

TOP NEWS OF J&K



JAMMU, SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 2025

Daily Evening Newspaper



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Some 70 people killed in attack on hospital in Sudan's Darfur region, WHO chief says

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BRIEFLY

JK Cement enters into joint venture with Kashmir-based Saifco cement

SRINAGAR, Jan 26 (Agencies): JK Cement has dramatically expanded its strategic footprint, signing a landmark deal to acquire a majority stake in Saifco Cements, a calculated move to penetrate the Jammu and Kashmir regional market.

JK Cement Limited has announced the acquisition of a 60% equity stake in Saifco Cement Private Limited. This acquisition, valued at approximately Rs 174 Crore, was approved during the board meeting held on January 25.

Strategically located in Khunmoh, Srinagar, Saifco brings an integrated manufacturing unit with clinker

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India's military prowess on full display at R-Day parade

NEW DELHI, Jan 26 (Agencies): India celebrated its 76th Republic Day on Sunday with a grand display of its military might that included elite marching contingents, missiles and various indigenous weapon systems, with Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto gracing the occasion as the chief guest.

In a first, a tri-services tableau, depicting the broader spirit of "jointness" among the armed forces, rolled down Kartavya Path, the centrepiece boulevard of the national capital.

It displayed a battlefield scenario, demonstrating a synchronised operation in land, water and air with the indigenous Arjun battle tank, Tejas fighter aircraft and advanced light helicopter.

The theme of the tri-services tableau was "Shashakt aur Surakshit Bharat" (strong and secure India).

The parade commenced with President Droupadi Murmu



taking the salute shortly after she and Subianto, flanked by the Indian president's bodyguards, arrived at Kartavya Path in a "traditional buggy".

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, several other Union ministers, the country's top military brass, foreign diplomats and senior officials were among the spectators on both sides of Kartavya

Path.

The first Army contingent leading the mounted column was 61 Cavalry, led by Lieutenant Ahaan Kumar.

Raised in 1953, 61 Cavalry is the only serving active horsed cavalry regiment in the world. It was followed by nine mechanised columns and nine marching contingents.

Tank T-90 Bhisma, the NAG

missile systems, the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile, the Pinaka multi-launcher rocket system, the Agnibaan multi-barrel rocket launcher, the Akash weapon system, the integrated battlefield surveillance system and all-terrain vehicle (Chetak) were among the key displays by the mechanised columns.

Light specialist vehicle Bajrang, vehicle-mounted infantry mortar system Airawat, quick reaction force vehicles Nandighosh and Tripurantak and the short-span bridging system were also on display.

The Army's marching contingents included the Brigade of the Guards, the Jat Regiment, the Garhwal Rifles, the Mahar Regiment, the Jammu and Kashmir Rifles Regiment and the Corps of Signals.

The Indian Navy's contingent consisted of 144 personnel led by Lieutenant Commander Sahil

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Republic Day greetings to all our readers

Omar-led Govt working towards fulfilling all promises one-by-one: Dy CM



SRINAGAR, Jan 26 (Agencies): Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary on Sunday said that the

promises made by the Omar Abdullah-led government in Jammu and Kashmir will be

Turn to page 9

76TH

REPUBLIC DAY

GREETINGS TO THE PEOPLE OF
JAMMU & KASHMIR

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

DIP/J-9494/24

TENTH DAY

With profound grief and sorrow, we regret to inform the sad demise of our beloved **Ex Serviceman S. Ravinderpal Singh (Rinku) S/o. S. Harjeet Singh, R/o. Saranoo, Rajouri** who left for his heavenly abode on 18-01-2025 and **Antim Ardas** will be held on 27-01-2025 on Monday from 10:00 A.M to 12:00 P.M at Our Residence at Saranoo, Rajouri.



Ex Serviceman
S. Ravinderpal Singh
(Rinku)

"You will remain in our hearts forever"

GRIEF STRICKEN

Sdn. Rajan Kour - **Wife**

S. Navtej Singh - **Son**

S. Harjeet Singh & Sdn. Satwant kour (**Father & Mother**)

S. Purshotam Singh Raja & Ranjeet Kour (**Brother and Bhabhi**)

S. Inderjeet Singh & Sabita (**Brother in Law**)

S. Harpreet Singh & Daljeet Kour (**Brother in Law**)

Mob No: 7006366793, 9419144733

10TH DAY/KRIYA/UTHALA

With profound grief and sorrow we regret to inform about the sad and untimely demise of **Mr. Vijayesh Khajuria, S/o Late Sh. Shashi Kant Khajuria R/o 3-A Karan Nagar, near Hill Top, Jammu.**

10TH DAY will be observed on Jan 25 (Saturday) at Ved Mandir, Amphalla Jammu at 11.30 AM.

KRIYA will be performed on Jan 26 (Sunday) at our residence at 12.30 PM.

UTHALA will be performed on January 27 (Monday) at Trikuta Yatri Niwas, near Ved Mandir Amphalla, Jammu, from 4. PM to 5 PM.

GRIEF STRICKEN:

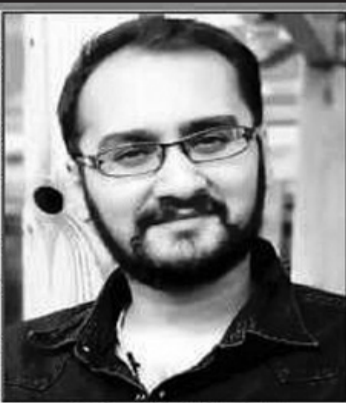
Madhu Raina (**Mother**)

Shruti (**Sister**)

(**Chachi and Chacha**)

Kusum and Ramakant Khajuria

Sushma and Ravikant Khajuria



MR. VIJAYESH
KHAJURIA

Meenu & Chanderkant Khajuria

Meera & Nishikant Khajuria

Charu & Kapil Kant Khajuria

Ph. No. 9419143132.

7006390955, 9469132126

KRIYA/UTHALA

In Loving memory of

Sh Vinod Kumar (Retd. Dev. Officer LIC).

"Your love and kindness will never guide us. Though unseen & unheard, you are always near - still loved, still missed & held so dear." With deep sorrow, we inform you of the passing of **Sh Vinod Kumar**, who left for his heavenly abode on 16th January 2025. We request your kind presence to join us for the

Kriya & Uthala to pray for the departed soul & seek eternal peace. **Kriya:** 27th January 2025 (Monday) at 12:00 Noon at 9/A Extn. New Karan Nagar, Jammu - 180005.

Uthala: 27th January 2025 (Monday).

Langar: 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM.

Rasam Pagri: 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM

at Gurudwara Guru Nanak Dev Ji Chand Nagar, Opposite Hotel Fortune Riviera Jammu.

Your presence & prayers would mean a lot to the family during this difficult time.



Sh Vinod Kumar

DEEPLY MOURNED BY:

Sunita Rani - **Wife**

Brother & Sister-in-law

Late Sh Gulshan Kumar & Saroj Rani

Sh Naresh Talia & Smt Seema Talia

Brother-in-law & Sister

Lt. Sh Subash Chander & Smt Krishna Luthra

Sh Ramesh Luthra & Smt Sangeeta Luthra

Daughter & Son-in-law

Vimrry Talia & Akhleshwar Thakur

Sons & Daughters-in-law

Vikul Talia & Sumeha Chib

Sandeep Kumar & Rashmi Talia

Ashish Talia & Deepali Talia

Rahul Talia & Mona Talia

Sahil Talia & Nandini Talia / Akshay Talia

Grand Children

Aria Talia, Trijal Talia, Arnav Talia, Pranav Talia, Anaya Talia

Deeply Remembered By:

TALLA, LUTHRA, CHIB & THAKUR FAMILY

Contact: +91-962222779, +91-9419192676

TENTH DAY/KRIYA/UTHALA

With profound grief and sorrow, we regret to inform the sad demise of our beloved **Sh. Hem Raj Sharma S/o Late Sh. Vishwanath Sharma R/o Ban Sultan, Miran Sahib (Near Govt Boys High School) who left for heavenly abode on 17 January 2025.**

TENTH DAY will be performed on 26 January 2025 (Sunday) at our residence at 11 AM.

KRIYA will be performed on 27 January 2025 (Monday) at our residence at 10 AM.

UTHALA will be performed on 27 January 2025 (Monday) at Hanuman Mandir Main Bazar Miran Sahib from 4 PM - 5 PM.

GRIEF STRICKEN

Raj Kumar (**Wife**)

Harit (Sanju) & Ruchi Sharma (**Son & Daughter-in-law**)

Amit Sharma (Shelly) (**Son**)

Daughters & Son-in-laws:

Anju Sharma & Sundresh Varm Kumar (Retd. SE PDD)

Rekha & Er. Gurmukh Singh

Poonam & Er. Ajay Gupta

Neeraj & Er. Vikas Sharma

Mob: 9796874999



Sh. Hem Raj Sharma

OBITUARY

With deep sorrow we inform the sad demise of respected **Sh. Om Prakash Badal** S/o Late Pt. Padam Nath Badal R/o 7 Lane No. 3 Shivalki Badaves, SEC. C EXT Chowk Road, Sank Colony on 19th Jan 2025.

TENTH DAY will be performed on Tuesday 28th January 2025, 11:00 AM at our residence.

KRIYA will be performed on Wednesday 29th January at our residence from 11am onwards.

UTHALA on Wednesday 29th January 2025 at Ram Mandir Ranabala Chowk, Sec-D Sank Colony Jammu from 4 PM - 5 PM.

GRIEF STRICKEN

Daughter-in-law & Son: Sangeeta & Pradeep Badal

Daughters & Sons in law: Isha & Er. Vinod Sharma

Sushila & Er. Pawan Baru

Sangeeta (Shi) & Er. Anil Sharma

Smt. Laxmi Sharma W/o Late Prof. M.L. Sharma - Sister

Bhabhi:

Smt. Kamla Badal W/o Late Sh. Ratan Chand Badal

Smt. Raj Badal W/o Late Surinder Nath Badal

Smt. Rama Badal W/o Late Subash Chand Badal

Pakir & Ashay Dutt - Grand Daughter & Grand Son in law

GRAND CHILDREN:

Soni & Mohinder Sharma

Arka & Vikram Sharma

Parul & Sahil Rohitara

Devika & Pranav Baru

Achha & Anshu Gupta

Sarvagya Sharma

Grand Grand Children: Vishu, Varsha, Seher, Sarikaad & Bhavika

9419127181, 98093914, 98923787



Sh. Om Prakash Badal

TENTH DAY & KRIYA

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved mother **Smt. Raj Kumari W/o Late Sh. Bal Krishan Gupta R/o 659, Lane No. 7 Opp. J&K Bank Gole Pully, Talab Tillo on 19th Jan. 2025.**

TENTH DAY will be held on Tuesday 28.01.2025 at Gurdwara Talli Sahib, Talab Tillo from 11.00 AM to 12.00 Noon.

KRIYA will be held on Friday 31.01.2025 at our residence at 12.00 Noon.

GRIEF STRICKEN

Son & Daughter-in-law

Sh. Pawan Gupta & Smt. Shalini Gupta

Daughters & Son-in-law

Smt. Sany Gupta W/o Late Sh. Dev Raj Gupta

Smt. Neelam Gupta W/o Late Sh. Ramesh Gupta

Smt. Tripta & Sh. Dilip

Smt. Parvesh & Sh. Sham Gupta

Smt. Anu & Sh. Rajinder Sharma

Smt. Asha & Sh. Nareesh Sethi

Grand Daughter & Grand Son-in-law

Sakshi W/o Sh. Vivek Sharma

Mr. Nilesh Gupta (Grandson)

MOB: 9419155155, 9796155155



Smt. Raj Kumari

OBITUARY

With profound grief and sorrow, we regret to inform sad demise of **Smt. Jagat Mohini Nehru W/o Late Sh. Jagat Nath Nehru** ex-resident of Kala Khud, Habba Kadal, Srinagar presently at Flat No. 42, Tower No. 2, Palm Olympia, Gaur City 2, Greater Noida (West), Noida.

Tenth Day Kriya will be performed on 27th January 2025 at Ganga Nagar, Chola Hatwara, Modd Nagar, UP at 8.30 am.

GRIEF STRICKEN:

Sh. Bansil Lal Nehru (Son) 9205403132)

(Grandson and Grand Daughter)

Sh. Pratik Nehru & Pratibha Nehru

9310572232, 8178525488

Smt. Rashmi & Sh. Sanjay Nehru (Daughter-in-law & Son)

9419701710, 9419147499

Smt. Prana & Sh. Adar Krishen Kaul (Daughter & Son-in-law)

8743081212, 9718387401

Smt. Usha & Sh. Ashok Koul (Daughter & Son-in-law)

9888116238, 9646087172

Smt. Sunita & Sh. Sanjay Rambal (Daughter & Son-in-law)

Smt. Sarita & Sh. Vinod Razdan (Daughter & Son-in-law)

Smt. Sunaina & Sh. Sunesh J. (Daughter & Son-in-law)

(Grand children: Amal & Ambika, Anmol Ji & Aparna, Amlesh Ji & Aruna, Manish Ji & Ancha, Shubul, Arnav, Jyesh, Ayansh, Nya, Meesha)



Smt. Jagat Mohini Nehru

OBITUARY/10TH DAY KRIYA

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved mother **Smt. Shyama Pandita W/o Late Sh. Bansil Lal Pandita** originally from Pampore, Kashmir, presently residing at Lalleshwari Vatika, Sector 21 D, Faridabad on 20th January 2025.

10th Day will be performed at Murad Nagar, Ghaziabad on 28th January (Tuesday) 2025.

GRIEF STRICKEN:

(Son and Daughter in law)

O.K. Pandita and Sunita Pandita

(Daughter and Son in law)

Sunita Kalpushu and Kuldeep Kalpushu

Sujata Dhar and Anil Dhar (Daughter and Son in law)

(Grand Children)

Nitin Pandita, Madhurima Dhar and Kamakshi Kalpushu

Contact No. 9871328973, 9419134597, 9899957847.



Smt. Shyama Pandita

TENTH DAY KRIYA

In Loving Memory of **VAIBHAV DEMBI (SHIVU) S/o Smt. Jyoti Dembi & Sh. Sudhir Dembi** 16th July 1996-19th January 2025 R/o Kralygar, Rainawari, Srinagar, J&K at present A0106, Brigade Golden Triangle, Kattamallur, Bengaluru.

10TH DAY KRIYA will take place on 28th January 2025 (Tuesday) 10 AM onwards at Triveni Sangam, Near Shri Kashi Vishveshwara Temple, Kamalaka (12.402431, 76.708603)

Prayer Meeting: 5 PM onwards at Clubhouse, Brigade Golden Triangle Sy No. 49, 51, Huskur Village, Bidarahalli Hobli Kattamallur, Sannatammanahalli, Bangalore.

GRIEF STRICKEN:

Vibhuti Dembi (Sister)

Dembi and Bazax Family



VAIBHAV DEMBI (SHIVU)

KRIYA/UTHALA

With profound grief and sorrow, we regret to inform sad demise of our beloved mother **Smt. Vaishno Sharma W/o Late Dr. M.L. Sharma R/o 234/9, Shakti Nagar Jammu on 17-01-2025.**

KRIYA shall be performed at our residence on 27-01-2025 (Monday) at 12 Noon.

UTHALA shall be held at Goeta Mandir Smriti Bhawan, Bakshi Nagar, Jammu on 27-01-2025 (Monday) from 4 to 5 PM.

GRIEF STRICKEN

Smt. Usha Rani & Sh. O.P. Sharma (Deverani & Devar)

Shoba & Anand Sharma (Daughter-in-law & Son)

Jyoti & Devinder Sharma (Daughter & Son-in-law)

Shakti & Avind Chibber (Daughter & Son-in-law)

Harish & Ravi Sharma (Daughter & Son-in-law)

Anu & Mohinder Bangotra - (Daughter & Son-in-law)

PHONE: 9086043506



Smt. Vaishno Sharma

DISCLAIMER

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10TH DAY/KRIYA/RASAM PAGRI

With profound grief & sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved **Sh. Ashok Mengi S/o Lt. Ram Lal Mengi R/o Tea Garden Katra, who left for heavenly abode on 16/01/25.**

10th Day will be performed on 25/11/2025 (Saturday) from 11 AM at our residence Tea Garden Katra (V.D.).

