

TOP NEWS OF J&K



ENTERTAINMENT

| 6

Dipshikha Nagpal joins romantic drama Ishq Jabariya



NATIONAL

| 7

Akhilesh Yadav demands all party meeting on Maha Kumbh stampede

INTERNATIONAL

| 8

Sri Lanka must unite to achieve economic freedom: Prez Dissanayake



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BRIEFLY

CRPF personnel dies of cardiac arrest in South Kashmir

SRINAGAR, Feb 4 (Agencies): A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel posted with the E/37th Battalion at Nillow in South Kashmir's Kulgam died of cardiac arrest on Tuesday.

A senior police officer said that the CRPF personnel suddenly complained of chest pain and was immediately referred to the nearest healthcare centre.

However, he later succumbed to cardiac arrest. He has been identified as Vishnoo, a resident of Kanial district, Gujarat.

Meanwhile, the police have taken cognizance of the incident.

Light rains, Snowfall Expected in J&K Tonight; Weather to Improve After Feb 5: MeT

SRINAGAR, Feb 4 (Agencies): A fresh spell of light to moderate snowfall is expected across higher reaches of Jammu and Kashmir, with light snowfall likely in the plains and South Kashmir, according to weather forecasts.

In Jammu, light rainfall is predicted in the plains, while Chenab Valley is likely to receive light snowfall. The higher reaches of Central and North Kashmir are also expected to witness light snowfall, with the plains seeing a mix of light snowfall and rain.

The weather is expected to improve after tomorrow afternoon and remain dry until the night of February 9. However, another spell of snowfall and light rainfall is likely between February 9 and 10.

As Chillai Kalan, the harshest 40-day winter period, has ended, night temperatures have shown improvement in the Valley. A gradual rise in both minimum and maximum temperatures is expected in the coming days, with no significant drop anticipated.

Hajj Applications on the Decline, Not Only in Kashmir but Across the Country: Executive Officer of the J&K HC

SRINAGAR, Feb 4 (Agencies): The Hajj pilgrimage for 2025 has witnessed a significant decrease in applications, a trend that is being observed not only in Jammu and Kashmir but across India. Despite the Hajj application process

■ Turn to page 9

200 Indians deported from US will land at Punjab's Amritsar airport

NEW DELHI, Feb 4 (Agencies): A US military plane is at present enroute to India, carrying a batch of 200 illegal migrants who are being deported. The plane is scheduled to land at Amritsar around 9 am on Wednesday, sources told the Tribune.

Most of those being deported are from Punjab or neighbouring states. This is first such deportation in Donald Trump's second tenure as US President. He took over on January 20.

The US is using a C-17 Globemaster military plane, which is expected to refuel at Ramstein air base in Germany during its journey before landing at Amritsar.

It is for the first time that the US is using a military plane to deport illegal migrants to India. In the past, all deporta-



tions to India have been on board commercial planes. The C-17 uses jet engines like regular commercial planes; has a toilet on board and seats are configured for movement of US troops. The Indian Air Force uses the same plane.

A US Embassy spokesperson in New Delhi said, "United States is

vigorously enforcing its border, tightening immigration laws, and removing illegal migrants. These actions send a clear message: illegal migration is not worth the risk."

In November 2024, the US has shared a list of 18,000 illegal migrants who need to be deported to India.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has already made it clear that India does not bat for illegal migration. In January, when Jaishankar visited the US for Trump's swearing-in ceremony, he had said that India supports legal mobility because it believes in a global

■ Turn to page 9

Delhi Police book CM Atishi for Model Code of Conduct 'violation'

NEW DELHI, Feb 4 (Agencies): Delhi Police registered an FIR on Tuesday against Chief Minister Atishi, the AAP candidate from Kalkaji, for allegedly violating the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) and obstructing public servants on duty, an official said.

Police said Atishi was with AAP supporters who allegedly obstructed an officer from doing his duty at Fateh Singh Marg. Two AAP members allegedly assaulted a police constable, they said.

"We have registered an FIR against Kalkaji AAP candidate at the Govindpuri Police Station under various sections and further investigation is under process," said the police official.

He further said that

■ Turn to page 9

Kulgam attack disputes centre's normalcy claims in J&K: Dr Farooq



SRINAGAR, Feb 4 (Agencies): National Conference (NC) president Dr Farooq Abdullah today said that attack carried out by unidentified terrorists in Behibagh village in south Kashmir's Kulgam district disputed centre's normalcy claims in Jammu and Kashmir.

He was speaking to reporters on the sidelines of an even held in Jammu.

"Question to those who are beating drums in and outside Parliament that militancy has been wiped out and normalcy has returned

to Jammu and Kashmir," Dr Farooq said as per Greater Kashmir said.

On Monday terrorists shot dead a former army soldier and injured his wife and a niece in Behibagh area of Kulgam district.

Dr Farooq said if terror activities are still happening in J&K then government at the centre should come clean on the facts. "The union government day in and day out are claiming that terrorism has ended in J&K. But this is not the reality. The central government should come clean on the situation."

■ Turn to page 9

Hundreds detained in Kulgam for questioning as major probe underway into ex-soldier's killing

SRINAGAR, Feb 4 (Agencies): A massive operation has been launched in south Kashmir's Kulgam district following the targeted killing of a former soldier.

The security forces, including the Army, J&K Police, and CRPF, have intensified efforts to track down the attackers, conducting door-to-door searches and questioning scores of locals in the village and adjoining areas.

The attack took place late Monday evening when gunmen fired upon Manzoor Ahmad, a former soldier, in the Behibagh area. He sustained critical injuries and was rushed to a



nearby hospital, where he succumbed to his wounds. His wife and niece were also injured in the attack.

Following the incident, senior police and Army officials rushed to the spot to assess the situation. The area was immediately cordoned off, and reinforcements

were deployed to prevent the attackers from escaping.

In response to the attack, a large-scale search operation was launched in the village and surrounding areas. Security personnel are combing dense orchards, residential

■ Turn to page 9

Sajad, Para accuse NC-led J&K govt of endorsing Aug 5 decisions



SRINAGAR, Feb 4 (Agencies): Peoples Conference and Peoples Democratic Party on Tuesday accused the National Conference Government in Jammu and Kashmir of endorsing August 5, 2019 (abrogation of J&K's special status) changes. Peoples Conference



chairman Sajad Gani Lone and PDP legislator, Waheed Para, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) reacted sharply over proposed deletion of references to J&K Constitution in business rules.

PC chairman and MLA Handwara, Sajad Lone

wrote on X: "Endorsement of draft proposal prepared by Assembly secretariat regarding Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the House will be the most explicit and unforgivable ratification of August 5, 2019 changes."

"It will effectively end once and for all any scope for legal challenge to 5 August changes, in the future. While we dreamt of an unambiguous resolution by the new assembly rejecting 5 August 2019, and that becoming a reference point in any future

■ Turn to page 9

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10th Day / Kriya

With profound grief and sorrow we inform the sad and untimely demise of our beloved **Sh. Parkesh Singh Chib** S/o Late Sh. Mian Singh Chib R/o Uttam Nagar Kunjwani Jammu who left for heavenly abode on 25-01-2025.

10th Day will be performed on 03-02-2025 (Monday) at our residence Uttam Nagar Kunjwani at 11.30 am.

Kriya will be held on Thursday 06-02-2025 at our residence H.No. 284/C Uttam Nagar, Kunjwani at 12.00 Noon.

GRIEF STRICKEN

Smt. Simro Devi - Wife

Romesh Singh Chib & Anuradha Chib - Son & Daughter-in-law

Daughter & Son-in-law

Neelam Jasrotia & Upjinder Singh Jasrotia

Reeta Charak & Kuldeep Singh Charak

Late Sh. Janak Singh Chib & Sita Devi - Brother & Sister-in-law

Sh. Vijay Singh Chib & Prem Lata - Brother & Sister-in-law

Late Sh. Reghbir Singh Chib & Kanta Devi - Brother & Sister-in-law

M.No: 9419144882 / 7006636040



Retd. Nb/Sub.
Sh. Parkesh Singh Chib
(12 JAKRIF)

10TH DAY

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform about the sad demise of our beloved **LATE Sh. MUIKH RAJ SHARMA (retired capt.)** s/o sh. Bayan ram He left us for heavenly abode on 27 JAN 2025

10th day will be performed on 5th FEB 2025, Wednesday from 11am to 12pm at mawa karora (karangi) Akhnoor AT Home.

Grief stricken

Neena sharma (wife) Teacher

Sons

Saksham bral & heetan bral

Brothers & Bhabis

Ravi veer sharma & Bindu devi

Sanjay Kumar & Rachana sharma



LATE Sh. MUIKH RAJ
SHARMA
(retired capt.)

10TH DAY/KRIYA/RASAM PAGRI

With profound grief & sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved **Sh. Manohar Lal Gupta (Retired Chief Manager J&K Bank)** S/o Lt. Sh. Ram Parkash Gupta (Ex GM J&K Bank) R/o House No. 131, Sector No. 4, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu who left for heavenly abode on 21/Jan/25.

10th Day will be performed on 29/Jan/2025 (Wednesday) from 11 AM to 12 Noon at Panch Mandir Sector 5 Trikuta Nagar, Jammu.

Kriya will be performed on 1/Feb/2025 (Saturday) at 12 Noon at our residence.

Rasam Pagri/Uthala will be performed on 5 Feb, 2025 (Wednesday) at 12 Noon to 1 PM at Panch Mandir Sector 5 Trikuta Nagar, Jammu.

GRIEF STRICKEN

Smt. Neelam Gupta (Wife)

Sons and Daughters-in-law

Sh. Kunal Mahajan and Smt. Ambika Arora Mahajan

Sh. Kapil Mahajan and Smt. Sonali Mahajan

Grand-Children: Anvi Mahajan, Avyan Mahajan

Bucha Family

Contact No.: 9682611669, 9619758314



SH. MANOHAR LAL
GUPTA
(Retired Chief Manager
J&K Bank)

TENTH DAY KRIYA

With profound grief and sorrow we inform the sad demise of our beloved father **Sh. Babu Ji Raina (Sabnue)** S/o Late Sh. Shyam Sundar Raina (Sabnue) originally resident of Nai Sadak, Ganpatyaar, Srinagar, Kashmir presently residing at H.No. 11 Lane No 2, Shrivdass Colony, Tomal, Bohri, (Near Laxmi Palace), Jammu on 27/1/2025.

Tenth Day Kriya will be performed at Mata Baderkali Temple, Thailwal, on 5/2/2025 (Wednesday) 9 am.

Assembly for public will be held at our residence, H.No.11, Lane No 2, Shrivdass Colony, Tomal Bohri Jammu by 12.30 pm.

GRIEF STRICKEN

Raina's (Sabnue) of Nai Sadak, Ganpatyaar

SRINAGAR, KASHMIR

9419158122, 7889352299, 9796866841, 9796838347



Sh. Babu Ji Raina
(Sabnue)

TENTH DAY/KRIYA/UTHALA

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved **Lt. Rtd. Col Tara Mani** S/o Late Shri Beli Ram Mansotra R/o Lane No 3, Greater Kailash, Jammu.

The **10th Day** will be performed at Shiv Mandir, Lane No. 9 (Up-side) Greater Kailash on 29/01/25 at 10 am and **Kriya** will take place on 30/01/25 at our residence Lane No. 3, Greater Kailash.

The **Uthala** will be performed at Shiv Mandir Lane 9 (Up-side) Greater Kailash on 07/02/25 at 4 to 5 PM.

GRIEF STRICKEN

Smt Kanta Devi - Bhabhi

Daughter in law & Son

Smt Raman & Sh Rattan Sharma

Smt Roma & Sh Deepak Sharma

Daughters and Son in Law

Smt Shobha & Sh Ashok Sharma

Smt Pamila & Sh Shriv Nandan Kumar

Smt Sheela & Sh Anil Sharma

Grand Children: Resham, Ameesha, Aakriti, Kamiya, Snigdha, Shantanu and Tarush

Great Grand Children: Karavya

Contact Number: 8192902842 & 9419727856



Lt. Rtd. Col Tara Mani

TENTH DAY KRIYA

With profound grief and sorrow we inform the sad demise of our beloved mother **Lakshmishori (Babil)** W/o Late Sh. Bhagwan Das Ganjoo of Ranipora Anantnag on 28th of January, 2025.

TENTH DAY KRIYA will be performed on 5th February 2025 at Ranipora Yarbail (Anantnag) at 09:30 AM.

GRIEF STRICKEN:-

Ashok Kumar Ganjoo -Son

Smt. Shashi Ji -Daughter-in-Law

Vijay Ganjoo -Son

Smt. Sunita Ji -Daughter-in-Law

Daughters and Son in Law

Phool Ji W/o Kanya Lal Thaploo

Sudasha Ji W/o Late Shyam Lal Pandita

Girja Ji W/o Ashok Ji Pandita

Reeta Ji W/o Bal Krishan Pandita

Grand Children:- Sheeta, Komal,

Aashish & Archana, Smile, Gajyam,

CONTACT NO:- 9906916945, 9971614273, 7051501737



Lakshmishori (Babil)

RASAM PAGRI

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved Mother **Smt Krishna Devi** W/o Late Sh. Gagan Singh Jamwal, Who left for the heavenly abode on 19th of Jan, 2025.

RASAM PAGRI will be performed on 5th of February (Wednesday) at 2.00 pm at our residence, F-501, NITCO Lane, Talab Tillo Jammu.

GRIEF STRICKEN

Sons & Daughter in Law

Sh. Shiv Dev Singh & Smt Bharti Wazir

Sh. Pankaj Jamwal & Smt Rajni Slathia

Daughters & Sons in Law

Sh. Rajinder Singh & Smt Sreshtha Jamwal

Sh. Raghuvir Singh & Smt Sushma Jamwal

Sh. Manjeet Singh & Smt Lata Jamwal

Sh. Vinod Singh & Smt Anita Jamwal

Grand Children: Yashvardhan, Swara, Avikshit, Bhanu, Aditya and Neha, Bhumika, Aman, Aakash, Maanya, Rajyavardhan.



SMT KRISHNA DEVI

TENTH DAY / KRIYA/ RASAM PAGRI & UTHALA

With profound grief and sorrow we inform the sad demise of our dearest **Smt. Krishna Devi** left for her heavenly abode on 24 January 2025.

Tenth Day will be performed on 02 February 2025 at 11 am at our residence Shiv Nagar, Udhampur.

Kriya will be performed on 05 February, 2025 at Devika Ghat.

Rasam Pagri & Uthala will be performed on 07 February, 2025 Btw 3:00-4:00 PM at our residence Shiv Nagar, Udhampur

GRIEF STRICKEN

Shiv Kumar Verma - Husband

Sons & Daughter in law

Sanjay Verma & Arti Verma (9419294441)

Ajay Verma & Jyoti Verma (7006633865)

Daughters and Son in law:

Veena Devi & Rakesh Sehgal

Sunita Verma & Mohinder Pal Verma

Mukta Mani & Ram Prasad



Smt. Krishna Devi

TENTH DAY / KRIYA & UTHALA

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved **Sh. Jai Kumar Upadhyay** S/o Late Sh. Madan Lal Upadhyay R/o 738-Janipur Colony, near Ram Lila Ground on Monday, 20-01-2025.

TENTH DAY: 29-01-2025 (Wednesday) from 11 A.M. to 12 P.M. at Trimurti Mandir, Janipur Colony.

KRIYA: 30-01-2025 (Thursday) 12 Noon at home.

UTHALA: 07-02-2025 (Friday) from 4 P.M. to 5 P.M.

Venue: Trimurti Mandir, Janipur Colony.

GRIEF STRICKEN:

Smt Shanta Sharma (Wife)

(Son and Daughter-in-law)

Er Naveen Sharma and Pooja Bindra (Teacher)

(Daughter and Son-in-law)

Renu Sharma (JKBOSE) and Rajesh Khajuria (JKP)

Grandchildren (Arya, Aryan, Akriti, Mrighank)



Sh. Jai Kumar
Upadhyay

TENTH DAY

With profound grief & sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved mother **Smt Kamla Sahib** W/o Late Sh Mohan Krishan Sahib R/o H.No. 144, Sec 3, L.No. 7, Durga Nagar, Jammu who left for her heavenly abode on 27th of January 2025 (Wednesday).

Tenth Day will be performed on 6-2-2025 (Thursday) at Mata Bhaderkali Asthapan Thailwal Phallian Mandal, Jammu at 8.30 AM and **Assembly** will be held at Muthi Ghat at 11.30 am.

GRIEF STRICKEN

Sons & Daughters-in-law

Shri Kaka Ji Sahib

Sh Jai Kishan Sahib & Smt Girja Sahib

Sh Ashok Sahib & Smt Veena Sahib

Daughters & Son-in-law

Smt Bimla Mattoo & Sh B K Mattoo

Smt Namrita Raina

Contact No. 9796608333, 9419105331, 9103038508



Smt Kamla Sahib

10TH DAY

With profound grief and sorrow we regret to inform the sad demise of our beloved **Smt. Kailash Kumari** W/o Shri Moti Ram Sadotra R/o Udhampur who left for her heavenly abode on 26th January 2025.

10TH DAY will take place on Tuesday 4th February 2025 from 11:30 am onwards at our residence 15/149 Dhar Road Shakti Nagar near IDBI Bank Udhampur and

KRIYA will hold on 5th Feb. 2025 Wednesday at Devika Ghat Udhampur.

