

# TOP NEWS OF J&K



JAMMU, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 02, 2025

Daily Evening Newspaper



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**Salman Khan opens up on making efforts for family, forgiving a person**



**PM Modi greets people on Basant Panchami, Saraswati Puja**

**"We did not want this, but Canada is prepared," Justin Trudeau responds to tariff announcement**

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## BRIEFLY

### Army Captain dies of 'medical conditions' in Akhnoor Jammu

JAMMU, Feb 2 (Agencies): A young army Captain died due to "medical conditions" in Akhnoor area of Jammu, officials said on Sunday.

They said the officer, Capt Rudra Pratap Singh, suddenly fell and was taken to Military Hospital Akhnoor late last evening. The officer, belonging to Varanasi, however died due to "medical conditions", they said.

"The last rites will be done at home town with full military honour tomorrow," they added.

### Soldier returning to duty from holidays goes missing in J&K

SRINAGAR, Feb 2 (Agencies): A soldier returning to duty from home after holidays has gone missing, officials here said on Sunday.

Rifleman Abid Bhat had left his home in Chittergul in Anantnag district to report to duty at Rangreth on Saturday, the officials said.

They said the soldier did not report at the camp till this morning after which a missing persons complaint was lodged with the police.

Further details were awaited, they added.

### J&K Police lodge FIR against fraudster, five unauthorised labs seized

SRINAGAR, Feb 2 (Agencies): Police in Jammu and Kashmir's Sopore town on Sunday lodged an FIR against a fraudster while five unauthorised dental laboratories were sealed in Pulwama town.

Officials said police in Sopore town acted swiftly against fraudulent activity by filing a case against Basharat Mehranj Shah, also known as Basharat Molvi.

He is accused of tricking Mehranj Ahmad Sheikh into paying a Rs 25,000 bribe, promising to secure the release of Sheikh's phone, which had been seized by law enforcement agencies for analysis.

An FIR has been registered at police station Dangiwaacha under the applicable legal provisions and the investigation has been started.

Police have also issued an advisory to the public asking them to remain vigilant against such fraudulent activities. Citizens are cautioned not to fall victim to scams and fraudulent schemes, which can lead to financial losses and other serious

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## Is privatization of power distribution on the cards in J&K?

**Chief Secy to discuss the matter on Feb 5**

SRINAGAR, Feb 2 (Agencies): The Jammu and Kashmir government appears to be moving forward with plans to privatize power distribution in the Union Territory, following the implementation of smart metering.

Chief Secretary Atal Duloo has scheduled a meeting on February 5, 2025, which will include the agenda item of "privatization of power distribution" among other power sector reforms.

This meeting is set to cover several critical aspects impacting the power sector, including the status of the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS), hydel projects, power tariff collections, and the implementation of a system for monitoring



power availability. Invitations have been extended to various officials from the Power Department and associated organisations, highlighting the serious intent behind this agenda.

Representatives from the Jammu and Kashmir Electrical Engineer Graduates' Union (JKEEGA), under the leadership of President Peerzada Hidyattullah,

players won't offer any subsidy."

He elaborated that taxpayers money have invested vastly in the power sector, and it should not be handed over to private entities.

The prospect of privatization follows recent decisions by the government to privatize power distribution across Union Territories (UTs), as part of its broader strategy under the Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan. The central government believes that privatization will improve the operational and financial efficiencies of power distribution utilities, which have been performing sub-optimally.

In a written response to parliamentary inquiries, it was mentioned that the decision to privatize ultimately lies with

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## Mysterious Deaths in Rajouri: AIIMS Delhi team meets patients, records clinical history

NEW DELHI, Feb 2 (Agencies): A five-member team of experts from AIIMS Delhi, including specialists in toxicology, has spoken to 11 patients who are undergoing treatment for a mysterious illness that has claimed 17 lives in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district, and recorded their clinical history.

The team would visit Badhaal village on Sunday where three families suffered casualties due to the illness, and collect samples from their sealed homes and surrounding areas.

"The samples would be tested to know the cause of toxicity. The experts will also interact with the other villagers," a source said.

The AIIMS team headed by its director Dr M Srinivas comprises Dr A Shariff, professor in clinical toxicology, Dr Shailendra Kumar, addi-



tional professor, anaesthesia and critical care, Dr Jamahed Nayer, additional professor, emergency medicine, Dr Jagdish Prasad Meena, additional professor, pediatrics, and Dr Javed Qadri, assistant professor, clinical toxicology.

According to sources, the team arrived in Rajouri on Friday night, interacted with the patients and their relatives at the Government Medical College (GMC), and made several queries about the entire episode.

They also examined some of the patients who are under observation.

The doctors at GMC Rajouri are treating the 11 patients using Atropine, an anti-poison drug, the sources said.

Besides the AIIMS Delhi team, a team of experts from PGI Chandigarh is also investigating the cause of toxicity.

Meanwhile, no new case has been reported in the past nine days from Badhaal village, which was shaken by the

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## Digital addiction among Kashmir's children reached 'pandemic level': Doctors



SRINAGAR, Feb 2 (Agencies): Digital addiction among children in Jammu and Kashmir has reached alarming levels, with

medical experts calling for urgent intervention to curb its impact.

Renowned neurologist Dr Sushil Razdan, speaking to the news

agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said early mobile phone use has harmful effects on brain development. He strongly advised against exposing children under the age of five to mobile devices saying that after this critical period, screen time should be carefully regulated to prevent dependency and ensure healthy cognitive growth.

Dr Razdan called upon parents to be proactive in monitoring

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## Jammu and Kashmir Seal Easy Win, Enter Ranji Quarter-Finals

SRINAGAR, Feb 2 (Agencies): Jammu and Kashmir triumphed over Baroda by 182 runs in their Ranji Trophy Elite Group A encounter, sealing their place in the quarter-finals on Sunday.

After winning the toss and opting to bat, Jammu and Kashmir posted a solid first-innings total of 246.



The team J&K, followed it up with a second-innings score of

284, setting Baroda a daunting target of 365

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## Cloudy weather forecast in Kashmir valley as Srinagar chills at 1°C; dense fog in northern states

SRINAGAR, Feb 2 (Agencies): Jammu and Kashmir's summer capital Srinagar continued to feel the winter chill with the minimum temperature at 1.0 degrees Celsius on Sunday, as per India Meteorological Department (IMD).

The city is likely to experience partly cloudy sky becoming generally cloudy towards after-

noon or evening or night today, as per the Met Department.

Upper reaches of Bhallessa in Doda district of the Union Territory received fresh snowfall, while the plains experienced rainfall, leading to a significant dip in temperatures. For farmers and orchard owners, this comes as a relief after a prolonged dry spell in

the region.

Meanwhile, in a move to ensure safe passage amidst the snowfall and inclement weather conditions in Sonamarg in Kashmir, the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has initiated snow clearance operations to enhance traffic flow in the area.

The Kashmir valley has been covered under

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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)

**UTHALA**

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform your the sad demise of our beloved **Sh. Bachan Singh Gujral S/o Lt. Sh. Malik Ram Gujral (Jhanger Wale) R/o 640, Shopping Centre Bakshi Nagar.**

**Uthala** will be held on 3rd of Feb. 2025 (Monday) from 3 PM to 4 PM at Hari Mandir Rehari Colony, Jammu.

**GRIEF STRICKEN**

Smt. Bimla Gujral - Wife

Smt. Koushalya Gujral W/o Lt. Sh. Mohinder Lal Gujral - Bhabhi

Sh. Tirath Ram Gujral (Brother)

**Sons & Daughters-in-law**

Smt. Rama Gujral & Sh. Rajesh Gujral

Smt. Pooja Gujral & Sh. Sanjeev Gujral

Smt. Surekha Gujral & Sh. Vijay Gujral

**Daughter & Son-in-law**

Smt. Suman & Sh. Ashish Kohli

**Sisters & Brothers-in-law**

Smt. Krishna Oberoi W/o Lt. S. Balwant Singh

Smt. Daleep Kour W/o Lt. S. Santokh Singh

Smt. Kanta Anand W/o Lt. Sh. Darshan Singh Anand

Smt. Soma Devi Anand W/o Lt. Sh. Baldev Singh Anand

Ms. Janak Dulari - Sister

**Grand Children:** Kartik, Sourab, Sonam, Riya, Siya, Harsh, Kritika, Palak, Prachi & Jain

Contact Nos: 9906264996, 6006530157, 6005129935



SH. BACHAN SINGH GUJRAL

**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.

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**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)

**TENTH DAY/UTHALA**

With profound grief and sorrow we regret to inform the sad demise of our beloved mother **Smt. Ram Pyari (Retd. HOD DIET)** wife of Late Prof. Prem Chand R/o H.No. 85, W. No.4, Court Road, Udhampur on 25-01-2025.

**10th Day/Uthala** shall be held at Parshotam Hall, Dhar Road, Udhampur on Monday, 3rd Feb, 2025.

**Satsang** 12 Noon

**Uthala** 1 p.m.

**GRIEF STRICKEN:-**

**Sons & Daughter-in-laws**

Sh. Vinay Kumar (LIC) & Smt. Vijay Kumari

Dr. Anil Kumar & Smt. Mridhu Bhardwaj

Dr. Sunil Kumar & Dr. Prabhkiran Kaur

Dr. Simriti & Dr. Bias Dev- Daughter & Son-in-law

Contact: 9419160558, 9419160949



Smt. Ram Pyari (Retd. HOD DIET)

**TENTH DAY KRIYA**

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform about the unfortunate demise of **Mrs. Viji Moza, W/o Late Shri Bansi Lal Moza** residing at 173 /10, Punchkula, who left us for heavenly abode on Sunday 26th January 2025.

**10TH DAY KRIYA** will be held at Shani Mandir, Ghaggar Ghat, Panchkula on Tuesday, 4th February at 9am.

**IN GRIEF:**

Aparna & Rajiv Koul

Vanita & Rishi Koul

**MOZA'S, RAINA'S, ALONGWITH FAMILY & FRIENDS**

Mob: 9811347023, 9815215022



MRS. VIJI MOZA

**TENTH DAY KRIYA**

With profound grief, sorrow and with heavy heart, we regret to inform the sad demise of our beloved father **Sh. Niranjan Nath Tikoo S/o Lt. Sh. Sudharshan Tikoo** erstwhile resident of Bulgam Sopore/H.No. 11, Lane No. 1, Adarsh Nagar Barnai (Bantalab) Jammu at present E-45/46 Arya Samaj Road Uttam Nagar, New Delhi for heavenly abode on 27/1/2025.