Kriya will be performed at our residence on 27/11/2025 (Monday) at 12 Noon.

Rasam Pagri will be performed on 27/11/2025 (Monday) at 4 PM at our residence Tea Garden, Katra (V.D.)

GRIEF STRICKEN

Kanta Mengi - **Wife**

Narinder & Neelam Mengi - **Brother & Bhabhi**

Sunita & Ajeet Kapoor - **Sister & JiJa Ji**

Suman & Rakesh Nayyar - **Sister & JiJa Ji**

Pooja & Ashu Gupta - **Daughter & Son-in-law**

Palak & Vasu Sharma - **Daughter & Son-in-law**

Pankaj & Ishita Mengi - **Son & Daughter-in-law**

Rohit & Palak Mengi - **Son & Daughter-in-law**

Abhi & Sonali Mengi - **Son & Daughter-in-law**

Mr. Abhishek Mengi - **Son**

MOB: 8803200000, 9469230000



Sh. Ashok Mengi

TENTH DAY/KRIYA

With profound grief and sorrow, we regret to inform the sad & untimely demise of our beloved **Mr. Shakti Sagar Bhat S/o Lt. Rattan Lal Bhat, Flat-12, Lane No.16, Block-74, Jagti Nagrota, who left for his heavenly abode on 23-01-2025.** Originally from Bangund, Verinag, Anantnag.

Tenth Day Kriya will be performed on 01-02-2025 (Saturday) at Sainik School Nagrota at 9.00 AM.

Mourning is being held at Block-72, Flat-4, Lane No. 16, Jagti.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha unfurls National Flag at Republic Day function



Force, Excise & Taxation Department, Ex-Servicemen, NCC (Boys and Girls), Bharat Scouts and Guides (Girls & Boys) and several school contingents, Brass & Pipe Bands of Army, BSF, J&K Police and Band Troops (Girl & Boys) of different Schools.

Tableaux by different departments on cultural diversity of J&K, PM-Surya Ghar, Swarnim Bharat ki Virasat, Fit India Movement, War against Drugs and impressive Motorcycle Acrobatic display by JKP dare-devils and cultural pageantry based on the different themes were the main attractions of the celebrations.

Earlier, the Lieutenant Governor laid wreath at Police Martyrs Memorial & Balidan Stambh and paid tributes to the valiant martyrs of the Police, Army, and CAPFs who made the supreme sacrifice for the motherland.

Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 26: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha unfurled the National Flag at the UT level function on the occasion of the 76th Republic Day, at MA Stadium on Sunday morning.

Republic Day Parade and took the ceremonial salute. The Republic Day Parade consisted of smart contingents from Army, BSF, CRPF, SSB, IRP (Women & Male), J&K Police, JKAP, UT Disaster Response Force, J&K Fire and Emergency Services, J&K Forest Protection

J&K BJP celebrates 76th Republic Day with fervour

Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 26: J&K BJP celebrated the 76th Republic Day with fervour across the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.

Celebrating the Republic Day with patriotic zeal, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders hoisted the National flag at almost every locality, Chowk and at all the important places. The party workers raised patriotic slogans and sang songs, while distributing sweets to mark their happiness on the occasion.

Sat Sharma, CA, President, J&K BJP, General Secretary (organization) Ashok Koul, Leader of Opposition Sunil Sharma, former Dy CM Kavinder Gupta, MLA Vikram Randhawa, District President Naresh Singh and other senior leaders of party hoisted the national flag at the party headquarters, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu. At BJP office, Kachi



Chawni, Jammu, MP Ghulam Ali Khatana, MLA Arvind Gupta, District President Rajesh Gupta, and other BJP leaders hoisted the National Flag. At City Chowk, Jammu, MP Jugal Kishore Sharma, MLA & J&K BJP Vice-President Yudhvir

Sethi, former Minister Priya Sethi and other BJP leaders hoisted the National Flag. Sat Sharma greeted the fellow Indians on the fortunate occasion of Republic Day. He said that we are the proud participants of the world's largest

democracy. Enjoying our civil rights with dignity, owing to the Indian Constitution, it is our duty to recognize the efforts of Bharat Ratna Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar in drafting this Constitution as its Chief Architect, he said.

Ashok Koul said that BJP duty-fully hoists the National flag at various places on this special occasion. He appealed to the residents of this great nation to celebrate this festival to uphold the principles of justice, liberty and equality and teach the spirit of patriotism into the younger generation.

Kavinder Gupta said that we have a past of patriots like Maharana Pratap, Shivaji, Guru Gobind Singh, Neta ji, Bhagat Singh, and many others to achieve our complete freedom. We must honour their sacrifices and be ever ready to save our nation's integrity, culture, and history, he said.

Kavinder hoists National Flag at several places in Gandhi Nagar Constituency

Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 26: Senior BJP leader and former Deputy Chief Minister Kavinder Gupta today hoisted the National Flag at multiple locations across the Gandhi Nagar constituency to mark the 76th Republic Day. Amidst patriotic fervor, he extended warm greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir and the entire nation, emphasizing India's rapid strides under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Addressing gatherings at different venues, Kavinder Gupta highlighted how India has emerged as a global powerhouse, with its



rich culture and heritage being recognized on the world stage. He credited PM Modi's dynamic governance for transforming the country into a self-reliant and progressive nation, ensuring holistic development in every sector. "The Indian Constitution has bestowed upon us invaluable rights and freedoms, but with these rights come responsibilities," he said. "Today, as

we celebrate this historic occasion, let us take a solemn pledge to uphold the values of unity, integrity, and national service." He urged citizens, especially the youth, to contribute actively towards nation-building, preserving the democratic ethos, and strengthening the spirit of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat.' He emphasized that the New India envi-

sioned by PM Modi is one that empowers every citizen, embraces its cultural roots, and leads the world in innovation and growth.

As the tricolor fluttered proudly across different parts of Jammu, patriotic songs, cultural performances, and enthusiastic participation from various sections of society marked the celebrations. Kavinder Gupta reaffirmed the BJP's commitment to serving the people and ensuring that Jammu and Kashmir continues to progress alongside the rest of the nation.

The celebrations concluded with slogans of "Bharat Mata Ki Jai," as people resolved to work towards a stronger, united, and prosperous India.

CCI celebrates 76th Republic Day with patriotic fervour

Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 26: Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI), Jammu celebrated the 76th Republic Day with great fervour here today. An impressive programme was organized at the Chamber House which commenced with the hoisting of National Flag by Sh. Arun Gupta, President Chamber of Commerce and Industry Jammu in presence of other office bearers and hundreds of members of the CCI.

On the occasion, Arun Gupta unfurled the National Flag after which the whole prem



ises reverberated with the singing of National Anthem amid salutations to the National Tricolour and the martyrs who laid down their lives while protecting the territorial integrity of the nation on the borders and the hinterland.

In his address, Arun Gupta threw light on the martyrdom of free

dom fighters who laid down their lives for the cause of the nation and its people as a result of which the people of the World's largest Democracy are enjoying full freedom and self esteem having earned honour and dignity at the global level. He also said that it is a day to remember those who

had sacrificed their lives to get the nation free from British rule.

Arun Gupta said that Republic Day is the most auspicious day for the whole nation and its people and being the most vibrant democracy of the world, it deserves to be celebrated like a festival with full enthusiasm and gaiety amid participation of people from diverse cultures as 'Unity in Diversity' is the hallmark of the Indian democracy.

The Chamber President assured that CCI members will leave no stone unturned in taking J&K on the glorious path of development and prosperity.



GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
MECHANICAL & HOSPITAL DIVISION
KATHUA
email: xenmedkathua@gmail.com



NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS

e-NITNo:- MHDK/TECH/e-NIT/2024-25/30 dated 22-01-2025 due on 29-01-2025

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, Tenders are invited by Executive Engineer, Mechanical & Hospital Division Kathua, by e-Tendering mode in Two Cover system from Registered firms /registered/reputed contractors, for the following work for the below mentioned.

1	Name of Work	Laying of pipe along with embedding of existing pipeline at parking area of Associated Hospital, Govt. Medical College Kathua.
2	Estimated Cost (in ₹)	₹ 36,196.00
3	Earnest Money	2% of the estimated Cost
4	Performance Security	5% of the quoted amount
5	Time of Completion	15 days
6	Cost of Tender Documents (in ₹)	₹ 600.00
7	Eligibility criteria of bidder	Registered/Reputed firms having sufficient experience for the similar nature work
8	Tender Receiving Authority	Executive Engineer, Mechanical & Hospital Division, Kathua.

The bidding process shall be completed online on www.jktenders.gov.in in two covers viz. **Cover I** consisting of General Terms and Conditions and Technical Specifications and **Cover II** consisting of Bid, in the prescribed BOQ.

Position of AAA : Accorded
Position of T.S : Sanctioned
Project Authority : Principal Govt. Medical College Kathua

CRITICAL DATES:

a)	Publish Date	22-01-2025
b)	Document Download/sale start date	22-01-2025
c)	Date of Pre-bid meeting	23-01-2025
d)	Bid submission start date	23-01-2025
e)	Bid submission end date	29-01-2025
f)	Date of Bid opening	30-01-2025

- Bid documents can be accessed and downloaded from the website www.jktenders.gov.in.
- The pre-bid meeting shall be held in the office chamber of the Executive Engineer, Mechanical & Hospital Division, Kathua.
- The whole bidding process shall be completed online on tender portal www.jktenders.gov.in. The intending bidders can download the bid document from the tender portal and can submit their bids by uploading them on the tender portal.
- The valid bids received shall be opened online in the office of the Executive Engineer, Mechanical & Hospital Division, Kathua.
- Bids must be accompanied by cost of Tender Document and EMD as specified in row 3&6 of the table and shall be payable at Kathua.
- ail.com.

No. MHDK/Tech/4366-70 DIP/J-9523/24
Dated: -22.01.2025

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Mechanical and Hospital Division,
Kathua

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EDITORIAL

CELEBRATION OF NATIONAL PRIDE

Patriotism is a powerful force that transcends time, space, and individual differences. It is the collective expression of love, loyalty, and devotion to one's country, often ignited by a deep sense of national pride. Patriotic fervour is the emotional response that emerges when individuals come together, united by shared values, history, culture, and a vision for the future. This fervour is most prominently seen during national celebrations, such as Independence Day or Republic Day, but its influence can be felt year-round through acts of service, sacrifice, and solidarity.

Patriotic fervour goes beyond simply celebrating one's nation—it is the embodiment of the spirit of unity, sacrifice, and commitment. It is expressed through gestures that symbolize national pride, from hoisting the national flag to singing the national anthem, or participating in national events like parades, commemorations, and festivals. The fervour is not just a display of devotion; it is rooted in the shared history of a nation, where citizens recall the struggles and triumphs of their ancestors, the hard-fought battles for freedom, and the sacrifices that have shaped the nation's identity.

In India, patriotic fervour is intertwined with the nation's freedom struggle, led by iconic leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Subhas Chandra Bose. The memory of colonial rule, the quest for independence, and the values of justice, democracy, and secularism that the country was built upon continue to inspire generations of Indians. It is a reminder that the freedom enjoyed today was earned through immense sacrifice, and it motivates people to take pride in the nation's journey.

Patriotic fervour is most visible during national festivals like Independence Day (15th August) and Republic Day (26th January). These occasions serve as important reminders of the nation's struggle for independence and the adoption of a democratic constitution. On these days, the entire country comes together in a celebration of its unity, diversity, and freedom.

On Republic Day, the grandeur of the celebrations reaches new heights. The Republic Day parade in New Delhi is a magnificent display of India's military might, cultural diversity, and progress. Soldiers, students, performers, and dignitaries participate in the parade, and the streets are filled with spectators, all basking in the warmth of patriotic fervour. The President of India presides over the celebrations, symbolizing the strength and unity of the country. The grand cultural performances showcasing India's rich heritage bring to life the spirit of the nation.

These national celebrations are powerful demonstrations of the collective consciousness of the people. The fervour is felt not only by those physically present at the event but also by millions watching on television or listening to the speeches. It is a moment when every individual, regardless of region, religion, or background, feels deeply connected to the country.

While national festivals are the most obvious manifestations of patriotic fervour, it is equally evident in the everyday lives of people. Patriotic fervour is seen in the resilience of citizens in times of national crises—whether it be in the face of natural disasters, terror attacks, or economic challenges. During times of need, the call to come together as a nation, to help one another and rebuild, is met with overwhelming solidarity. From volunteers working in disaster zones to doctors and nurses on the frontlines of a pandemic, individuals exemplify the spirit of service to the nation.

Similarly, military personnel, police officers, and government workers serve the nation selflessly, often making the ultimate sacrifice for the safety and well-being of the country. Their dedication to the nation, even in the face of danger, exemplifies the deep love and loyalty they have for their country. These silent yet powerful acts of patriotism often go unnoticed, but they form the backbone of the nation's progress.

Another manifestation of patriotic fervour is in social activism. Citizens who advocate for social justice, equality, and environmental protection are driven by a sense of responsibility toward the nation's well-being. They understand that true patriotism involves working toward the common good, not just personal or political gain. Many youth organizations, student movements, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) contribute to nation-building through their initiatives in education, healthcare, and poverty alleviation.

The youth of any nation play a significant role in nurturing and sustaining patriotic fervour. In India, young people often take part in national celebrations, community service projects, and social awareness campaigns that reflect a deep sense of commitment to their country. Schools and colleges frequently organize debates, essay competitions, sports events, and cultural activities to instill a sense of pride in young minds.

Through social media and digital platforms, young people also share messages of unity and patriotism. They engage in discussions about national issues, promote awareness on sustainability and equality, and celebrate the cultural diversity of the country. This modern expression of patriotism is crucial in keeping the flame of national pride alive in the digital age.