GRIEF STRICKEN:-

Moti Ram Sadotra (Husband)

Son & Daughter in law

Suresh Kumar & Nisha Sharma (9596978003)

Inder Sadotra & Jyoti Sharma

Daughter & Son in law

Smt Sushma & Sh Bansil Lal Khajuria

Smt Shashi Kiran & Sh Vinod Kumar



Smt. Kailash Kumari

TENTH DAY KRIYA

It is with profound sadness that we share the passing of our beloved Mother **Smt. Chuni Labroo / Rani Bhan** W/o Late Sh. Nand Lal Bhan, Who left us for heavenly abode on January 28th. A guiding light in our lives.

10th Day Kriya will be performed at Akhnoor on 6/2/2025, Thursday at 9.00 am.

Assembly will be held at Muthi Ghat at 11.30 am.

IN GRIEF

Sushma & Ashok Kaul

Rita & P.R. Khushu

Renu

Joshina & Bharat

Shruti & Akhil

Vrinda & Vishal

Nivaan & Viraj

Bhans & Labrus



Smt. Chuni Labroo /
Rani Bhan

BHOG AND ANTIM ARDAS

With profound grief and sorrow it is to inform the sad demise of our beloved **Sdr Pritam Kour** Bal W/o Sander P S Bal from Village Fojpora (Khat) Kashmir AP 15-April Vihar Kunjwari Jammu on 27-01-2025 at Mumbai.

Programme

Arambh Shri Akhand Path Sahib at 9.30 AM on 03-02-2025

Bhog Shri Akhand Path Sahib at 9.30 AM on 05-02-2025 at our residence.

Antim Ardas at Gurdwara Guru Ka Bagh (Channi Himmat) 11.00 AM to 12-30 PM

followed by Guru Ka Langar.

Grief Stricken

P S Bal (Husband)

Son's & Daughter-in-laws

Manjit S Bal and Davina Kour

(Rtd VP L&T)

D.P.S. Bal (Rtd SEPDD) and Harmeet Kour

Grand Children: Sahaj, Manal, Tanvi

M. Nos. 6005795078, 9419198478, 9879366655



Sdr Pritam Kour Bal

UTHALA/RASAM PAGRI

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved **Mrs. Santosh Gupta** W/o Shri Rakesh Kumar Gupta R/o 217, Bakshi Nagar, Jammu.

UTHALA AND RASAM PAGRI will be held on 5th February 2025 (Wednesday) from 3 PM to 4 PM at Arya Samaj Mandir, Bakshi Nagar, near P.R Hotel.

GRIEF STRICKEN

Sh. Rakesh Kumar Gupta- Husband

Sh. Pankaj Kumar Gupta - Brother-in-law

Sons & Daughters-in-law

Mr. Akhil Mahajan & Mrs. Gazal Mahajan

Mr. Nikhil Mahajan & Dr. Hina Gupta

Daughter & Son-in-law

Mrs. Garima Gupta & Mr. Anil Gupta

Grandchildren: Mananya, Atharv, Darshika, Ayaan, Abhinandan, and Aavik

RSVP

AN BROTHERS, Apsara road, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu

CONTACT NOS: 9419212358, 9419135126, 9906376955



MRS. SANTOSH GUPTA
(GUDDO)

TENTH DAY BHOG & ANTIM ARDAS

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform you that our beloved **S. Darshan Singh** Ji (Rtd. Health Department, Jammu) who left for his heavenly abode on January 25, 2025.

The schedule is as follows:

Arambh Shri Akhand Path Sahib (at residence);

Wednesday, 26th of Feb. 2025 at 9:00 am.

HRAK urges CS for increasing stay of Yatris

Katra would be made as focal point for diverting tourists to other Tourist destinations: CS

Top News Report
JAMMU, Feb 4: Responding to the demands of the Hotel & Restaurant Association, Katra, Chief Secretary of Jammu & Kashmir, Atul Dulloo, emphasized the importance of diverting one crore pilgrims and tourists to other Tourist and pilgrim attractions and elaborated that the main object and aim of it would be to increase the stay of tourists so that it may contribute to the economic growth of the Union Territory.
Principal Secretary Finance Santosh D Vaidya, Commissioner Secretary Tourism Yasha Mudgal, Secretary Public Works Department Bhupinder Kumar, Director Tourism Jammu Vikas Gupta, Joint Director Tourism Jammu, Sunaina Sharma Mehta, President Hotel & Restaurant Association, Katra & Chairman PHDCCI Jammu Region Chapter Rakesh

Wazir were prominently present. Rakesh Wazir, while speaking on the occasion highlighted the success stories of various tourist destinations around Katra which became popular within years and tourists flow increased from bottom to top and the common thing in all those destinations was this that their main focal and originating point was Katra and to elaborate gave the examples of places of Tourist interests around Katra where tourists flow increased many times in last few years including Shiv Khori from one lakh to 20 lakh, Nau Devian from thousands to 25 lakh, Baba Dhansar from thousands to 15 lakh, Sear Baba from thousands to lakh, Patnitop from one lakh to more than 10 lakh, Bhaderwah from thousands to in lakh and the need of the hour is to increase it further besides adding more places of tourists interests in it and to site example he elabo-

rated places like Devi Pindian, Mathwar, Ambaran, Showa Mata, Raghunath Temple, Bawe Wali Mata etc.
He said that to increase the flow of yatris certain steps are required to be taken including starting of Light & sound show on the history of Maa Vaishnodevi ji at Katra, enhancing the beauty and infrastructure of Mansar Lake, including the introduction of battery-operated cars for tourists for ferrying the Tourists for taking round, around mansar Lake, setting up of a museum with interactive exhibits showcasing Jammu's destinations, introducing of integrated tour packages for heritage, culture, adventure, eco-tourism, religious tourism and wellness, launching of an effective digital campaign and setting up of proper signages on roads to promote tourism, advanced publicity and promotional activities of all tourist des-

tinations and tourism products, pamphlets and publicity materials for all tourism destinations to be made available at all hotels at Katra and Jammu.
He also emphasized for promotion of Mata Ki Parikarma Yatra to extend the stay of yatris besides promotion of the old traditional route of Maa Vaishnodevi which includes Kol Kandoli-Jagti, Bamyal, Oli Mata Temple-Deva Mai etc.
The Chief Secretary listened to each and every point patiently and assured that the government would focus on these initiatives to establish Katra as a tourism hub and ensure the holistic development of nearby destinations.
He said that this strategic move will definitely diversify the tourism sector, increase economic opportunities, and enhance visitor experiences in the region.

LIC employees oppose hike in FDI in insurance sector to 100%



Top News Report
JAMMU, Feb 4: LIC employees of Jammu and Kashmir under the banner of Northern Zone Insurance Employees' Association Srinagar Division held massive demonstration outside offices of LIC of India across Jammu Kashmir in the leadership of Comrade Pawan Gupta; Divisional Secretary of the Association against the central Govt.' move to increase FDI in insurance sector from 74% to 100%.
Speaking on the occasion at D.O.Cell Jammu, Com. Pawan Gupta said that this decision is unwarranted and carries with it serious consequences for mobilisation of precious resources for the development of Indian economy and meeting the obligation of the State towards its citizens. LIC employees condemn this decision and will mobilise the public opinion against this move.
The Insurance sector was denationalised with the passage of the IRDA Bill 1999. This Act permitted the Indian capital to operate in the insurance industry in partnership with the foreign companies.
The FDI was restricted to 26 percent; since then, it has been raised to 74%. A large number of private insurance companies with foreign

partners have been operating in both the life and non-life insurance industry. Capital has never been a constraint for these companies to run their businesses; as they are owned by big business houses partnering with top multinational companies.
Perhaps with the exception of one, no insurance company is anywhere near breaching the 74% FDI limit. In fact, the total FDI in insurance is only around 32% of the capital employed.
This being the case, it is surprising as to why the government has taken the step to give total freedom to foreign capital to operate in India.
This decision will also have serious consequences for the Indian companies and the Indian economy if the existing foreign partner decides to pull out to form a separate company.
The AIIEA is of the firm understanding that allowing total freedom and greater access to foreign capital could only retard the orderly growth of the insurance industry with the focus more on profits rather than providing the people and business the much needed security. It will have disastrous impact on the interests of the marginalised sections of the Indian soci-

ety. Moreover, foreign capital can never be a substitute to the domestic savings.
This being the case, handing over the domestic savings to foreign capital makes no economic or social sense. India being a welfare state must necessarily have greater state control over the savings for economic development which benefits all its citizens.
The AIIEA lodges its strong protest against the decision to hike FDI limit in insurance and demands withdrawal of this move.
Others who spoke-Com. Rajesh Gupta -Joint Secretary, Com Dinesh Kumar Sharma-vice President, , Com. Priya Sharma-Women sub-committee, Com. Harkesh Kumar Singh and Kishore Lal-Jammu-3, and others.
The programme in Srinagar was led by Com. Syed Aadil Imam-President NZIEA Srinagar Division along with Coms-Amarjeet Singh, Ajaz Ah. Dar, Javed Ah Bukhari, Gulshan Singh and others.
The programme was organised at Jammu-2 by R.P.Singh, Samba by Surat Singh, R.S.Pura by Jagdish and Rajesh Sapolia, Udhampur by Sham Singh, Rajouri by Vikas and Vinod Sharma, Doda by Anmol Sharma, Poonch by Raj Kumar, Kathua by Vijay Verma and Mohan Lal.

J&K Congress president slams 'Govt's security claims', calls for introspection

Top News Report
SRINAGAR, Feb 4: Jammu and Kashmir Congress President Tariq Hamid Karra on Tuesday criticized the Centre over its 'claims of improved security in the Union Territory, stating that the recent terror incidents in Jammu and Kashmir expose the reality on the ground'.
Addressing the media here in Srinagar, Karra termed the latest security incidents as "unfortunate".
He asserted that while the government claims normalcy, the situation

on the ground tells a different story.
"The Congress party has repeatedly highlighted that the government's claims about security are contradictory to the actual situation. Not just in Kashmir but also in Jammu, such incidents continue to expose these claims," he said.
Referring to the recent attack in Kulgam on a former soldier he said that these events are a clear indication that the government's narrative of peace in Jammu and Kashmir is misleading. "The government must

introspect and present the true picture of the situation instead of creating a false narrative," Karra stated.
On the functioning of the Jammu and Kashmir administration, he stressed the need for clarity in business rules, arguing that confusion in governance negatively impacts the common people, particularly the poor.
"The biggest casualty of unclear rules is the common man, who is made to run from one office to another without answers. The govern-

ment must streamline governance for the welfare of the people," he added.
Reacting to allegations from political rivals that discussing business rules implies acceptance of the revocation of Article 370, Karra refused to comment, saying, "That is their stand, I have nothing to say on it."
On the broader political landscape, he also addressed concerns raised by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi regarding electoral processes, stating that election outcomes reveal

ground realities only after results are declared. "Each state has a different scenario; Haryana and Maharashtra have shown different trends. The Congress party has formed a committee to take up election-related concerns with the Election Commission," he said.
When asked about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's upcoming visit to the United States, Karra remarked, "PM Modi is going as an uninvited guest. Earlier, he was not invited; now, we will see how he is welcomed there."

Sunil Sharma raises concern over rising crime in Jammu with LG

Top News Report
JAMMU, Feb 4: Jammu and Kashmir BJP General Secretary & Leader of Opposition, Sunil Sharma, has raised serious concerns over the increasing crime rate in Jammu, urging Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, to take immediate action to ensure public safety.
Sunil Sharma had

called on the LG to discuss the prevailing situation in the UT, Jammu in particular regarding spurt in incidents of thefts, murders, robbery.
Sunil Sharma stressed that the growing law and order problem is causing fear among residents and called for enhanced policing, stricter enforcement of laws, and effective initiatives to curb criminal activities in

Jammu.
"The people of Jammu and Kashmir deserve a secure environment. Rising crime not only threatens public safety but also impacts tourism and economic development," Sunil stated. He urged the administration to increase police patrolling, set up special task forces, and leverage technology such as CCTV surveillance to

deter criminals.
Sunil also emphasized the need for stronger measures against the drug menace, which is affecting the youth. He called for rehabilitation programmes, awareness campaigns, and stringent action against drug peddlers to tackle the crisis.
Sunil reaffirmed his party's commitment to

work with authorities to ensure a safer and more prosperous Jammu and Kashmir. He urged citizens to remain vigilant and cooperate with law enforcement agencies.

Raman Suri slams critics, hails railway expansion in J&K, Ladakh

Top News Report
JAMMU, Feb 4: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) J&K Executive Member Raman Suri has strongly criticized those who have remained blind to the monumental development projects which are undergoing in Jammu and Kashmir under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
Reacting to the successful trial run of the train between Jammu and Srinagar, Suri said, it is now Ladakh's turn to be connected to the rest of the country through rail services.
He pointed out that the Modi government has already allocated funds and initiated surveys for this ambitious project, further proving its commitment to infrastructural development in the region.
He expressed confidence that the BJP-led central government will leave no stone unturned in ensuring that both Jammu & Kashmir, and Ladakh receive world-class railway connectivity.

Taking a dig at the critics, Suri remarked that those who fail to acknowledge these transformative developments are either politically motivated or deliberately ignorant of the rapid progress taking place in the region under PM Modi's leadership.
Suri emphasized that after ensuring Kashmir's railway connectivity, the central government has now taken up the challenge of bringing rail services to Ladakh.
He noted that despite extreme weather conditions, rugged terrains, and logistical challenges, the survey for the Srinagar-Ladakh and Baramulla-Kupwara railway lines is being conducted at a fast pace.
The newly allocated Rs 844 crores in the Union Budget 2025-26 for railway sector in J&K and the overall allocation of Rs 2,52,000 crore to Indian Railways will play a crucial role in completing these projects, ensuring that Ladakh benefits from improved connectivity just like the rest of the country.
The BJP leader further

highlighted the strategic importance of the Srinagar-Ladakh railway line by saying that this railway track will not only facilitate civilian travel but will also serve as a crucial asset to the military, considering Ladakh's sensitive border areas.
He pointed out that road connectivity to Ladakh often gets disrupted due to heavy snowfall and adverse weather conditions, making railway connectivity an essential alternative.
The Modi government, he asserted, is committed to make the region more accessible and economically vibrant.
Speaking about the railway expansion in Jammu, Raman Suri welcomed the formation of a new Railway Division in Jammu, which will oversee the development and enhancement of railway services in the region.
He hoped that the appointment of Vivek Kumar as the first Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) of the Jammu Division will further

accelerate the progress.
Under his leadership, Jammu Tawi Railway Station will be upgraded with modern facilities, including a pollution-free greenfield area and a new foot-over bridge. This, Suri said, will significantly enhance the travel experience for passengers.
Raman Suri also dispelled the rumours and asserted that the Vande Bharat Express for Kashmir will originate from Jammu, reinforcing the city's position as a major railway hub.
While the Jammu Tawi railway station will undergo development, the Vande Bharat Express will initially operate between Katra and Srinagar, with direct services between Jammu and Srinagar starting soon.
The Railway Minister, he added, has assured that the timetable for Jammu-Srinagar train will be released shortly, marking another milestone in the government's commitment to improve railway infrastructure in J&K.



Department of Wildlife Protection
Office of the Additional Director Jambu Zoo
Nagrota, Jammu
Email: wlwjambuzoo@gmail.com



SHORT TERM TENDER NOTICE

E-TENDERING

Tender Notice : e-NIT No.:- 47/WLW/JZ of 2024-25 dated: 01-02-2025

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, Jammu & Kashmir UT, e-tenders are invited from approved and eligible contractors registered with J&K UT Govt./Central Govt.

Organizations for the following works:

Name of work	Adv. Cost (₹. in lacs)	Earnest Money (in Rs.)	Cost of Tender Document (in Rs.)	Time of completion	Receiving /Opening Authority
Installation of Animal shaped Mascots at Jambu Zoo.	10.00	20,000	600	01 month	Tender opening committee

The e-NIT consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, bill of quantities, (B.O.Q), set of Terms & Conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental Website:- <http://jktenders.gov.in>

Position of funds: CAPEX 2024-25

Position of AA : Accorded.

Position of TS : Accorded.

Publishing Date	01-02-2025
Download Start Date	01-02-2025
Bid Submission Start Date	01-02-2025
Pre-bid meeting	04-02-2025
Bid submission End Date	08-02-2025 up to 04:00 PM
Date of opening of Technical Bid	10-02-2025 at 12:00 PM (In the Office of Regional Wildlife Warden, Jammu, Manda Hills, Jammu)
Date of opening of Financial Bid (online)	10-02-2025 at 03:00 PM (In the Office of Regional Wildlife Warden, Jammu, Manda Hills, Jammu)

Bid documents can be seen at and download from the website: - <https://jktenders.gov.in>. Bid documents contain qualifying criteria for bidder, specifications, bill of quantities, conditions and other details.

DIP/J-9782/24

Additional Director
Jambu Zoo.

EDITORIAL

TOURISM SURGE

Jammu & Kashmir, once renowned for its natural beauty and vibrant cultural heritage, is experiencing a significant resurgence in tourism. After years of political unrest and economic challenges, the region is now witnessing a new era of tourism, as more travelers from across India and the world are flocking to explore its picturesque landscapes, rich history, and unique cultural experiences.