**10th Day Kriya** will be performed at Muradnagar Ghat (U.P) on 04/02/2025 and **Assembly** will be held at Uttam Nagar residence at 1 PM onwards.

**GRIEF STRICKEN**

Smt. Shanta - Wife

**Sons & Daughters-in-law**

Sanjay & Yogita Tickoo

Sunil & Renu Tickoo

**Daughters & Sons-in-law**

Sushma & P.K Saraf

Pumi & Opinder Saraf

Fancy & Kuldeep Bakshi

and All Grand Children

Contact : 9899143274, 9210333272, 9419144615



Sh. Niranjan Nath Tikoo

**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, Shividass Colony, Tomal, Bohri, (Near Laxmi Palace), Jammu on 27/1/2025.

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

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

**GRIEF STRICKEN**

Raina's (Sabnue) of Nai Sadak, Ganpatyaar

**SRINAGAR, KASHMIR**

9419158122, 7889352299, 9796866841, 9796638347



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 Reman & Sh Rattan Sharma

Smt Roma & Sh Deepak Sharma

**Daughters and Son in Law**

Smt Shobha & Sh Ashok Sharma

Smt Pamila & Sh Shiv Nandan Kumar

Smt Sheela & Sh Anil Sharma

**Grand Children :** Resham, Ameesha, Akriti, Kamyra, Snigdha, Shantanu and Tarush

**Great Grand Children :** Kartavya

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 (Babi) 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 Yarbali (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**

Phoola Ji W/o Kanya Lal Thapoo

Sudeeta Ji W/o Late Shyam Lal Pandita

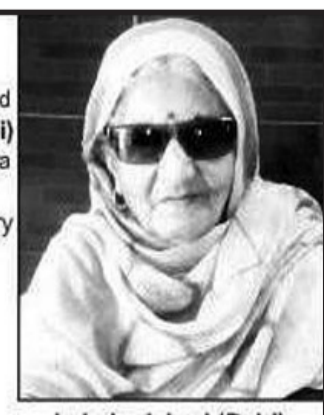
Girja Ji W/o Ashok Ji Pandita

Reeta Ji W/o Bal Krishna Pandita

**Grand Children:-** Sheetal, Komal,

Ashish & Archana, Smile, Satyam.

CONTACT NO:- 9906918945, 9971614273, 7051501737



Lakshmishori (Babi)

**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 Baderkali Asthapan Thalwal 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

**KRIYA / RASAM PAGRI & UTHALA**

With profound grief and sorrow we inform the sad demise of our dearest **Smt. Ved Kumari Gupta (Retd. ZEO) W/o Late Sh. Yash Pal Gupta** left for her heavenly abode on 21st Jan 2025.

**Kriya** will be performed on February 2nd 2025 at 12 Noon at our residence 197-A, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu.

**Rasam Pagri & Uthala** will be performed on February 3rd 2025 from 4.30 pm - 5.30 pm. at Shiv Mandir Gandhi Nagar Opp Church.

**In Grief**

**Children / Daughter-in-law & Son-in-law**

Mr. Anil Gupta & Vandana Gupta

Mr. Mantoo Gupta & Sakshi Gupta

Dr. Pranay Sinha & Dr. Neena Sinha

**Grand Children**

# Rattan Lal Gupta terms Union Budget 2025-26 as Balanced but Calls for greater focus on J&K

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 2: Rattan Lal Gupta, Provincial President of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC), has termed the Union Budget 2025-26 as balanced but stressed that it requires more attention and focus on the development and prosperity of Jammu and Kashmir. While he lauded the Union Finance Minister for providing relief to the middle class in income tax, he expressed hope that the Central Government would prioritize J&K's pressing needs and ongoing challenges.



a rail coach factory, which could generate employment without harming the environment," he added.

The senior NC leader lamented that despite assurances in Parliament regarding industrialization in J&K, no substantial progress has been made. "It was promised that new industries would be set up in J&K, but not a single major industrial project has materialized. As a result, unemployment continues to rise daily, with no concrete plan in place to address it," he said.

Rattan Lal Gupta emphasized that the Union Budget should have included a special package for border dwellers, farmers, and fruit growers in J&K, who are facing immense hardships. "The expectations of the people of

Jammu and Kashmir have not been fulfilled. No relief has been announced for farmers and fruit growers, despite the challenges they face due to harsh climatic conditions and lack of infrastructure," he pointed out.

Speaking on financial support from the Centre, Rattan Lal Gupta said, "Earlier, when J&K was a full-fledged state, the Centre provided 90% grants and 10% loans for the region's overall development. However, now only 10% is given as a grant, while 90% comes as a loan, which will further burden the already struggling economy of Jammu and Kashmir." He demanded that this process be stopped and the old pattern of 90% grants and 10% loans be reinstated.

The Provincial President also stated that this Budget would contribute to inflation across the country, making it even more difficult for common people to sustain themselves.

Rattan Lal Gupta urged the Central Government to extend unwavering support to Jammu & Kashmir, recognizing its unique challenges as a backward and border state. Emphasizing the need for special financial packages, accelerated infrastructural development, and robust employment opportunities, he called for concrete measures to bridge the developmental deficit of the last 10 years and bring the region at par with the rest of the nation.

# Chamber of Traders Federation elects new leadership for 2025-27



Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 2: The Chamber of Traders Federation has successfully conducted its elections, with the results officially announced by Election Commissioner Vinod Sachdeva in the presence of election committee members Parveen Gupta, Balvinder Singh, Devinder Gupta, and Kanwaljeet Singh. The election process witnessed active participation, reflecting the strong democratic spirit within the federation.

team for the term 2025-27 includes Shiv Kr. Gupta as Senior Vice President, Tushar Mahajan as Vice President, Dinesh Gupta as Secretary General, Ajay Gupta as Treasurer, Sachin Gupta as Secretary, and Rahul Sharma as Joint Secretary.

The election event was attended by a large number of trade leaders and federation heads, symbolizing unity and enthusiasm among the traders. Among the prominent attendees were the federation's founder Yashpal Gupta, along with Attar Singh, Vinod Mahajan, Kailash Nagar, Raman Gupta, and S.K. Sharma, who extended their best wishes to the newly elected team.

Their presence highlighted the significance of the federation's role in strengthening the business community.

Speaking on the occasion, President Neeraj Anand expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the members for their continued trust and support. He emphasized the federation's unwavering commitment to addressing traders' concerns, advocating for business-friendly policies, and strengthening the interests of the trading community. He assured that under his leadership, the federation would continue to work towards a more progressive and business-friendly environment.

The Chamber of Traders Federation remains dedicated to the welfare of traders and will persist in its efforts to promote economic growth, policy reforms, and a thriving trade ecosystem. The newly elected leadership aims to drive initiatives that will benefit the business community and contribute to the region's overall economic development.

# Union Budget game changer for India's growth, J&K's transformation: Slathia



Top News Report

SAMBA Feb 2: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Jammu & Kashmir Vice President and former minister Mr Surjeet Singh Slathia today hailed the Union Budget 2024-25 as a game-changer, placing India firmly on the path toward achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat.

Addressing a rally at Village Naran in Gagwal Block this afternoon, Slathia described the budget as a pro-people, growth-oriented, and futuristic financial roadmap that ensures inclusive development, economic empowerment, and national security.

Slathia welcomed the relief measures for the middle class, stating that these provisions will go a long way in easing the financial burden on families across the country. He asserted that by focusing on tax reliefs, incentives for homebuyers, and subsidies on essential commodities, the government has reaffirmed its commitment to improving the quality of life for millions of citizens.

"The middle class is the backbone of our economy. Their aspirations and needs have been addressed in this budget, ensuring that disposable income increases

and financial stress is reduced," Slathia said, adding that the government's focus on job creation, entrepreneurship, and digital economy initiatives will further enhance opportunities for the working population.

Slathia highlighted that the allocation for Jammu & Kashmir in the Union Budget reflects Prime Minister Narendra Modi's unwavering resolve to transform the region. The enhanced funding for infrastructure, agriculture, education, and healthcare will accelerate the pace of development and bring long-lasting economic stability to the Union Territory.

"This budget has once again reaffirmed the Modi government's commitment to the holistic development of J&K. The increased allocation will provide a significant push to road connectivity, tourism, industrial growth, and skill development programs, ensuring that the Union Territory emerges as a hub of economic prosperity," he said.

The BJP MLA Samba particularly appreciated the focus on infrastructure, with funds earmarked for road and rail networks, power projects, and rural connectivity. He asserted that these investments will not only

boost local economies but also generate employment opportunities for youth.

A special highlight of the budget is the enhanced allocation for the police force, which he described as a well-deserved recognition of the bravery and sacrifices of J&K Police and security forces in combating terrorism and safeguarding national security.

Slathia reaffirmed that the Union Budget 2024-25 is not just a financial document but a visionary blueprint that lays the foundation for New India's economic prosperity and self-reliance. He called upon the people of Jammu & Kashmir to support and take advantage of the opportunities this budget presents, reinforcing their role in the country's growth journey.

Prominent among those present in the rally included District President BJP Samba Asha Rani, Mandal President Nishant Sharma, DDC Suresh Kumar Sharma, Rashpal Verma National General Secretary OBC EX Sarpanch Parveen Sharma, Jasbir Singh, Tersaim Singh, Arpan Sharma, Dev Raj Sharma, Sorab Sharma, Gopal Sharma and others.

# Jammu has become a stronghold of criminals: Shiv Sena



Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 2. Jammu, which is called the city of temples, has been turned into a city of liquor, a victim of narco terror, has now become a stronghold of criminal incidents, stated by Manish Sahni, President says Shiv Sena (UBT) Jammu-Kashmir unit.

Leaders of Shiv Sena (UBT) Jammu-Kashmir unit, today, under the leadership of state chief Manish Sahni, staged a strong protest holding placards "Unsafe Jammu", "khaki past gunde mast",

"Why so-called well-wishers of Jammu silent?" etc., expressing concern over the falling reputation of the police, made a strong effort to awaken the consciousness of rekindling the fear of khaki among criminals.