By: Omkar Dattatray

Indian republic is 75 years old and the nation is celebrating the 76th anniversary of its republic. During these 76 years of Indian republic, the nation has excelled in many walks of its life and India has matured as a dynamic and vibrant republic and the nation has to throw light on its achievements attained during the ups and downs of the country and its constitutional history. India had adopted its constitution on 26th January 1950 and we have embraced the principles of democracy, socialism, secularism, equity, fraternity and social justice. Constitution is the life line of our republic. The Constitution of India's preamble, as amended up to July 2024, reads as under—We the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic & to secure to all its citizens—Justice, social, economic and political, Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship. Equality of status and of opportunity and to promote among them all Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and unity and integrity of the Nation. The constitution was adopted, enacted and given on 26th day of November, 1949. Thus the people of India have resolved to constitute India as a democratic socialist & secular, republic and gave themselves the constitution as the guiding force for its governance and all the basic and fundamental principles enshrined in the preamble of the constitution are the guidelines and blueprint for the India's destiny as a democratic and socialist republic and the people of India should at all costs uphold the basic principles, tenets and doctrines of the republic so that India continues its march on the glorious path charted by the founding fathers of its constitution and we as the proud citizens of the republic should maintain the pristine principles enshrined in the constitution so that our democratic republic will flourish and prosper and the political, social and cultural destiny of the people of India is strengthened. The preamble

to the constitution declares India a sovereign, socialist, secular, and democratic republic. The objectives of the preamble are to secure justice, liberty, and equality for all citizens and promote fraternity among the citizens. The preamble to the constitution is a reflection of the core constitutional values that embody the constitution. The preamble of the constitution acts like the introduction that presents the intention of the framers, the core values, principles, and the history behind the creation of the constitution. The preamble to the constitution was accepted by the constituent assembly on 22nd January 1947 and adopted by it on 26th November 1949 and came into force on 26th January 1950, which is celebrated as the Republic Day of India. It is pertinent to mention that the words "socialist", "secular" and "integrity" were later added to the preamble during the Indian emergency that is in 1976 by Indira Gandhi. Thus the government of India and its states as well as UT's are making efforts to run on the path and as per the guidance and guidelines of the preamble of the constitution and are on the path of making India an egalitarian society. The government is implementing the ambitious and sacred values and principles as enshrined in the constitution. The goals, values and principles given in the preamble of the constitution are lofty and they should be made crafty to pursue them so that an egalitarian society is made possible and the centre government, state governments, UT's, political parties, NGO's and last but not the least the people who are sovereign and are the masters of their destiny should cooperate with the rulers so that the objectives and values as well as principles contained in the preamble of the constitution are implemented and all the policies and programmes and schemes of the government are an exercise in fulfilling the values and doctrines enshrined in the constitution. The preamble of the constitution of India sets out the guiding purposes and principles and the centre government and state governments are following the path shown by the founding fathers of the constitution and thus making concerted

and persistent efforts to implement the objectives as per the guidelines delineated in the constitution. The preamble of the constitution is a reflection of the core constitutional values that embody the constitution. It is known as the soul and essence of the constitution. The march of Indian republic has seen many ups and downs during its 76 year long history and our democracy and Indian republic has emerged stronger with each passing year and we are very proud of our republic. Indian republic is on the march of economic, social and political development and it is making strenuous efforts to implement the principles and values as well as the purposes as given in the constitution. We have attained many advancements in our political, social and economic life. But we have not been able to reduce and bridge the widening gap between the haves and the poor and so our country should take steps in this direction so that the dreams of the profounder of the constitution are realized. It is India's biggest achievement that we have successfully conducted eighteen general elections and hundreds of state assembly elections more or less peacefully and it goes to the credit of the independent election commission of India and these elections were conducted freely and fairly raising the status and image of Indian republics democratic destiny in the international community. Our republic and democracy has become resilient, stable, dynamic strong and robust day by day during all these 76 year history of our republic. The 76th Republic Day of India celebrates the country's transition to a republic and its democratic values. It also marks India's progress in various fields including economic development, technology and social reforms. Republic day celebrates India's democratic values and the people's power to govern them. The republic day parade in New Delhi showcases India's cultural richness and military prowess, reinforcing the idea of unity in diversity. Republic day serves as a reminder of India's journey towards self-governance and its core values of justice, equality and fraternity. India's growth story and progress during all these 76 years of republic

are enviable and make us feel proud. India's Gross Domestic Product-GDP increased from 2,700 billion in 1947 to US dollar 3.53 trillion in 2021, making it the world's sixth largest economy and today in 2025, it has the distinction of being the fifth largest economy in the world and its march to become third largest economy in near future is no less ordinary. India has made significant technological advancements and it has become a technological giant. We are exporting technologists and engineers to outside world. India has made significant social reforms. India has increased its global influence. During 10 years of Modi rule, India's status in the world got much impetus and boost and she is heard on international issues and matters and Modi has become a global leader as the popularity of India and Modi has increased thanks to the diplomatic virtues of Modi government. In the last seven—and-a-half decades, India achieved remarkable development in agriculture, heavy industry, irrigation, energy production, nuclear power capability, space technology, biotechnology, telecommunication, oceanology and science and research. Republic Day parade 2025 will showcase India's cultural diversity and military might. The special focus will be on 75 years of enactment of the constitution and Jan Bhagidari. This year, 31 tableaux from various states, UT's and central government Ministries /departments will participate, showcasing the theme "Swarnim Bharat—Virasat aur Vikas". In brief we the citizens of Indian should once again resolve to tread the path shown by the constitution and march to make Indian republic of the dreams of the founding architects of the constitution and this will be the befitting way to celebrate the 76th republic day. Long live Indian Republic & democracy. Tatha Astu.

(The author is a columnist, social, KP activist & Freelance Writer)

Why South leans more towards science?

By: Vijay Garg

(South India has a long history of passion for Science)

Ancient contribution: Science and other STEM branches (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) at school and in colleges have importance in South Indian education systems, from an early level. This article explores why South India leans more towards science.

42 lakh students in India chose science in 2022, mostly from South India

Andhra Pradesh leads with 75.63% science stream students

South India holds 41% of the country's MBBS seats

Every high school student faces a turning point: Science, Commerce, or Humanities. For most, it is the turning point that decides their future. In 2022, 42 lakh students in India chose the science stream. Interestingly, most of them came from five southern states - Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Karnataka. This is no coincidence; it is a result of a harmonious blend of culture, infrastructure, and opportunities to nurture young minds.

A REGIONAL PREFERENCE
According to a study by the Union Ministry of Education in 2023, there are some stunning insights into stream selection across India. Andhra Pradesh led the pack with 75.63% of Class 11 students opting for Science, followed by Telangana at 64.59% and Tamil Nadu at 61.50%. The figures are far above the national average, which points to South India's strong inclination toward the sciences.

INFRASTRUCTURE
South India has a love affair with science, backed by an excellent foundation of resources and opportunities. This region has many cutting-edge laboratories, research centres, and innovation hubs.

To name a few:
ISRO in Bengaluru is encouraging space science

Hands-on research facilities are available at NAL and CLRI EDUCATION POWERHOUSE

The five southern states and Puducherry and Lakshadweep house 1,229 AICTE-approved institutions that confer engineering and technology courses. This region boasts an intake capacity of nearly 5.11 lakh students per year and is a leader in technical education.

COMPETITIVE EDGE

The IIT Madras zone is always at the top in the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE). In 2022, 29 students from this zone were in the top 100.

"Bengaluru alone accounted for over 30% of India's tech startups in 2022 (NASSCOM). STEM success is evident in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, contributing 21.3% of the top 500 JEE Advanced rank holders in 2023. Hyderabad further strengthens STEM preparation with over 1,000 JEE and NEET coaching centres," said Dr. Jagadeesh Bharatam is a Distinguished Professor in the Department of Physics at the GITAM School of Science, Visakhapatnam.

In medical education, South India has 41 per cent of the country's MBBS seats. Of the 242 medical colleges in the region, nearly 60 percent are privately run, which creates an ecosystem that nurtures aspiring doctors.

ADVANCING SPACE EXPLORATION

Besides the classrooms, South India has many contributions. Another launch pad is under development at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Andhra Pradesh. It is sanctioned for Rs 3,985 crores. This kind of programme raises aspirations and enhances the region's scientific strength.

A LEGACY OF INTELLECTUAL EXCELLENCE

South India has a long history of passion for Science:

Ancient contribution: From Aryabhata to the Kerala School of Mathematics, the region is a hub for intellectual activity that dates back many centuries.

Colonial Impact: British rule has transformed cities such as Chennai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad into educational centres. IISc Bengaluru and Madras Medical College were born out of this period.

Modern Icons: Organisations like ISRO, with its headquarters in Bengaluru, and figures such as Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, are what have actually solidified the reputation of scientific excellence in South India.

A CULTURE OF LEARNING

Families prioritise learning, and schools emphasise STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) from an early age. This dedication creates a virtuous cycle: Strong schools produce exceptional students who inspire the next generation.

According to the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2020-21, Tamil Nadu leads the country with a Gross Enrollment Ratio of 52.5% in higher education, much of which is focused on STEM fields. Families prioritise careers in engineering and medicine, with 58% of Tamil Nadu parents preferring these paths for their children (ASER 2022).

"Higher English proficiency in South India provides a distinct advantage. Kerala, with a literacy rate of 96.2%, leads in English-medium education, enabling students to excel in science courses and access global opportunities," said Dr. Jagadeesh Bharatam.

In Hyderabad alone, over 1,000 coaching centres provide specialised training for JEE and NEET, compared to fewer than 400 in Uttar Pradesh, offering a more structured pathway to top institutes like IITs and AIIMS.

POLICY AND INVESTMENT

Economic growth in Southern cities has been a major driver. Bengaluru, with a GDP of \$110 billion in 2021, is a magnet for talent in IT and biotech. Karnataka's Rs 31,980 crore education budget for 2023-24 includes significant investments in STEM fields.

Chennai's industrial ecosystem supports research in engineering and pharmaceuticals, with Tamil Nadu allocating Rs 40,299 crore to education in the same year.

Southern states prioritise education. They give much importance to higher and technical studies. VIT, Anna University, and Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology represent the zeal of the region in developing a world-class education ecosystem.

ALLOCATION OF BUDGET FOR

SCIENCE IN NORTH AND SOUTH

The government maintains uniform allocation policies through initiatives like the Atal Innovation Mission, Skill India, and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. While these programmes aim to bridge regional disparities, Southern states historically benefitted from investments in institutions like ISRO (Bengaluru) and DRDO (Hyderabad), giving them a head start. For example, ISRO's total annual budget for 2023 was Rs 13,949 crore, much of which is spent on projects headquartered in the South.

"India's overall R&D expenditure, at just 0.7% of GDP (2022), limits both regions' ability to pursue cutting-edge research. However, NEP 2020 aims to enhance equity by prioritising interdisciplinary learning and innovation across all states," professor further explained.

Under National Education Policy, establishing regional science parks and incubation centres are already seeing traction, with Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh receiving grants for setting up STEM-focused schools.

South India is known for ancient temples showcasing advanced engineering to cutting-edge space programmes, the region has always celebrated knowledge.

This is more than a statistic in South India's preference for Science. It attests to its dedication to education and progress. With investments in infrastructure, talent nurturing, and honouring its rich legacy, the region goes ahead of inspiring students throughout the country to dream bigger.

It's not about the trends and the numbers, though. This is about a region that made education a way of life. If the proper foundation is built, the sky will not be the limit—it is only the starting point.

With such reforms, India is well-positioned to bridge regional disparities and strengthen its global standing in science and technology.

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

Srinagar Wing of High Court celebrates Republic Day



Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Jan 26: The 76th Republic Day was celebrated on Sunday in the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, Srinagar Wing, with immense enthusiasm and full patriotic fervour.

The event commenced with unfurling of the

National flag by Justice Atul Sreedharan, Judge, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, who took salute at the March Past followed by playing of the National Anthem/ patriotic tunes by the Band.

The event was also graced by Justice Mohammad Yousuf Wani, Judge, High Court of J&K and Ladakh. Besides, Mir Syed Latif, Member, CAT Srinagar Bench, Jaffer Hussain Beg, Principal District & Sessions Judge, Srinagar, Tasleem Arief, Registrar Vigilance, Farooq Ahmad Bhat, Registrar Judicial Srinagar Wing, Tahir Majeed Shamsi, DSGI, Waseem Gul, President, Kashmir Advocates' Association, officers of police and civil administration, law officers besides officers and officials of Srinagar Wing of High Court.

The event concluded with distribution of sweets among the police and CRPF officials.

76th Republic Day celebrated in Dooru



Top News Report

ANANTNAG, Jan 26: The 76th Republic Day was celebrated with patriotic fervor and traditional gaiety in Sub-division Dooru amid the participation of people from across the social spectrum.

According to our correspondent the main function was held in the premises of Govt. Model Hr.Sec.School Dooru, wherein Sub-divisional Magistrate Dooru Parvaiz Rahim (JKAS) was the chief guest who hoisted the National flag and took salute at an impressive march past.

The parade featured contingents from JK police band, CRPF, F&ES, and different school children Under the command of SHO Jazib Bhat the parade showcased excellent discipline and precision.

While congratulating gathering, Parvaiz Rahim said that the Constitution of independent India was implemented on 26th Jan 1950, which provides fundamental rights to every citizen of the country. He reiterated that on 26 January 1950, we the people of the Republic adopted the constitution that was framed by a committee headed by Dr. B.R.Ambedkar. The con-

stitution declares that India is a Sovereign, Socialist, and Democratic Republic.

Addressing the gathering he said that the nation is paying homage to those leaders, freedom fighters and martyrs who made numerous sacrifices for the freedom of the country.

He presented an outline regarding the construction and development in the whole Dooru Sub-division.

Various colorful cultural programs were also presented by students and cultural groups. A large number of people witnessed the event. Elaborate security arrangements were made by the police on the occasion of Republic Day.

At the end of the ceremony, the officers who showed the best performance in Dooru Sub-division were honored with special awards and certificates.

Meanwhile, Republic Day celebration was also held at Munsif Court Dooru, where Judge Arzoo Javed Rather hoisted the national flag and took the salute. Meanwhile national flag also hoisted at Middle School Nadura Dooru.

JK Resident Commission celebrates Republic Day

Top News Report

JAMMU / NEW DELHI, Jan 26: Principal Resident Commissioner, Jammu and Kashmir Government, Dr. Rashmi Singh, unfurled the National Flag on the eve of 76th Republic Day at Jammu and Kashmir House on Sunday.

A contingent of J&K Armed Police presented the guard of honour on the occasion. The ceremonial function was attended by all the officers and officials of Jammu and Kashmir posted at New Delhi.

Congratulating the participants on this auspicious occasion, the Principal Resident Commissioner paid rich tributes to the martyrs and freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives for liberating India from the Britishers.

A colourful cultural programme was presented on the occasion besides release of coffee table book and calendar of the



Resident Commission. Later, Principal Resident Commissioner interacted with the officers and officials of J&K House.

Republic Day celebrated with enthusiasm across Karnah Sub-Division



Top News Report

KARNAH, Jan 26: The Karnah sub-division witnessed grand Republic Day celebrations with multiple events held across the region. The main event took place at the Mini Secretariat in Tangdhar, where SDM Karnah, Zaffar Ahmad, hoisted the national flag and took the salute from an impressive parade.

Contingents from the police, NCC, Fire and Emergency Services, and Forest Protection Forces participated in the parade, while students from various schools added vibrancy to the event with colorful cultural programs, including a well-received Pahari drama.

Addressing the gather-

ing, SDM Zaffar Ahmad highlighted the ongoing developmental initiatives in the border sub-division, emphasizing that progress in Karnah is in line with the rest of the country.

In addition to the main event, the Indian Army organized a celebration in the border village of Teetwal along the Line of Control (LoC). Similar Republic Day programs were conducted at private schools in Chamkote and Tangdhar, where school heads unfurled the national flag with patriotic fervor.

The Tehsil Legal Services Committee Tangdhar also marked the occasion at the local court complex. Sub-Judge and Chairman Mansoor Ahmad Mir

presided over the event and hoisted the national flag, with police contingents participating in the ceremonial parade.

At Government Degree College (GDC) Tangdhar, Prof. Mush-taq Ahmad Wani hoisted the national flag, and students presented a variety of cultural programs showcasing the rich heritage and patriotic spirit of the region.

Celebrations extended to Khudri Karnah, where officials associated with the 12 MW power project proudly hoisted the tricolor and took the salute from the parade.

The celebrations across Karnah reflected the patriotic spirit and enthusiasm of the people, reaffirming their commitment to national unity and progress.

76th R-Day celebrated across Chenab Valley



Top News Report

DODA, Jan 26: Like other parts of country, 76th Republic Day, was celebrated with patriotic fervor and gaiety by various educational institutions across Chenab Valley.

SDM Gandoh Arun Kumar badyal Kumar, unfurled the National

Flag and took salute at an impressive march past by J&K Police, educational institutions.

SDM Gandoh Arun Kumar badyal was chief guest and SDPO Gandoh Raj Kumar was guest of honour in a major function held at Hali Pad in Sub division Gandoh(Bhalessa).

BDC Bhalessa Ch. Mohd Hanif, Range

officer Gandoh, BDO Bhalessa, Tehsildar Gandoh, 26RR Major, ZEO Gandoh, Uttam S. Thakur PA to SDM prominent citizens, students, locals, besides officers of civil, Army, and police administration were present on the occasion.

On the occasion, cultural programme, poetry recitation contest, group dance competition and symposium were held, in which students participated actively.

Later, SDM Gandoh distributed mementos among the best adjudged schools for presenting cultural programme and march past contingents.

Similar, functions were also held at Kishtwar, Doda, Thathri, Bhaderwah, and other areas of Chenab Valley where respective SDMs and Tehsildars unfurled the national flag and take salute from the parade.