The surge in tourism in J&K is not just a temporary spike but a result of sustained efforts by both the government and private sector. With the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019, the region saw a fresh outlook on development and opportunities. One of the primary focus areas has been the revival of the tourism industry, which has long been a backbone of J&K's economy. The government has been actively working to boost tourism, ensuring better connectivity, improved infrastructure, and enhanced security for travelers.

Traditionally, J&K has been seen as a winter destination, with places like Gulmarg, Pahalgam, and Sonamarg attracting visitors during the snowy months for skiing, snowboarding, and other winter sports. However, the region's tourism offerings have expanded far beyond the winter months. In recent years, there has been a concerted effort to promote J&K as a year-round destination.

The state government, with the support of the Jammu & Kashmir Tourism Development Corporation (JKTDC), has been working on diversifying the tourism product by emphasizing summer tourism, which includes trekking, camping, and exploring the state's lush meadows, rivers, and serene lakes. The Hemis Monastery Festival and Shikara rides on Dal Lake in Srinagar have been highlighted to bring in cultural and eco-tourism enthusiasts. Furthermore, initiatives like Ganga Aarti in Jammu and spiritual tourism at Vaishno Devi have been significantly contributing to the religious and spiritual tourism boom in the region.

One of the key factors driving the surge in tourism is improved connectivity. With the air traffic connectivity to Srinagar, Jammu, and Leh getting better every year, travelers from all parts of India are finding it easier to access the region. The opening of new routes and the expansion of the Srinagar Airport have made it a major hub for tourists. Additionally, the Banihal-Qazigund tunnel, which was inaugurated in 2020, has significantly reduced travel time and increased ease of movement between Jammu and Srinagar.

Apart from air and road connectivity, the region's hospitality infrastructure has undergone a transformation. Several luxury hotels, boutique resorts, and budget accommodations have sprung up, particularly in Srinagar, Gulmarg, Pahalgam, and Leh. This has ensured that the growing number of tourists, both domestic and international, have a variety of options to choose from according to their preferences and budget.

The demand for adventure tourism in J&K is steadily growing. The region's diverse geography offers opportunities for activities like trekking, mountain biking, paragliding, white-water rafting, and camping. Places like Zaskar, Ladakh, and Kishtwar are fast becoming popular among adventure enthusiasts, who are eager to experience the adrenaline rush while surrounded by some of the world's most stunning natural scenery.

Jammu & Kashmir's eco-tourism sector is also flourishing, with an emphasis on preserving its pristine landscapes. The state's national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, such as Hemis National Park, Kazinag National Park, and Dachigam National Park, are attracting nature lovers and wildlife photographers. These protected areas offer a sanctuary for rare species like the Kashmir Stag and Snow Leopard, along with providing an immersive experience in the lap of nature.

Jammu & Kashmir is a region steeped in history and culture. The architectural marvels of the Mughal Gardens, Shankaracharya Temple, Jama Masjid, and Khalsa College are some of the key attractions for history buffs and cultural enthusiasts. The state's rich craftsmanship in Pashmina shawls, Kashmiri carpets, papier-mâché, and wooden carvings also draws tourists who are keen to experience the artistic heritage of the region.

Furthermore, the efforts to organize cultural festivals, music performances, and heritage walks are contributing to the growing interest in the local arts and traditions. The Sufi shrines, mystical traditions, and cultural exchanges in places like Kishtwar, Anantnag, and Pulwama are an essential part of the region's tourism appeal.

The surge in tourism has had a positive impact on the local economy of J&K. Small-scale businesses, including handicraft vendors, local guides, and transport providers, are seeing increased demand, leading to employment generation and income growth in the region. The agricultural and hospitality sectors have also benefited from the influx of tourists, with more local products being showcased and sold.

FM Nirmala Sitharaman– opened Her Pitara of Bonanza for Middle Class

By: Omkar Dattatray

Finally the long wait of the middle class and the salaried class has come to end on 1st of February 2025 ,when finance minister unveiled her new budget and gave a bonanza for the salaried class as well as middle class when she announced that the government has decided to exempt middle class from the tax on the yearly income of Rs 12,00,000. In fact in the new tax regime an employee earning up to Rs 12.75 lakh have to pay no income tax because Rs 75,000 is the standard deduction. It is in fact for the time in the history of Independent India that such a big relief has been announced for the middle class including salaried people .It is a great milestone and is historic that a gift of such a huge nature has been announced in 2025 union budget for the salaried people. The net effect of this big relief for the middle income group is that 95% population of the country is freed from pay income tax for this maiden time and this is no ordinary thing or a mean development. Thus it will benefit a great majority of the people of India.FM Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday unveiled a budget bonanza for taxpayers ,particularly the middle class ,which has been reeling under the double impact of a slowing economy and rising prices.PM Modi had strongly hinted at it on Friday and so did the president Droupadi Murmu. There will be a rebate on annual income up to Rs 12 lakh , compared with Rs 70,000 currently, and higher limits across slabs under the new regime. For the salaried ,who also get standard deduction of Rs 75,000 under the new regime ,the rebate will mean zero tax liability for those with income up to Rs 12.75 lakh. As a result of the sweeping changes in the tax structure and the exemptions ,almost

1 crore of the 3 crore Indians who actually pay taxes will now legally escape the tax net—though they will still have to file IT returns to avail of the rebate .Those who will pay taxes will save amounts ranging from Rs 30,000 to Rs 1.1 lakh a year ,depending on their income level. While vast of the middle class will gain ,the big beneficiaries are those with taxable income of Rs 15,00,000-Rs 24,00,000,who were earlier in the highest slab of 20% and will now face levies of 15% to 25%.No taxes up to Rs 12 lakh annual income set to boost consumption spending stays the path on fiscal consolidation with fiscal deficit target of 4.4Pc in FY 26 farm economy in FM's focus too with a slew of measures. Finance minister N.Sitharaman on Feb 1 placed the bets firmly on India's vast consuming salaried and middle class to power the economy ,announcing wide-ranging changes in income tax rates and slabs in the 2025-26 union budget in a plucky drive to push growth amid fast gathering global headwinds. Amid signs of moderation in the broader economy ,Sitharaman unveiled measures to catalyze a swift recovery by putting more money in people's pockets ,and amplifying their purchasing power. This predicted on the assumption that higher disposable income will stimulate demand for goods and services. This in turn could set off a cycle of investment as companies eventually start adding capacities to meet the extra demand. Under the proposed new slabs and rates, anyone with an annual taxable income up to Rs 12 lakh —excluding capital gains income will not have to pay any taxes. This ,effectively means that those with annual income up to Rs 12.75 lakh will not have to pay any tax ,including a standard deduction benefit of Rs 75,000.FM said,” Slabs and rates are being changed across the board to benefit all tax —payers. The new

tax structure will substantially reduce the taxes of the middle class and leave more money in their hands .boosting household consumption ,saving and investment.” The finance minister also rejigged slabs and rates. Under the proposed slabs ,people earning more than Rs 12 lakh per annum ,there will be nil tax for income up to Rs 4 lakh,5% for income between Rs 4 and 8 lakh,10 % for RS 8 to Rs 12 lakh ,15 % for Rs 12 lakh to Rs 16 lakh. A 20 percent income tax will be levied on income between Rs 16 lakh to Rs 20 lakh,25 percent on Rs 20 to Rs 24 lakh and 30 % above Rs 24 lakh per annum.FM said,” Democracy, Demography and Demand are the key pillars in our journey towards Viksit Bharat. The middle class provides strength for India's growth. The government under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi has always believed in the admirable energy and ability of the middle class in nation building.”FM's Budget speech is being seen as a “big relief” for middle class and salaried population. The announcement that there will be no tax on the annual income up to Rs 12 lakh and coupled with it the standard deduction of Rs 75 lakh, it is clear that salaried class will be exempt from income tax up to Rs 12.75 lakh annually. This announcement prompted a wave of joy among the middle —class salaried population, and as expected many took to social media to share happiness about the “big relief”. In fact the Budget 2025 is a game changer for the middle class .”Slabs and rates are being changed across the board to benefit all tax payers. The new structure will substantially reduce the taxes of the middle class and leave more money in their hands.” So under the new tax regime, the tax rate structure has revised. Budget exercise is a politico-economic tool and political economy has much importance for the government and governance

as well as the economic, social and political development of the country. The big bonanza of tax relief to the middle salaried class has won the hearts ,minds and sympathy of the central government. The elections are happening in Delhi and in few months there will be assembly elections in Bihar and the governments big relief in income tax to middle class will boost the political fortunes of the BJP in Delhi Assembly elections and it along with the huge allocations for the state of Bihar will finally result in votes in the Bihar assembly elections in favor of NDA and its allies which are going to be held in few months .So FM's middle path will in fact lure Delhi and Bihar voters as it is most and accurate possibility. Delhi votes on 5th February that is Wednesday and Bihar in October or November this year. The Budget has gone the extra mile to woo them. For Delhi —Country's richest city by per capita income and with large middle class straddling government employees ,private sector ,and businesses —=the big tax giveaway is a clear and loud message./signal. The fact is that AAP's core base is low income group and the lower middle class is wavering ,the Modi government appears to be hoping to tip them over to their side. So for as Bihar is concerned, BJP and its ally Nitish's JDU political fortunes will be positively affected. To conclude one can say that FM's tax bonanza to middle class /salaried population is the gift of Modi sarkar to the middle class.

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

Need of artificial intelligence university in india

By: Vijay Garg

India has seen a growing demand for Artificial Intelligence (AI) education due to the increasing adoption of AI across industries. Establishing specialized AI universities in India is crucial for several reasons:

1. Addressing the Skill Gap
AI is transforming industries like healthcare, finance, and manufacturing, but there is a shortage of skilled professionals. A dedicated AI university can produce industry-ready talent.
2. Research & Innovation
India needs to develop indigenous AI solutions for local challenges. A specialized AI university would foster research in

- areas like natural language processing (NLP), computer vision, and robotics.
3. Global Competitiveness
Countries like the US and China have made significant advancements in AI. A university dedicated to AI would help India compete globally and contribute to international AI research.
 4. AI for Social Good
AI can address Indian-specific issues such as improving agricultural productivity, enhancing medical diagnostics, and optimizing traffic management. A focused AI university can drive such solutions.
 5. Startup & Entrepreneurship Growth
India has a booming AI startup ecosystem. A dedicated AI university

- can support startups with incubators, mentorship, and funding opportunities.
6. Government & Industry Collaboration
A university specializing in AI can bridge the gap between academia, industry, and government, ensuring that AI development aligns with national interests and policies.
- Existing AI Education in India
While India does not yet have a standalone AI university, several institutions offer AI-focused programs, including:
IITs (IIT Madras, IIT Hyderabad, IIT Delhi, etc.) – AI & Data Science programs
IIIT Hyderabad – Center for AI & Machine Learning
Indian Institute of Sci-

- ence (IISc) Bangalore – AI & Robotics research
Plaksha University & Ashoka University – AI & ML courses
Private universities like Amity, SRM, and Manipal also offer AI programs
Conclusion
Given the rapid AI growth, India would benefit from a dedicated AI university that integrates education, research, and industry collaboration. The government and private sector must work together to establish such an institution, ensuring India's leadership in the AI revolution.

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

Social Welfare Department organizes awareness camp at Sathra



Top News Report

SATHRA, Feb 4: On the direction of District Social Welfare Officer Wakeel Ahmed Bhatt, the SANKALP: Hub for Empowerment of Women (HEW) Poonch organized an awareness camp at Village Sathra.

The event was attended by local residents, particularly women from the village, who gained valuable information on various social welfare schemes aimed at their empowerment.

The session focused on the “Beti Bachao Beti Padhao” campaign,

raising awareness about the importance of girls’ education and safety.

The HEW team shared crucial details about various government schemes designed to uplift and empower women.

Key schemes highlighted included Mission Shakti, women-centric initiatives, and welfare programs such as Women Helpline 181, Sakhi One Stop Centre for Women, PMMVY (Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana), e-SHRAM, Janani Suraksha Yojana, Poshan Abhiyan, Tejaswini Livelihood Scheme

for Women Entrepreneurs, Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme, Pension Scheme for Widows and Disabled Women, SMAS (Socially Marginalized Assistance Scheme), and Childline 1098.

During the camp, Tirath Kour, Gender Specialist DHEW, Taranpreet Kaur, Specialist in Financial Literacy DHEW, Harmeet Kaur, Paramedical Personnel OSC, and Sobina Bandey, Case Worker OSC, actively participated and provided in-depth information about these schemes, ensuring women were well-informed about their rights and available resources.

The event successfully instilled a sense of empowerment among the women of Sathra, encouraging them to make use of the available welfare programs for their personal and professional development.

KVK Kishtwar reaching out to farming community



Top News Report

KISHTWAR, Feb 4: To promote sustainable agricultural practices and sensitize the farming community on various issues related to farm and allied sectors, KVK-Kishtwar under the leadership of Prof. B. N. Tripathi Vice Chancellor

and guidance of Prof. Amrish Vaid Director Extension, SKUAST-Jammu is reaching out to the farming community scattered over small hamlets in the hilly district of Kishtwar.

Deliberating upon the outreach programme, Dr. Parveen Kumar

SMS Ag Extension told that the district is mostly rained with small, fragmented holdings in which restoring soil fertility is a major issue.

The continuous use of chemical fertilizers has further compounded to the problem. There is critical technology as well as knowledge gap in different areas of crop production and the adoption of sustainable practices is also very low.

KVK-Kishtwar since its establishment has been working to uplift the socio-economic status of the community working in agriculture and allied sectors.

World Cancer Day observed at ANMT School Doda

Top News Report

DODA, Feb 4: To mark the observance of World Cancer Day, an awareness program was organized at ANMT School Doda by the NCD Division CMO Office Doda.

The event aimed to spread awareness about cancer prevention, early detection, and treatment.

The program was graced by Chief Medical Officer Doda, Dr. Om Kumar, and attended by Principal ANMT School Doda, Vidya Kotwal, along with Dr. Hamid Paray, Mohd Shafi Attu, Rishi Kumar Pandita, Sanjeev Rana, Azhar Iqbal Butt, staff including Naveeda Anjum and Saima Kouser, and students of ANMT School Doda.

Speaking on the occasion, CMO Doda Dr. Om Kumar emphasized the significance of World Cancer Day and the need for collective efforts in fighting cancer.

He highlighted the importance of early detection, lifestyle modifications, and timely treatment in reducing the burden of the disease.

“Cancer is a major global health challenge, but early diagnosis and preventive measures



can save lives. Adopting a healthy lifestyle, avoiding tobacco and alcohol, and going for regular screenings can significantly reduce the risk of cancer.

As healthcare professionals and students, it is our responsibility to spread awareness and educate people about the importance of cancer prevention and early intervention.

Together, we can make a difference in the fight against cancer,” he said.

Several students from ANMT School Doda delivered insightful lectures on cancer awareness, including Shabana Banoo (Dental Technician), Afia Banoo (Dental Technician), Asma Banoo (FMPHW) and Mussarat Banoo (OT Technician).

The stage proceedings were conducted by Mohammad Faheem Butt, FLO NCD Division Doda, who also shared valuable insights on the

importance of World Cancer Day and the role of awareness in cancer prevention.

The event successfully educated students and staff on cancer awareness, reinforcing the collective responsibility to fight cancer through early detection, awareness, and lifestyle changes.

Meanwhile, similar awareness programs were held across all medical blocks of Doda district, including Assar, Bhaderwah, Gandoh, Ghat, and Thathri. Health professionals, ASHAs, and community leaders participated in these programs, educating the public about cancer risk factors, symptoms, and the importance of early diagnosis.

The events aimed to empower communities with knowledge and encourage proactive healthcare measures.

GDC Vijaypur organises Inter-College Quiz Competition

Top News Report

VIJAYPUR, Feb 4: Department of Education under the aegis of Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) of Govt. Degree College Vijaypur observed National Cancer Awareness Day by organising an online quiz on the theme “United by Unique”.

More than 60 students from various colleges of Jammu and Kashmir participated in the competition which was conducted through Google Forms and participants received e-certificates.

The aim of organizing the competition was to make students aware that every experience with cancer is unique and it will take all of us, united, to create a world where we look beyond the disease and see the person before the patient.

The competition was organized under the able guidance of the esteemed Principal of the college Dr. (Prof.) Vandana Verma.

She articulated that ‘Cancer’ is more than

just a medical diagnosis—it’s a deeply personal matter, where, behind every diagnosis lies a unique human story—stories of grief, pain, healing, resilience, love and more. That’s why a people-centered approach to cancer care that fully integrates each individual’s unique needs, with compassion and empathy, leads to the best health outcomes.

Principal of the college appreciated the efforts of the IQAC team. She further voiced that these competitions encourage young youth to come together for such causes so that needs of the people and communities are addressed.

The event was coordinated by Prof. Ritu Bhagat (Convenor IQAC) and the team comprising of Prof. Poonam Kundan (HOD Environmental Sciences), Dr. Manoj Heer (HOD Dogri), Dr. Naseem Choudhary (HOD English), Dr. Gunjeet Mahiwal (Lecturer Education) and Dr. Noreen Jaral (Lecturer Education).

Jammu Sanskriti School Jammu hosts District-Level Bocce Ball Championship

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 4: Jammu Sanskriti School, Jammu, hosted the District-Level Bocce Ball Championship in collaboration with the Raffa Bocce Indian Federation, an event approved by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs and recognized by NITI Aayog & MSME, Government of India.