Manish Sahni said that yesterday in broad daylight, a jewelry shop in posh Greater Kailash of Jammu city adjacent to National Highway NH 44 was targeted at sharp weapons and looted for about Rs. 1.5 crore.

This is the third crime incident in this area within last ten days. On the other hand, people are in panic due to increasing incidents of

robbery on the newly constructed ring road and avoid driving on this road in the dark of night. Incidents of two-wheelers and other petty thefts have become common in Jammu city. On the other hand, hooliganism and gang war have also taken root.

Two days before this robbery incident (31 January), there was a fire between criminals and police in Miran Sahib of Jammu.

On the other hand, a few days before Republic Day, the accused managed to escape after killing 'Sumit alias Gataru' by riddling bullets with bullets in broad daylight in Jewel Chowk of Jammu.

Sahni said that all these incidents are the face of police failure. Sahni said that Jammu, the city of temples, has become a stronghold of heinous crimes like murder, gang war, drug addiction, crime and robbery.

Sahni also raised questions on the mute spectatorship of the so-called well-wishers of Jammu, BJP leaders.

Sahni has demanded investigation and police verification of illegal Mandis/Bazaars, Bastis, slums, hawkers run by outsiders in various areas including Trikuta Nagar of Jammu.

On this occasion Vikas Bakshi, Bharat Mahajan, Raj Singh, Rohan Malwal, Sham Lal, Jagbir, Sunita Kumari, Kiran Slathia, Ravi Kant, Vishal, Manesh Anand, Manjeet and many others were present.

# ADG, JK&L Directorate felicitates RDC 2025 Cadets at NCC Training Academy Nagrota



Top News Report

NAGROTA, Feb 2: Additional Director General (ADG) of JK&L Dte NCC, Maj Gen A Bevil, VSM visited Nagrota Training Academy today to extend a warm welcome to the RDC 2025 contingent.

He praised the cadets and officials for their exemplary performance, acknowledging their dedication and the immense pride they brought to the Directorate.

During the felicitation ceremony, SUO Ekta

Kumari was specially honoured for her remarkable achievement of leading the All India NCC Girls Contingent on Kartavya Path during the Republic Day Parade 2025.

A few outstanding cadets of RDC 2025 contingent were awarded for their outstanding contributions and achievements during the Republic Day Camp in New Delhi.

Maj Gen A Bevil, VSM congratulated Contingent Commander Col Amit Bhardwaj and Staff for their leadership and

guidance, which played a pivotal role in the success of the contingent.

He interacted with the cadets, gaining insights into their experiences, challenges, and accomplishments during RDC 2025.

He commended their discipline, perseverance, and commitment to excellence, inspiring them to continue striving for greater success.

The event concluded with his words of wisdom as he advised the cadets to be ready to grab millions of opportunities waiting for them and told them that there are no shortcuts to success.

This was followed by the NCC song, the National Anthem and a group photograph. The visit served as an inspiration for the cadets, reinforcing the values of hard work, teamwork, and dedication instilled by the NCC.

# Union Budget paves way for Viksit Bharat: Dr Parneesh

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 2: Dr. Parneesh Mahajan, Convenor of the Department of Training, BJP J&K, hailed the Union Budget as a visionary step towards realizing the aspiration of a Viksit Bharat by 2047. The Budget marks a significant commitment by the Modi Government to create a robust, inclusive economy that empowers every citizen, with a special focus on rural prosperity, middle-class empowerment, and economic growth through infrastructure and innovation.

issued here today, the senior BJP leader emphasized that the Union Budget is driven by four key engines: Agriculture for rural prosperity, MSMEs for job creation, Investment for infrastructure and innovation, and Exports for global competitiveness. He highlighted that the six-pronged approach to accelerate growth, enhance middle-class spending power, and uplift private-sector investments will set India on a trajectory toward becoming a global economic powerhouse.

He said that the Budget includes significant pro-

visions aimed at empowering the middle class, which has always been the backbone of the nation's development. Tax reforms, such as an increase in the income tax exemption limit to ₹12 lakh and a rise in tax deductions for senior citizens, reflect the government's ongoing commitment to making financial growth accessible to all. Furthermore, initiatives like the 'SWAMIH Fund 2' and housing for low-income urban groups demonstrate the government's dedication to improving the quality of life for citizens.

Dr. Parneesh also lauded the government's

emphasis on agricultural development with the launch of the Prime Minister Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana, focusing on enhancing farm productivity and sustainable practices, which will directly benefit over 1.7 crore farmers. Additionally, the Budget's focus on skilling the youth and creating 50,000 Atal Tinkering Labs in schools is a visionary step toward empowering the next generation to lead the nation into a digital future.

The Budget also recognizes the importance of social justice, with provisions for the welfare of gig workers, healthcare

facilities, and education, all aimed at creating an inclusive and resilient India.

He reiterated that these initiatives reaffirm the government's vision of a developed India—Viksit Bharat—where every citizen has the opportunity to thrive.

The senior BJP leader expressed confidence that the Union Budget will be instrumental in strengthening India's economy, fostering inclusivity, and empowering citizens, thus laying the foundation for a prosperous and Viksit Bharat.

Ph./Fax No.: 0191-2561953      E-mail: ceo-jammu@gov@jk.in

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER, JAMMU

Whereas, Mr Neeraj Sharma S/O Late Smt Prem Lata (Ex-Master) Government Middle School Amb Zone Bhalwal R/O JMC 1400 Maheshpur near Medical College Jammu was requested many times to submit the requisite document /information as desired by the higher authorities in connection with his compassionate appointment case in terms of SRO-43 of 1994, but no response has been received from your end till date.

Now through the medium of this publication of this notice you are once again requested to submit the requisite documents/information required for considering/examining your compassionate appointment case in terms of SRO-43 of 1994 within 15 days after publication of this notice in the office of Chief Education Officer Jammu failing which your claim for compassionate appointment under SRO-43 of 1994 will be rejected without any further notice.

DIP/J-9756/24

Chief Education Officer  
Jammu

Department of Wildlife Protection J&K Government  
Office of the Additional Director, Jambu Zoo  
Nagrota, Jammu  
Email: ulujambuzoo@gmail.com

**Corrigendum**

With respect to the e-NIT No. 43/WLW/JZ of 2024-25 i.e. *Installation of Animal Shaped Mascots at Jambu Zoo*, due to no bid qualify the technical evaluation, the tender is hereby cancelled and will be retendered soon.

DIP/J-9761/24

-sd-  
Additional Director,  
Jambu Zoo, Jammu

## EDITORIAL

## Path to Accessible Healthcare

Precision medicine is revolutionizing healthcare by offering personalized treatments based on an individual's genetic makeup, lifestyle, and environment. Unlike traditional approaches, which adopt a "one-size-fits-all" model, precision medicine tailors interventions to specific patient needs, enhancing effectiveness and reducing side effects. However, despite its potential, accessibility remains a major challenge due to high costs, limited insurance coverage, and infrastructure barriers. Making precision medicine affordable requires strategic efforts from governments, healthcare providers, pharmaceutical companies, and technology innovators.

**Expensive Genetic Testing and Sequencing** – Whole genome sequencing (WGS) and advanced diagnostic tests can cost thousands of dollars per patient.

**High Drug Development Costs** – Developing targeted therapies involves extensive research, clinical trials, and regulatory approvals, making them significantly more expensive than conventional drugs.

**Limited Market for Personalized Therapies** – Since precision medicine targets smaller patient groups, companies often charge higher prices to recover investments.

**Infrastructure and Technology Costs** – Advanced data analytics, AI-driven diagnostics, and precision treatment facilities require significant financial investments.

**Insurance and Coverage Gaps** – Many insurance providers do not fully cover genetic testing or personalized therapies, making out-of-pocket costs unaffordable for many patients.

One of the primary cost drivers of precision medicine is genetic testing. However, advancements in next-generation sequencing (NGS) and AI-driven diagnostics have the potential to reduce costs significantly.

Increasing the number of genetic testing labs and integrating them into mainstream healthcare can reduce per-test costs.

Governments and private organizations can subsidize testing for patients with critical conditions like cancer, rare diseases, and chronic illnesses.

Creating standardized, cost-effective genetic testing models can prevent unnecessary expenses and duplication.

Pharmaceutical companies must explore ways to reduce R&D expenses without compromising quality.

AI-driven drug discovery and real-world data analytics can accelerate research, reducing the time and cost of developing new drugs.

Identifying new uses for already-approved drugs can cut costs and speed up approval processes.

Public-private partnerships and global collaborations can share research costs, making treatments more affordable.

To ensure broader access to precision medicine, insurance companies must revise their coverage policies.

Governments should work with insurers to ensure essential genetic tests are covered under standard health plans.

Drug manufacturers and insurers can adopt outcome-based pricing, where payments are linked to treatment effectiveness.

Special insurance programs should be designed for low-income populations, covering precision medicine treatments.

A robust healthcare infrastructure is necessary to support affordable precision medicine.

Establishing dedicated research and treatment centers can reduce reliance on costly overseas facilities.

Telemedicine, AI-driven diagnostics, and mobile health applications can bring precision medicine to remote and underserved populations.

**Training Healthcare Professionals** – Expanding training programs for doctors and healthcare providers ensures effective integration of precision medicine into standard care.

Generic and biosimilar drugs offer cost-effective alternatives to high-priced biologics used in precision medicine.

Governments should simplify and fast-track the approval process for biosimilars. Encouraging domestic production of precision medicine drugs can reduce import costs and improve accessibility. Bulk purchasing agreements between governments and pharmaceutical companies can drive down costs.

Governments play a crucial role in making precision medicine affordable through policy reforms and funding initiatives.

Encouraging partnerships between biotech companies, hospitals, and universities can accelerate innovation while controlling costs. Offering tax benefits to companies investing in affordable precision medicine solutions can drive innovation. Incorporating precision medicine into public healthcare schemes ensures broader access for all citizens.

The future of precision medicine lies in continuous innovation, improved cost structures, and equitable healthcare policies. Advancements in AI, cloud computing, and blockchain technology will further reduce costs and enhance efficiency. As governments, researchers, and industries collaborate, the dream of making precision medicine affordable can become a reality, benefiting millions worldwide.