IIM Jammu commemorates 76th Republic Day with patriotic fervour

Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 28: The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu celebrated the 76th Republic Day with enthusiasm and patriotic spirit at its permanent campus in Jagti on 26th Jan 2025. The event was graced by Prof. B. S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu.

The Republic Day ceremony commenced with the ceremonial hoisting of the tricolor National Flag by Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu followed by a stirring rendition of the national anthem, instilling pride among all attendees.

A memorable highlight of the event was the soulful performance of the iconic song, "Aa Chal Ke Tujhe" from the film, Door Gagan Ki Chaon Mein by Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu accompanied by students, faculty, officers, and staff, symbolizing unity and patriotism.

Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu, Inspires Vision for Excellence and Nation-Building through his inspiring address on the eve of 76th Republic Day.

On the occasion of the 76th Republic Day, Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu, delivered an inspiring address emphasizing IIM Jammu's role in India's progress and development.

He highlighted India's achievements, including innovations like UPI, a steady GDP progressive growth rate and Shri Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India's vision for a Viksit Bharat by 2047. He stressed the importance of youth in driving this transformation and encouraged the IIM Jammu community to contribute meaningfully through research and entrepreneurship.

He emphasized about IIM Jammu's alignment with NEP 2020 and its collaborations with IIT Jammu and AIIMS Jammu. Notably, he emphasized the establishment of the "Centre for Innovation and Transformation in Governance (CITaG)" at IIM Jammu by the Planning Development & Monitoring Department, Government of J&K, in collaboration with NITI Aayog, the Department of Economic Affairs, and other key stakeholders.

IIM Jammu serves as the nodal knowledge partner and implementing body for this transformative initiative. He also mentioned about the Centre for Entrepreneurship, Innovation



and Skill Development at Jammu and Srinagar for supporting and creating a sustainable ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir.

He also reflected on IIM Jammu's remarkable journey, including the appointment of seven Professors of Practice, impactful faculty research, a strong blend of theory with practice, and progress toward accreditations.

He urged students to simplify complex concepts, apply their knowledge, and benefit from industry interactions, with 20% of classes being taught by industry professionals and experts.

Looking to the future, he announced several key initiatives, including the formal launch of an alumni association, an upcoming convocation, and state of the art Infrastructure ranging from state-of-the-art classrooms, Management Development Centre, Vedanta as part of Executive Education and Consultancy, Nalanda Library, Vishrantika-Faculty Lounge, and inauguration of an amphitheatre.

Top News Report

URI, Jan 26 (Agencies): A double-storey residential house was completely gutted in fire that broke out at midnight on Saturday at Hawa Mod, Gingal in Uri area of north Kashmir's Baramulla district.

The house belongs to Fazal Din Najjar, son of Abdullah Najjar, a local

resident, according to officials.

Reports said that the fire began around 11:30 pm. "The fire tenders arrived at the scene around 1:00 am," locals said.

"Despite repeated requests, the NHPC office, located just half a kilometre away, failed to send its fire tenders on time. Had they respond-



ed promptly, extensive damage could have been avoided," said Rafi Najjar, a close relative of the victims.

He further stated that cash worth Rs 5 lakh was also destroyed in the fire. "Property worth crores has been completely damaged, including the stock of the kiriyana shop that was kept in the house," he added.

The victims have expressed their frustration with the authorities for not visiting them yet. "We demand compensation for the losses we have suffered. We hope the authorities will take this matter seriously," said a family member.

The cause of the fire is still unknown..

I felt sad and restless: Rakesh Roshan on his father's neglected legacy

"The Roshans", currently streaming on Netflix, celebrates enduring legacy of composer Roshan

Actor-filmmaker Rakesh Roshan says docu-series "The Roshans" was fuelled by his desire to highlight the achievements of his father, late composer Roshan Lal Nagrath, after he noticed that these songs were missing from many music compilations.

"The Roshans", currently streaming on Netflix, celebrates the enduring legacy of composer Roshan, who worked with iconic singers like Mohammad Rafi, Mukesh, and Talat Mahmood. The series also highlights the contributions of his family members—his sons, Rakesh and Rajesh, and his grandson, Hrithik—to the film industry. It was seven years ago when Rakesh found an old transistor, which had old songs of many renowned musicians.

"There were 5,000 to 10,000 songs, songs of all music directors and actors. I thought of listening to my father's songs but I couldn't find any of him. I was amazed that there were names of all the music directors but not of my father."

"I felt very sad that he had done such great work (but it was missing...). I was feeling restless and disturbed," the filmmaker told agency in an interview.

Later, he met Shashi Ranjan, the director of the docu-series, at an event.

"He was singing my father's old songs, and I was surprised that he knew songs of my father. I told him, 'Why don't you make a documentary on him?' But he suggested that we make a docu-



mentary series on all the other three Roshans – Rajesh, Hrithik and myself. So it becomes a wholesome package for the audience to learn about our contribution to the film industry," he said.

Unlike his musician father, who died in 1967, Rakesh started his journey in Indian cinema as an assistant director and later made his debut as an actor in the 1970 film "Ghar Ghar Ki Kahani".

"Back then, I didn't know what was happening around me. We were kids and all I remember is we would just watch him (father) work. It was only after my father passed away and I began work as an assistant director, I realised my father is such a big name."

"Producers would respect me and offer me work because of him," Rakesh Roshan, who starred in films like "Khub-soorat", "Khel Khel Mein",

"Khatha Meetha", said.

Despite his father's influence, the actor-filmmaker faced hurdles in his acting career.

"I got films because of my father. Even though my work was appreciated in films, I couldn't grow in my acting career," he said, adding that this led him to explore production and direction.

"I brought in all the emotions I had within me in my films. I was like 'I want to do something, I want to become something.' I conveyed all of that in my films." Rakesh then embarked on a directing career, making hits such as "Khoon Bhari Maang", "Karan Arjun", "Kaho Naa... Pyaar Hai", "Koi... Mil Gaya", and the "Krrish" series.

"I've analyzed that a common man wants to succeed in life. I've got a similar feeling within me that an underdog should win," the filmmaker added.

He hopes that after watching

"The Roshans", the younger generation will get the courage to not fear losing anything in life.

"One will attain victory at some point, provided if they work with honesty," Rakesh added.

Ranjan, known for films such as "Dobara" and "Dhoom Dada-kka", said a documentary series about celebrities is nothing but a vital historical document.

"I look at it as a cinema student and cinema buff and think that it's great that we are looking at the history of Indian cinema through the eyes of different personalities," he said.

"For instance, one might have heard the songs by Roshan sahab but they must not be aware that it was he who did it (music). So, this is important documentation," he added.

Apart from the Roshan family, the four-part docu-series features industry stalwarts like Shah Rukh Khan, Sanjay Leela Bhansali, Karan Johar, Shastrughan Sinha, Anupam Kher, Javed Akhtar, Farhan Akhtar, Abhishek Bachchan, Asha Bhosle, Suman Kalyanpuri, Sonu Nigam, Usha Mangeshkar, and Kumar Sanu, among others.

With over 100 hours of footage collected over two years, Ranjan said he faced the arduous task of sifting through interviews and ensuring it was all in sync with the story and the depth of the personality.

"We've had such beautiful things shared by all of them, that we could make four more episodes," he said.

Tinaa Dattaa plays a grey character in 'Personal Trainer'



Crime thriller series, Personal Trainer, on Hungama, is set against the backdrop of Mumbai's elite gym

culture and explores the themes of ambition, love, and the dangerous pursuit of physical perfection. At the heart

of the story is Neha Dharamrajan, a married woman, played by Tinaa Dattaa, whose illicit affair with her personal trainer, Anish, essayed by Gulshan Nain, sets off a chilling chain of events that culminates in Anish's mysterious murder.

Renowned for her dedication to fitness, Tinaa revealed how her disciplined lifestyle helped her deliver a compelling performance in the series. She shared, "There's a scene where I perform a headstand, and I was proud to pull it off on my own. My passion for health and wellness allowed me to bring authenticity to Neha's character. It's not every day that you get to combine your personal interests with such a meaty role."

About her experience working on the show and sharing insights about her character, she added, "Neha is a grey character, and it was exciting to portray someone complex with both strengths and flaws. Besides bringing a promising character to life, it was fantastic to work with such a talented cast. Each one of them brought something unique to the table, motivating me to push my limits as an actor. We also formed a great bond on sets and the camaraderie was evident in every scene."

Priya Thakur stuns fans in a 16 kg bridal outfit

For the first time, the audience will see their beloved Vasu in a completely new avatar in Zee TV's show Vasudha. Transitioning from a gaon ki chori to a stunning bride, Vasu is all set to captivate viewers in her dulhan look. Her intricately designed lehenga, crafted in rich shades of crimson and gold, beautifully blends traditional artistry with modern elegance. The ensemble, adorned with exquisite embroidery and embellishments, is a true testament to the creative team's dedication to authenticity. Despite its significant weight, Priya Thakur carried the outfit with remarkable poise and grace, bringing the sequence to life—a moment sure to become a cherished memory for fans of the show!

Priya said, "When I first saw the lehenga, I couldn't take my eyes off it—it's truly a work of art—straight out of a royal wedding. At the



same time, I have to admit, wearing a 16 kg outfit wasn't easy, especially with the heavy jewellery and heels. The weight of the lehenga and jewellery along with

the long hours of shoot required a lot of stamina and energy at my end. But the moment I put it on and looked at myself in the mirror, I felt a rush of energy."

Bollywood films would be a 'tragic' lens to understand India 100 years later: Naseeruddin Shah

Actor Naseeruddin Shah believes cinema's most important function is to be the record of its times but he is worried that it would be a "big tragedy" if future generations look at Bollywood movies to understand India of now.

Shah, known for his powerful performances in films such as "Nishant", "Aakrosh", "Sparsh" and "Masoom", was speaking at the ongoing eighth edition of Kerala Literature Festival (KLF).

"I think the most important purpose that serious cinema serves is not to bring change in the world. I don't think anybody's thinking is changed after seeing a film, no matter how wonderful it may be. Yes, it may help you raise a few questions. But the really important function of cinema, to my mind, is to act as a record of its times. Those are the most valuable films," the veteran star said in a conversation with actor Parvathy Thiruvothu.

"Because these films



will be seen 100 years later, and if 100 years later people want to know what India of 2025 was like, and they find a Bollywood film, that would be a big tragedy I think." Shah also highlighted the difficulties filmmakers face when creating "honest pictures" that reflect the realities of the times. He noted that films attempting to portray the truth often face bans or struggle to find an audience because they lack the commercial elements that make successful films.

However, for the

74-year-old actor, the success or failure of a film holds little importance.

"What's important is that it gets across to the few people who watch it. If my work affects even one person in the world, that's still good enough for me," he added.

Shah also voiced his strong disapproval of what he described as "sickening films" that glorify masculinity while undermining femininity, questioning whether the success of such films reflects the state of society or merely the fantasies within it.

He said the relationship between cinema and society is mutual, with each influencing the other.

"I think these films feed into the secret fantasies of men who in their hearts of hearts look down on women. It is actually very scary to see how much approval such films get from the common viewer. It is very terrifying and does explain the horrendous things that happen to women in our society," he explained.

Although Shah has never felt nervous about acting, except when it involves dancing with a girl younger than his daughter—something he admits he's never been good at—he's not ashamed but does regret taking on some roles purely for money.

"There were movies I did only for money. That's the simple truth. And I don't think there's anything wrong with working for money. What do we all do, after all? But yes, I do regret some of those choices.

Fortunately, people tend to forget the bad work, and they remember the good things you did," he added.

The KLF, which kicked off on Thursday, is hosting around 500 speakers from 15 countries. The event has drawn a large crowd of book lovers to Kozhikode beach, where they are attending engaging sessions by renowned authors, actors, artists, historians, activists and more.

Nobel laureates Venki Ramakrishnan and Esther Duflo, Booker prize winner Irish novelist Paul Lynch, actors Ratna Pathak Shah and Prakash Raj, Filmmaker Mani Ratnam, award-winning author-poet Perumal Murugan and politician-author Shashi Tharoor are among the speakers participating in the festival, touted to be Asia's largest literature festival.

Over six lakh visitors are expected to attend the four-day literary festival, concluding on January 26.

"Thank you for being who you are": Divya Dutta's sweet message to Amitabh Bachchan

Both actors have shared the screen in several iconic films

Actor Divya Dutta, who has worked with Bollywood legend Amitabh Bachchan in multiple films, shared a touching post in admiration of the actor and also reminisced about their time working together and how he inspired her love for cinema.

Taking to her Instagram account, the

'Baghban' actor shared a picture with Big B, where the duo can be seen smiling warmly. Along with the picture, she penned a beautiful note, thanking the megastar for his kindness and support over the years.

"I could never describe in words what he means to me, how watching him

weave his magic on the big screen gave me a connection with the world of movies, how doing four films with him (shared screen space in Baghban and The Last Lear) left me yearning for more, how generous he has always been," she wrote.

"How will I ever forget his prompt response to



launch my book on Maa (truly special), and how, whenever I meet him, there's so much I want to say... but all I do is feel that immense joy of just being with him. Just to say... thank you @amitabhbachchan sir, for being who you are. Always wishing you lots of love and regards," she

added. Amitabh Bachchan and Divya Dutta have shared the screen in several iconic films.

In 'Baghban' (2003), the two played father and daughter-in-law, with Dutta portraying Reena Malhotra, a role that added emotional depth to the story.

In 'The Last Lear' (2007), directed by Rituparno Ghosh, Bachchan played a retired Shakespearean actor, while Dutta portrayed Ivy, his caretaker.

They also appeared together in 'Veer-Zaara' (2004), 'Bade Miyan Chote Miyan' (1998) and 'Delhi 6' (2009).

PM Modi sports vibrant multi-coloured turban, brown coat on Republic Day

PM Modi marked Republic Day in his signature style, donning a vibrant multi-coloured turban

NEW DELHI, Jan 26 (Agencies): As India celebrates its 76th Republic Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi marked the occasion in his signature style, donning a vibrant multi-coloured turban that highlights his deep connection to the country's culture and heritage. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's sartorial choices have always sparked conversation, especially when it comes to his turban selections for Republic Day celebrations.

For the 2025 Republic Day, PM Modi chose a striking multi-coloured turban featuring shades of red and yellow. He paired it with a brown bandhgala coat with full sleeves, accessorised by a multi-coloured pocket square and churidar pants.

Before attending the Republic Day celebrations at Kartavya Path, the Prime Minister paid his respects to the fallen soldiers by observing a two-minute silence, honouring the supreme sacrifices of armed personnel who have protected the nation.

This year's Republic Day celebrations at Kartavya Path in New Delhi are graced by President Droupadi Murmu, Indonesia's President H.E. Prabowo



Subianto, and several other dignitaries.

PM Modi's attire, especially his signature turban, symbolises patriotism and national pride.

Taking to his official social media handle on X (formerly Twitter), PM Modi wished the nation on this special day: "Happy Republic Day. Today, we celebrate 75 glorious years of being a Republic. We bow to all the great women and men who made our Constitution and ensured that our journey is rooted in democracy, dignity, and unity. May this occasion strengthen our efforts towards preserving the ideals of our Con-

stitution and working towards a stronger and prosperous India."

Reflecting on his past Republic Day appearances, Modi's choice of headgear has always been a subject of much admiration.

In 2024, for the 75th Republic Day, he wore a multi-coloured turban, featuring a vibrant yellow hue, paired with a white kurta and a brown Nehru jacket. This outfit, with its traditional Rajasthani Bandhini print, was a representation of his love for the country.

For the 74th Republic Day, PM Modi donned a multi-coloured Rajasthani turban symbolizing

India's diversity.

For the year 2022, celebrating the 73rd Republic Day, the Prime Minister opted for a traditional cap from Uttarakhand, embellished with a Brahmakamal-inspired brooch, a tribute to the state flower of Uttarakhand.

For the year 2021, PM Modi wore a special Jamnagar turban, gifted to him by the royal family of Jamnagar, Gujarat, accompanied by a grey jacket, a kurta, and pyjama.