The championship aimed to promote the spirit of sportsmanship, inclusivity, and athletic excellence among young athletes.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from children across the district and also differently abled children from Jammu Sanskriti School Jammu who showcased remarkable skill and determination, further strengthening the recognition of Bocce as an emerging sport in India.

The championship was graced by the presence of Chief Guest DIG Railways Haseeb Ur

Rehman, who praised the initiative for providing a platform for young athletes to develop their sporting abilities. Special invitees included Pooja Malhotra – Founder Patron, J&K Sports Speed Ball Association, Munish Gupta – Vice President, J&K Sports Speed Ball Association, Ashwani Jajra – Founder of Sanyog India, State President, Special Olympics Bharat, J&K, Gaurav Gupta – President, Special Olympics Bharat J&K, UT President of Special Olympics for J&K UT, Astha Nanda – Director, Raffa Boules India Federation, Sucha Singh – Retd. HOD, Sports, SMVDU.

The event was coordinated by Sunny Nanda - The speed ball coach. The vote of thanks was given by Bhawana - the special educator at Jammu Sanskriti School Jammu.

Rohini Aima – Principal Cum Vice-Chairperson, Jammu Sanskriti School, Jammu

expressed her pride in hosting the event.

She also stated, “At Jammu Sanskriti School, we firmly believe that sports play a crucial role in shaping a child’s personality and fostering qualities like discipline, teamwork, and resilience. Hosting this championship has been a proud moment for us, as it not only nurtures young talent but also strengthens the spirit of inclusivity in sports. I sincerely thank all our esteemed guests, organizers, and participants for making this event a phenomenal success. The enthusiasm and dedication displayed by everyone have been truly inspiring.”

The championship concluded with an award ceremony, where the winners were honored for their exceptional performances. The event was a remarkable success, reinforcing the significance of sports as a powerful medium for youth empowerment and community development.

GDC Paloura observes World Cancer Day



Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 4: Govt. Degree College Celebrated World Cancer Day. The World Cancer day is celebrated on February 4 every year to spread awareness about Cancer and of early detection and screening as well as prevention and cure.

In this programme Dr. Rajesh Singh Bhau, Oncologist Government Medical College, Jammu was the chief guest.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Rajesh Singh Bhau informed the students & faculty mem

bers about different types of Cancer, causes of the deceases, its various symptoms and its prevention & cure by adopting healthy habits.

He also advised the students to spread awareness about Cancer through Posters, Lectures, discussions etc.

More than 100 students along with college staff participate in the event.

The whole programme was organised by NCC Unit, NSS and Department of History, GDC Paloura under the able guidance of Dr. Kulvinder Kour, Principal GDC Paloura.

Qamarwari-Noorbagh Bridge to be opened for public in March: CE R&B

Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Feb 4: In a major relief for commuters battling congestion in the Qamarwari-Noorbagh area, the much-awaited Qamarwari Bridge is set to be thrown open for public use by March this year, Chief Engineer of Roads and Buildings (R&B) Central Kashmir, Sajad Naeqeb, confirmed on Tuesday.

The bridge, which has been under construction for over 14 years, is now in its final stages, with approximately 95 percent of the work already completed.

“Only about 20 to 25 days of work remain. The delay was primarily due to adverse weather conditions, which forced us to halt construction. Now that the weather has improved, we will complete the remaining work and open it for the public in March,” Naeqeb told media.

The bridge, an extension of the historic Cement Bridge, was originally scheduled to open in January. However, sub-zero temperatures in the winter months slowed down construction efforts.

The construction of the Qamarwari-Noorbagh Bridge has been marred by repeated delays, causing significant inconvenience to residents and daily commuters.

Initially sanctioned in 2009, the project was expected to provide an alternative route to decongest the bottlenecked traffic flow between Qamarwari, Noorbagh, and adjacent areas of Srinagar.

However, a combination of funding constraints, contractor issues resulted in the project missing multiple deadlines.

The opening of the Qamarwari-Noorbagh Bridge is expected to significantly ease traffic congestion in one of Srinagar’s busiest

corridors. Currently, thousands of vehicles navigate through an overloaded bridge in Qamarwari, often leading to long traffic snarls during peak hours. The new bridge is anticipated to serve as a vital link, reducing travel time and enhancing connectivity between central and northern parts of the city.

Local residents and business owners have expressed both frustration over the prolonged delay and optimism about the bridge’s imminent completion.

“We have been waiting for this bridge for over a decade. Every year, we were given new deadlines. We hope this time it will finally be completed and functional,” said Mohammad Ashraf, a shopkeeper in Qamarwari.

Authorities have assured that all pending works, including finishing touches, road surfacing, and safety measures, will be completed within the stipulated time frame.

Two-day Cluster Level Sports event concludes in Poonch

Top News Report

POONCH, Feb 4: The two-day Cluster Level Sports Event, organized by Nehru Yuva Kendra (NYK) Poonch under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, successfully concluded at Government Boys Pahari Hostel Ground, Poonch.

The event, held from February 2 to 3, 2025, featured a series of competitive sports activities aimed at promoting youth participation in athletics and team sports.

The event witnessed intense competitions across multiple sports disciplines. In the Volleyball (Boys) final, Chandak Youth Club emerged victorious against Manjeet Singh Youth Club. The Kho Kho (Girls) final saw Gujjar Hostel



secure a win against Saima Mahila Mandal Team with a score of 6-4. In the 100-meter race (Boys), Majid Ali claimed first place, followed by Adnan Mush-taq in second, and Muzammil Ahmad in third. The Skipping Rope (Girls) event was dominated by Fareeda Begum, who secured

first place, while Yasmeen Kouser and Zohra Khatoon finished second and third, respectively.

In Badminton (Girls) singles, Rafia Kouser clinched the title, displaying remarkable skill and determination. Meanwhile, in Shot Put (Boys), Majid Ali secured first place, Mohd Raiz

finished in second, and Naiz Ahmad took third place.

The event was graced by several guests. Abdul Qayoom, Warden of Pahari Hostel, attended as the Chief Guest, while Senior Lecturer Mushtaq Ahmed served as the Guest of Honour.

Other special guests included Nisar Saqi,

Warden of Gujjar Hostel, and Chairman of the United Hamayat Committee.

Officials Ajaz Malik, Sajad Rather, and Waseem Akram, along with event organizers Maroof Ahmed (President of Mahi P Youth Club) and Farooq Ahmed, also attended the closing ceremony.

At the conclusion of the event, the winners were honored with trophies, volleyball kits, and badminton kits in recognition of their outstanding performances.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks presented by Mohd Shafiq, TOT NYK Poonch, who expressed gratitude to all participants, guests, and organizers for their contributions to the successful execution of the tournament.

‘The Secret of Secrets’: Dan Brown’s ‘most ambitious novel’ to hit stands in September

The series, titled ‘The Secrets of Secrets’ aims to continue the action-packed journey of Dan Brown’s famous character Harvard symbologist Langdon

In good news for Dan Brown fans, “The Da Vinci Code” author is all set to return with the much-awaited new novel in the famed Robert Langdon series, titled “The Secret of Secrets”, on September 9 this year.

The upcoming thriller, touted to be Brown’s most “ambitious novel” till date, is releasing eight years after “Origin” (2017) – his last novel in the series. It aims to continue the action-packed journey of Dan Brown’s famous character Harvard symbologist Langdon.

“The Secret of Secrets’ is by far the most intricately plotted and ambitious novel I’ve written to date – and also the most fun. Writing it has been an unforgettable journey of discovery,” the 60-year-old American author said in a statement.

Brown first introduced Langdon to readers in 2000 with “Angels & Demons”, followed by five captivating novels, including “The Da Vinci Code”, “The Lost Symbol”, “Inferno”, and “Origin”,



each packed with action and mystery.

“The Secret of Secrets” will be published by Penguin Random House.

“Dan Brown has created a new Robert Langdon thriller that will mesmerize and delight readers across the world. The hallmarks of Dan’s books – codes, art, his-

tory, religion, and cutting-edge science – are on full display alongside a propulsive plot.

We also find one of fiction’s greatest heroes, Robert Langdon, in love and on the run in one of the most mysterious and beautiful cities in the world. ‘The Secret of Secrets’ is Dan’s best novel yet and this will be the big-

gest publishing event of 2025,” said Penguin Random House global CEO Nihar Malaviya.

The plot of the upcoming novel, as per the publishers, is set around Langdon accompanying a celebrated academic, Katherine Solomon, to a lecture she’s been invited to give in Prague. But soon Langdon’s world spirals out of control when she disappears without a trace from their hotel room.

“Far from home and well out of his comfort zone, Langdon must pit his wits against forces unknown to recover the woman he loves... This is a battlefield unlike any he has previously experienced, one on which he must fight not for his only life, but for the future of humanity itself,” they added.

Brown is also the author of the bestselling children’s book “Wild Symphony”. His novels are published in 56 languages internationally, with over 250 million copies in print.

Dipshikkha Nagpal joins romantic drama Ishq Jabariya



Dipshikkha Nagpal is all set to dazzle audiences in Sun Neo’s much-loved romantic

drama Ishq Jabariya. Joining the show as the enigmatic Devi Sahay, Dipshikkha brings a mix

of charm, power and mystery to the screen. Her character promises to shake up the storyline with her intriguing back-story and unexpected motives, making her entry one of the most exciting twists yet! Dipshikkha shared, “I am thrilled to join the cast of Ishq Jabariya and bring Devi Sahay to life. From the moment I read about the character, I was drawn to her. Devi is a highly successful businesswoman; wealthy and powerful, but what makes her truly fascinating is her multidimensional personality. She’s grounded, with a passion for cooking traditional food, and her charming quirks—like speaking English with a delightful flair—add humour to her persona. But beneath her lively and positive demeanor lies a hidden past filled with betrayal and pain. Devi has a mission, and her arrival will undoubtedly stir things up in the story.”

Here’s how Janhvi Kapoor ‘burnt’ herself

It seems Bollywood actress Janhvi Kapoor spent too much time in the sun as she got “sun-burnt”.

Janhvi took to her Instagram, where she uploaded a mirror selfie. In the image, the actress is seen wearing orange shorts and a grey hued active-wear crop top. Janhvi is flaunting her tanned back in the image.

For the caption, the actress wrote: “BURNT”.

The actress did not reveal where she was. However, Janhvi visited the old city of Kochi and even visited some of the iconic spots such as Jew Street. The 27-year-old star along with Sidharth Malhotra is shooting for the romantic comedy “Param Sundari”.

Sidharth had previously shared pictures and videos from Kochi on February 2. The video, captured from inside of a houseboat, shows the Chinese nets for catching fish in the Kumbalangi area of Kochi.

“Param Sundari” is a cross-cultural romance film. It has been locked for theatrical release on July 25.

The film is by production house Maddock Films, directed by Tushar Jalota of “Dasvi” fame. It centers on a love story between a North Indian played by



Sidharth and a South Indian girl, filmed in Kerala.

The film “promises a heartfelt tale of love, where two worlds collide, and sparks are bound to fly. Set against the breathtaking backwaters of Kerala, this love story is a roller-coaster of laughter, chaos, and unexpected twists you won’t see coming,” per a description provided by Maddock, reports variety.com.

“Its like those films that Mani-sir (Mani Ratnam) used to do like ‘Saathi-

ya’ (the Hindi-language remake of Tamil drama-romance film “Alai Payuthey”),” Maddock chief Dinesh Vijan told Variety.

“The kind of music it has and Janhvi playing a South Indian is interesting, Sid’s playing a Northern Delhi boy and the conflict is very cool. It’s like maybe taking ‘Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya’ forward – there’s a high tech idea in there. But we are going into the ‘Kantara’ world of sorts – we are going a little more than that.”

Nimrit Kaur Ahluwalia on starting from TV: There’s no reason to feel ashamed of it

Nimrit Kaur Ahluwalia has talked about the stigma some actors associate with their television background. The actress embraces her small screen roots and said that there’s no reason to feel ashamed of it.

The actress, who gained the spotlight with her work in ‘Choti Sarraamni’, said: “Many TV actors abandon their background like it’s a thing to be hidden. There’s no shame in the background that literally gave you the launchpad.”

“I owe everything to television,” she shares.

The actress said that she will never abandon the identity that helped her gain the spotlight.

“It was my first avenue to become an actor and the platform that nurtured my passion for acting.

It gave me the opportu-



nity to reach where I am today. There’s no reason to feel ashamed of it, and I will never abandon the identity that got me started.”

The actress is all set to make her debut in movies with the Punjabi film “Shaunki Sardar”. The film, which also stars Guru Randhawa and Babbu Maan, is all set to release on May 16.

Expressing her excitement, Nimrit had said, “This is an incredibly special moment for me as I announce the release date of my debut film, Shaunki Sardar. The film is releasing on 16th May 2025, and I couldn’t be happier to share this news with all of you.”

“Shaunki Sardar” is directed by Dheeraj Kedarnath Rattan and the film promises a powerful narrative celebrating Punjab’s culture,

values, and spirit.

Talking about the actress, Nimrit started her career with modelling, and in 2018, she was crowned Femina Miss Manipur. She then featured in a music video titled ‘Masstani’ by B Praak, which helped her step into the world of showbiz.

In 2019, she began her work in the popular daily soap ‘Choti Sarraamni’, which helped her gain the spotlight.

The actress was later seen in the 16th edition of the controversial reality show ‘Bigg Boss’, hosted by Salman Khan, where she was placed in the sixth position.

She was then seen in the stunt-based reality show “Khatron Ke Khiladi” season 14. The show was won by actor Karanveer Mehra, who is currently seen in the show “Bigg Boss 18” hosted by Salman Khan.

Arun Chaudhary makes a debut with Swipe Crime

Arun Chaudhary is making mark in the world of digital entertainment with his debut role in Swipe Crime, a gripping new series on Amazon MX Player. The series dives deep into the world of dating apps and the cybercrimes that can occur within them.

“The title itself hints

at a modern, dark and thrilling narrative. It’s not just about the fun side of dating apps, but about the hidden dangers and complexities. The show takes a unique approach to exploring this world, adding mystery and excitement to the story,” he said.

The show’s focus on



the darker side of social media and dating apps, which makes it especially relevant today. “These platforms lead to unexpected situations and Swipe Crime shines a light on the dangers that many people face. It’s a wake-up call to be cautious in the digital age,” says Arun.

Parineeti shares her ‘bittersweet’ feeling as she ‘almost’ wraps up film

Actress Parineeti Chopra shared a glimpse of her life lately and expressed her ‘bittersweet’ feeling as she has almost wrapped up her upcoming film.

Parineeti took to her Instagram stories, where she shared an array of pictures featuring her on the sets, a glimpse of her husband Raghav Chadha in the newspaper, the food she indulged in and the coffee she likes to have.

For the caption, she wrote: “Life lately. Shoot, sleep, eat, repeat. Almost wrapping our film. Bitter sweet.”

Amid all the shooting

days, the actress often shared glimpses from the sets. She recently expressed her frustration over endless traffic before her work.

On January 31, the actress posted a video on her Instagram stories. Parineeti captured the frustrating situation and humorously expressed her exhaustion before even reaching her destination.

“Will the traffic ever end? Tired before you reach the shoot,” she wrote in the caption.

In the video, Parineeti was seen sitting in her car, visibly stuck in the congested traffic. In



her previous post, the ‘Ishaqzaade’ actress revealed the fatigue that follows with long hours of filming.

She had shared a candid moment, reveal-

ing the toll her hectic schedule had taken on her. In a video posted from her car, she humorously labeled it as “Day 36.” However, in a follow-up post, the actress

shared a photo of her script, admitting, “Actually Day 37. Blame the fatigue.”

She also dropped a video of the camera team and wrote, “Cameras also holding onto each other for support.”

Parineeti, who is the cousin sister of global star Priyanka Chopra Jonas, was filming the second schedule of an untitled drama.

Additionally, the actress is gearing up for her role in Anurag Singh’s highly anticipated thriller “Sanki,” where she will star alongside Varun Dhawan.

X reactivates Swara Bhasker’s account, actor says ‘back like a bad penny’

Social media platform X restored actor Swara Bhasker’s account after it was “hacked” when she clicked on fake links that falsely claimed her page had been suspended.

“AND WE ARE BACK LIKE A BAD PENNY Thank you everyone who helped! @XCorpIndia #Unuspended #Unhacked #Secured #ItsMe,” she wrote on X.

Bhasker said her X account was permanently suspended due to alleged copyright infringements over two posts she shared on Republic Day.

“Two images from two tweets have been marked as ‘copyright infringements’. Basis which my X account is locked / disabled, I can’t access it and permanent suspension has been approved by your teams,” she wrote.

The actor, known for films such as “Nil Battey Sannata”, “Tanu Weds Manu”

franchise, and “Veere Di Wedding”, had then shared a screenshot of the “email” she received from the team of X on Instagram and criticised the decision as “ridiculous” and “untenable”.

The next day, in an Instagram post, Bhasker said the email that was sent “claiming suspension was fake”.

“When I clicked those links my account got hacked... This is the fake email ID... Real email from X. And it’s super scary because the fake link took me to a proper ditto lookalike site of X with the logo and everything and I even filled out an appeal form that asked for govt. ID !!!

“Then I got this email which alerted me that the account had been hacked because I never delegated my account or granted access to anyone!!” she wrote alongside the screenshots of the mails.