Precision medicine has the potential to transform healthcare, offering personalized treatments that improve outcomes and reduce side effects. However, affordability remains a critical barrier. By investing in cost-effective genetic testing, reducing drug development expenses, expanding insurance coverage, strengthening healthcare infrastructure, and promoting generics, we can make precision medicine accessible to all. Collaborative efforts between governments, pharmaceutical companies, and technology providers will be essential in achieving this goal. Making precision medicine affordable is not just a medical necessity—it is a moral imperative to ensure equitable healthcare for all.

## Growth Oriented and Pro-poor Union Budget 2025

By: Omkar Dattatray

As we kick off 2025, the much anticipated Union Budget 2025 has been unveiled, offering a roadmap for India's growth, fiscal stability and social development. The finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman the first female FM is presenting her 8th consecutive and Modi government 3.0's second budget. She has presented the country's budget for the year 2025-26 in the parliament today on 1st February 2025. This union budget will be the blue print for Viksit Bharat by 2047 and sets forth the vision of a developed India. The government has outlined several strategic initiatives aimed at bolstering economic recovery post-pandemic, promoting inclusive growth, and enhancing India's competitive edge on the global stage. The budget 2025 projects economic growth rate of 6.3% to 6.8%. One of the most awaited aspects of the budget is tax relief for individuals and businesses. Taxpayers are expecting changes in tax slabs under the new tax regime, with hopes of an increase in exemption limits and standard deductions since the centre government has approved the 8th pay commission for central government employees, and pensioners as well as family pensioners will all be benefitted. There is a genuine demand for making annual income up to Rs 10 lakh tax free. The outstanding feature of the budget 2025 will be that Mahalaxmi - the goddess of wealth and prosperity will shower her blessings on the middle income group. But finance minister Sitharaman has shown magnanimity and broadmindedness and announced a big bonanza and great relief for the salaried class and the general people and made income up to Rs 12,0000 lakh annually free & exempted from income tax and it is no less than the gift of finance minister to the salaried class and middle income group. By this announcement of far-reaching importance Modi government has won appreciation from the salaried class, middle income group and has won the hearts and minds of the majority of the people and this great relief to salaried and middle income group will boost the political fortunes of NDA/BJP as the elections in Delhi are underway and some state assem-

bly elections are near. The new budget 2025 will be pro people and pro poor. The household consumption, demand and investment will grow up. The budget 2025 should focus on investment, employment generation and control of inflation. In the face and middle of global economic slowdown India economy is robust as its fundamentals are strong and it will continue its march towards Viksit Bharat and there are no two views about it. The union budget 2025-26 is expected to include measures to support the economy, employment, and businesses. In the upcoming union budget, the finance ministry may take steps to revive export-boosting schemes, such as the interest Equalization Scheme -IES, offer financial support to exporters, and enable flexibility for certain service sector units in special economic zones -SEZ's. PM has said that the new year budget will be historical as it will focus on the overall development of the economy while giving big relief to the middle income group and poor people. Since the IES expired on December 31, the commerce department is seeking approval for a slightly modified version of the scheme to cover at least micro, small, and medium enterprises -MSME's. The IES is an interest -subvention scheme under which exporters are given benefits in the interest rates charged by banks on their pre-and post -shipment rupee export credits. Lenders are subsequently compensated by the government. The scheme was launched in 2015 for five years to reduce stress among exporters, especially in labor -intensive sectors and MSME's. Majority of the people are hoping for policy measures that will bring down prices of daily household items. Additionally youth are looking for announcements that will create more jobs, while the salaried class is expecting income tax concessions. The inflation rate should be checked and government should focus on areas such as travel expenses as it is getting costlier. In new budget there should be better tax rebate. Train facilities should be made even better and frequency of trains should also be increased. It is hoped that there will be several announcements for the middle class, poor people and farmers as the farmers are the back bone of the econ-

omy and president Droupadi Murmu in her address to the joint session of the parliament made several references to the middle class. The government is expected to continue its fiscal consolidation roadmap, bringing down the fiscal deficit from 4.9 percent in FY 25 to 4.8%, with a target of 4.5 % in FY 26. A major focus of budget 2025 is expected to be tax reform and simplification. The a government is likely to introduce modernized Direct Tax Code -DTC, replacing the 63-year old Income Tax Act -much like how GST revolutionized indirect taxation. The focus of the budget 2025 are on the following—A-Focus on Infrastructure Development B-Digital Economy & Innovation. C-Taxation Reforms for a Simplified System. C-Focus on Health and Education D-Support for Farmers and Agriculture. E-Green Growth and Climate Action .F -Strengthening Social Welfare Schemes G-Revitalization of the MSME Sector. The key highlights will shape the financial trajectory and financial landscape of the country in the coming year. One of the most significant thrust areas in Budget 2025 is infrastructure. The government has allocated a substantial increase in funding for key infrastructure projects, aiming to drive long-term growth and enhance connectivity across the country. Boost to rural infrastructure, focus on National Infrastructure Pipeline-NIP Expansion, digital economy and innovation as the digital revolution continues to be a cornerstone of India's growth. A much awaited reform is the proposed simplification of the tax system. Budget 2025 outlines various initiatives designed to make tax compliance easier for both individuals and businesses. Finance minister rather the Modi government has recognized that a healthier and better-educated population is vital for sustained economic growth and thus expansion of National Health Mission and increased funding for skill development has been given top attention in the budget. India's agricultural sector remains the backbone of its economy and the budget 2025 addresses the need for long-term agricultural reforms. The government is set to increase direct cash transfers to farmers under the PM-Kisan Yojana, aiming to boost agricultural income and improve financial

security. Budget focuses on green growth and climate action. Sustainability is at the core of budget 2025 and there is special stress on clean energy investment and carbon reduction targets. Social welfare programs continue to play a pivotal role in Budget 2025. There is increased allocations for women and child welfare. The government aims to enhance financial inclusion, with focus on expanding access to credit and banking services for rural and underserved populations. Besides this, micro, small, and medium enterprises -MSME's form the backbone of India's economy. To ensure the growth of this crucial sector, the government is focusing on—A-Easy access to credit, credit guarantee scheme extension. India aims to position itself as a global economic power with increased foreign investment. In this regard attracting FDI is one of the main initiatives as per the budget. In short the budget 2025 delivers a comprehensive vision for India's future. It focuses not only on driving economic growth but also on ensuring that this growth is inclusive and sustainable. From infrastructure development to green energy, taxation reforms to social welfare, this budget sets the stage for a stronger, more resilient economy. Budget 2025 combines modernization with inclusivity, striking a delicate balance between driving innovation and maintaining social welfare. In fact this budget is growth oriented and pro people and pro poor. Thus it is a historical budget in many ways and it is a big milestone for contributing for a Viksit Bharat @ 2047. Hats off to the first finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman for giving a balanced budget which address the concerns of all most all stakeholders. The new year will provide us the opportunity to make India a powerhouse of global economic power and the new budget will pave way for a developed India by 2047.

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

## How restoring forests can combat climate change and empower communities

By: Vijay Garg

Reforestation stands as both a climate action imperative and a cornerstone for building sustainable future

Amid escalating climate changes, reforestation has come to be one of the most effective, nature-driven methods to combat environmental degradation and enhance climate resilience. Beyond absorbing carbon dioxide, forests support livelihoods, stabilise ecosystems, and foster sustainable communities. Forests have a great role in countering global warming and providing essential resources that not only support communities but also manufacturing and trade.

However, as research indicates, India in the past two decades has lost nearly 414-kilo hectares of humid primary forest which made up 18 per cent of its total tree loss. This highlights an urgent need to prioritise reforestation, not just as a climate action tool but also as a cornerstone for community development.

Reforestation's Dual Role: Climate Action and Community Resilience. Forests have an immense capacity to capture and store carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, thus reducing the greenhouse effect.

The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, established in 1988 estimates that reforestation and afforestation could account for up to 30 per cent of the carbon reduction

required to limit global warming. Additionally, forests regulate microclimates, mitigating the urban heat island effect and stabilising local weather patterns crucial for agriculture. Reforestation plays a crucial role in combating desertification, which poses a significant threat to food security, water availability and livelihoods. Forests help anchor the soil, replenish organic matter, and improve water retention, thereby enhancing agricultural productivity and water access, particularly in ecologically fragile regions. According to the India State of Forest Report 2021 (ISFR), tribal and rural communities living in these areas face high vulnerability but also exhibit remarkable climate resilience.

For these communities, reforestation is a game-changer as it can help prevent and even undo desertification by stabilising the soil using tree roots, which reduces wind and water erosion. Furthermore, forests help replenish organic material in the soil, leading to improved water retention and increased fertility which can lead to environmental regeneration and socio-economic stability.

Community-driven Reforestation: A Proven Model. Even with rapid urbanisation, India's conservation ethos has a rich legacy of protecting nature. Be it the collective Chipko movement of the 1970s or the inspirational restoration of more than 1300 acres of Brahmaputra's Forest by Jadav Payeng,

the Forest Man of India, the success of any reforestation effort hinges on community and local participation.

With the input of individuals and stakeholders from communities, any conservation project remains culturally relevant, ecologically sound and economically beneficial. Take Aravalli Hills Afforestation Project as an example for instance. By involving Village Forest Protection Committees, the project rejuvenated over 151,390 hectares of degraded land and built nearly 200 water storage dams to support wildlife, boosting biodiversity and tiger populations in Sariska Sanctuary.

With an impressive 87 per cent tree survival rate, the initiative balanced environmental restoration with tangible social benefits such as job creation and improved livelihoods.

This model demonstrates that sustainable reforestation thrives on collaboration, community empowerment, and measurable impact. Partnerships for a Greener Future. To scale reforestation efforts, collaboration is key. Governments, philanthropies, non-profits and businesses must unite to amplify impact. For instance, non-profits can mobilise grassroots participation and bring cultural insights. Corporations can leverage resources for large-scale projects while fulfilling sustainability commitments.

Local governments can ensure policy alignment and provide

regulatory support.

Together, these stakeholders can create integrated strategies that combine ecological restoration with community upliftment. Initiatives like the National Afforestation Programme and the Green India Mission lay a solid foundation, but partnerships can catalyse progress. Reforestation for Generations to Come. Reforestation offers a rare synergy—mitigating climate change while addressing critical challenges like water scarcity, food insecurity and rural poverty. It is not merely an environmental solution but a pathway to holistic development. By fostering meaningful partnerships with non-profits, businesses, and communities, and aligning efforts with governmental initiatives.