For the 71st Republic Day, he sported a bright saffron-coloured printed turban, featuring a blend of yellow hues in an intricate pattern.

On the occasion of the 70th Republic Day, the Prime Minister wore a yellow turban with a red tail, accented with green and subtle golden lines, completing the look with a sleeveless bandhgala jacket and white kurta.

Each year, PM Modi's turbans have told a story of India's rich cultural diversity. This year, as the nation celebrates the 76th Republic Day, the Prime Minister's look continues to honour India's traditions.

Every sacred tenet of Constitution being shredded into pieces: Kharage



NEW DELHI, Jan 26 (Agencies): In a scathing attack on the BJP-led Centre, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge alleged on Sunday that a hateful agenda, immersed in religious fundamentalism, has sought to divide the society over the last 10 years and every sacred tenet of the Constitution is being "shredded into pieces by an authoritarian regime".

He claimed that the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) practises pseudo-nationalism by making disadvantaged youngsters carry the flag of "nationalism" and "religious supremacy", but does nothing to get them employment.

In his message to the nation on the 76th Republic Day, Mallikarjun Kharge said it is high time that people preserved and protected the ideas and ideals of the Constitution — justice, liberty, equality and fraternity.

"We uphold the values espoused by our founders. Be ready to make every sacrifice to protect the Constitution. This will be the true tribute to our ancestors," Mr. Kharge said.

He said it is also time to reflect upon how the country is witnessing constant attacks on the Constitution.

The ruling party has unleashed a continuous degradation of India's institutions, built carefully over decades, the Congress chief alleged.

"Political interference in autonomous institutions has become a norm. Exercising control over their independence is being seen as a virtue of power. Federalism is being trampled on a daily basis and the rights of Opposition-governed states are being curtailed," he further claimed.

"The functioning of Parliament has seen tremendous backsliding due to the tyrannical tendency of the ruling government," Mr. Kharge alleged.

The Congress leader also claimed that universities and self-governing institutions are witnessing constant intrusion.

A large part of the media has been converted as a propaganda tool for the ruling party, he said.

"Strangling dis-

sent by witch-hunting Opposition leaders has become the only policy of those in power. In the past decade, a vicious, hateful agenda immersed in religious fundamentalism has sought to divide our society," Mr. Kharge alleged.

He further claimed that minorities are being targeted and those who are secular are being tarnished with the paint of "Goebbelsian propaganda".

The weaker sections — Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBC), the poor and minorities — are being treated as second-class citizens, he said.

"Atrocities and unheard-of violence against them have become a regular occurrence. Manipur has been burning for 21 months, but there is no accountability at the topmost echelons of power," Mr. Kharge said.

He also said economic inequality has widened to frightening proportions.

"Crony billionaire friends are being handed over the country's precious resources. Any scandal that comes to fore is sought to be crushed by the hammer of labelling the whistleblowers as 'anti-national'," he said.

"The ruling party practises pseudo-nationalism, for they make our disadvantaged youth carry the flag of 'nationalism' and 'religious supremacy' but does nothing to get them employment," Mr. Kharge said.

He said the country is witnessing an era of economic turmoil, adding that taxes have guzzled every single paisa of the hard-earned money of the poor and middle class.

"The living standards of our populace have hardly increased because flawed economic policies have perished their savings. Those handful of elites who can afford a brighter future are leaving India's citizenship," Mr. Kharge said.

When the failures of the Union government are pointed out, it either indulges in what-abouts or in diversionary tactics, often invoking the past, but never the present, the Con-

gress president said. "There is an inherent tendency to impose 'One Nation, One Party' on 140 crore different people, who believe in 'Unity in Diversity'," he said.

"Every sacred tenet of the Constitution is being shredded into pieces by an authoritarian regime. Therefore, my dear fellow citizens, it is high time we preserve and protect the ideas and ideals of our Constitution — justice, liberty, equality and fraternity," Mr. Kharge said.

"We uphold the values espoused by our founders. Be ready to make every sacrifice to protect the Constitution. This will be the true tribute to our ancestors. Once again, I wish you a very happy Republic Day. Jai Bapu, Jai Bheem, Jai Samvidhaan," he said in his message to the people of the country.

"This year, we completed 75 years of adopting the conscience keeper and soul of the Indian Republic — the Constitution of India. We bow in reverence to Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Babasaheb Dr B R Ambedkar, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Maulana Azad, Sarojini Naidu and many others who tirelessly contributed to the shaping of our great republic," Mr. Kharge said.

"We venerate each and every member of the Constituent Assembly who with their wisdom and ingenuity created a remarkable document which represents the will of our diverse people," he added.

Mr. Kharge also paid tributes to every soldier of the armed forces, paramilitary forces and the security establishment who have made exemplary sacrifices in upholding the integrity and sovereignty of the country.

"We are also thankful to our scientists and teachers whose contributions to nation building are unparalleled and who have ensured that our nation is a knowledge and technical powerhouse today," he said.

"We are also indebted to our Annadata — our hardworking farmers who have put food on our table. We express our gratitude to crores of daily wage workers, labourers, shramiks, gig workers, for they are the hands that are building India — brick by brick," the Congress chief said.

Mr. Kharge also expressed gratitude to the artistes, writers and sports personalities who have contributed to protecting and building the vibrant cultural diversity of India.

Respect differences, live in harmony: RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat

MUMBAI, Jan 26 (Agencies): Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat on Sunday said differences should be respected and cohesion is the key to living in harmony.

He was speaking after unfurling the national flag at the Republic Day celebration at a college in Bhiwandi town of Maharashtra's Thane district.

Along with celebration, Republic Day is an occasion to "remember our responsibilities towards the nation," he said.

Addressing the issue of diversity, Bhagwat

said differences should be respected and that "cohesion is the key to living in harmony".

"Clashes are happening outside Bharat due to diversity. We see diversity as a natural part of life. You can have your specialties, but you must be good to each other.

If you want to live, it should be a cohesive living. You cannot be happy if your family is unhappy.

Similarly, a family cannot be happy if the town is facing trouble," he said.

Bhagwat emphasised the importance of working with both knowledge

and dedication.

"Being enterprising is important, but you must always do your work with knowledge. Any work done without a proper thought does not bear fruit but brings trouble.

A task done without knowledge becomes the work of a lunatic," he said.

Explaining his point, Bhagwat likened cooking rice to the need for knowledge in any task.

"If you know how to cook rice, you need water, heat, and rice. But if you do not know how to cook it and instead eat dry rice, drink water, and stand in



the sunlight for hours, it will not turn into a meal. Knowledge and dedication are essential," he said.

The RSS chief also spoke on the significance of faith and dedication in everyday life.

"If you drink water at a hotel and leave, you

may get insulted or dirty looks. But if you ask for water in someone's home, you are offered a jug full of water along with something to eat. What's the difference? There is faith and dedication at home. Such work bears fruit," Bhagwat said.

2 men attempt self-immolation in presence of ministers in Maharashtra

Incidents occurred in Beed and Dhule districts

MUMBAI, Jan 26 (Agencies): Two persons attempted to immolate themselves in the presence of state ministers in protest against different issues in the Beed and Dhule districts of Maharashtra on Republic Day on Sunday, police said.

According to the police, a man attempted to set himself on fire in front of state Minister Dattatray Bhanu's convoy, which was

heading towards the government rest house in Beed.

The man, Nitin Mujmule, demanded the ouster of chief executive officer Nita Andhare, alleging a scam in the Beed Municipality, an official said.

He said as soon as the minister's convoy reached Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Bhavan, Mujmule poured petrol on himself and attempted to set himself on fire



when police personnel in the vicinity intervened. A similar incident took place in Dhule, where

a man identified as Vavdya Patil tried to immolate himself at a Republic Day event,

another official said.

He said Patil made the attempt at a flag-unfurling ceremony in the presence of Guardian Minister Jayakumar Rawal.

Patil was protesting against alleged police inaction on the illegal transportation of cattle from cowsheds in Shirpur city, he said.

According to police, both men were detained following the incidents and were later released.

Three-year-old girl raped by uncle in Uttar Pradesh, police launches investigation

ETAH, Jan 26 (Agencies): A three-year-old girl was allegedly raped by her uncle in Uttar Pradesh's Etah, police said on Sunday.

Officials said the girl's family lodged a complaint lodged on Saturday alleging that the girl's uncle lured her

from the house on the pretext of giving her chocolates and later raped her.

The girl's mother in her complaint identified the accused as Hira Lal (40), a police officer said.

Kotwali Nagar Station House Officer (SHO)

Rajesh Kumar Singh, said that on the basis of the complaint an FIR has been lodged and further legal action is being taken.

Singh said that the minor has been admitted to a hospital for medical care and examination.

UP lawyer pleading sister's divorce kidnapped, crushed to death by SUV

BASTI, Jan 26 (Agencies): A 50-year-old advocate was allegedly kidnapped, beaten up and then crushed to death under a vehicle in Uttar Pradesh's Basti, following which his estranged brother-in-law was arrested, a police official said.

According to police, Chandrashekhar Yadav (50), a resident of Baid-

olia Ajaib in Kaptanganj police station area, had gone to Kaptanganj on Saturday to attend a 'Thana Samadhan Diwas' event.

While returning home on a motorcycle late in the evening, he was kidnapped by some people driving a Scorpio near Narayanpur village, they said.

By the time the police

got information about the kidnapping, the accused beat up Yadav badly and threw him on the road in the Walterganj area.

The accused then ran over him with their vehicle and fled, a senior police official said.

Superintendent of Police of Basti district Abhinandan said the advocate's sister

and her husband Ranjeet Yadav were going through a divorce and he was pleading this case.

There was a dispute over the financial aspect of the divorce settlement due to which Ranjit Yadav and his brother Sandeep kidnapped the advocate and killed him, the SP said.

Ranjit Yadav, the main accused in the case has been arrested and police teams have been deployed to arrest the other accused, the officer added.

Upon getting information about the incident, a large number of advocates reached the hospital and demanded the arrest of the killers.

Some 70 people killed in attack on hospital in Sudan's Darfur region, WHO chief says

DUBAI, Jan 26 (Agencies): Some 70 people were killed in an attack on the only functional hospital in the besieged city of El Fasher in Sudan, the chief of the World Health Organization said Sunday, part of a series of attacks coming as the African nation's civil war escalated in recent days.

The attack on the Saudi Teaching Maternal Hospital, which local officials blamed on the rebel Rapid Support Forces, came as the group has seen apparent battlefield losses to the Sudanese military and allied forces under the command of army chief Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan. That includes Burhan appearing near a burning oil refinery north of Khartoum on Saturday that his forces said they seized from the RSF.

International mediation attempts and pressure tactics, including a U.S. assessment that the RSF and its proxies are committing genocide and sanctions targeting Burhan, have not halted the fighting.

In the Saudi hospital attack in El Fasher, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus offered the death toll in a post on the social platform X.

Officials and others in the capital of North Darfur province had cited a similar figure Saturday, but Ghebreyesus is



the first international source to provide a casualty number. Reporting on Sudan is incredibly difficult given communication challenges and exaggerations by both the RSF and the Sudanese military.

"The appalling attack on Saudi Hospital in El Fasher, Sudan, led to 19 injuries and 70 deaths among patients and companions," Ghebreyesus wrote. "At the time of the attack, the hospital was packed with patients receiving care."

Another health facility in Al Malha also was attacked Saturday, he added.

"We continue to call for a cessation of all attacks on health care in Sudan, and to allow full access for the swift restoration of the facilities that have been

damaged," he wrote. "Above all, Sudan's people need peace. The best medicine is peace."

Ghebreyesus did not identify who launched the attack, though local officials had blamed the RSF for the assault. United Nations official Clementine Nkweta-Salami, who coordinates humanitarian efforts for the world body in Sudan, warned Thursday that the RSF earlier had given "a 48-hour ultimatum to forces allied to the Sudanese Armed Forces to vacate the city and indicated a forthcoming offensive."

"Since May 2024, El Fasher has been under RSF siege," she said. "Civilians in El Fasher have already endured months of suffering, violence and gross human rights abuses under the

prolonged siege. Their lives now hang in the balance due to an increasingly precarious situation."

The RSF did not immediately acknowledge the attack in El Fasher.

Sudan has been unstable since a popular uprising forced the removal of longtime dictator Omar al-Bashir in 2019. A short-lived transition to democracy was derailed when Burhan and Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo of the RSF joined forces to lead a military coup in October 2021.

Al-Bashir faces charges at the International Criminal Court over carrying out a genocidal campaign in the early 2000s in the western Darfur region with the Janjaweed, the precursor to the RSF.

Rights groups and the U.N. say the RSF and allied Arab militias are again attacking ethnic African groups in this war.

The RSF and Sudan's military began fighting each other in April 2023. Their conflict has killed more than 28,000 people, forced millions to flee their homes and left some families eating grass in a desperate attempt to survive as famine sweeps parts of the country.

Other estimates suggest a far higher death toll in the civil war.

North Korea says it tested cruise missile system and vows 'toughest' response to US



SEOUL, Jan 26 (Agencies): North Korea said Sunday it tested a cruise missile system, its third known weapons display this year, and vowed "the toughest" response to what it called the escalation of U.S.-South Korean military drills that target the North.

The moves suggested North Korea will likely maintain its run of weapons tests and its confrontational stance against the U.S. for now, even though President Donald Trump said he intends to reach out to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

The official Korean Central News Agency said Kim observed the test of sea-to-surface strategic cruise guided weapons on Saturday.

The term "strategic" implies the missiles are nuclear-capable. KCNA said the missiles hit their targets after traveling 1,500-kilometer (932-mile) -long elliptical and figure-eight-shaped flight patterns, but that couldn't be independently verified.

KCNA cited Kim as saying that North Korea's war deterrence capabilities "are being perfected more thoroughly" and affirming that his country will make "strenuous efforts" to defend stability "on the basis of more powerfully developed military muscle."

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said North Korea had launched "several" cruise missiles toward its western waters from an inland area at around 4 p.m. on Saturday. It said South Korea maintains a readiness to "overwhelmingly" repel any

provocations by North Korea in conjunction with its military alliance with the U.S.

In a separate statement carried by KCNA on Sunday, North Korea's Foreign Ministry criticized the U.S. for committing "serious military provocations aiming at" North Korea with a series of military exercises with South Korea this month.

"The reality stresses that the DPRK should counter the U.S. with the toughest counteraction from A to Z as long as it refuses the sovereignty and security interests of the DPRK and this is the best option for dealing with the U.S.," the Foreign Ministry statement said.

DPRK stands for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the abbreviation of its formal name. The Foreign Ministry warning was in line with Kim's vows to implement the "toughest" anti-U.S. policy during a year-end political meeting.

North Korea views U.S. military training with South Korea as invasion rehearsals though Washington and Seoul have repeatedly said their drills are defensive in nature. In recent years, the U.S. and South Korea have expanded their military exercises in response to North Korea's advancing nuclear program.

The start of Trump's second term raises prospects for the revival of diplomacy between the U.S. and North Korea, as Trump met Kim three times during his first term. The Trump-Kim diplomacy in 2018-19 fell

apart due to wrangling over U.S.-led economic sanctions on North Korea.

During a Fox News broadcast Thursday, Trump called Kim "a smart guy" and "not a religious zealot." Asked whether he will reach out to Kim again, Trump replied, "I will, yeah."

Many experts say Kim likely thinks he has greater bargaining power than in his earlier round of diplomacy with Trump because of his country's enlarged nuclear arsenal and deepening military ties with Russia.

In South Korea, many worry that Trump might scale back military drills with the Asian U.S. ally and abandon the goal of the complete denuclearization of North Korea and focus on eliminating its long-range missile program, which poses a direct threat to the U.S., while leaving its nuclear attack capabilities against South Korea intact.

On Monday, Trump called North Korea "a nuclear power" as he spoke of his personal ties with Kim during a news conference at the Oval Office after his inauguration. Washington, Seoul and their partners have long shunned describing North Korea as a nuclear state because that could be seen as accepting its pursuit of nuclear weapons in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions.