Rahul Gandhi's 'China sitting in our territory' claim is false, says Rajnath Singh

His post on social media platform X states that the words that the Congress leader had attributed to Indian Army chief General Upendra Dwivedi were never spoken by him

NEW DELHI, Feb 4 (Agencies): Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday termed Rahul Gandhi's claim that "China is sitting in our territory" as "false" and said that the words that the latter had attributed to Indian Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi were not spoken by him at any point in time.

Gandhi, on Monday, while participating in a discussion on the President's address in the Budget Session, had said, "Chinese are inside the Indian territory. The Prime Minister had denied it, the Army Chief had contradicted him (the PM). Our Chief of Army Staff said that the Chinese are inside our territory."

Rajnath Singh posted on social media platform X, saying, "Rahul Gandhi in his speech in Parliament on February 3, 2025, made false allegations about the statement of the Army Chief on the situation on the India-China border."

The Army Chief's remarks –



made on January 13 at a press conference – referred only to the disturbance of traditional patrolling by both sides, he said. "He (the Army Chief) also mentioned that these practices have been restored to their traditional pattern as part of the recent disengagement. The government has shared these details in Parliament," the minister said.

"The words attributed to the Army Chief by Rahul Gandhi

were never spoken by him at any time," Rajnath Singh stated, adding that it was a "matter of deep regret that Rahul Gandhi should indulge in irresponsible politics on matters of national interest".

Rajnath then drew on history to put blame on the Congress saying, "If at all there is Indian Territory into which China has come, it is 38,000 sq km in Aksai Chin as a result of the 1962 con-

flict and 5,180 sq km that was illegally ceded by Pakistan to China in 1963."

Rahul Gandhi may consider introspecting about this phase of our history, the Minister added, without mentioning that the Congress was in power when the 1962 war with China happened.

Earlier on January 13, the Indian Army Chief, on being asked about the present situation, had said, "Since April 2020, both sides have doctored the terrain on their sides, have added troops, stocked up (arms and weapons) and added troop numbers. So in these terms, there is a degree of stand-off."

He had ruled out a reduction in troop-levels along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

"Troop deployment directly depends on the trust factor (between the two armies) and the capabilities have been created on other side. The current capabilities across entail that we will need to maintain the troop levels."

Bottom line, India-EU relationship more important than even before: Jaishankar



NEW DELHI, Feb 4 (Agencies): External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Tuesday said in a world that promises to be so volatile and uncertain, a stronger India-EU relationship can be an "important stabilising factor", as he asserted that the relationship between the two sides is more important than even before.

In his address at the inaugural session of the IIC-Bruegel annual seminar here, the EAM, without naming any country, also said that "in our own continent, international law has been disregarded with significant consequences".

"Even on a question like democracy and military rule, different standards have been applied to our neighbours in the east and our neighbour in the west," he said.

The second IIC-Bruegel annual seminar is being held at the India International Centre (IIC) from February 4-5.

"The world is currently witnessing two major conflicts, these are often presented as matters of principle. We are told that the very future of the world order is at stake. Yet, the record

shows how selectively and unevenly these principles have been applied," Jaishankar said.

In his address, he also touched upon the aspects of trade and digital technology, climate action, and their interplay with geopolitics.

He said today there is much talk about the world order unraveling. "The fact is that the consensus which underpinned it, has done so well before."

"There are North-South contradictions as much there is an East-West divide. In fact, even these broad characterisations are no longer tenable in an era of sharper nationalism," the external affairs minister said.

Both economic and political logic of an earlier era needs refreshing, Jaishankar said.

"Much of the architecture will undoubtedly continue because we are too deeply invested into it, but some of it, perhaps aspects that are critical and sensitive, will be more nationally driven," he added.

The EAM in his address asserted, "We are truly entering a time of multipolarity and rebalancing, the sooner we come to

terms with this reality, the better for all of us." He underlined that these are some of the questions that India and the European Union confront today.

"It is important that as we reflect on appropriate policies and responses, there is a quest for convergence as well as an honesty in conversations. We clearly have common interests and shared values, there may be some differences on prioritise and specifics, but what binds us is a sentiment much stronger," the Union minister said.

"At the end of the day, we are political democracies, pluralistic societies and market economies," he said.

The minister said as the two sides take stock of the changes underway, it is likely that "our meeting points will increase".

"Moreover, in a world that promises to be so volatile, so uncertain, a stronger India-EU relationship can be an important stabilising factor," Jaishankar said.

India is certainly cognisant of the greater strategic awakening of Europe in the last few years, that too can serve as a "driver of deeper engagement", he added.

"We already see that happening, for example, in defence and security and technology cooperation. The bottom line is that our India-EU relationship is more important than even before," the EAM said.

India has robust system to tackle pandemics: Health Minister

NEW DELHI, Feb 4 (Agencies): India has a very robust system to deal with future pandemics and public health emergencies, Union Health and Family Welfare Minister JP Nadda asserted in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday.

Replying to supplementary questions in the Rajya Sabha, Nadda highlighted the steps taken by the government in the last 10 years to strengthen India's health system, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

India has proven under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi that we have got a very robust system to address the issue of any pandemic that comes, the minister said.

Listing out India's capabilities, Nadda said the country has the

National Center for Disease Control (NCDC), which oversees and keeps surveillance.

"It is the apex body which takes care of the diseases and the pathogens, and the other emerging virus mutation, which takes place," he added.

Under the NCDC, he said the country has an integrated disease surveillance programme, a platform for disease surveillance.

"We have got the RRT, which is called the rapid response team, which is there in the states. And we have got very decentralised multidisciplinary teams for health control and containment.

And also, we have got an integrated health information platform where advanced data with analysis and analytical data and data modelling tools are there,"

the minister said.

"We give real-time reporting for all the emerging pandemics or there are chances of having any pandemic."

The Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) has 150 labs, he said, adding that there are viral research diagnostic laboratories. India has a world-class National Institute of Virology in Pune.

"So, we have got a very robust system wherever any pandemic or any chances of the pandemic are there, these laboratories confirm what type of mutation is taking place, what change, what type of medicine or what type of treatment is to be given," Nadda said.

The minister further said the Prime Minister has taken one step forward and launched the National One Health



Mission.

"We get diseases because of pesticides. We get diseases because of the environment.

We get diseases because of the nature of the plants, which is changing.

We get diseases because of the medicines that are being given to the animals. What is the impact altogether? So for that, we have also started (a programme), which is

known as the National One Health Mission," the minister said.

In a written reply, Nadda said the prevention of and preparedness against the pandemic is a shared global responsibility.

In order to better prepare against future pandemics/public health emergencies in the country, the ministry provides requisite support to states/UTs to enhance their capabilities.

Private school in Karnataka receives hoax bomb threat through email

Upon translation into English, the email was found to discuss Tamil Nadu politics

KALABURAGI, Feb 4 (Agencies): A private school in the city received a bomb threat via email on Tuesday, following which the students were evacuated, police said.

An intensive search was carried out on the school premises, and it turned out to be a hoax, they said.

"A private educational institution in Kalaburagi

city received a threat email. As soon as the institute informed us, local police arrived at the scene and evacuated the students.

We immediately deployed an anti-sabotage team along with a bomb detection and disposal squad to thoroughly inspect and sanitise the area," Kalaburagi police commissioner Sharanappa S D said.



After a comprehensive screening, it was confirmed to be a hoax

bomb threat email, he added. A case has been regis-

tered and the matter will be investigated, he said.

Sharing further details about the email, Sharanappa said the subject mentioned an RDX bomb blast in the school, but the entire content was in Tamil.

He said that upon translation into English, the email was found to discuss Tamil Nadu politics.

Gujarat Govt forms committee to assess need for UCC, draft bill

GANDHINAGAR, Feb 4 (Agencies): The BJP Government in Gujarat on Tuesday formed a committee headed by a retired Supreme Court judge to assess the need for the Uniform Civil Code in the state and also draft a bill for the same.

The five-member committee, to be headed by former SC judge Ranjana Desai, will submit its report within 45 days, following which a decision about implementation of the UCC will be taken, Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel said addressing a press conference here.

The committee will also meet religious leaders, including from the Muslim community, to prepare the report, a senior Government official said.

"To assess the need for a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) and to prepare a draft bill for the same, we have decided to form a committee under the former judge of the Supreme Court," CM Patel said.

Other members of the committee include retired IAS officer CL Meena, advocate RC Kodekar, former vice chancellor of Veer Narmad South Gujarat University Dakshesh Thakar and social worker Gita Shroff.

Notably, the BJP-ruled Uttarakhand has already implemented the UCC. CM Patel said the Gujarat govern-



ment is committed to fulfil Prime Minister Narendra Modi's resolve of implementing the UCC across the country.

The five-member committee will examine various aspects related to the UCC and take views of the people from different walks of life to prepare its report, he said.

An "appropriate decision" will be taken after going through the report, the CM said.

Minister of State for Home Harsh Sanghavi said that the UCC, if implemented, will protect the rights of tribals.

"The UCC implemented by the Uttarakhand government presented a model before the country because it protects the customs and traditions of tribals. Our (Union) Home Minister Amit Shah has also clarified in Jharkhand that UCC will protect the traditions followed by tribals," Sanghavi said.

He said the committee will also meet religious leaders, including Muslim leaders, to prepare the report.

Akhilesh Yadav demands all party meeting on Maha Kumbh stampede

NEW DELHI, Feb 4 (Agencies): Samajwadi Party National President and Kannauj MP Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday slammed the Central government over the stampede in Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj and demanded an all party meeting to ascertain the "root cause" of the incident.

Participating in the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President's address in the Lok Sabha, Yadav said "When the government is continuously giving the budget figures, it also should give the figures of those who died in Maha Kumbh.

I demand an all-party meeting should

be called to give clarification about the arrangements for Maha Kumbh".

According to the figures provided by the Uttar Pradesh government, 30 people were killed and 60 injured in the stampede that occurred during the Mauni Amavasya at the Mahakumbh on January 29.

The SP National President also demanded strict action against those who are behind the stampede.

He said the figures for the deaths in Maha Kumbh accident, treatment of injured, availability of medicines, doctors, food, water, transport should be presented in



the Parliament.

For the Maha Kumbh tragedy, there should be strict punitive action against those responsible and those who have hidden the truth should be punished.

The Kannauj MP added that "The responsibility of Maha Kumbh disaster management and an AI-based lost and found centre should be given to the Army."

He questioned why provisions were not made to prevent such an incident when the government was prepared to host over 100 crore people in the Maha Kumbh festival.

On the President's address, Akhilesh said

"There was nothing new in the address. Nothing of significance was spoken during the address, she didn't raise any important issues during her speech."

Earlier, Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi gave an adjournment notice in the Lok Sabha over the issue of the Maha Kumbh stampede in Prayagraj.

"I rise to discuss the tragic incident that occurred during the Maha Kumbh at Prayagraj, where a horrific stampede resulted in the loss of numerous lives and left many others injured," Gogoi said.

Israel prepares for next round of ceasefire negotiations with Hamas

TEL AVIV, Feb 4 (Agencies): Following Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's discussions in Washington, Israel will dispatch a working-level delegation to Qatar at the end of the week to address technical aspects of the second phase of a ceasefire with Hamas, the Prime Minister's office said on Tuesday morning.

After returning from the US, Netanyahu will convene Israel's political-security cabinet to review the country's stance on the second phase of the deal, shaping future negotiations. Under the terms of the ceasefire that began on January 19, phase two talks were scheduled to begin on Monday. However, Netanyahu delayed the process until after



his meeting with US National Security Advisor Mike Waltz and US President Donald Trump's special envoy to the Middle East, Steve Witkoff. After returning from the US, Netanyahu will convene Israel's political-security cabinet

to review the country's stance on the second phase of the deal, shaping future negotiations.

The ongoing first phase of the ceasefire is supposed to see a total of 33 Israeli hostages freed over six weeks in exchange for

hundreds of Palestinian terrorists imprisoned in Israel. The exact number will depend on how many are alive. So far, 18 hostages — 13 Israelis and five Thais — have been released.

The fate of the remaining 65 hostages will be determined by negotiations to begin on the 16th day of the ceasefire. Critics say the phased approach condemns hostages not freed in the beginning to open-ended captivity and undermines Israel's war gains.

At least 1,200 people were killed, and 252 Israelis and foreigners were taken hostage in Hamas's attacks on Israeli communities near the Gaza border on October 7. Of the 79 remaining hostages, 35 have been declared dead.

China counters Trump, imposes 15% tariffs on coal, LNG



BEIJING, Feb 4 (Agencies): China's Ministry of Commerce announced Tuesday it was implementing counter tariffs against the US on multiple products, while announcing other trade-related measures, including an investigation into Google.

The government said it would implement 15

per cent tariff on coal and liquified natural gas products, as well as a 10 per cent tariff on crude oil, agricultural machinery, large-displacement cars.

"The US's unilateral tariff increase seriously violates the rules of the World Trade Organization," the statement said. "It is not only unhelpful in solving its own problems, but also

damages normal economic and trade cooperation between China and the US."

The 10 per cent tariff that President Donald Trump ordered on China was set to go into effect Tuesday, though Trump planned to talk with Chinese President Xi Jinping in the next few days.

China's State Administration for Market Regulation on Tuesday said it is investigating Google on suspicion of violating antitrust laws. While the announcement did not specifically mention any tariffs, the announcement came just minutes after Trump's 10% tariffs were to take effect.

Sri Lanka must unite to achieve economic freedom: Prez Dissanayake

COLOMBO, Feb 4 (Agencies): President Anura Kumara Dis-sanayake on Tuesday said that Sri Lanka must work in unison to achieve economic freedom rather than yield to vulnerabilities within the global economic system.

Addressing the 77th Independence Day celebrations of the island nation, Dissanayake said, "Collectively, we must persist in our struggle for freedom on behalf of this motherland."

"To secure our economic freedom, rather than succumbing to weakness in the global economic system and being overwhelmed by its every fluctuation, we must unite in our efforts for this motherland," said the 56-year-old president.

In keeping with his government's policy of minimizing state expenditures as the island nation struggles to emerge from the 2022 economic crisis, this year's celebrations saw a reduction in the usual pomp and pageantry.



Only 1,800 military personnel were deployed in the parade, a reduction of over 1,500 personnel from last year. From last year's 19 aircraft, this morning's celebrations featured only three aircraft.

Dissanayake, who was elected president in a narrow win in September's presidential election, created history for his National People's Power (NPP) party in the parliamentary election held in November last year.

His party won two-thirds of control in the 225-member assembly and more significantly, overwhelming support in the Tamil regions.

The Tamils had eschewed support for

the main Sinhala community political parties in Sri Lanka's political history.

This was the first time that a government had won two-thirds control or over 150 seats in a parliamentary election held since 1989.

Dissanayake inherited an economy battered by the 2022 crisis. He has completed the long-drawn-out-debt restructuring of the island's external debt — a process all but completed by his predecessor Ranil Wickremesinghe before last year's presidential election.

The island nation, in April 2022, declared its first-ever sovereign default since gaining independence from Britain in 1948.

US, Philippine fighter aircraft jointly patrol disputed shoal region guarded by China

MANILA, Feb 4 (Agencies): U.S. and Philippine fighter aircraft staged a joint patrol and training Tuesday over a disputed South China Sea shoal where Chinese fighter jets fired flares last year to drive away a Philippine aircraft, Philippine officials said.

The joint patrol and air-intercept drills over the hotly disputed Scarborough Shoal off the northwestern Philippines were the first by the longtime treaty allies since U.S. President Donald Trump took office again.

Trump's "America First" foreign policy thrust has sparked concerns among Washington's allies in Asia about the scale and depth of U.S. commitment to the region in his new term. His predecessor, Joe Biden, had moved to strengthen an arc of security alliances in the region to counter China's increasingly assertive actions.

Two U.S. Air Force B-1 bomber aircraft and three Philippine Air Force FA-50 fighter jets joined the brief patrol and training, which involved practicing how to intercept a hostile aircraft, Philippine air force spokesperson Maria Consuelo Castillo said in a news briefing.

It was not immediately known if the joint patrol encountered any challenge from Chinese forces guarding the Scarborough Shoal.

"The exercises focused on



enhancing operational coordination, improving air domain awareness and reinforcing agile combat employment capabilities between the two air forces," the Philippine Air Force said.

In August last year, two Chinese air force aircraft flew close then fired flares in the path of a Philippine air force plane on a Philippine air force plane on a routine patrol over the Scarborough Shoal in actions that were strongly condemned and protested by the Philippine government, military officials said.

All those aboard the Philippine air force NC-212i turbo-prop transport plane were unharmed, the Philippine military said.

The Southern Theater Command of the Chinese People's Liberation Army said then that a Philippine air force aircraft "illegally" entered the airspace above the shoal and disrupted

training activities by Chinese forces. It warned the Philippines to "stop its infringement, provocation, distortion and hyping-up."

The Philippine military chief, Gen. Romeo Brawner, said at the time that the incident "posed a threat to Philippine air force aircraft and its crew, interfered with lawful flight operations in airspace within Philippine sovereignty and jurisdiction and contravened international law and regulations governing safety of aviation."

China and the Philippines have had increasingly alarming faceoffs in the shoal, which is called Bajo de Masinloc by the Philippines and Huangyan Island by China.

"We are always prepared for any contingency, it's part of the training," Castillo said when

asked if the allied forces had prepared to address any challenge by Chinese aircraft.

"It already happened before and, as I have said, whatever the coercive, aggressive actions of any foreign party, the Philippine air force will not be deterred to perform its mandate," Castillo said.