The time to act is now. With a shared vision and commitment, we can restore forests not just as carbon sinks but as vibrant ecosystems that sustain life and empower generations. A greener, more resilient future is within our reach.

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

## Last date for online admission, re-registration for January 2025 session extended till February 15

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 2: Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) has extended the last date for fresh admission as well as re-registration for the January 2025 session till 15th of February, 2025 in respect of all notified programmes offered in ODL and Online modes.

To enroll in the next year or semester, learners need to register on the Portal and click "New Registration" button to proceed and provide the correct mobile number and e-mail ID so that the University is able to send confirmation and other important updates only if the correct mobile number and e-mail ID are entered.

In case the learners face difficulty in registering on the portal (not getting OTP/ forgot Username/Password or any other difficulty), they need to approach Regional Centre Jammu for re-setting of their account/updating email ID or mobile number. They can apply



for IGNOU re-registration January 2025 by visiting the official website of the IGNOU [www.ignou.ac.in](http://www.ignou.ac.in). The direct link for online re-registration is <https://onlinerr.ignou.ac.in/> which can be accessed under the drop-down menu option "Register Online" on IGNOU website.

For filling the admission form online, candidates need to create a User ID and Password on the SAMARTH portal and be ready with a Mobile No., Email ID, properly scanned academic

documents, photograph and Bank Debit /Credit/Net Banking for payment of fee.

Applicants can access the IGNOU admission portal 2025 at IGNOU website [www.ignou.ac.in](http://www.ignou.ac.in) or by directly following the link <https://ignouadmission.samarth.edu.in>.

To enroll in the next year or semester, candidates must fill and submit the IGNOU re-registration January 2025 form by the submission deadline. The students who did not attempt

the term-end examinations or did not submit their assignment can also apply for re-registration for January 2025 provided the minimum duration is completed and programme validity has not expired. They can apply for IGNOU re-registration January 2025 by visiting the official website of the IGNOU [www.ignou.ac.in](http://www.ignou.ac.in). The direct link for online re-registration is <https://onlinerr.ignou.ac.in/> which can be accessed under the drop-down menu option "Register Online" on IGNOU website.

"The desirous learners who wish to seek admission or wish to re-register themselves for subsequent year/semester must avail this extended opportunity and apply online well before the last date and eligible learners can apply for Government of India Scholarships on the National Scholarship Portal at <https://scholarships.gov.in/> after confirmation of admission", said Dr. Sandeep Gupta, Regional Director.

## Shiksha Niketan bids farewell to Class 12



### Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 2: Shiksha Niketan Senior Secondary School organized a farewell ceremony for the students of the 12th Class on Sunday. Guests extended their heartfelt blessings and best wishes to the outgoing students.

The event featured inspiring speeches from alumni, including Arshdeep Singh (MBBS/M.D Pediatrics), Mohd., Zahid (Asst. Manager SBI), Rakesh Gupta (Asst. Audit Officer) and Vasu Mahajan (CA).

They shared their journey, recounting their struggles and achievements to ignite students as they embark on their future endeavours.

The day was lively celebration filled with nostalgia, as students, teachers, and friends reminisced about their cherished moments together. The farewell bash was vibrant affair, with mesmerizing dance performances, engaging acts, and other cultural showcase that captivated the attendees.

The event was meticulously organized by the 11th Class students to honor their Seniors.

The ceremony was graced by the presence of Headmaster Harish Sharma, RMPS Director Rakshan Mengi, Gandhi Nagar Director, Risheek Mengi and Headmistress of Pushp Vatika, Sushma Sharma.

Their words of encour-

agement and Wisdom inspired the students, emphasizing the importance of making level-headed and confident choices in life.

In his heartfelt speech, the Principal, Rameshwar Mengi emphasized the importance of discipline, hardwork and integrity in shaping a successful future. He urged students to remain determined and resilient in the faces of challenges, reminding them that perseverance and a positive mindset are the keys to achieve their dreams.

His final words resonated with all, "Where ever you go, whatever you do, carry the legacy of Shiksha Niketan with Pride. Be a beacon of hope, a pillar of strength for your family, and a dedicated contributor to the progress of our nation".

He stressed the need for ethical values, respect for elders and the pursuit of knowledge as essential traits of responsible citizens.

## Renowned comedian Manpreet Singh enthralled audience at Aryans Group of Colleges event



### Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 2: Renowned comedian Manpreet Singh enthralled audience in two events organized by Aryans Group of Colleges, Rajpura Near Chandigarh.

The event was organized by Aryans Group & District Culture & Heritage Society, Sri Muktsar Sahib. Hundreds of people & Students got enthralled by the performance of Comedian, Manpreet Singh Aka The Comic Singh.

The events was graced by Rajesh Tripathi, Deputy Commissioner, Raj Kumar Garg, District & Session Judge; Gurpreet Singh Thind Additional Deputy Commissioner; Baljeet Kaur, Sub Divisional Magistrate; Manveer Singh, Superintendent of Police, Puneet Sharma (PCS) Chief Ministers Field Officer, Rajinder Soni, Deputy Education Officer, Muktsar & Dr. Anshu Kataria, Chairman, Aryans Group of Colleges, Rajpura Near Chandigarh were the distinguished Guest.

Aryans Group of Colleges organised two events in a row in two venues including Auditorium, DAV Public School, Kotkapura Road & auditorium, Red Cross Society, Near Guru Gobind Singh Park, Muktsar Sahib.

DC, Muktsar while addressing said that Laughter helps our neurological, physical, emotional, cognitive and social health and well-being in multiple ways. He also mentioned that he has already visited Aryans Group of Colleges in past and interacted with students. He thanked Dr Anshu

Kataria for organising the show.

Dr Anshu Kataria said that he is very much connected with Sri Muktsar Sahib as he has born and brought up here. He mentioned that Aryans Group of Colleges keeps on organising such activities here on regular basis and also organising scholarship melas for needy & deserving students who are seeking admission in courses like Engineering, Pharmacy, Nursing, Management, Paramedical, Physiotherapy, Law etc.

Baljeet Kaur mentioned that it was a great initiative by District Culture Heritage Society and Aryans Group Chandigarh. She mentioned now a days we have seen that due to even small reasons our youth is easily getting depression and getting in to drugs menace. So such event can be therapeutic & must be regularly organised as they are best stress relievers.

On the occasion, Prof Gopal Singh, State Awardee Chanchal Kataria., Billu Kataria, Varun Kataria, were also present.

It is to be mentioned that, established in 2007, Aryans campus is located on Chandigarh-Patiala highway, near Chandigarh and has lush green 20 acres pollution free campus and has become the destination for JK students. Aryans Group has been serving the educational and intellectual interests of the youth in a commendable manner. The Group is running Engineering College, Law College, Pharmacy College, Management College, Business School, Education College, and Nursing College, Faculty of Physiotherapy & Paramedical etc.

## Nitish lauds SP Rajouri for anti-drug campaign, pledges full support

### Top News Report

RAJOURI, Feb 2: In a significant step towards strengthening the fight against drug abuse, Nitish Mahajan, President BJP Trikuta Nagar Mandal, met with Bikram Bhagat, SP Rajouri, today and discussed various issues related to the anti-drugs campaign initiated by the Jammu and Kashmir Police.

During the meeting, Nitish Mahajan lauded the relentless efforts of SP Rajouri and his team in tackling the growing menace of drug abuse in the region. He praised the proactive measures undertaken by the police, including awareness drives, crackdowns on drug peddlers, and rehabilitation initiatives aimed at safeguarding the youth from falling prey to substance abuse.

Expressing concern over the rising instances of drug addiction among youngsters, Nitish emphasized the need for a collective approach involving law enforcement agencies, community leaders, and



civil society to eradicate this social evil. He assured BJP's full cooperation in supporting police-led initiatives and urged citizens to come forward and contribute to this noble cause.

SP Bikram Bhagat reaffirmed the J&K Police's commitment to making Rajouri a drug-free district. He highlighted the recent successes in arresting drug suppliers and cracking down on trafficking networks. He also stressed the importance of educational campaigns and rehabilitation programs to ensure long-term solutions.

Nitish Mahajan further suggested launching

joint awareness programs in collaboration with local communities, educational institutions, and religious organizations to sensitize the youth about the hazards of drug abuse. He also called for strict enforcement against those involved in drug trade while ensuring that victims of addiction receive proper rehabilitation support.

Reaffirming BJP's commitment to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a Nasha-Mukt Bharat (Drug-Free India), the BJP leader vowed to work alongside law enforcement agencies to strengthen the movement against drug abuse in J&K.

## NCC Cadets plant 960 saplings in CUJ campus



### Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 2: In a remarkable environmental initiative, the NCC cadets (SD/SW) of 4 J&K BN, JK&L Directorate, successfully planted 960 saplings and plants within the Central University of Jammu campus.

The plantation drive was led by the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Prof. Sanjeev Jain, who emphasized the importance of sustainability and envi-

ronmental conservation.

The event was held under the guidance of the ANO Lt. Dr. Pankaj Mehta, who played a key role in coordinating the initiative.

Several officials were present to support the cause, including Prof. Asit Mantry, Head of the Department of Educational Studies, Estates Officer, Sh. Vikas Gupta, and many faculty and staff members of the

department of educational studies also actively participated, reinforcing the commitment to a greener and cleaner campus.

The plantation drive marks an important step towards the University's efforts in promoting environmental awareness and contributing positively to the local ecosystem. With this initiative, the Central University of Jammu aims to promote a sense of responsibility towards nature among its students and staff.

## MDP on LEAD-ART 2.0 concluded at Central University of Jammu

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 2: Leadership and Management Development Programme on Leadership in Panchayats for Effective and Accelerated Rural Transformation 2.0 (Lead-ART 2.0) concluded at SBS, Central University of Jammu. This pioneering initiative aimed to equip elected representatives and senior officers with essential leadership and managerial skills to enhance rural policy-making and governance organised by the School of Business Studies, CU Jammu, in collaboration with the Department of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Government of J&K under the Patronage of Prof. Sanjeev Jain, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Central University of Jammu and Sh. Mohammad Aijaz Asad, Secretary, Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, J&K, UT.