After his first summit with Kim in 2018, Trump baffled many in South Korea by unilaterally announcing the suspension of major summertime military drills, calling them "very provocative" and "tremendously expensive."

North Korea hasn't commented on Trump's latest overture. Sunday's cruise missile tests were the North's first known weapons launches since Trump's inauguration.

Los Angeles fires: Southern California rain helps firefighters but creates risk of toxic ash runoff

LOS ANGELES, Jan 26 (Agencies): After weeks of windy and dry weather, rain has fallen in parched Southern California and is expected to aid firefighters who are mopping up multiple wildfires. But potentially heavy downpours on charred hillsides could bring new troubles such as toxic ash runoff.

Los Angeles County crews spent much of the past week removing vegetation, shoring up slopes and reinforcing roads in devastated areas of the Palisades and Eaton fires, which reduced entire neighborhoods to rubble and ash after breaking out during powerful winds Jan. 7.

Most of the region was forecast to get around an inch (about 2.5 centimeters) of precipitation over several days, but "the threat is high

enough to prepare for the worst-case scenario" of localized cloud-bursts causing mud and debris to flow down hills, the National Weather Service said on social media.

"So the problem would be if one of those showers happens to park itself over a burn area," weather service meteorologist Carol Smith said. "That could be enough to create debris flows."

Rainfall that began late Saturday was expected to increase Sunday and possibly last into early Tuesday, forecasters said. Flood watches were issued for some burn areas, while snow was likely in the mountains.

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass issued an executive order last week to expedite cleanup efforts and

mitigate the environmental impacts of fire-related pollutants. LA County supervisors also approved an emergency motion to install flood-control infrastructure and expedite and remove sediment in fire-impacted areas.

Fire crews filled sandbags for communities, while county workers installed barriers and cleared drainage pipes and basins.

Officials cautioned that ash in recent burn zones was a toxic mix of incinerated cars, electronics, batteries, building materials, paints, furniture and other household items. It contains pesticides, asbestos, plastics and lead. Residents were urged to wear protective gear while cleaning up.

Concerns about post-fire debris flows have been especially high

since 2018, when the town of Montecito, up the coast from LA, was ravaged by mudslides after a downpour hit mountain slopes burned bare by a huge blaze. Hundreds of homes were damaged and 23 people died.

While the impending wet weather ended weeks of dangerous gusts and reduced humidity, several wildfires were still burning Saturday across Southern California. Those included the Palisades and Eaton fires, which killed at least 28 people and destroyed more than 14,000 structures. Containment of the Palisades Fire reached 81% on Saturday and the Eaton Fire was 95% contained.

In northern Los Angeles County, firefighters made significant progress against the

Hughes Fire, which prompted evacuations for tens of thousands of people when it erupted on Wednesday in mountains near Lake Castaic.

In San Diego County, there was still little containment of the Border 2 Fire as it burned through a remote area of the Otay Mountain Wilderness near the US-Mexico border.

The rain was expected to snap a near-record streak of dry weather for Southern California. Much of the region has received less than 5% of the average rainfall for this point in the water year, which began Oct. 1, the Los Angeles Times reported.

Most of Southern California is currently in "extreme drought" or "severe drought," according to the US Drought Monitor.

Trump says he believes US will get Greenland

WASHINGTON, Jan 26 (Agencies): Insisting that Greenland needs to be part of the US, President Donald Trump has said that it would be an "unfriendly act" on the part of Denmark if they did not let this happen.

Greenland, which is under the control of Denmark, is the world's largest island.

"I think we're going to have it (Greenland). I think the people want to be with us. As you know, there's 55,000 people there. They want to be with us," Trump told reporters.

Trump's comments come after reports that Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen insisted Greenland was not for sale in a fiery phone call with the US president last week.

"I don't really know what claim Denmark



has to but it would be a very unfriendly act if they didn't allow that to happen because it's for protection of the free world. It's not for us. It's for the free world right now," Trump said in response to a question. Trump said that the people of Greenland don't like the way

they've been treated by Denmark.

"You have Russian ships; you have Chinese ships. You have ships from various countries. It's not a good situation. I believe we'll get that. I believe Greenland we'll get because it really has to do with freedom of the world," Trump said.

Australians celebrate and protest the anniversary of British colonization

MELBOURNE, Jan 26 (Agencies): Australians celebrated and protested across the country on Sunday as Australia Day drew attention to political differences over Indigenous rights months out from a federal election.

Australia Day marks a British colony being established at Sydney Cove on Jan. 26, 1788, which eventually led to Britain claiming the entire country without a treaty with its Indigenous inhabitants.

Indigenous rights advocates call Jan. 26 "Invasion Day" and protest rallies have been held in major cities. Many argue that Australia's national day should not commemorate such a divisive event.

Australia Day is usually a public holiday and because it fell on a Sunday this year, Monday has been declared a holiday.

Acknowledging the hurt that Australia Day causes many Indigenous Australians, the most disadvantaged ethnic group that accounts for 4% of the population, many businesses refer to the "January long weekend" rather than the "Australia Day long weekend."

Australia Day has in recent decades been the date on which immigrants became Australian citizens in public ceremonies. But several local government councils have chosen to hold citizenship ceremonies on different dates due to the controversy.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's center-left Labor Party government has attempted to accommodate differing views of Australia Day since it won elections in 2022.

The government in 2023 decided to allow public servants to work

on Australia Day and take another day off instead, reversing a previous conservative government order that they must not work on Jan. 26 when it falls on a week day.

Opposition leader Peter Dutton has said that all councils will be required to hold citizenship ceremonies on Jan. 26 if his party wins elections due by May 17.

"If the prime minister doesn't have the strength of leadership to stand up to mayors and others who don't want to celebrate Australia Day, then our country's in more trouble than we first realized," Dutton said two weeks ago.

Dutton has accused Albanese of "equivocating" on his support for Australia Day to appease the minor Greens party.

The Greens party opposes celebrations on Jan. 26. Many

observers, including Dutton, expect Labor will lose its parliamentary majority at the next election and may need the support of Greens lawmakers to form a minority government.

Albanese has accused Dutton of being divisive by declining an invitation to attend Australia Day events in the national capital Canberra.

Instead, Dutton attended a citizenship ceremony in his hometown of Brisbane.

"The national Australia Day event should be attended by both sides of the Parliament. They should be bipartisan," Albanese told reporters on Sunday.

"Why wouldn't you participate in national events if you want to be a national leader?" Albanese asked.

Australian National University historian Frank Bongiorno said both leaders were using

Australia Day for their own political advantage.

"These figures will insist that they want it to be a day of unity, but they'll invariably behave in ways that promote disunity around the day. That's really how culture wars work," Bongiorno said.

Dutton has accused Albanese of dividing Australia along racial lines by holding a referendum in 2023 on Indigenous rights.

Australians voted against a proposal that would have enshrined in the constitution an Indigenous body known as the Voice to address Parliament on Indigenous issues.

Dutton has also accused Albanese's government of focusing on Indigenous rights instead of a cost of living crisis facing many Australians due to inflation and high interest rates.



Array of cultural performances, parades, and displays of unity mark impressive Republic Day celebrations at MA Stadium in Jammu.

(Pic by Aman Sharma)

From Page No:1

India's military prowess on full display at R-Day parade

Ahluwalia as the contingent commander and Lt Commander Indresh Choudhary, Lt Commander Kajal Anil Bharani and Lt Devender as platoon commanders. It was followed by the Naval tableau, depicting a strong "Aatmanirbhar" (self-reliant) Navy capable of protecting India's maritime interests. The tableau showcased the newly-commissioned indigenous frontline state-of-the-art combatants, including destroyer INS Surat, frigate INS Nilgiri and submarine INS Vaghsheer, highlighting India's rapid progress in indigenous warship design and construction. The tableau showcased the Indian Navy's commitment to build a robust and self-sufficient defence ecosystem. The Indian Air Force's (IAF) contingent comprised four officers and 144 personnel, led by Squadron Leader Mahender Singh Garati. It was followed by a fly-past by three MiG-29 aircraft in "Baaz formation". Another highlight of the parade was the veterans' tableau on the theme "Viksit Bharat Ki Ore Sadaiv Agrasar", a heartfelt tribute to the unwavering spirit of the ex-servicemen towards the nation. Several veterans who brought glory to India in sports were also part of the parade. In its tableau, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) displayed

many home-grown critical systems and technologies developed by it. The DRDO tableau, with the theme "Raksha Kavach - Multi-layer Protection against Multi-domain Threats", featured quick reaction surface-to-air missile, airborne early warning and control system, 155 mm/52-calibre advanced towed artillery gun system and drone detect, deter and destroy system. It also showcased a satellite-based surveillance system, medium-power radar Arudhra, advanced lightweight torpedo, electronic warfare system Dharashakti, laser-based directed energy weapon, very-short-range air defence system and unmanned aerial system. It was for the first time that the indigenously-developed Pralay missile system was showcased. A 352-member marching and band contingent from Indonesia also participated in the Republic-Day parade. This was the first time that an Indonesian marching and band contingent participated in a national-day parade abroad. Among the contingents marching down Kartavya Path were a 148-member all-women marching contingent of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), led by Assistant Commandant Aishwarya Joy M. The Assam Rifles contingent was led by Captain Karanveer Singh Kumbhavat of 29 Assam Rifles. It comprised soldiers recruited from all over the country. The Camel contingent of the Border Security Force (BSF) was under the command of Deputy Commandant Manohar Singh

Kheechee. The all-girls marching contingent of the National Cadet Corps (NCC) was led by Senior Under Officer Ekta Kumari of the Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh Directorate. The all-boys marching contingent was led by Senior Under Officer Prasad Prakash Waikul of the Maharashtra Directorate. The National Service Scheme's (NSS) marching contingent of 148 volunteers was led by Deepak from Punjab. **Omar-led Govt working towards fulfilling all promises one-by-one: Dy CM** fulfilled in a phased manner. He also showered praises on Abdullah family for strengthening the constitution in the Union Territory. In his Republic Day speech at Bakshi Stadium, Srinagar, the Dy Chief Minister said whatever the promises have been made by the Omar-led Government will be fulfilled one by one. However, he said that the promises made by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other leaders on the floor of the house regarding the restoration of statehood and protection of lands and jobs for the people of J&K, must be fulfilled now. Praising Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah for implementing and strengthening the constitution in Jammu and Kashmir, he as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the Chief

Minister Omar Abdullah has been following the path of his father Farooq Abdullah and his grandfather Sheikh Abdullah to ensure progressive J&K. "The recent elections witnessed a massive voter turnout in which people put their trust in us after being promised several things. We are committed to fulfill all those promises one by one and the government led by Omar Abdullah has been working day-in and day-out to fulfill all the promises," he said in his speech, adding that the increase in ration quota, employment and other issues will be ensured soon as the elected government has been working 24x7 in this regard. About the return of Kashmir Pandits, the Deputy Chief Minister stated that every single people across J&K are pained over the exodus of the community, but the government has been working hard to bring them back. "We are on it and our round-the-clock efforts will bring fruit soon," he added. Terming the drug menace as the major threat in the society, the Dy Chief Minister said that the challenging task needs to be eliminated through a joint effort. "The government has been taking stringent measures to eliminate the drug menace from society, but the involvement of youth would end up in the devastating situation. There is a need to start a joint fight in this regard and eliminate the nuisance from the society as it has been affecting the future very badly," he said. At the end of his speech, Choudhary as per KNO asked people to take a pledge to make India more

beautiful and make J&K independent in every aspect. Pertinently, the event at Bakshi Stadium witnessed the participation of National Conference (NC) President Dr Farooq Abdullah, Advisor to CM, Nasir Aslam Wani, MLA Lal Chowk Ashan Pardesi, NC spokesman Imran Nabi Dar and others. **JK Cement enters into joint venture with Kashmir-based Saifco cement** and grinding capacities that perfectly complement JK Cement's expansion strategy. With a recent annual turnover hovering around Rs 86 crore, the acquisition represents more than a financial transaction – it's a territorial chess move in India's competitive cement landscape. The deal, expected to close soon pending regulatory approvals, signals JK Cement's aggressive growth ambitions. By targeting a regional player with an established infrastructure, the company circumvents the traditionally challenging process of greenfield expansion. Saifco's integrated manufacturing unit at Khunmoh in Srinagar is spread across 54 acres of land and has a clinker capacity of 0.26 million tonnes per annum and a grinding capacity of 0.42 million tonnes per annum. It has captive limestone reserves spread on an area of 144.25 hectares with a total mineable reserve of 129 million tonnes. Industry observers are already noting this as a potential blueprint for regional consolidation, watching closely how JK Cement will leverage its newest asset in the strategically complex Jammu and

Kashmir market. The deal includes the acquisition of both existing shares and a new issuance of shares from Saifco, which will transition into a subsidiary of J.K. Cement upon completion. This acquisition comes at a time when the Indian cement industry is gearing up for a robust growth phase, buoyed by government infrastructure projects and increasing urbanisation. JK Cement's Managing Director in a statement emphasised the strategic importance of this acquisition, stating, "With Saifco Cement joining our portfolio, we are well-positioned to not only expand our operational footprint but also enhance our production capacity and offerings in the growing cement market in Jammu and Kashmir." "We are excited about the opportunity to work together to scale our operations and establish ourselves as the leading cement players in the Kashmir Valley.", said Manzoor Ahmad Guna, chairman, Saifco Cements. Saifco Cement, known for its quality products and strong regional presence, is expected to benefit significantly from the operational synergies that come with JK Cement's extensive expertise and distribution capabilities. The acquisition allows JK Cement to leverage Saifco's established supply chain while introducing improvements in production efficiency and cost management. JK Cement's well-established brand and market reach are expected to provide Saifco with the resources needed to scale up operations and improve product offerings, ultimately benefiting regional customers. Moreover, the acquisition is likely to have a positive ripple effect on the local economy, potentially leading to job creation and greater opportunities for local suppliers. As JK Cement integrates Saifco into its operations, the company is expected to enhance training and development initiatives, fostering local talent and expertise, according to press release.

IDFC FIRST Bank Q3 FY25 PAT at Rs. 339 crore, Core Operating Profit up 15% YoY

MUMBAI, Jan 26 (Agencies): IDFC FIRST Bank has reported a strong financial performance for Q3 FY25, with a Profit After Tax (PAT) of Rs. 339 crore and a 15% YoY increase in core operating profit. The bank saw significant growth in key areas, including a 28.8% rise in customer deposits and a 22% increase in loans and advances. Despite challenges in the microfinance sector, the bank's asset quality remains stable, supported by a solid capital position following its recent merger.

Financial results
IDFC FIRST Bank today announced the unaudited financial results for the quarter and nine months ended December 31, 2024.

Deposits & Borrowings
-Customer Deposits increased 28.8% YOY from Rs. 1,76,481 crore as of December 31, 2023 to Rs. 2,27,316 crore as of December 31, 2024.

-Retail Deposits grew by 29.6% YOY from Rs. 1,39,431 crore as of December 31, 2023 to Rs. 1,80,752 crore as of December 31, 2024.

-CASA Deposits grew by 32.3% YOY from Rs. 85,492 crore as of December 31, 2023 to Rs. 1,13,078 crore as of December 31, 2024.

- CASA Ratio stood at 47.7% as of December 31, 2024.

- Retail Deposits constitute Rs 80% of total customer deposits as of December 31, 2024.

- Cost of Funds for the Bank was 6.49% in Q3-FY25. Excluding the high-cost legacy borrowings, the cost of funds was 6.43% in Q3-FY25. The cost of deposits remained stable at 6.38% over Q2 FY 25.

Other Businesses
- Credit cards issued by the Bank crosses 3.2 million mark during last quarter.
- Wealth Management AUM (including deposit balances) grew 53% YoY to touch Rs. 42,778 crore

- Fastag: Bank remains the largest issuer bank with 22 million FASTag issued.