The U.S. military has reported encountering such dangerous maneuvers by Chinese air force planes in the past over the disputed waters, where it has deployed fighter jets and navy ships to promote freedom of navigation and overflight.

China has bristled at U.S. military deployments in the disputed region, saying these have endangered regional security.

Aside from China and the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, Vietnam and Taiwan have overlapping territorial claims in the busy sea passage, a key global trade and security route, but hostilities have particularly flared in the past two years between Chinese and Philippine coast guard and navy forces in the Scarborough Shoal and another fiercely contested atoll, the Second Thomas Shoal.

Washington has repeatedly warned that it's obligated to defend the Philippines, its oldest treaty ally in Asia, if Philippine forces, ships and aircraft come under an armed attack, including in the South China Sea.

Pak to send registered Afghan refugees back to their country

ISLAMABAD, Feb 4 (Agencies): The Pakistan Government has devised a plan to move registered Afghan refugees out of Islamabad and gradually repatriate them back to their country.

Authorities have also been directed to implement the plan without making any public announcement, Dawn newspaper reported quoting sources.

It reported that the plan was finalised in a series of meetings presided by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif last week.

One of the meetings was also attended by Chief of Army Staff Gen Syed Asim Munir, a source in the prime minister's office confirmed.

Under phase I of the relocation plan, Afghan nationals having the Afghan Citizens Card (ACC) will be "immediately" moved out of Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

They will then be sent back to Afghanistan alongside illegal and undocumented refu-

gees.

ACC is an identification document issued to registered Afghan nationals by Nadra.

According to the UN's International Organisation for Migration (IOM), ACC gives temporary legal status to Afghans during their stay in Pakistan.

However, the federal government makes the decision on the duration for which the ACC would remain valid.

Afghan nationals who have a Proof of Registration Card (PoR), which allows them to stay anywhere in Pakistan legally, will be repatriated in the second phase of the plan.

They would be "moved out" of Islamabad and Rawalpindi, but wouldn't be deported immediately, sources said, adding that the cabinet had allowed POR-holding Afghans to remain in the country till June.

The total number of Afghans living in Pakistan with PoR and ACC is estimated to be 1.3 million and 700,000, respectively.



Meanwhile, Afghans awaiting resettlement in third countries will be moved out of Islamabad and Rawalpindi by March 31.

According to sources, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will coordinate with embassies and other global organisations to expedite the resettlement process.

Any Afghans who couldn't be resettled in a third country will also be sent back to Afghanistan.

According to Shawn VanDiver, the founder of #AfghanEvac, a leading coalition of resettlement and veterans groups, 10,000 to 15,000 are in Pakistan waiting for visas or resettlement in the US.

It is unclear what number of these Afghans live in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. However, the decision to move them out of the twin cities is expected to create a host of logistical challenges for the refugees, many of whom have to visit foreign missions and offices of global humanitarian organisations in Islamabad.

Many of the Afghan nationals awaiting resettlement to a third country are also enrolled in language centres in the federal capital.

The Ministry of Interior will lead the relocation and deportation plans, and intelligence agencies, IB and ISI, will monitor their implemen-

tation.

Pakistan started a nationwide crackdown in 2023 to deport millions of Afghans, which the government said were living illegally in the country. According to IOM, 805,991 Afghans have returned to their country since September 15, 2023.

Human rights activists and civil society members have criticised the forced repatriation and filed a petition in the Supreme Court.

The petition was last heard by a seven-judge bench headed by Justice Amin-ud-din Khan on January 7. During the hearing, the federal government assured the court that all registered Afghan refugees, including those having PoRs or ACC, would be provided full legal protection and not be apprehended or deported.

However, in a report last month, IOM said hundreds of Afghan nationals were arrested and detained in Islamabad in the last two weeks of December, according to Dawn.

Japanese man who threw pipe bomb at ex-PM Kishida tells court he didn't intend to kill



TOKYO, Feb 4 (Agencies): A man who threw a homemade pipe bomb at former Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at a 2023 campaign event denied that he intended to kill the politician as his trial began Tuesday at a court in western Japan. Ryuji Kimura, 25, is charged with attempted murder for the April 15, 2023 attack on Kishida at a small fishing port in the city of Wakayama, as well as four other charges including violations of laws controlling explosives and deadly weapons.

The then-prime minister was unhurt, but two people sustained minor injuries. Kimura was arrested on the spot.

At Tuesday's trial at the Wakayama District Court, Kimura pleaded not guilty to attempted murder, saying he didn't intend to kill Kishida, according to Japan's NHK public television and other media. They said Kimura admitted to making the bombs and other charges.

A ruling is expected later this month. The attack on Kishida came about a year after the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe during

Prosecutors said the bomb Kimura threw at Kishida was one of two he brought to the campaign event.

Social media postings later suggested Kimura had grievances about Japan's election system. Authorities found parts of the pipe bomb stuck in a container 60 meters (65 yards) away from the venue. Prosecutors say that it was potentially lethal.

AJKGRDS to take out Shoba Yatra on Feb 9 to commemorate 648th Prakash Divas of Guru Ravidass

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 4: The All Jammu & Kashmir Shree Guru Ravidass Sabha (AJKGRDS) is all set to organize a grand Shoba Yatra on February 9, 2025, to mark the 648th Prakash Divas of Shree Guru Ravidass Ji Maharaj. The final preparations for this event were shared in a press conference attended by key members of the Managing Committee and branch heads.

The Shoba Yatra, or Nagar Kirtan, will commence at 11 AM from the Krishna Nagar Gurudwara and will conclude at the Bahu Fort Gurudwara around 2:30-3:00 PM. The procession will pass through several key locations in Jammu, including Guru Ravidass Chowk, Secretariat Rotary, City Chowk, and Raghunath Bazar, with devotees participating on foot, by personal vehicles, and in tableaux from various parts of Jammu city and surrounding areas.

The event will culminate at



GRDS Bahufort Gurudwara, where Sri Sri 108 Swami Gurdeep Giri Ji, a prominent religious leader, will deliver sermons. The District Police and Civil Administration have been informed well in advance, ensuring the smooth execution of the event.

In the lead-up to the celebrations, the Managing Committee announced the formation of two committees: one for the overall event and a dedicated youth committee. Both will oversee

the logistics and organization of the Prakash Utsav, which will take place on February 12, 2025, at the Krishna Nagar Head Office.

Er. R.C. Bhasin, a prominent committee member, shared details of the event and also highlighted the unity achieved within the community following the resolution of a long-standing dispute. He emphasized the importance of this occasion for the Ravidassia Biradri, which represents nearly 4 lakh mem-

bers in Jammu and Kashmir.

Prof. Shivgotra urged the participation of people from all walks of life, particularly members of other Scheduled Castes and communities, to join the Shoba Yatra in paying respects to the great saint, Guru Ravidass Ji Maharaj.

The committee also expressed confidence that the civil and police authorities would make all necessary arrangements to ensure a peaceful and successful event.

Prominent amongst others who participated were Prof. G.L. Thapa, Er. Joginder Paul, T.C. Bavouria, Dev Raj Angral, Surjeet Heer, Kuldeep Fougi, Sham Kalsi, Tarsem Loach, Gourab Ravidassia, Pritam Dass, Des Raj, Prabdh Dayal, Romesh Kumar, Ashok Thapa, Er. Madan Basson, Er. Surinder Dewagowda, Er. Darshan Kalsotra, Sham Lal Kundal, Tara Chand Sambyal, Vinod Kumar, Bikram Basson and many others.

Adv Nikhil demands high-level inquiry into disappearance of government records



Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 4: Advocate Nikhil Padha, founder of the Organization For Human Rights and Harmony, has called for immediate action following the reported disappearance of crucial government records.

In a press conference today, Padha highlighted the gravity of the situation, emphasizing the need for an independent inquiry to determine whether the incident was a result of negligence or part of a larger conspiracy.

Advocate Padha has demanded that a transparent and impartial

investigation be conducted to uncover the root cause of the disappearance of these vital records. He stressed that the truth must be revealed to restore public faith in the system.

Padha urged that officers incharge of maintaining records be held accountable. He emphasized the importance of ensuring that those responsible for the security and management of official documents are answerable for such incidents.

To prevent similar occurrences in the future, Padha called for the implementation of regular audits to

ensure the proper maintenance, tracking, and security of government records.

Padha demanded that the findings of the investigation be made public. He stated that it is crucial for the Crime Branch to expedite its probe and restore public trust by ensuring full transparency.

Padha emphasized that the disappearance of these documents is not merely a clerical error, but a serious attack on transparency and accountability within the government.

He demanded that immediate action be taken to address the issue and prevent such misconduct in the future.

Advocate Nikhil Padha and Mahesh Chander, a prominent political activist, calling for swift action to protect the integrity of public administration.

No new grave dug Post-Article 370 abrogation in J&K due to violence: Altaf Thakur slams NC MP Aga Ruhullah

Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Feb 4: Senior BJP leader and Jammu & Kashmir spokesperson Altaf Thakur launched a scathing attack on National Conference (NC) Member of Parliament Aga Syed Ruhullah for his recent remarks, where Ruhullah claimed that the abrogation of Article 370 has "choked Jammu & Kashmir's economy" and that Muslims across India are facing increasing threats.

Countering these claims, Thakur stated emphatically, "Not a single new grave was dug due to violence after the abrogation of special status." He highlighted that the move to revoke Article 370 in August 2019 has ushered in an era of unprecedented peace and stability in Jammu and Kashmir, with a significant decline in incidents of violence



and militancy-related activities.

"Today, peace prevails in every corner of Jammu and Kashmir. The atmosphere of fear and unrest that existed for decades has been replaced by hope, stability, and security," Thakur said. He pointed out that the region has witnessed record voter turnout in both Lok Sabha and parliamentary elections since the abrogation, reflecting the people's growing faith in democratic processes and governance.

Refuting Ruhullah's allegations about threats to Muslims in India, Thakur asserted that the Narendra Modi-led

government is committed to the principle of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas", ensuring inclusive development for all citizens, irrespective of caste, color, or creed. "There is no threat to any community in India. The government's focus is on inclusive growth, economic development, and ensuring equal opportunities for everyone," he added.

Hitting back at Ruhullah's demand for the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's pre-1953 position, Thakur criticized it as "an outdated and separatist agenda" that has no place in today's progressive and unified India. "Such demands only serve to mislead the people and align with separatist narratives that the people of Jammu and Kashmir have rejected. The focus now is on peace, development, and integration with the rest of the country," Thakur stated.

Artisans, weavers raise concerns over JKTPO's stall allotment, high fees in Trade Fair

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 4: The Jammu and Kashmir Trade Promotion Organization (JKTPO) is facing growing criticism from local weavers and artisans regarding the stall allotment process for various exhibitions, particularly the upcoming Delhi Trade Fair.

The organization has been accused of arbitrarily allotting stalls in a way that overlooks deserving artisans from Jammu province, raising concerns about fairness and transparency.

Local weavers and artisans are especially frustrated with the high stall rental fees imposed by JKTPO.

Many argued that the charges are prohibitively expensive and unsustainable for small-scale artisans, who may be forced to skip the opportunity to exhibit their products at



prominent events like the Delhi Trade Fair.

They are urging the authorities to review the fee hike and consider returning to last year's rental rates. If the rates remain unchanged, many believe the growth and promotion of Jammu's handloom and handicraft sector will be hindered.

In contrast, other states that organize exhibitions in New Delhi and other parts of the country, as well as central government departments like Handloom and Handicrafts, offer much lower stall rental fees. This disparity has added to the growing frustration

among Jammu weavers and artisans, who are demanding a similar approach to stall allotment at affordable rates.

Another critical issue raised by the community is the lack of clear criteria for the allocation of stalls.

It has been reported that the quota of stalls allocated by the central government to Jammu and Kashmir often gets diverted to the Kashmir Directorate of Handloom/Handicrafts, leaving the Jammu Directorate with insufficient stalls to meet the demand from Jammu's weavers and artisans. As a result, many weavers are unable to show-

case their products at important exhibitions. Local stakeholders have called on the government to develop a fair and transparent allocation system that ensures both Jammu and Kashmir provinces receive their equitable share of stalls.

Furthermore, there is a growing need for a dedicated space or art and craft market for Jammu weavers and artisans. It has been proposed that such a market be created along the National Highway, which is frequented by tourists and pilgrims.

This would provide weavers with a permanent place to showcase their products. A few years ago, the Government of India had proposed the construction of two Urban Hatts, one in Jammu and one in Kashmir, with allocated funds for the project. However, these funds have not yet been uti-

lized.

In addition to these issues, local weavers and artisans have also been neglected when it comes to receiving sponsorships for important craft events such as the Surajkund Craft Mela (Haryana), Toshali Craft Mela (Odisha), Delhi Haat Master Creations, and Agra Mohotsav Mela. Due to the negligence of the Department of Handloom/Handicrafts, many Jammu artisans have been unable to participate in these high-profile events, further limiting their exposure and opportunities for growth.

Local artisans and weavers are urging the government and concerned authorities to take immediate action, ensuring fair treatment, financial support, and equal opportunities for Jammu's craft community.

FromPage No:1

200 Indians deported from US will land at Punjab's Amritsar airport

workplace.

"We want Indian talent and Indian skills to have the maximum opportunity at the global level.

"We are very firmly opposed to illegal mobility and illegal migration," Jaishankar had said.

The EAM had conveyed the stance to US Secretary of State, Marco Rubio.

Those being deported on Tuesday have been verified by India of being its nationals.

US President Trump has increasingly turned to the military to help carry out his immigration agenda, including using military aircraft to deport migrants and opening military bases to house them.

The Pentagon has also started providing flights to deport more than 5,000 immigrants held by US authorities in El Paso, Texas, and San Diego, California.

So far, the military aircraft have flown migrants to Guatemala, Peru and Honduras, all within a couple of hours flying distance from US.

Delhi Police book CM Atishi for Model Code of Conduct 'violation'

action was taken as the AAP candidate was found at Fateh Singh Marg along with 50-70 supporters

and 10 vehicles. Police instructed them to vacate the area as per MCC guidelines. But they obstructed an officer from doing his duties, he said.

The official X handle of DCP (Southeast) posted, "On Tuesday, at 12.59 am, a gathering was reported at Baba Fateh Singh Marg, Govindpuri. Head Constable Kaushal Pal responded and began videography. AAP members Ashmit and Sagar Mehta obstructed and assaulted him."

Atishi took to X to slam the Election Commission for the police case against her.

In a post on X, she claimed her BJP rival from Kalkaji, Ramesh Bidhuri, and members of his family were openly resorting to "hooliganism" but no action has been taken, but they lodged a case against her.

In response, BJP leader Bidhuri said Atishi was in panic over her imminent defeat and suggested that she should not "shred the dignity" of the constitutional post held by her.

Kulgam attack disputes centre's normalcy claims in J&K: Dr Farooq

he said.

While responding to a query, the NC president said that let the Delhi polls happen, everything will be cleared. "Previously they (BJP) were claiming they will sweep polls in Jammu & Kashmir, but what happened when results came out. They were claiming that they will

emerge from upward and downward sides, but people showed them door. So let election to happen in Delhi, and results come out, everything will be cleared," he said.

Hundreds detained in Kulgam for questioning as major probe underway into ex-soldier's killing

areas, and suspected hideouts. Drones and sniffer dogs have also been deployed to assist in tracking down the assailants.

"Multiple teams have been formed to investigate the incident and identify those responsible. We are questioning several individuals and analyzing CCTV footage and other technical evidence," a senior police officer told Greater Kashmir.

Hundreds of people from the village and adjoining hamlets have been detained for questioning, he said, adding that they suspect that the attackers may have received logistical support from local contacts.

"We are working on multiple leads and are confident that the perpetrators will be brought to justice soon," the officer added.

Sajad, Para accuse NC-led J&K govt of endorsing Aug 5

decisions

legal challenge —now we have a shocker," he wrote.

"The same Assembly is being used to bury any such chances of legal challenges in the future. The present assembly reflecting the will of people of J and K, will now be remembered as the endorser not the rejector of August 5 2019," he added.

"The Assembly which we thought will be the voice of people of J and K is now a shameless rubber stamp of the perpetrators of August 5. The ruling NC led government purposely constituted a Committee which had 6 NC members and 2 BJP members. There was no one from the Kashmir based opposition parties or MLAs," Lone wrote.

"This committee endorses all changes made on 5 August 2019. By virtue of this draft— they even take away references to J&K Constitution and bills governing permanent residents from the Rules. Such a cruel joke at the expense of people of Kashmir," he said.

"Let me briefly summarise the NC BJP covert agreement to endorse and normalise 5 August 2019. First they script the context. NC starts the "all are BJP" discourse. Second, the BJP mysteriously behaves in a manner which endorses that discourse. The discourse is strengthened and then elections are announced. While the people of J and K to some extent subscribe to the "all others are BJP" discourse, the agencies led by a retired old war horse in uninterrupted engagement with the NC from the last 3 years, ensures

total compliance of the agencies in favour of NC," he wrote.

"This 42 seat lottery is a gift in order to endorse. The NC is the master endorser of all the changes that Delhi had brought in. Remember the older gifts in lieu of endorsements. 1975 gift of government with no MLAs to endorse erosions from 1950 to 1975. 1996 gift of government on a platter by conducting an exercise of selection in Kashmir and calling it election. That was to endorse the killings and acts of violence committed by the state. And now 2024 gift to endorse changes made on 5 August 2019. It is a curse to be an MLA of an assembly which will be remembered for endorsing 5 August," Lone wrote.