With a view to enhance the leadership capacity at the grassroots and to give an impetus to the strengthening and capacity building of Panchayati Raj Institutions across the UT of J&K Department of RD & PR has conceptualized a programme for leadership development among the Panchayat Leaders who are leading the change at the grassroots level under the supervision of Mohammad Aijaz Asad, Secretary, Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, UT of J&K for infusing professional leadership skills.

Under this initiative the Department of RD & PR in collaboration with SBS, CU Jammu organised the Programme for beneficiaries for developing leadership skills among the Panchayati



Raj representatives for better and informed decision making and governance. The 2nd batch of participants included DDCs/ADC and ACPs and were trained in various modules on Leadership and Teamwork, Financial Management and Panchayat Finances, Effective Communication, Project Management and Monitoring, Digital Transformation, ICT, Creativity and Innovation for Village Development and more were covered by galaxy of eminent experts to instil confidence among participants and equip them with requisite skills to usher in a new era of grassroots governance. The event witnessed participation of distinguished dignitaries and Resource Persons from academia, corporate and bureaucratic set-up including Sh. B. R Sharma, IAS, Former Chief Secretary of J&K, Prof. Dipankar Sengupta and Prof. Anil Gupta from University of Jammu, Prof. Meenakshi Rajeev, IIT, Jammu, Mr. Kanav Sharma, NABARD, Jammu, Ms. Geetika Kohli and Ms. Chitrakshi Vij Corporate Trainers, Sh. Ratan Ranjan, SDGCC Public Policy Analyst-cum-State Head SDG Coordination Centre Planning Development & Monitoring Department, Prof. Jaya Bhasin, Dean, SBS, Dr. Shahid Mushtaq, Assistant Professor, SBS and Dr. Asif Ali, Assistant

Professor, SBS.

The event was inaugurated in presence of Sham Lal, JKAS, Director, Panchayati Raj, Government of J&K, Sheetal Pandita, Deputy Secretary, Department of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Government of J&K and Prof. Jaya Bhasin, Dean, School of Business Studies, Central University of Jammu. During the valedictory session feedback was sought wherein participants expressed their enthusiasm and appreciation for the insightful sessions and the opportunity to enhance their leadership capabilities.

Sham Lal, Director, Panchayati Raj, Government of J&K and Sheetal Pandita, Deputy Secretary, Department of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Government of J&K addressed the gathering during valedictory session. The MDP organising team comprised of Prof. Jaya Bhasin, Dr. Neelika Arora, Dr. Shahid Mushtaq, Dr. Asif Ali faculty members from School of Business Studies.

Earlier Prof. Jaya Bhasin welcomed the gathering for valedictory session and briefed about the activities conducted during these three days and Dr. Shahid Mushtaq proposed formal vote of thanks. Prof. Jaya Bhasin conducted the proceedings of the programme and Riya Gandotra coordinated certificate distribution.

## Salman Khan opens up on making efforts for family, forgiving a person

Actor Salman Khan will soon make his debut on his nephew Arhaan Khan's YouTube channel, Dumb Biryani. Taking to Instagram, Salman has shared an edited video comprising his old interview and moments from the upcoming episode of the podcast.

Salman Khan shares his old video

The video began with a young Salman at an event. He was then seen amid a crowd in the old clip. This was followed by some clips and stills from his films. The singer was next seen teasing and then hugging Arhaan Khan in an old video. A journalist's voice was heard saying, "What you do on the screen is everybody's business." Salman replied, "Exactly. It's the image, you know? You are selling the image, basically. I mean, like me as an individual, I'm just like all you people. Just like a normal human being.

Salman opens up on family. In another segment of the video, Salman was seen chatting with Arhaan and his friends. "You just need to be there for



friends, family. The effort that you have to keep on keep on putting in. If I give you advice, the way I speak to myself, okay, you will hate me. Because I speak to myself rather harshly. You can forgive

a person once, twice, third time (makes gesture of wiping hand) chalo khallas (the end)."

Salman on putting in effort in life

The video ended with Salman saying, "When your body says

no, your mind should say yes. When your body and mind both say no, you should say, 'C'mon guys, a last round'." Salman shared the video with the caption, "I spoke to the boys a year ago, I'm not sure if they even remember all the advice. My first-ever podcast appearance @dumbbiryani comes out soon. @devraiyanii @iamarhaankhan @4rushverma. A @revoliomedia original."

About Arhaan

Arhaan is the son of Arbaaz Khan and Malaika Arora. Arbaaz and Malaika Arora separated in 2016 and officially divorced in 2017. Arbaaz is now married to Sshura Khan. Malaika recently broke up with actor Arjun Kapoor, whom she dated for several years.

About Salman's films

Salman will headline AR Murugadoss' upcoming film Sikandar, co-starring Rashmika Mandanna. The film is slated for release on Eid 2025. He was last seen in Tiger 3 (2023) an action thriller film directed by Maneesh Sharma. It also starred Katrina Kaif and Emraan Hashmi.

## Arjun Kapoor spills the beans on his marriage plans



Arjun Kapoor, Rakul Preet Singh, and Bhumi Pednekar will be seen sharing the screen together for the first time in the forthcoming romantic entertainer, "Mere Husband Ki Biwi". The trio is presently busy promoting their next.

Speaking during one of the promotional events, Arjun Kapoor was asked about his marriage plans in real life. To this, he said, "I will let you all know when it happens. Today, we will be talking about the film as it is time to celebrate the movie. I think I have allowed enough conversation and chat-

ter around my personal life when I have been comfortable."

He added, "When the time is right, I will not be hesitant to share it with you all. You all know, how I am as a person. Right now, let me celebrate 'Mere Husband Ki Biwi'."

Some time back, Arjun Kapoor announced his break up with actress Malaika Arora. Attending a Diwali party hosted by Raj Thackeray, the '2 States' actor revealed that he is now single.

In the meantime, the makers recently unveiled the first poster from the much-anticipated drama. The poster shows a funny tug-of-war between the three lead actors. While Arjun Kapoor stands in the middle, Bhumi Pednekar and Rakul Preet Singh are pulling on either of his arms while sitting on a horse.

Sharing the poster on his official IG, Arjun Kapoor penned in the caption, "Khencho... Aur khencho!! Sharafat ki yehi saza toh hoti hai... Kalesh ho ya clash, phassta toh mujh jaisa aam aadmi hai #MereHusbandKiBiwi In Cinemas 21st February, 2025."

Meanwhile, Bhumi Pednekar and Rakul Preet Singh also posted their versions of the poster, scratching each other out from the picture.

Made under the direction of Mudasar Aziz, "Mere Husband Ki Biwi" will also see Shakti Kapoor, Anita Raj, Dino Morea, and Aditya Seal in ancillary roles, along with others.

## Jennifer Aniston reacts to rumours of her romance with Barack Obama

Hollywood star Jennifer Aniston is gaining massive traction on social media. Recently, the rumour mills have been abuzz about the actress' alleged romance with the former President of the US, Barack Obama. However, now a clip of the actress refuting the rumours has gone viral. She said in the video, "Of all the calls you get from your publicist where you're like, 'Oh no, what's it gonna be?' Or the emails saying some cheesy tabloid's going to make up a story and then it's that. I was not mad at it. I know Michelle (Obama) more than him."



## Udit reacts to backlash over his viral video kissing female fans

Udit Narayan has found himself at the center of a controversy following a viral clip from one of his concerts. The internet erupted in outrage after the 69-year-old singer was seen returning kisses from fans during his performance of Tip Tip Barsa Paani (from Mohra, 1994). At one point, he allegedly even kissed a female fan on the lips as she was about to kiss him on the cheek.

When agency reached out to the singer for his reaction to the backlash online, he tells us, "Fans itne deewane hote hain na. Hum log aise nahi hain, hum decent log hain. Some people encourage this and show their love through this. Udaake kya karna hai ab iss cheez ko?"



There are so many people in the crowd, and we have bodyguards present too. But fans think they are getting a chance to meet, so someone extends their hands for a handshake, some kiss the hands... yeh sab deewangi hoti hai. Uspe itna dhyaan nahi dena chahiye."

The video, which quickly went viral, sparked an intense debate online. One Reddit user commented, "...sir age ho rahi hai respect hai apka thodi toh sharam karlo! Public me ye sab!" while others tagged the clip as "disgusting."

Narayan suggested that there might be an ulterior motive behind the controversy, saying, "My family's image is such that everyone wants (a controversy to

happen) Aditya (Narayan, son and singer) chup chaap rehta hai, controversy mein aata nahi hai. Many must feel that. There is madness when I am singing on stage, fans love me, I think let them be happy. Otherwise iss type ke log hum hain hi nahi. Humein bhi unko khush karna hota hai."

Addressing the specific incident of kissing a female fan on the lips, Narayan says that it was a spontaneous moment. "I have been in Bollywood for 46 years now, my image hasn't been such (that I forcefully kiss fans) In fact, I fold my hands when I see the love my fans shower on me, while on stage, I bow down, thinking phir aaj ka yeh waqt laut ke aaye na aaye," he ends.

## Jennifer Lopez on Kiss of the Spider Woman receiving standing ovation: 'I've been waiting for this moment my whole life'

*Jennifer Lopez also talked about the importance of love, and how it can "shorten the gap of any divide between people"*

Singer-songwriter Jennifer Lopez premiered her new movie musical Kiss of the Spider Woman at the 2025 Sundance Film Festival, and the film received a standing ovation. "I've been waiting for this moment my whole life," Jennifer said during a post-screening discussion, reported People.

"When you talk about the importance of musicals, the reason that I even wanted to be in this business was because my mom would sit me in front of the TV... we'd come on once a year, West Side Story on Thanksgiving. I remember I was just mesmerized. And I was like, 'That's what I want to do.' And that was always my goal. And this is the first time I actually got to do it. This crowd made my dream come true," reported People.

The film is directed by Bill Condon, who is known for helming critically acclaimed films Twilight Saga: Break-

ing Dawn-Part 1 and Beauty and Beast. Kiss of the Spider Woman stars Diego Luna as a political prisoner during Argentina's civil war in the 1980s, incarcerated alongside another man portrayed by Tonatiuh.