- Tax collections: Bank has been empaneled to collect Direct Taxes on behalf of Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) and GST collections

on behalf of Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), Govt. of India. Bank has completed technical integration and started collecting taxes.

Loans and Advances
-Loans and Advances (including credit substitutes) increased by 22.0% YOY from Rs. 1,89,475 crore as of December 31, 2023 to Rs. 2,31,074 crore as of December 31, 2024.

- The retail book of the bank grew by 21.3% YoY while the corporate (non-infrastructure) loans grew by 28.9% YoY at December 31, 2024.

- The Bank's legacy infrastructure book reduced by 15% YoY to Rs. 2,546 crore as of December 31, 2024, constitutes 1.1% of the total funded assets of the Bank.

- Microfinance portfolio as % of overall loan book reduced from 5.6% in Sep-2024 to 4.8% in Dec-2024.

Assets Quality
Considering the increase in delinquency of the micro finance business across the industry, the bank is tracking the microfinance business closely. The asset quality indicators, including gross NPA, net NPA, SMA, and Provisions of the Non-microfinance business, which is Rs 95% of the total loan book, is stable.

-NPA Details
- Gross NPA was 1.94% as of December 31, 2024, against 2.04% as of December 31, 2023.

- Net NPA was 0.52% as of December 31, 2024, against 0.68% as of December 31, 2023.

- Excluding micro-finance business, the GNPA was at 1.81% as of December 31, 2024 as compared to 1.88% as of September 30, 2024

- Gross NPA of the Retail, Rural and MSME Finance stood at 1.63% as of December 31, 2024 as compared to 1.45% as of December 31, 2023.

- Net NPA of the Retail, Rural and MSME Finance was 0.59% as of December 31, 2024 and 0.51% as of December 31, 2023.

- PCR of the bank stood at 73.6% as of December 31, 2024 as compared to 66.9% as of December 31, 2023.

- The gross slippage for Q3-FY25 was Rs. 2,192 crore as compared to Rs.



2,031 crores in Q2 FY 2025, an increase of Rs. 162 crores. Majority of the increase in slippage during Q3FY 25 was from the micro-finance business which constituted Rs. 143 crores out of the said Rs. 162 crores. Hence, gross slippage on the Retail, MSME, Agri and Corporate Loans, i.e the non-microfinance business was stable. These businesses constituted Rs 95% of the total book of the Bank.

- SMA Positions:
- SMA-1+2 in Retail, Rural and MSME Finance portfolio excluding the micro-finance book improved by 3 bps on QoQ basis from 0.85% as of September 30, 2024 to 0.82% as of December 31, 2024.

- SMA-1+2 in all the key products including Mortgages, Vehicle Loans, Personal Loans and Credit Cards remained stable as compared to Q2 FY25.

- The SMA-1+2 in the micro-finance business increased to 4.56% as of December 31, 2024 from 2.54% as of September 30, 2024.

- Provisions:
- Provisions for Q3 FY25 stood at Rs. 1,338 crore, driven by the higher slippages in the Micro-Finance book. Excluding micro-finance, the provisions were stable for the Non-micro-finance book.

- The Bank has not utilized any micro-finance provision buffers in Q3-FY25 during the quarter on a prudent basis.

- The annualized provision for Q3-FY25 including micro-finance stood at 2.31% of the total funded assets.

- Excluding the micro-finance portfolio, the quarterly annualized credit cost for the loan book for Q3-FY25 was stable at 1.8%.

- The incremental disbursements in micro-finance

are insured by CGFMO. The insurance coverage of the overall portfolio has increased from 0% to 58% in one year.

Profitability
-Net Interest Income (NII) grew 14% YOY from Rs. 4,287 crore in Q3 FY24 to Rs. 4,902 crore in Q3 FY25. For the 9M-FY25, the growth of NII was 20.1% on YoY basis.

- Net Interest Margin (NIM) of the Bank was at 6.04% for Q3-FY25 as compared to 6.18% in Q2-FY25. NIM declined during the quarter largely due to decline in the micro-finance business and increase in composition of Wholesale Banking business.

- Fee and Other Income grew by 20% YOY from Rs. 1,469 crore in Q3 FY24 to Rs. 1,757 crore in Q3 FY25. For the 9M-FY25, the growth of Fee and Other Income was 18.9% on YoY basis.

- Operating income grew 15% from Rs. 5,803 crore in Q3 FY24 to Rs. 6,682 crore in Q3 FY25. For the 9M-FY25, the growth of Operating Income was 19.4% on YoY basis.

- Operating Expense grew by 16% YOY from Rs. 4,241 crore in Q3 FY24 to Rs. 4,923 crore in Q3 FY25. For the 9M-FY25, the growth of Operating Expenses was 18.2% on YoY basis.

- Core Operating Profit (excluding trading gain) grew by 15% YOY from Rs. 1,515 crore in Q3 FY24 to Rs. 1,736 crore for Q3 FY25, impacted by micro-finance business.

- Including trading gains, operating profit increased by 13% YOY. For the 9M-FY25, The Core Operating Profit (excluding trading gains) was 23.9% on YoY basis.

Net Profit de-grew by 53% from Rs.716 crore in Q3 FY24 to Rs. 339 Crore

in Q3 FY25, sequentially it grew by 69% QoQ from Rs. 201 crore in Q2 FY25. For the 9M-FY25, the Net profit decreased by 45.3% on YoY basis. The profit was largely impacted by reduced income from slowing down disbursement of micro-finance loans, increase in provisions on micro-finance and normalization of credit costs of non-microfinance business.

Capital Position
-The Bank successfully completed merger with IDFC Ltd in October 2024 through which Rs. 618 crore of capital have been added to the net-worth whereas, the outstanding share count has reduced by 16.64 crore shares.

-Including profits for 9M-FY25 and post the impact of merger as mentioned above, total CRAR as on December 31, 2024 would have been 16.11% with CET-1 ratio of 13.68%.

Comments from Managing Director & CEO

V Vaidyanathan, Managing Director and CEO, IDFC FIRST Bank, said,

"Our bank continues to grow well on loans and deposits. Our customer deposits is growing strongly at 29% YoY to reach Rs. 2,27,316 crores, with the CASA ratio sustaining at 48%. The loans & advances grew steadily by 22% YoY to reach Rs. 2,31,074 Crores."

We are specifically tracking Micro-finance loan book closely considering the industry situation. The asset quality of the overall Bank's loan book is stable with Gross NPA at 1.94% and Net NPA at 0.52%. Excluding the micro-finance loan book, the GNPA and NNPA of the book of the bank is even lower 1.81% and 0.49%.

The credit issues in Micro-finance segment as a transitional issue which is likely

to be resolved within a few quarters. The Bank built this business because it was important from priority sector lending norms point of view, particularly meeting PSL norms for Weaker Sections and Small and marginal farmers PSL categories.

All other businesses being built as part of universal banking, including deposits, loans, Credit Cards, Wealth, Cash Management, Corporate Banking, Fastag, Gold Loans are doing well. Over the next few years, the C:I will come down because of operating leverage, as we scale up. As mentioned earlier, the bank is growing steadily in scale."

About IDFC FIRST Bank
Vision: IDFC FIRST Bank is building a world-class bank in India, guided by four core principles: Ethical Banking, Customer-Friendly Banking, Digital Banking, and Social Good Banking.

IDFC FIRST Bank was created by the merger of infrastructure financing Giant IDFC Bank and retail financing specialist Capital First in December 2018. Earlier, IDFC Bank launched commercial Banking operations in 2016.

"Universal" Bank: IDFC FIRST Bank offers products and services across all segments including Retail, MSME, Rural, startups, Corporate Banking, Cash Management, Wealth Management, Retail Deposits, Government Banking, Working Capital, Trade Finance, and Treasury solutions.

Ethical Banking: The Bank follows a "Near and Dear" test to ensure that all products are so friendly that the employees can confidently recommend to their loved ones. The Bank holds the belief that income earned unethically is not worth earning. The bank is committed to doing right by customers, even when no one is watching.

In line with the above, the Bank has simplified descriptions, calculations, and legal jargon to avoid confusing customers. The Bank offers zero fees on most services in savings accounts, such as SMS alerts, IMPS, RTGS, NEFT, cash deposits, non-home branch access, ATM and branch cash withdraw-

als, third-party transactions, cheque books, demand drafts, pay orders, duplicate statements, and other commonly charged services. It is the first and only bank in India till date to do so.

Customer Friendly Banking: IDFC FIRST Bank provides monthly interest credit on savings accounts. In credit cards, the Bank offers lifetime free cards without minimum spend conditions, rewards points that do not expire, zero interest on cash withdrawal at ATMs and dynamic low APR. Fees, if applicable are transparent and clearly described for easy understanding. We love making great products that customer love to have.

Technology led banking: The Bank has built a modern technology stack which has enabled the Bank to offer our customers an advanced mobile banking app with 250 features. It has a high rating of 4.8 on Google Playstore and Appstore. FORRESTER the internationally renowned rating entity has rated the app the best in India and among the top 20 apps in the world for two years in a row.

The advanced technology stack has also enabled us to offer high quality service across all channels including mobile banking, branch, internet banking, Call Centre, Relationship Managers, and all other channels.

Social Good Banking: The Bank's business is inherently designed to promote financial inclusion while maintaining consistently high asset quality. The Bank has financed over 40 million customers, including 16 million lifestyle improvement loans for laptops, washing machines and such purposes, 15 million loans to 4.3 million women entrepreneurs, 6.5 million loans for two-wheelers and cars, 1 million sanitation loans for toilets, water fittings etc., 1 million livelihood loans for cattle, 3,00,000 SME loans and 1,00,000 Home loans.

ESG Goals: The Bank is incorporating ESG in every aspect of working and has high ESG scores. The Bank believes that to get an opportunity to create a new age, ethical and world class Bank for India is a great privilege for its employees.

Taxpayers wish for simpler filing, greater exemption limit

NEW DELHI, Jan 26 (Agencies): Grappling with rising household expenses and inflation, the middle class has high expectations from the Budget. The taxpayers are hopeful that the Union Budget for 2025-26 on February 1 will introduce reforms that will not only make filing taxes simpler and easier but also increase exemption limit.

The current limit of Rs 1.5 lakh under Section 80C (under old regime) is too narrow, given the variety of eligible investments like EPF, PPF, insurance premiums and home loan principal repayment. The government should raise the limit to Rs 2.5 lakh would provide much-needed relief to taxpayers and encourage long-term savings, according to Col Sanjeev Govila (retd), Certified Financial Planner, CEO, Hum Fauji Initiatives, a financial advisory firm.

Individuals are of the view that with rising inflation, the standard deduction of Rs 50,000 feels inadequate. Increasing it to Rs 75,000 or Rs 1 lakh would help salaried individuals manage



their disposable income better and boost consumption.

Reintroducing the long-term capital gains (LTCG) tax exemption for equity investments held for more than three years or increasing the threshold limit (currently Rs 1 lakh) could motivate retail investors to stay invested in equity markets longer, promoting financial discipline.

As physical gold remains culturally significant, promoting SGBs with higher interest rates or additional tax benefits for longer-term holdings could encourage financial gold ownership over physical gold.

One area in dire need of attention is the tax deduction limit on home loan interest payments, which has remained unchanged since 2014.

"The limit was last increased from Rs 1.5 lakh to Rs 2 lakh, but in the decade since, real estate prices have escalated significantly due to rising demand, land costs, and construction expenses.

During the same period, the average home loan ticket size has more than doubled, resulting in higher EMIs and larger interest components," Raoul Kapoor, Co-CEO, Andromeda Sales and Distribution Pvt Ltd, said. For many homebuyers, especially in metropolitan areas, the interest portion of their loan repayments far exceeds the current deduction limit. Enhancing the limit to at least Rs 5 lakh would provide much-needed relief and encourage homeowner-

Blood pressure management for 3 years could reduce risk of cognitive decline: Study

NEW DELHI, Jan 26 (Agencies): Aggressively managing blood pressure for over three years could provide sustained benefits in preventing cognitive decline, a new study has found.

Published in the journal Neurology, the results showed that intensive blood pressure control for three and a half years continues to significantly reduce risk of mild cognitive impairment or dementia long after treatment is stopped in adults with hypertension and high cardiovascular risk.

Researchers at Wake Forest University, US, looked at 9,361 participants aged 50 years and older from the US and Puerto Rico. Over a typical follow-up period of seven years, cognitive tests were conducted both in-person and via telephone.

The participants were then classified as having no cognitive impairment, mild cognitive impairment (MCI) or probable dementia.

"We found that the intensive treatment group had a sustained lower incidence of developing cognitive impairment compared to those in the standard treatment group," corresponding author David M. Reboussin, a professor of biostatistics and data science at Wake Forest University's School of Medicine, said.

Previous studies have found that people with hypertension are at an increased risk of cognitive decline and therefore, controlling blood pressure could a strategy to prevent the neurological condition.

"Our study shows that intensive blood pressure control is an important strategy in the prevention of cognitive impairment, a major cause of loss of independence in older adults," author Jeff Williamson, a professor of gerontology and geriatric medicine at Wake Forest University's School of Medicine, said.

"Lowering your blood pressure to more aggressive targets can improve the quality of life and extend active life for individuals with hypertension," Williamson said. "Among ambulatory adults with hypertension and high cardiovascular risk, intensive treatment vs standard treatment (of systolic blood pressure) for 3.3 years resulted in a lower risk of MCI and cognitive impairment including MCI or probable dementia, but not for probable dementia alone," the authors wrote.

Two-thirds of those with long Covid struggle with symptoms for a year



NEW DELHI, Jan 26 (Agencies): Nearly two-thirds of those with long Covid continue to struggle with symptoms, including a reduced capacity for exercise and cognitive function, in the second year of illness, a study has found.

Researchers, including those from Ulm University, Germany, studied over 1,500 people aged 18-65 years who were identified as having post-Covid-19 syndrome, or long Covid, which refers to the symptoms persisting despite having recovered from acute infection.

The participants had been previously surveyed for complaints and symptoms they were experiencing after the acute phase of infection had passed and were either diagnosed with long Covid or had not developed the condition.

The study, published in the journal PLoS Medicine, found that 68 per cent of the long Covid patients continued to struggle with symptoms in the second year -- most common ones being fatigue, neurocognitive disturbances, breathlessness and psychiatric ones, including anxiety, depression and sleep problems.

Among these patients with continued illness, the authors also found "significant reductions in handgrip strength, maximal oxygen consumption, and ven-

tilatory efficiency".

"Maximal oxygen consumption" refers to amounts of the gas used by a person during intense exercise, while "ventilatory efficiency" indicates how well one's body exchanges oxygen and carbon dioxide while performing physical activity.

Further, over a third of the 68 per cent also reported a reduced capacity for exercise, with a worsening of symptoms after performing physical activity, and were found to have "worse outcomes and more severe symptoms".

The authors said that while previous studies have described the health problems one might experience following Covid-19 infection, the long-term course of the disease, in the context of long Covid-19, is unknown.

"In this study, we observed that the majority of working-age patients with PCS did not recover in the second year of their illness. Patterns of reported symptoms remained essentially similar, non-specific and dominated by fatigue, exercise intolerance and cognitive complaints," they wrote.

Further, the authors noted "grave symptoms with mental and physical exercise dysfunction, but no laboratory markers in Long Covid/post-Covid syndrome".

The findings "call for the inclusion of cognitive and exercise testing in the clinical evaluation and monitoring of patients with suspected (long Covid)", the authors wrote.

They urged for more observational studies with longer follow-ups that can help evaluate factors for improvement and non-recovery from long Covid.

Rohit named skipper of ICC Men's T20I of year, Bumrah, Pandya, Arshdeep also in squad

Australia's Travis Head, England's Phil Salt, Pakistan's Babar Azam, West Indies' Nicholas Pooran, Zimbabwe's Sikandar Raza, Afghanistan's Rashid Khan, Sri Lanka's Wanindu Hasaranga complete line-up

DUBAI, Jan 26 (Agencies): India captain Rohit Sharma, who led the team to their second ICC T20 World Cup title last June, has been named skipper of the ICC Men's T20I Team of the Year 2024.