Meanwhile, PDP MLA Waheed Para posted a screenshot of a news report on X which read: "The modifications have been proposed to make the rules in sync with the constitutional changes effected on August 5, 2019," a member of the committee wishing to remain anonymous said.

"The modified J&K Assembly business rules mark a shift from Article 370, effectively endorsing the constitutional changes of August 5, 2019. A clear acknowledgment of the new status quo," Para wrote on X.

Haji Applications on the Decline, Not Only in Kashmir but Across the Country: Executive

Officer of the J&K HC

starting shortly a month after the conclusion of Hajj 2024, only 4,150 applications were received, and many of the applicants have since withdrawn, reducing the final number of confirmed pilgrims to 3,622, as per HC.

"This year, we have seen a sharp decline in applications for the Hajj pilgrimage, not just in Jammu and Kashmir but nationwide," said the Executive Officer of the J&K Hajj Committee. "A decade ago, we used to receive between 3 to 3.5 lakh applications, but now, the total has dropped to just 1.5 lakh, leading to an under-fulfillment of our Hajj quota."

Several factors contribute to this reduced interest. "Many people are increasingly inclined towards performing Umrah, with around 20,000 to 30,000 pilgrims opting for it annually instead of Hajj," the Executive Officer explained.

The rising cost of Hajj, driven by inflation, has also made the pilgrimage more financially burdensome. Furthermore, extreme summer temperatures in Saudi Arabia during the Hajj season have become a significant factor as well.

In response, the Hajj Committee of India has introduced various measures to ensure the safety and preparedness of pilgrims.

"We have advised the pilgrims to focus on both physical and mental preparedness. It is essential for them to engage in daily exercises, such as long-distance walking of up to six kilometers, to be ready for the challenges of the pilgrimage," advised the the Executive Officer.

The first group of pilgrims is scheduled to depart on April 29, 2025, marking the beginning of the the sacred journey this year.

People in Kashmir inspired by Modi's Good Governance: Sat Sharma

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 4: Jammu and Kashmir BJP President, Sat Sharma CA, while speaking to party leaders and members of civil society of Kashmir, said that people in Valley are coming forward to further strengthen BJP in their respective areas, which is indeed a good development.

BJP senior leader Rakesh Mahajan, Spokesperson Balbir Ram Rattan, and Brijesh Gupta were also present on the occasion.

Sat Sharma CA said that a wave of transformation is sweeping across Kashmir as people in large numbers on daily basis are expressing confidence in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's governance, which has laid a strong focus on development,



security, and economic growth and as a result, the UT has witnessed unprecedented progress over the past few years.

Sat Sharma CA said that from improved infrastructure to economic revival, the central government's initiatives have reshaped Kashmir's landscape. Major projects, including enhanced road networks, new rail links, and upgraded airports,

have boosted connectivity, facilitating trade and tourism.

The government's commitment to peace and security has also contributed to a significant decline in terror-related incidents. The influx of tourists, breaking all previous records, is a testament to growing stability. Various schemes of the Modi government have improved healthcare, housing, and water

supply, enhancing the quality of life.

Sat Sharma CA said that the people of Kashmir envision a future filled with hope and progress. With continued support from the central government, Kashmir is rapidly emerging as a symbol of India's development story under PM Modi's visionary leadership.

"The people in Kashmir are convinced that it is the BJP and the

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who have real concern and pain for them", Sat said adding that return of peace and normalcy have resulted in normal functioning of educational institutions, business establishment, transport, etc and every citizen in valley want the situation remain secure, which they, think is due to the bold and historic decisions of Modi government.

Prominent among those who called on Sat Sharma CA at party headquarters included Mehbooba Akhtar, BJP Mahila Morcha district president, Kulgam, Constituency President Dr. Majid Hussain Hakeem, Civil Society prominent persons Ashiq Hussain Shah, Rayees Ahmed Halla, besides office bearers of transport and business community of Kashmir.

Women ignored under NC rule in J&K: Rajni Sethi



Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 4: The statement of National Conference (NC) President regarding the empowerment of women in society appears to be more of a political stunt rather than a genuine commitment to women's rights, stated Rajni Sethi.

Rajni Sethi, spokesperson, J&K BJP was accompanied by Dr. Pardeep Mahotra, Media Incharge, J&K BJP, while she addressed a press conference at party headquarters, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu.

"If the NC government truly believed in women's empowerment, why did they not ensure equal rights for women in Jammu and Kashmir when they were in power in the past?", said Rajni Sethi.

For decades, women in J&K were deprived of fundamental rights due to discriminatory laws under Article 370 and Article 35A. A J&K woman who married an outsider was denied the right to inherit property from her parents,

whereas men faced no such restriction. Furthermore, women from marginalized communities like the Valmiki Samaj, West Pakistani refugees, and Gorkhas were denied voting rights and government jobs. If NC truly stood for women's rights, why did they never address these injustices?

Rajni Sethi said that it was only after the abrogation of Article 370 and 35A by the Modi government that women of all communities in J&K received equal rights. Now, whether a woman marries within J&K or outside, she retains her inheritance rights. Women are also participating in local governance through 33% reservation in BDC and DDC elections, and a historic bill has been passed in Parliament ensuring 33% reservation for women in assembly and parliamentary elections. Additionally, the BJP ensured 33% reservation for women in its organizational structure up to the state level. In contrast, the NC has failed to provide simi-

lar representation to women within its own party.

NC President Farooq Abdullah's statement on women's rights seems hollow when we look at the past injustices against Kashmiri women under his government. One critical question that remains unanswered is: Did the NC government take any concrete steps to deliver justice to Kashmiri Pandit women who were subjected to violence, rape, and displacement during the 1990s insurgency? Did they form any committee or appeal to displaced Kashmiri Pandit women to return and live safely in their homeland? The answer is no. Instead of addressing these historical wrongs, NC leaders have often engaged in mere rhetoric, while real reforms and justice for women in J&K have been achieved only under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Rajni Sethi further added that Farooq Abdullah's sympathy for women appears selective and politically motivated. If he is truly committed to women's empowerment, he should begin by ensuring equal representation for women in his own party and acknowledge the contributions of the current government in securing equal rights for all women in J&K.

District Poonch Wushu Championship to begin on Feb 8

Top News Report

POONCH, Feb 4: The District Wushu Association, under the auspices of the Wushu Association of Jammu and Kashmir, is set to organize the District Wushu Championship 2024-25 from February 8 to 9, 2025 at the Wushu Hall Poonch.

This event is supported by the Jammu and Kashmir Sports

Council and promises to be a significant sporting event for the region.

The championship will feature participants in various age groups, including boys and girls under 5, 9, and 14 years, as well as Junior and Senior Male and Female categories.

The decision to organize this championship was made during a meeting led by Priyanka

Singh, President of the District Poonch Taekwondo Association, and Sarvjeet Singh, Treasurer of the association, along with other office bearers at the District Association Office Poonch.

The organizers have invited all interested players from different institutions and clubs in District Poonch to participate in this exciting event.

Interested players are encouraged to register by contacting the event organizers at Mobile No: 6006729319 and confirm their registration by February 6, 2025, before 5:00 PM.

The championship aims to promote the sport of Wushu in the region and provide young athletes with a platform to showcase their skills and talents.

HDFC Bank Parivartan start-up grants to support over 50 start-ups with Rs 20 crore in FY25

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 4: HDFC Bank, India's leading private sector bank, announced the launch of the eighth edition of its flagship Parivartan Start-up Grants programme.

This year, more than 15 incubators and accelerators have been selected and on boarded to support 50-60 start-ups working in the social impact space. The programme will award grants of up to rupees 50 lakh to selected start-ups, with a total programme budget of Rs 20 crore.

IIT Madras, IIM Ahmedabad Ventures, Villgro, ICAR Pusa Krishi, IIT Guwahati Bionest, ASPIRE - University of Hyderabad, IIM-Calcutta Innovation Park, i-Hub Gujarat, Kerala Start-Up Mission, IFMR Catalyst AIC are among the incubators already shortlisted this year.

Over the next few months, these incubators will invite applications from social entrepreneurs across India. This initiative will culminate in a series of "Demo Day" events, showcasing start-ups to the Bank, investors, corporates, and media, ensuring greater visibility and opportunities for these ventures.

Key Focus Areas for FY25: In line with HDFC Bank's commitment to sustainable development and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the programme will focus on AI For Social Good, Climate Innovation, Financial Inclusion, Agriculture & Sustainable Rural Economy, Education & Livelihood

Enhancement and Gender Diversity and Inclusion.

Selected start-ups will represent diverse regions of India, including Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Haryana and North-East region states.

"Our Parivartan Start-up Grants programme is a testament to our commitment to fostering innovation and addressing critical societal needs. By nurturing social start-ups that are implementing solutions aimed at achieving SDG targets, we aim to support the creation of sustainable, inclusive solutions for communities across India," said Kaizad Bharucha, DMD, HDFC Bank.

"Through strategic partnerships with incubators and accelerators, we are building a robust start-up ecosystem. The programme empowers entrepreneurs with resources and visibility, enabling them to scale impactful solutions and contribute to India's development journey. Through the Parivartan Start-up Grants programme we aim to empower these innovative ventures to make a meaningful impact and create a better future for all," said Arup Rakshit, Group Head, Treasury, HDFC Bank.

Now in its eighth year, the Parivartan Start-up Grants programme continues to empower India's entrepreneurs who are making a social impact. Since 2017, it has supported over 400 start-ups through more than 120 incubators nationwide, investing significant resources to drive meaningful change.

Balvinder Singh meets Sakina Itoo, calls for urgent healthcare reforms

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 4: Prominent RTI and social activist Balvinder Singh met with Minister for Health & Medical Education, Sakina Masood Itoo, to discuss key healthcare challenges and propose critical reforms aimed at improving patient care management.

During the meeting, Singh presented several recommendations/suggestions, including: Ensuring Nutritious Diets for Patients: Introducing strict conditions in the new tender process to guarantee patients receive nutritious meals, including eggs and milk. Enhancing Transparency in Diet Distribution: Implementing stringent monitoring to ensure fair distribution of meals. Incentivizing Rural Postings for Doctors: Doubling the Housing Rent Allowance (HRA) for doctors serving in peripheral areas to make rural postings



more attractive. Establishing an online, uniform, and transparent transfer system ensuring that doctors who complete rural postings are automatically transferred to urban areas and vice versa—free from bureaucratic and political interference. Mandatory Rural Service for Doctors: Introducing a five-year compulsory service bond for doctors seeking admission to post graduate and super-specialty courses in government Medical colleges, with a penalty clause of 50 lakh for violations. Singh emphasized that since taxpayer money is used

to train doctors, they must be available where they are most needed—ensuring better medical access in rural areas and addressing the ongoing shortage of healthcare professionals.

Singh also demanded the closure of 15 Urban Health Centres (UHCs) located between 1.3 km and 8 km from existing health institutions like PHCs, CHCs, SDHs, DHs, and GMC Jammu. He named these UHCs as rehabilitation centres for influential individuals, citing RTI data showing that some doctors have been stationed in these UHCs for 10 to 25 years

while rural areas face severe doctor shortages. As a result, patients in remote regions compelled to travel over 50 km for treatment. Singh criticized the government's unnecessary expenditure of lakhs of rupees on UHCs with two to three Medical Officers and 5-10 staff members, despite their limited utility.

"Singh also updated the Minister regarding his petition pending in the Hon'ble High Court of J&K concerning the shortage of doctors. He filed this petition after obtaining information under RTI in 2018, which revealed a shortage of 50 to 55 Medical Officers (MOs) and 35% shortages of Non-Gazetted and Class IV employees in the Jammu region.

Additionally, Singh raised serious concerns over the exorbitant pricing of medicines at AMRIT Pharmacies within state-run hospitals, citing RTI data.

He also flagged irregularities in procurement via GeM (Government e-Marketplace), exposing a nexus between suppliers and buyers, who allegedly manipulated the process to purchase items at rates higher than prevailing market prices. Singh said his revelations were substantiated by Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) who on the basis of my Press Conference regarding the scam in GeM procurement, constituted a team under AIG (Policy) ACB who after verifying the facts issued an Alert Note vide No: ACB-E-218491 dated September 19, 2022.

Minister Sakina Masood Itoo assured the RTI Activist that his recommendations / suggestions would be thoroughly examined, and any measures beneficial for strengthening healthcare delivery and management would be seriously considered for implementation.

Mahant Rohit Shastri meets Tourism Director, holds discussions on promoting tourism

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 4: Mahant Rohit Shastri, President of Shri Kailakh Jyotish and Vedic Sansthan Trust, paid a courtesy visit to Dr. Vikas Gupta, Director of Tourism, Jammu, on Tuesday. On this occasion, they held extensive discussions on promoting religious and cultural tourism in Jammu and Kashmir.

Mahant Rohit Shastri appreciated the efforts made by the Tourism Department and stated that the department's proactive initiatives are giving a new direction to tourism in Jammu and Kashmir.

He also shared his suggestions regarding the preservation of religious sites, the



promotion of spiritual tourism, and the availability of better facilities for tourists.

Tourism Director Dr. Vikas Gupta provided insights into various government schemes aimed at improving and expanding the tour-

ism sector. He emphasized that the department is continuously working to bring global recognition to Jammu's religious and historical sites.

During the meeting, both parties stressed the need for collective efforts to preserve Jammu and Kashmir's cultural heritage and promote local religious tourism.

At the conclusion of this significant meeting, Mahant Rohit Shastri congratulated the Tourism Director and his team for their outstanding work and expressed hope that these efforts would continue in the future.

Former councilors Narottam Sharma and Kamal Gupta were also present on this occasion.

Indian Army organised veterinary camp for animals at Malut



Top News Report

RAJOURI, Feb 4: A veterinary camp was successfully organized by the Indian Army in collaboration with the Animal Husbandry Department, Malu, Rajouri.

The camp aimed to provide animal care advice, medicines, and education

on cattle health to the local population. The event was attended by Dr. Khalid Najeeb, Chief Animal Husbandry Officer, along with other doctors and staff. A total of 4 doctors, 5 attendants, and 116 civilians participated in the camp, which was a testament to the Indian Army's commitment to supporting the local community.

The veterinary camp is an exemplary initiative by the Indian Army to promote animal health and welfare in the region. By providing free medical aid and advice, the Indian Army has demonstrated its dedication to serving the nation and supporting local communities.

From selling water bottles at Attari-Wagah border to topping Hockey India League charts, a peep into Jugraj's inspiring journey

Born in Attari, Punjab, Jugraj's journey has been one of perseverance and grit.

NEW DELHI, Feb 4 (Agencies): In an inspiring turn of events, Indian men's hockey team player Jugraj Singh, who once sold Indian flags and water bottles at the Attari-Wagah border to support his family, emerged as the top scorer in the recently concluded Men's Hockey India League (HIL) 2024-25, while playing for Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers, the newly crowned champions of the elite tournament.

Born in Attari, Punjab, Jugraj's journey has been one of perseverance and grit.

When his father, who served as a porter in the Indian Army, fell ill, Jugraj took on the responsibility of earning for his family at a young age. Recalling those challenging days, Jugraj said as quoted by an HIL press release, "I never once questioned why I was doing it. At that time, my family was my top priority, and I knew that my hard work was the only way to support them and ensure we had food on the table."

"Selling water bottles and flags was my way of supporting my family when we had no other income. I believed that hard work, in whatever form, would pave the way for my future, and it did," he added.

Despite these early challenges, Jugraj's passion for hockey, inspired by his elder brother, never wavered as he began playing hockey at the age of seven. "My brother played hockey in our village, but when our father's health deteriorated, he gave up the game to take on our father's job. However, he



encouraged me to never stop playing and pushed me to excel in the sport. He deserves all the credit for where I am today."

Jugraj's perseverance culminated in an outstanding performance during his first-ever HIL season, where he netted 12 goals and played a pivotal role in his team's triumph. His memorable hat-trick in the final against Hyderabad Toofans was the icing on the cake.

Reflecting on the moment, Jugraj said, "Scoring a hat-trick in a final is something every player dreams of. I didn't plan it, but once I scored two goals, I felt in my zone and went for the third. Winning the top-scorer award in my maiden HIL season is a huge personal milestone, which I will cherish for a lifetime."

28-year-old defender Jugraj made full use of the HIL as a platform to showcase his talent. "I knew the HIL was a big opportunity for me to show what I'm capable of. I wanted to prove

that I could be a reliable goal-scorer and penalty corner converter not just for Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers but also for the Indian team. This tournament has given me the perfect stage to demonstrate my skills."

Jugraj attributes his success in Hero HIL to his meticulous preparation and dedication to self-improvement. "I always focused on reading the opposition goalkeepers before each match, which helped me convert penalty corners. I have made it a point to learn from every tournament, every game, and every player, whether senior or junior. I constantly work on improving myself, and will continue to do so till the day I'm playing hockey."

As he looks forward to upcoming international tournaments, Jugraj is keen to carry his form into the upcoming FIH Pro League in Bhubaneswar. "The HIL has given me a massive confidence boost. I am in good form, and if given the opportu-

nity, I will carry this momentum into the FIH Pro League and give my absolute best for the Indian team. It's a big tournament, and I want to keep pushing my limits."