The movie is a reimagining of John Kander, Fred Ebb and Terrence McNally's stage adaptation of Argentine writer Manuel Puig's 1976 novel; its Broadway adaptation won a Tony Award for Best Musical in 1993, as per the outlet.

"I think of Chita Rivera, I think of Fred Ebb. I think of Terrence McNally and all of the love that they poured into this," added Jennifer. "And it is just an honour to be able to be part of this movie. And I thank you guys so much for this moment. Thank you."

"Jennifer Lopez is an astonishing scene-stealer in a career-highlight performance as Luna/Aurora, with showstopping musical numbers



that underscore the exuberant prowess of her dancing and voice," the synopsis added, as

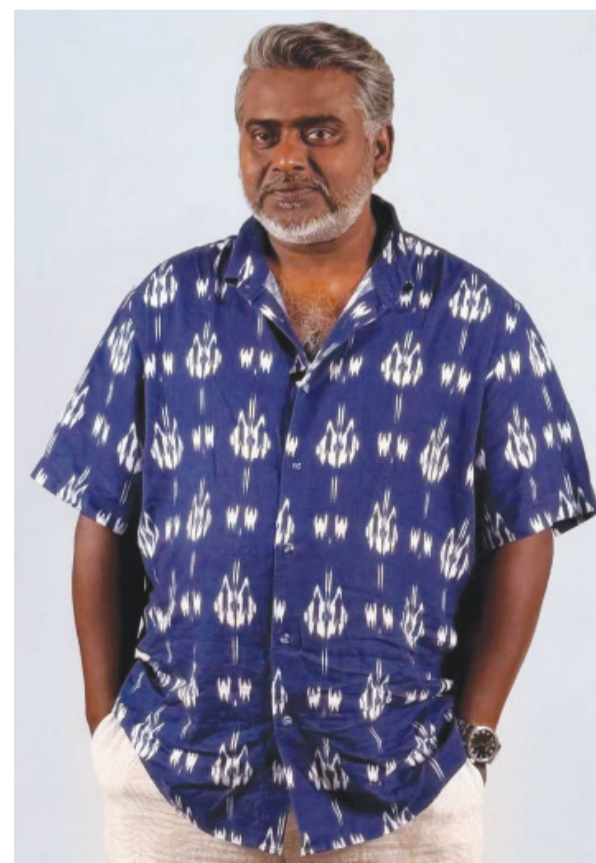
per the outlet.

"I think the thing about the movie that I love the most is that it tells the importance of storytelling and how it can help you get through the day and how it helps all of us," shared Jennifer when asked how she feels about the "timeless" quality of the film.

"Films help all of us kind of get through the hardest times in our lives, just like music. That's why musicals and movies are so important. And the importance of love. The importance of love, and just seeing each other as human beings and how love can kind of shorten the gap of any divide between people," she added, as per the outlet.

Kiss of the Spider Woman does not yet have a release date. Jennifer, as well as Ben Affleck and Matt Damon through their company Artists Equity, are among the movie's producers, reported People.

## Dibyendu Bhattacharya: Hope content continues to rule on OTT



Actor Dibyendu Bhattacharya has carved a niche for himself in the digital space, particularly with shows like Sacred Games, Undekhi, The Gone Game, and more recently Griha Laxmi. Having been involved in both theatre and digital storytelling, he is confi-

dent that OTT platforms will continue to play a central role in the future of Indian cinema.

Discussing the growing significance of streaming platforms, Bhattacharya tells us, "OTT platforms are not just the present, but the future of the entertain-

ment industry. Right now, they are already a dominant force in entertainment, and their influence will only grow. During the pandemic, when people couldn't step out, OTT services brought entertainment directly to our homes, offering the convenience of watching on our own terms."

He continues, "Log ab waise bhi bahar kam jaate hai for entertainment. Cinema halls mein releases bhi 1-2 hi hoti, and even then, audiences only turn up if there's a huge star cast. Footfall has significantly decreased. The whole space is currently dominated by OTT."

Despite the OTT boom, the actor expresses hope that content continues to rule and flourish on the medium and that formulaic films don't begin to dominate the space.

"OTT started as a content driven industry and even now we get to see good content. I hope it stays like this kyunki corrupt hone mein bahut zyada time lagta nahi hai," he ends.

## PM Modi greets people on Basant Panchami, Saraswati Puja

NEW DELHI, Feb 2 (Agencies): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday wished people on the auspicious occasions of Basant Panchami and Saraswati Puja.

"Best wishes on the auspicious occasions of Basant Panchami and Saraswati Puja," Modi said in a post on X.

The festivals heralds the arrival of spring and are dedicated to Goddess Saraswati, the symbol of knowledge.



## 'Ashamed to admit abroad': S Jaishankar on Delhi 'lacking' basic amenities

NEW DELHI, Feb 2 (Agencies): Ahead of the Assembly polls, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar criticised the Aam Aadmi Party-led Delhi government for "failing" to provide essential services to residents, and said he feels "ashamed" to admit abroad that people in the national capital lack basic amenities under central schemes.

He further said that Delhi has been "left behind" over the past decade and urged voters to consider a change in government when they cast their ballots on February 5.

During an interaction with the South Indian



Community of Delhi on 'Viksit Delhi-Viksit Bharat,' Jaishankar said, "Whenever I visit foreign countries, I hide one thing from the world. I feel ashamed to go abroad and say that people living in the national capital do not get houses, do not get gas cylinders, or piped water under Jal Jeevan

Mission and do not get the benefit of Ayushman Bharat." He added, "It is unfortunate that in the last 10 years, Delhi has been left behind. The residents of Delhi are not given their rights to water, electricity, gas, cylinders, health treatment. If the government here does not give you your rights then on 5th

February you also think that this government should be changed."

He also praised PM Narendra Modi's leadership and said, "Ever since Narendra Modi became Prime Minister, the thinking of the world about India has changed a lot. The world sees that when the economic situation in the whole world is down, we are still maintaining six to seven per cent growth rate." The 70 assembly seats in Delhi will go to polls on February 5, with the counting of votes scheduled for February 8. Meanwhile, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MP Sanjay Singh exuded confidence in his party

winning more than 60 seats in the 70-seat legislature in the upcoming Delhi assembly polls.

Speaking to media persons, Sanjay Singh said that the Arvind Kejriwal-led government will be formed in Delhi with an absolute majority.

"AAP will be winning more than sixty seats and the Arvind Kejriwal-led government will be formed in Delhi with an absolute majority," Sanjay Singh said.

With less than a week left for the Delhi polls, the battle has intensified between three major parties in the fray—ruling AAP, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and Congress.

## BJP launches new campaign song three days before Delhi polls

NEW DELHI, Feb 2 (Agencies): BJP MP Manoj Tiwari on Sunday launched the party's fourth campaign song for Delhi Assembly elections, three days before the February 5 polling day.

The song — "Dil Walo Ki Dilli Ko Ab BJP Sarkar Chahiye" — has been sung by former MP Dinesh Lal Yadav, while senior BJP leader Neel Kant Bakshi is its creative director.

Speaking at the

launch, Tiwari told mediapersons that when the BJP announced its manifesto, someone asked him how the party plans to fulfil all the promises made in it.

"I responded by saying that whatever is mentioned in the manifesto is already being implemented in Haryana and Maharashtra," Tiwari said.

The discussions led to the idea of launching another campaign song to raise awareness



among the residents of Delhi, he said.

"We felt the people of Delhi should be informed about these

developments, and that's when the idea for this song was conceived," the BJP MP from Northeast Delhi

said. Tiwari also said that while campaigning on Saturday, he forgot to highlight a key takeaway from the Union Budget.

"Someone from the crowd reminded me I missed mentioning that those earning up to Rs 12 lakh annually will now be completely exempt from income tax. This shows that people are aware, and they want a BJP Government," he said.

## Govt has heard voice of middle class, says Sitharaman



NEW DELHI, Feb 2 (Agencies): Paraphrasing Abraham Lincoln,

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday described the

Union Budget as "by the people, for the people, and of the people", saying Prime Minister Narendra Modi was fully behind the idea to cut taxes but it took time to convince the bureaucrats.

"We have heard the voice of the middle class", who had been complaining about their aspirations not being met despite being honest taxpayers, she told agency in an interview.

## 'AAP is sweeping Delhi polls, Amit Shah is baffled': Arvind Kejriwal

NEW DELHI, Feb 2 (Agencies): AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday launched a scathing attack on the BJP, accusing it of resorting to 'hooliganism' as the Delhi Assembly elections near.

Addressing a press conference, Kejriwal claimed that AAP is heading towards a "decisive win" in the February 5 polls, which has left BJP leaders, particularly Union Home Minister Amit Shah, "baffled and desperate".

"AAP is sweeping the polls, and Amit Shah is baffled. The BJP has resorted to hooliganism because they can sense defeat," Kejriwal alleged. He also accused BJP workers of threatening and assaulting AAP volunteers and supporters.

"Our leaders and supporters are being threatened to join the BJP or face arrest and attacks. But we cannot be scared," he said,



adding that Delhi will not tolerate such "intimidation tactics".

In response to the alleged threats, Kejriwal announced the launch of a new social media campaign with the hashtag 'AmitShahKiGoondagardi' on X.

He urged people to share their experiences of being "attacked, threatened, or intimidated" using the hashtag.

"The BJP has no vision for Delhi. no chief ministerial candidate, no development agenda. All they have is hooli-

ganism. They want to win through fear, not votes," Kejriwal claimed, as he urged Delhiites to unite against the BJP to ensure the safety and democratic integrity of the city.

The high-stakes Delhi Assembly elections are slated for February 5, and the results will be out on February 8.

The AAP is aiming for a third consecutive term, while the BJP is determined to reclaim the national capital after more than 25 years.

## Fadnavis-Shinde 'discord' has hit Maharashtra's progress, claims Sanjay Raut

MUMBAI, Feb 2 (Agencies): Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde suspects his phone calls are being monitored, and central agencies are tracking his movements, amid growing tensions between him and Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut has claimed.

"An MLA told me that Shinde is convinced that surveillance is being conducted on him and his associates," Raut wrote in his weekly column Rokhthok in Saamna, the Shiv Sena (UBT) mouthpiece.

Raut alleged that strained relations between Fadnavis and Shinde have paralysed the Maharashtra government despite its majority. He claimed Shinde has not come to terms with the fact that he was not reinstated as chief minister after the November 2024 assembly elections and is desperately trying to reclaim the position—a reality that Fadnavis fully understands.