The team dominated by Indians also features star pacer Jasprit Bumrah and left-arm seamer Arshdeep Singh, along with all-rounder Hardik Pandya.

Rohit had an unforgettable 2024, both as a leader and a batter.

The seasoned opener amassed 378 runs in 11 matches at an impressive average of 42.00 and a strike rate of over 160. Rohit played a pivotal role in India's triumphant T20 World Cup campaign, with three half-centuries, including a sensational 92 against Australia in the Super Eight stage.

His astute leadership was instrumental in guiding a young Indian side through high-pressure situations, cementing his legacy as one of India's greatest T20I captains.

Pandya reaffirmed his stature as one of the world's finest all-



rounders, playing a crucial role in India's successful campaign.

In 17 matches, Pandya scored 352 runs and claimed 16 wickets, finishing as the top-ranked ICC Men's T20I all-rounder.

His standout performance came in the T20 World Cup final against South Africa, where he defended 16 runs in the last over, securing India's title victory.

His best bowling figures of 3/20 in the final underlined his ability to deliver under pressure.

Bumrah made a remarkable return to T20I cricket in 2024,

leading India's bowling attack with precision and consistency.

He claimed 15 wickets in eight matches at an astonishing average of 8.26, making him a nightmare for opposition batters.

His lethal yorkers and impeccable control at the death overs played a pivotal role in India's success, and his performances earned him a nomination for the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy as ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year.

Young left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh emerged as India's most prolific wicket-taker in

2024, scalping 36 wickets in 18 matches at an average of 13.50.

Arshdeep's ability to swing the ball early and deliver pinpoint yorkers in the death overs made him indispensable to the Indian squad.

His standout performance came against hosts USA in the T20 World Cup, where he returned figures of 4/9.

Apart from the Indian players, the ICC Men's T20I Team of the Year includes standout performers from other nations. Australia's Travis Head, England's Phil Salt, Pakistan's Babar Azam, West Indies' Nicholas Pooran, Zimbabwe's Sikandar Raza, Afghanistan's Rashid Khan, and Sri Lanka's Wanindu Hasaranga complete the line-up.

Men's T20I team of 2024

Manolo Marquez discusses FC Goa's strong first half and current league standing

MARGAO (GOA), Jan 26 (Agencies): FC Goa head coach Manolo Marquez expressed satisfaction with his team's dominant performance in the first half, as they secured a 2-0 victory over Chennaiyin FC in the 2024-25 Indian Super League (ISL) season, a report from the leagues website said.

Speaking at the post-match press conference, Marquez praised the team's cohesion and resilience against a strong opponent, acknowledging both their strengths and areas for improvement.

The game featured first-half goals from Iker Guarrotxena and Aakash Sangwan, which set the tone for FC Goa's commanding performance. Guarrotxena's opener came in the 11th minute, and 15 minutes later, Sangwan

doubled the lead with a well-placed strike. Marquez lauded the team's efforts in the first half and noted the impact of the substitutions.

"Maybe one of the best games especially in the first half. The team played very, very well and in the second half we were playing in front of a very good side and they tried to enter the game again with three substitutions. Despite that we substituted players who performed very, very well," Marquez said as quoted by the ISL official website.

Reflecting on FC Goa's recent form, Marquez praised the squad's ability to recover from a shaky start to the season, highlighting the impact of injured players returning to the lineup. FC Goa remains in second place on the table with 33 points from

17 matches, having lost only two.

"In every game, you can improve in some aspects but I feel that after 12 games unbeaten, another clean sheet, second in the table with four points behind Mohun Bagan SG. I thought that we had a good team and in one moment if something changed and we recovered some very important injured players, the season would be good, let's see where we finish. But the team is very competitive," he added.

The coach also highlighted the camaraderie within the squad, praising players who contributed positively even when not on the pitch.

"It's a pleasure to train this group of players. Armando Sadiku didn't play a single minute, and Mohammad Yasir played only a few min-



utes, but they were the first to celebrate in the dressing room," he said.

"I think that this is very important. The group is top. We play in Jamshedpur in one week more or less. Eight days. We have these two days off. It's good also that they try to disconnect. And let's go again," he added.

Looking ahead to their next match against Jamshedpur FC on February 2nd, Marquez acknowledged the challenges

posed by their upcoming opponent.

"Jamshedpur FC, most of their points have come at home. They are a very strong team, and their style is difficult to play against," he explained.

"For them, it will be a difficult game also because we have some tools to manage the game. Let's see what happens. But obviously, I think both teams are having a very good season," he concluded.

Tilak's mature, smart innings was the difference: England's Brydon Carse



CHENNAI, Jan 26 (Agencies): Middle-order batter Tilak Varma's "mature" unbeaten 72 was the difference between India and England in the second T20I here, reckoned visitors' pace bowling all-rounder Brydon Carse.

Tilak's fifty helped India chase down 166 in a tense chase at the Chepauk on Saturday as the home side took a 2-0 lead in the five-match series.

"I felt like we got a decent score on the board towards the end. We kept on taking wickets throughout the game. But, you know, credit goes to Tilak and I think he played a very mature, smart innings and ultimately he was

the difference," said Carse in the post-match press conference.

Carse, who had a good game scoring a 17-ball 31 besides taking three wickets, defended his fellow quick Jofra Archer despite him conceding 60 runs in four overs.

Archer was taken apart by Tilak who smashed four sixes off the English fast bowler.

"A couple of nights ago, Jofra had an amazing spell up front. I still think he bowled pretty well tonight. He was pretty unfortunate. I don't know the exact number, but a lot of runs (were scored) over the keeper's head behind square.

"I suppose that sometimes happens, you know, when you bowl

90 miles an hour," said Carse.

England's downright aggression with both bat and ball has not really paid any dividends in the series so far, but Carse found no reason to change their approach.

"I think we're always going to try and take the game on in the power play, whether that's with bat and ball. But there's probably always room to improve. But I think we're always going to take that aggressive approach," he said.

However, Carse discovered some positives in the tight finish that did not go England's way.

"It's obviously a defeat, but these sorts of close finishes will do wonders for you going forward for the rest of the season and the Champions Trophy. But ultimately we haven't put a full performance in.

"So, it's quite exciting to see where we can get to over these next couple of games."

The 29-year-old, however, conceded that England do not have much wriggle room after two successive defeats with three more matches remaining.

"Two games gone now, three to play, there's no room now. You've got a win now, so every game's going to be serious. Obviously guys are a little bit down, but as a whole, I think it's pretty inevitable that the performance tonight was a lot better than the other night," added Carse

'Need to get that monkey off my back': Anirban Lahiri ahead of International Series India

NEW DELHI, Jan 26 (Agencies): Star Indian golfer Anirban Lahiri feels his game has plateaued a bit and is focused on achieving greater consistency as he chases his first LIV Golf title at the upcoming International Series India. The 37-year-old recorded four top-10 finishes in 2024, including a second-place finish at LIV Golf Andalucia, and a T6 at all three events in Chicago, Houston, and Jeddah. However, as the 2025 season kicks off, Lahiri is aiming for more consistent performances.

"I think I would hold myself to my own standards of consistency. I wasn't very consistent last year. I would want to play at a higher level overall throughout the year," Lahiri said in a release.

"I only got into contention realistically two or three times. I want that to be a higher percentage, and just generally I felt like my level of golf plateaued a little bit." The inaugural event is scheduled to be held at the DLF Golf and Country Club from January 30.

Lahiri, a seven-time Asian Tour winner, emphasised his goal of securing that elusive win.

"I'm completely focused and engrossed in taking it back up a couple of notches and definitely that first win is



a monkey that I need to get off my back.

"So, yes, the eyes on that prize and again, like every year, and as long as I'll ever be a professional golfer trying to get to the majors and play well in those." Joining Lahiri in the India field are his Crushers GC teammates, including captain and reigning U.S. Open champion Bryson DeChambeau, as well as Paul Casey, a prolific winner on the global stage.

Lahiri, a familiar face on The International Series, having participated in numerous tournaments since its inception in 2022, believes the Gurugram event should become an annual fixture.

"It's only fitting that The International Series presented by DLF comes to India. I would love for International Series India to be an annual fix-

ture because it deserves that recognition. It's a synergetic event for everything that the two entities, the country, and the Asian Tour, have done together, so I'm very pleased," he said.

"We've wanted The International Series to be in India for a while now, and big thanks to DLF for making it happen. Hopefully, this becomes a regular fixture and one of the highlight tournaments in India. Definitely, in the subcontinent, it will be the biggest event." The International Series provides a global pathway for players to qualify for the LIV Golf League, with the season-ending rankings champion earning a guaranteed spot for the following season. Additionally, players have a second chance to qualify through the LIV Golf Promotions event.

Australian Open: Katerina Siniakova, Taylor Townsend crowned women's doubles champion

Australian Open: Katerina Siniakova and Taylor Townsend won the women's doubles title at Melbourne Park after beating Jelena Ostapenko and Hsieh Su-wei 6-2, 6-7 (4), 6-3 on Sunday at the Rod Laver Arena.

MELBOURNE, Jan 26 (Agencies): Katerina Siniakova and Taylor Townsend became the women's doubles champions in the Australian Open 2025. On Sunday, January 26, the top-seeded pair defeated Jelena Ostapenko and Hsieh Su-wei 6-2, 6-7 (4), 6-3 at the Rod Laver Arena in a match that stretched for two hours and 27 minutes.

Siniakova and Townsend also won their second major as a pair after they won the Wimbledon 2024 title, beating Gabriela Dabrowski and Erin Routliffe in straight sets in the grand finale.

The Czech Republic's Siniakova, who is also the doubles World No. 1, won her 10th major and her third Australian Open doubles title after 2022 and 2023. Siniakova won her first two titles at Melbourne Park with



reigning Wimbledon champion Barbora Krejickova, after which she won with Townsend.

Ostapenko and Hsieh made Siniakova and Townsend fight hard and took the match into the deciding set where they threw in

the towel.

In the last set, Siniakova and Townsend put forth their A-game to earn a break point and go 5-3 up, after which they did not look back. Overall, the duo dominated after converting six of their 17

break point chances.

They made seven double faults and struggled somewhat with their second serves, but that did not cost them the match.

Siniakova and Townsend also made their way through to the semi-final of the US Open 2024 where they lost to Zhang Shuai and Kristina Mladenovic. As a pair, they have a 15-1 record in Grand Slams until now.

Siniakova also became the first player since Martina Hingis in 2015 to win 10 women's doubles Grand Slam titles. Townsend has been in stupendous form as after returning from her maternity break, she has won seven of her eight WTA doubles title.

Earlier, Townsend had taken an 18-month break and became a mother to Adyn Aubrey on March 14, 2021.

CEO Shrine Board reiterates commitment to pilgrim welfare on 76th R-Day celebrations at Katra



Top News Report

KATRA, Jan 26: 76th Republic Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm, fervour and national spirit at Shrine Board's Sports Complex Katra wherein Anshul Garg, Chief Executive Officer, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board unfurled the tricolour and took salute of the impressive march past of contingents from J&K Police, CRPF, NCC, Shrine Enforcement & Security besides, the students of various educational institutions.

Speaking on the occasion, CEO reiterated the Shrine Board's unwavering commitment to the welfare and facilitation of pilgrims visiting the Holy Shrine of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji. He added that the Shrine Board has been tirelessly working to upgrade and expand the existing infrastructure to cater to the ever-increasing number of pilgrims visiting the shrine across the country and abroad. He exhorted that Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine has witnessed a steady influx of devotees, with the annual pilgrimage exceeding 90 lakh for the third consecutive year. Last year yatra followed a similar trend and touched the mark of 95 lakh," he remarked.

The CEO highlighted the significance of the upcoming Delhi-Srinagar train connectivity stating that it will establish Katra as a crucial transit station and is expected to further boost the pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine. He underscored that in view of this development the Shrine Board has operationalised a Yatri Facilitation Centre at the Katra Railway Station for enabling pilgrims to complete their registration for the yatra conveniently, right from the railway station thereby enhancing their overall pilgrimage experience.

He also drew attention

to the Shrine Board's ongoing efforts to enhance the traditional route to the Holy Shrine stating that major project, estimated at Rs. 20 crore is underway, which includes the development of a state-of-the-art Darshani Deodi Queue Complex designed to accommodate 1500 devotees to wait in all weather conditions. Besides, the completion of other mega projects in the Banganga sector including the 3-storey Shubhra Bhawan, upgraded track quality and drainage network, proposed Laser Light and Sound project with an aim to enhance the overall pilgrimage experience. CEO also highlighted key initiatives undertaken collaboratively by the Government of India and the Shrine Board to rejuvenate the Banganga rivulet for enhancing the rivulet's ecology and aesthetics through synchronized development and contiguous embankments.

A Rs 25 crore new exit track inspired by the Skywalk aimed at decongesting the Bhawan area and New Vaishnavi Bhawan for enhancing the overall pilgrimage experience for devotees were also highlighted by the Chief Executive Officer. He also announced several new upcoming facilities including Battery Car Parking, Adhkuwari holding area, AI-based CCTV cameras on the track and a Command Control Centre during the upcoming Chaitra Navratras for enhancing the overall pilgrimage experience for devotees.

The CEO outlined ambitious plans to establish Katra as a regional hub, with several key projects underway including four temples along the Trikuta Hills Parikrama Marg and development of a helipad to improve connectivity to the Shiv Khori Shrine with an aim to boost tourism in the region. In addition, the Board's social support initiatives were spotlighted by the CEO including scholarships for Bari-dar families aiming

to support the education and well-being of these families and the upcoming Medical College, a flagship project of the Board, promises to deliver high-quality healthcare services to the region. He also announced that the residents of Katra Town & all 41 villages falling in Sub-Division, Katra shall be provided priority darshan at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji Bhawan on production of Aadhaar Card as valid address proof at Durga Bhawan.

Earlier, the students of various educational institutions presented a colorful scintillating cultural programme on the occasion featuring theme based presentations. The cultural items depicted, national integration, unity in diversity, harmony and composite culture of Jammu Kashmir UT besides featured patriotic songs and dance.

CEO gave away cash prizes and appreciation to the outstanding staff of Shrine Board on the occasion in the categories of Ministerial, Catering, Accounts, general and best performing Unit besides, to Students who were adjudged best in the march-past and presentation of cultural programme.

Among those present on the occasion were Additional CEO, Jt CEO, Dy. CEO, Asstt CEOs of the Shrine Board; SDM, Katra; Addl. SP, Katra; Commandant. CRPF; Managers, Engineers and staff of the Shrine Board. Others who participated in the function included Members of Hotel Association, Municipal Committee, Katra, Civil, Police and Security Forces Officers, Prominent Citizens, Heads of various Educational Institutions, Media Persons, a large number of people of the area, teachers, school children and the pilgrims.

As part of the Republic Day celebrations, Anshul Garg, also hoisted the tricolour at the Central Office of the Shrine Board at Katra.

Jammu wing of High Court observes Republic Day

Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 26: The High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh on Sunday celebrated the 76th Republic Day with main function held in the High Court Wing Jammu wherein Chief Justice, Tashi Rabstan, hoisted the National flag.

The event was attended by Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Justice Sindhu Sharma, Justice Vinod Chatterji Koul, Justice Sanjay Dhar, Justice Puneet



Gupta, Justice Mohd. Akram Chowdhary, Justice Rahul Bharti, Justice Moksha Khajuria Kazmi, Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal and Justice Rajesh Sekhri. Besides, President High Court Bar Association, Jammu along with Executive Members of the Bar, Senior Advocates of Jammu, Assistant Solicitor General of India and other Government Advocates were also present on the occasion. The Registrar General,

High Court of J&K and Ladakh, Principal Secretary to Chief Justice besides officers and officials of the registry of main wing, Jammu Wing and Srinagar Wing of the High Court also participated in the event.

The contingent of Armed Forces played patriotic songs/tunes following unfurling of the National Flag.

The Chief Justice distributed sweets among the members of the Armed Forces.



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