Jugraj's journey from the Attari-Wagah border to becoming one of India's top hockey talents is a powerful testament to the importance of resilience and perseverance. "I have faced my share of obstacles, but I have always believed that hard work can overcome anything. I will continue to work hard as long as I have the strength to play for my India, because this country has given me everything."

He also expressed gratitude to his Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers Captain, Rupinder Pal Singh, for trusting him with crucial penalty corners in the Hero HIL, saying, "Rupinder's faith in me allowed me to prove my worth on the field. He guided me throughout the tournament, and I owe a lot of my success to his mentorship."

Looking ahead, Jugraj has set ambitious goals for his future in hockey. His eyes are firmly fixed on achieving success at the World Cup, the Asian Games, and the next Olympics, where he hopes to bring glory to India. "I am motivated to keep improving and delivering for the Indian team on the biggest stages. I want to win Gold at the World Cup, Asian Games and the Olympics. That is my next big goal, and I will continue to work hard and prepare myself for these challenges."

I wanted to lead MI CapeTown the way I led Afghanistan in T20WC: Rashid



GQEBERHA, Feb 4 (Agencies): Rashid Khan said he wanted to lead MI Cape Town in the same manner as he led Afghanistan during the T20 World Cup and credited his improved leadership this season to his familiarity with the team, which helped secure a spot in the SA20 playoffs.

After two forgettable seasons, MI Cape-Town now sits at the top of the points table with 30 points from nine matches ahead of the playoffs.

The 26-year-old led Afghanistan to a historic victory over Australia in the Super Eight stage of the T20 World Cup 2024, following which the team made it to the semifinals.

"I wanted to lead MI CapeTown the way I led Afghanistan in the T20 World Cup. Coach Robbie Peterson also encouraged me in this direction," Rashid, who captained MI Cape Town in the first season but missed out last

season due to injury, said in a media interaction ahead of the first qualifier against Paarl Royals.

"I think this year I knew the players quite well and spent more time with them so I had the knowledge about which bowler to use at what point of time.

"The most important thing was to have clear communication with the players. To have what is happening in the mind of the captain and to know what is going through in their minds. I think I could have done better in the first year but you just keep learning."

Rashid noted that every player has taken responsibility and risen to the occasion, marking a major shift from the previous seasons.

"In the last couple of years, we played good cricket, but it was just about that we haven't finished well. You know, we haven't hit those points where it was a matter of going to the

result," he said.

"I feel like this year we just have done that well. It's an overall team effort. Whoever got the opportunity, they have contributed for the team. Even if it's like he goes for one ball or two balls to hit there, he did it for the team."

Praising the contribution from the bowlers, Rashid said, "Everyone has been contributing with the ball as well. So, I feel like this year, this is a massive difference. The biggest thing is we're enjoying ourselves. You know, we're having fun and we're not much thinking about what the result will be."

Rashid emphasised the importance of having a leadership group in the team.

"It's very important for a captain to have a leadership group around as you always need support. Especially while coming from overseas and leading the team was not an easy job for me as a captain," he said.

"But to have that leadership is something that stood for us this year. Everyone knows their role and responsibilities which made my job easier."

"It's not just about me making decisions. It's about listening to the experienced players who have played extensively in these conditions. They know the local conditions better than anyone else, and their input is invaluable."

Suryakumar, Dube included in Mumbai squad for Ranji Trophy quarterfinal against Haryana

MUMBAI, Feb 4 (Agencies): India's T20 captain Suryakumar Yadav and Shivam Dube have been included in Mumbai's 18-member squad for their Ranji Trophy quarterfinal clash against Haryana, starting from February 8.

Both Suryakumar and Dube, who took part in the recently-concluded India-England five-match T20I series which the hosts won 4-1, have played one game each in Mumbai's title defence of the Ranji Trophy this season.

Mumbai qualified for the quarterfinals after their crushing victory by an innings and 456 runs against Meghalaya, while Jammu and Kashmir is the other team to make it to the knockouts from Elite Group A.

Suryakumar was a part of the Mumbai side



in their clash against Maharashtra in October, whereas Dube was a member of the star-studded hosts' side that included India Test and ODI skipper Rohit Sharma as well as Yas-hasvi Jaiswal, and which lost to J&K at home last month.

The 42-time winners Mumbai will travel to Rohtak where they will take on Haryana, who had finished at the top of Group C, at Chaudhary Bansi Lal Cricket Stadium in Lahli.

Among other inclu-

sions in the side is the uncapped Harsh Tanna, who has so far played four List A matches.

Mumbai squad: Ajinkya Rahane (c), Ayush Mhatre, Angkrish Raghuvanshi, Amogh Bhatkal, Suryakumar Yadav, Siddhesh Lad, Shivam Dube, Akash Anand (wk), Hardik Tamore (wk), Suryansh Shedge, Shardul Thakur, Shams Mulani, Tanush Kotian, Mohit Avasthi, Sylvester D'Souza, Royston Dias, Atharva Ankolekar, Harsh Tanna.

If he keeps getting out like this, Samson's mind will play tricks with him: R Ashwin

NEW DELHI, Feb 4 (Agencies): Former India spinner R Ashwin has expressed concern at T20 batting star Sanju Samson's lack of form, saying his mind will start "playing tricks" with him if he does not find a way out of the current rut.

The 30-year-old Samson, who will be out of action for a month due to a fracture in his right index finger, endured a terrible series against England's express pace and short balls.

He managed a mere 51 runs in the five-match contest that India won 4-1.

"...if Sanju keeps getting dismissed like this, as a batter, the mind will be playing tricks," Ashwin said.

"(It will force you to think) the bowler is bowling a certain way and I am getting dismissed like this, is the bowler bowling well or do I have a shortcoming? Will I be able to adapt? Once so many questions arise, then it becomes difficult," he explained.

Ashwin also advised out-of-form skipper Suryakumar Yadav to change his approach to come out of the form slump that he is also enduring right now.



Suryakumar could only manage 28 runs in the just-concluded series against England.

"I can understand it happening in one or two games, but it is quite surprising," Ashwin said on his Hindi YouTube channel.

"...when you know you are being attacked in a certain way, there should be a different approach to that ball or just avoid it and force the bowler to bowl at your strengths."

"Suryakumar Yadav is a very experienced guy. He has a lot of ability. One can say he brought about a change of guard in Indian batting, showing the way.

But the time has come for him to take some time out and change his approach," he added.

Ashwin said Samson, who has blown hot and cold throughout his run in international cricket, should take responsive actions to ensure that doubts don't creep into his subconscious mind.

"But Ashwin cited legendary Sachin Tendulkar's advice during last week's BCCI Naman Awards that players should use their subconscious mind too.

"Sachin Tendulkar also said during the (BCCI) awards function that (you must) do so many repetitions that you allow the subconscious mind to take over," he said.

"But if so much confusion comes over on the subconscious mind, then batting becomes a different ball game altogether." Ashwin said failing in T20 cricket is not the problem but the manner of dismissals can be a cause of concern.

"As an experienced cricketer I will not focus on someone failing in T20 cricket but on how is he getting out, what is his decision making is like, I will focus

on that. They are good enough players to find solutions and they will think over it," he said.

Ashwin said a player is always rated on his ability to handle pressure in the shortest formats.

"T20 cricket is (all) about failures, you are bound to fail. You will not be able to play percentage cricket. As per this, I will think (about) the player who can handle pressure and can deliver wins," he said.

"Those players can be given long rope because T20 cricket is not about consistency, it's about excitement, putting fear in the opposition." Ashwin also expressed surprise at England's approach across formats, saying they are losing more than they are winning due to their aggressive strategy.

"...if I was England, I would be really worried, because they play Bazball, one-day and T20 cricket... all that is fine," he said.

"One can talk about it as much as they want, sometimes they pull off wins too. But I think they are losing more than they are winning so it is a serious matter of concern."

Veteran Sri Lankan batter Dimuth Karunaratne to retire after playing 100th Test

Karunaratne has scored 7,172 runs at an average of just under 40, with 16 centuries and 34 half-centuries in 99 Tests in over nearly 14 years

GALLE, Feb 4 (Agencies): Former Sri Lanka captain Dimuth Karunaratne is set to retire from international cricket after playing his 100th Test, which will be the second and final match against Australia starting here on Thursday.

The 36-year-old, one of the most prolific batters for Sri Lanka, has scored 7,172 runs at an average of just under 40, with 16 centuries

and 34 half-centuries in 99 Tests in over nearly 14 years. He has also featured in 50 ODIs, scoring 1,316 runs with one century and 11 fifties.

"It is difficult for a Test player to keep himself motivated to play 4 Tests for a year and maintain his form," Karunaratne, who made his Test debut in 2012, was quoted as saying by 'Daily FT'.

"In the last two-three

years after the WTC (World Test Championship) was introduced, we have been having very little bilateral series. My current form is another reason; completing my 100 Tests, the end of the WTC cycle (2023-25), I thought is the right time to retire," he said.

Karunaratne plans to relocate to Australia with his family next month. Having made his first-class debut for Sinhalese Sports Club



(SSC) in 2008, he will play his final match for them against NCC in the SLC Major Club three

-Day Tournament from February 14-16.

"I have some personal plans of my own.

I've decided to retire after speaking to other senior players like Angie (Angelo Mathews) and Chandu (Dinesh Chandimal)," he said.

"Rather than the three of us retiring at the same time, it will be better for us to go one by one. I thought I will retire first because I know I cannot go for my next target – 10,000 runs – with the lesser number of Tests being played.

"I am happy with what

I have achieved so far. I want to announce my retirement with a happy moment like playing in my 100th Test," Karunaratne said.

He has been struggling for form of late, managing scores of 7 and 0 in the first Test against Australia in which Sri Lanka slumped to an innings and 242 run defeat to go 0-1 down in the two-Test series.

"Any cricketer's dream is to play 100 Tests and

score 10,000 runs. It's a big achievement. When you start playing cricket, you don't think of those targets, but when you continue playing, you come across different targets," Karunaratne said.

"But as Sri Lanka are playing less Test matches for a year, getting to 10,000 runs seems far away. Appearing in 100 Tests I feel is an achievement," he added.

IIM Jammu inaugurates trekking-based MDP for leadership skills for NTPC Managers

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 4: The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu under the leadership of Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu inaugurated a unique trekking-based Management Development Programme (MDP) for National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC's) dynamic young leaders at the Prahalad Classroom on Tuesday.

This leadership training program, conducted from Feb 3rd to Feb 5th, 2025, is designed to enhance leadership skills through experiential learning in the picturesque lower Himalayas. The program features seven carefully curated sessions aimed at fostering personal and professional growth.



The inauguration commenced with a traditional lamp-lighting ceremony, graced by Dr. Ateeque Shaikh, Chairperson, Executive Education and Consultancy (EE & C), IIM Jammu, Dr. Yashoda Devi, Program Director, and Dr. Prakrit Silal, Program Director, IIM Jammu. During the inaugural session, participants introduced themselves and shared their reflections on the trekking experience,

highlighting key takeaways on resilience, teamwork, and leadership in challenging environments.

Dr. Ateeque Shaikh, Chairperson, EE&C, IIM Jammu, welcomed everyone and highlighted the institute's rapid growth, driven by excellence in academics, research, and executive education.

He outlined key programs, including the MBA in Hospital Admin-

istration & Healthcare Management with AIIMS Jammu, IPM, and the Dual Degree Program with IIT Jammu. Emphasizing IIM Jammu's world-class infrastructure and expanding initiatives, he stressed the importance of feedback for continuous improvement and encouraged attendees to embrace the institute as their own.

Dr. Yashoda Devi, Program Chair, IIM Jammu delivered the welcome

address, outlining the program's objectives and its alignment with NTPC's leadership vision.

The inaugural event concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Prakrit Silal, Program Chair, IIM Jammu.

The program includes field-based experiential learning activities such as trekking in the Himalayas, empowering leadership, team building, sustainability and good governance, conflict resolution, negotiating solutions, intrapreneurship skills, strategic thinking, mastering communication for leadership, and digital transformation. Through initiatives like these, IIM Jammu reaffirms its role in shaping future-ready leaders who can make meaningful contributions to society and industry.

JKTF submits 12-point memorandum to School Education Department



Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 4: The Jammu & Kashmir Teachers Forum (JKTF), a prominent body representing educators across the Union Territory, has submitted a detailed 12-point memorandum to Shantmanu, Administrative Secretary, School Education Department, J&K. Led by State President Mohd Ashraf Sheikh, the delegation highlighted urgent concerns affecting the education sector and called for transformative reforms.

The memorandum emphasizes the need for immediate intervention to resolve key issues impacting both teachers and student learning outcomes. JKTF reaffirmed its dedication to quality education, teacher welfare, and alignment with national policies such as the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and NIPUN Bharat. The delegation urged the administration to take swift action to improve the overall efficiency of the education system in the region.

Among the key demands, JKTF stressed the need for expedited promotions for teachers, ensuring a smooth transition from Teacher to Master and

Master to Headmaster. A structured and time-bound promotion policy is crucial to prevent administrative inefficiencies. The forum also highlighted the urgent requirement to fill vacant posts, particularly in rural schools, where acute teacher shortages severely impact learning outcomes.

The memorandum further addressed the teacher rationalization process, advocating for a fair redistribution policy to address disparities in staffing. A specific concern was raised regarding Rehbar-e-Taleem (ReT) teachers, many of whom have been stationed in the same schools for over two decades, restricting career growth. JKTF also urged the government to implement a timely career progression and promotion system, in line with NEP 2020, to retain skilled educators.

Another critical issue was the repatriation of teachers assigned to non-teaching duties, as their expertise is better utilized in classrooms rather than administrative roles. Additionally, the forum called for the streamlining of the Midday Meal (MDM) scheme, citing irregular fund disbursement that has placed teachers in difficult situations.

Annual Transfer Drives (ATD) and hardship postings were also discussed, with a specific demand for immediate relocation of teachers posted in Zone 5 (hard zones).

JKTF further emphasized the need for strengthening teacher training through District Institutes of Education & Training (DIETs), which currently suffer from severe staff shortages. Lastly, the forum urged the administration to clear pending promotions for Headmasters and Lecturers to ensure better school management and leadership.

State President Mohd Ashraf Sheikh stated that resolving these long-standing concerns is crucial for the future of education in Jammu & Kashmir. General Secretary Mir Bashir Ahmad added that delays in policy implementation and promotions have slowed progress in the sector.

The Administrative Secretary, School Education Department, provided a positive response and assured the delegation that these issues would be addressed in a time-bound manner. The JKTF delegation expressed gratitude for the constructive discussion and hoped for swift action that would benefit both teaching and non-teaching staff.

The delegation included General Secretary Mir Bashir Ahmad, UT Press & Publicity Secretary Jalil Ahmed, Provincial President Jammu Sanjeet Sharma, and Executive Farooq Ahmed Mir.

SMVDU organizes workshop on personal branding



Top News Report

KATRA, Feb 4: The School of Business at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University (SMVDU) organized a one-day workshop on Personal Branding for MBA and DYD students.

The workshop aimed to enhance students' skills and confidence, preparing them to effectively present their unique value propositions in interviews and group discussions.

Pallavi Mahajan and

Lilly Bhan from Brainpreneurs led the sessions, engaging students through interactive group activities and games.

They also discussed the inspiring journey of Ratan Tata, highlighting how he built his personal brand through impact, humility, and authenticity. More than 70 students actively participated in the workshop. Prof. Jyoti Sharma, Head of the School of Business, emphasized the importance of such

initiatives in equipping students for the professional world.

The event was successfully coordinated by Dr. Rashmi Taggar and Dr. Arti Maini, who expressed their gratitude to the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor for providing such learning opportunities.

The workshop was conducted with funding from the Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA) scheme, which aims to enhance the quality of higher education in India.

Heritage School student excels at Inter School Taekwondo Championship



Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 4: Vardaan Singh of Class VI B delivered an impressive performance at the Inter School Taekwondo Championship held at SAI Palace on 29th December 2024.

Competing against skilled participants, he secured a gold medal in the Taekwondo (Tul competition) and a silver medal in the Speed Kicking competition.

Heritage School extended its best wishes to Vardaan for continued success in future competitions.

Dimple prays for peace and harmony at Raja Mandlik Ji Temple



Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 4: Sunil Dimple, President of Mission Statehood, visited the Raja Mandlik Ji Bhandara today at the revered Raja Mandlik Baba Kali Pier in Raja Mandlik Ji.

The event was organized by the Raja Mandlik Ji Committee, led by Baba Tarsem Lal and Baba Bachan Lal, at Pacca Talab Rehari Chungi New Plot, Jammu.

The grand Bhandara witnessed a large turnout of devotees, with thousands of people, including men, women,

and children, participating in the spiritual event. The devotees were blessed with Roti of Raja Mandlik, distributed among them as a symbol of divine blessings and generosity.

Baba Tarsem Lal showered his blessings on all the participants, offering prayers for their well-being and prosperity. During the event, Chowki of Raja Mandlik, along with prayers to Raja Kali Pier, Surgul Devta, and Mata Mal Devi, resonated in the hearts of the devotees present.

On this occasion, Sunil Dimple prayed to Raja

Mandlik for the restoration of peace, normalcy, communal harmony, and brotherhood in Jammu and Kashmir. He also prayed for the peaceful and prosperous future of all families in the region. Expressing his commitment to the cause of statehood, Dimple emphasized the need for unity and peace in Jammu and Kashmir.

The function was a remarkable success, with thousands of devotees coming together in a show of devotion and unity, making it an impressive and spiritually enriching experience for all those present.



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