In the elections, the Mahayuti alliance, comprising the BJP, Shinde-led Shiv Sena, and the NCP led by Ajit Pawar, secured 230 out of 288 seats.

"Our Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and the BJP-backed Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde have almost no real communication anymore, which has turned into a source of entertainment for the public," Raut charged.

According to Raut, Shinde's political control over his stronghold, Thane, is being systematically weakened by the BJP. The appointment of BJP minister Ganesh Naik as the guardian minister of the neighbouring Palghar district is allegedly part of this strategy.

"Naik was already a minister in the first Shiv Sena-BJP government when Shinde was just



a municipal councillor. He will not take orders from Shinde," Raut wrote.

Notably, Naik recently said he wants the saffron party to flourish in Thane, hinting at a possible power struggle. He also announced plans to hold public grievance meetings in the city, fuelling speculation that the BJP is preparing to challenge Shinde's dominance.

Raut claimed Shinde's role in the government has diminished significantly. He is frequently absent from key cabinet meetings and, when present, is often late.

"On 30 January, he arrived two-and-a-half hours late for a District Planning Committee meeting at the World Trade Centre," he alleged.

Quoting a senior MLA from Shinde's faction, Raut claimed Union Home Minister Amit Shah had promised Shinde that the 2024 assembly elections would be fought under his leadership and that he would continue as chief minister.

Encouraged by this assurance, Shinde is believed to have spent enormous amounts of money during the campaign. However, when the time came, Shah allegedly did not keep his word, leaving Shinde feeling deceived

and politically cornered. A senior BJP minister recently dismissed reports of tensions, stating there were no "major differences" between Fadnavis and Shinde.

However, Raut countered, "Similar claims were made before the Shiv Sena split (in June 2022). What happened after that is something the entire country witnessed."

He further claimed that many MLAs in Shinde's camp are now "uneasy", with some considering joining the BJP under Fadnavis' leadership, while others contemplate returning to the Thackeray-led Sena (UBT). However, the fear of central agencies has left them hesitant to act.

"Shinde's leadership is no longer secure," Raut alleged, adding that even the BJP is working against him.

He also claimed the RSS has deployed its own people as personal assistants to ministers from both the Shinde and Ajit Pawar camps to monitor their activities and curb corruption.

Unlike Shinde, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar is in a much more stable position, Raut said.

"Ajit Pawar understands his limitations and has built a stronger working relationship with Fadnavis," he wrote.

Raut claimed Pawar allied with the BJP to avoid action by the Enforcement Directorate in certain cases, recover assets worth Rs 1,000 crore, and secure the deputy chief minister's post as an additional benefit.

"Unlike Shinde, Pawar has no aspirations of becoming chief minister and is content with a politically safer position," he added.

## 5 killed, 35 injured as bus carrying pilgrims falls into gorge in Gujarat

DANG, Feb 2 (Agencies): Five people were killed and 35 injured as a private bus carrying pilgrims on a trip to various religious places fell into a gorge in Gujarat's Dang district on Sunday morning, police said.

Among the injured, 17 were seriously hurt, they said.

The accident took place at 4.15 am when the bus driver lost control over the wheel near the Saputara hill station, Superintendent of Police SG Patil said.

The bus, carrying 48 pilgrims, broke the crash barrier and fell into a depth of about 35 feet, he said.

"Five people died on the spot and 17 suffered serious injuries. The seriously injured have been rushed to the civil hospital at Ahwa. Some others have sustained minor injuries. The rescue operation is nearly over," the official said.

The bus driver was among the deceased, which comprised three men and two women,



according to police.

A total of 35 passengers were taken to the nearby community health centres, where 17 were referred to the civil hospital at Ahwa in the district, Patil said.

The passengers started at night for Dwarka in Gujarat from Trimbakeshwar, a religious place in Maharashtra's Nashik district.

They made a brief stop at Saputara for tea break before resuming their journey when the accident occurred 2.5 kilometres from the hill station, the official said.

The pilgrims, hailing from Guna, Shiv-

puri and Ashok Nagar districts in Madhya Pradesh, had set out on four different buses on December 23, 2024 on a trip to religious places across various states, he said.

Dang Collector Mahesh Patel said the unfortunate incident occurred after one of the four buses carrying the pilgrims fell into the gorge.

"As per the passengers, they had tea and breakfast at Saputara before resuming their journey. It is likely that the driver lost control of the vehicle due to brake failure. Medical staff are working diligently to treat the injured," he said.

The deceased have been identified as bus driver Ratanlal Jatav, Bholaram Koswa, Bijroni Yadav, Guddibai Yadav and Kailashbai Yadav, according to police.

A team of locals and police personnel conducted the rescue operation. They brought out the passengers from the bus and rushed them to the CHCs.

## Bihar woman strangles stepdaughter to death, sets body ablaze, conceals it in gunny bag

BUXAR, Feb 2 (Agencies): A woman has been arrested for allegedly strangling her eight-year-old stepdaughter to death, setting the body on fire and then stuffing the charred remains in a gunny bag in Bihar's Buxar district, police said on Sunday.

The charred body of Aanchal Kumari was found stuffed in a gunny bag concealed in a wooden box in her house in Naya Bhojpur area under the jurisdiction of Dumraon police station on Saturday night.

Police have arrested the woman on charges of killing her stepdaughter.

Speaking to agency, Buxar Superintendent of Police Shubham Arya said, "The victim's family had lodged a missing complaint on Saturday.

Police immediately launched a search operation to trace the girl."

"When police searched the house, they found the charred body stuffed in a gunny bag concealed in a wooden box in a room. During preliminary investigation, the victim's stepmother confessed to have committed the crime," he said.

She told the police that she strangled her stepdaughter to death and then set the body on fire.

Later, she stuffed the body in the gunny bag and concealed it in the wooden box, he added.

"Based on the woman's confessional statement and evidence collected from the spot, police arrested her.

The body has been sent for the scientific examination. She did not tell the police the reason behind committing the crime. The victim's father lives in Delhi. The matter is being examined," the SP added.

## “We did not want this, but Canada is prepared,” Justin Trudeau responds to tariff announcement

*Prime Minister Justin Trudeau responded on Sunday to the United States' decision to impose a 25 per cent tariff on most Canadian goods, stating that 'Canadians did not want this, but are prepared.'*

OTTAWA, Feb 2 (Agencies): Prime Minister Justin Trudeau responded on Sunday to the United States' decision to impose a 25 per cent tariff on most Canadian goods, stating that “Canadians did not want this, but are prepared.”

Sharing a post on X, Trudeau addressed the situation following the announcement, stating, “We did not want this, but Canada is prepared.”

He noted that he had met with the Premiers and the Cabinet earlier in the day to discuss the matter and would be speaking with President Sheinbaum of Mexico shortly.

“The United States has confirmed that it intends to impose 25 per cent tariffs on most Canadian goods, with 10 per cent tariffs on energy, starting February 4. I've met with the Premiers and our Cabinet today, and I'll be speaking with President Sheinbaum of Mexico shortly,” he said.

“We did not want this, but



Canada is prepared. I'll be addressing Canadians later this evening,” said Justin Trudeau,” he added.

Earlier in the day, US President Donald Trump announced on his social media platform Truth Social that he had imposed a 25 per cent tariff on imports from Canada and Mexico, as well as a 10 per cent tariff on goods from China, citing concerns over illegal immigration and drug smuggling, including fentanyl. The US President has taken

action under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), emphasizing the need to protect Americans and fulfil a campaign promise.

Trump stated that the tariffs were implemented to protect US citizens from the threats posed by illegal immigration and drug trafficking.

“Today, I have implemented a 25 per cent Tariff on Imports from Mexico and Canada (10% on Canadian Energy), and a 10 per cent additional Tariff on

China. This was done through the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) because of the major threat of illegal aliens and deadly drugs killing our Citizens, including fentanyl. We need to protect Americans, and it is my duty as President to ensure the safety of all. I made a promise on my Campaign to stop the flood of illegal aliens and drugs from pouring across our Borders, and Americans overwhelmingly voted in favour of it,” Trump wrote on Truth Social.

Trump has repeatedly said he will follow through with his threat to hit imports from Canada and Mexico on 1 February.

During the election campaign, Trump threatened to hit Chinese-made products with tariffs of up to 60 per cent, but held off on any immediate action on his first day back in the White House, instead ordering his administration to study the issue.

## Mexico responds to US tariff announcement with proposal for collaboration



MEXICO CITY, Feb 2 (Agencies): Mexico's President Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo has rejected US President Donald Trump's accusations of Mexico's alleged alliances with criminal organizations. She emphasised Mexico's commitment to combating crime and drug trafficking, highlighting the need for cooperation between neighbouring countries.

Sheinbaum emphasised the importance of collaboration between neighbouring countries, stating, “Mexico does not want confrontation. We start with collaboration between neighbouring countries. Mexico not only does not want fentanyl to reach the United States but anywhere.”

This comes after US President Donald Trump announced a 25 per cent tariff on imports from Canada and Mexico, as well as a 10 per cent tariff on goods from China, citing concerns over illegal immigration and the smuggling of drugs, including fentanyl.

Pardo strongly rejected the White House accusations, stating, “Problems are not resolved by imposing tariffs.”

Highlighting the need for joint efforts to combat criminal groups involved in drug trafficking, she affirmed, “If the United States wants to combat criminal groups that traffic drugs and generate violence, we must work

together in an integrated manner, but always under the principles of shared responsibility, mutual trust, collaboration and, above all, respect for sovereignty, which is not negotiable. Coordination, yes; subordination, no.”

She proposed creating a working group with top public health and security teams from both countries to address shared concerns.

“To this end, I propose to President Trump that we establish a working group with our best public health and security teams. Problems are not resolved by imposing tariffs, but by talking and dialoguing, as we did in recent weeks with your State Department to address the phenomenon of migration; in our case, with respect for human rights,” she said.

Mexico's team had been in constant communication with the US to address migration concerns.

“The graph that President Trump has been posting on social media about the decline in migration was created by my team, which has been in constant communication with his,” said the President.

“I instruct the Secretary of Economy to implement Plan B that we have been working on, which includes tariff and non-tariff measures in defence of Mexico's interests. Nothing by force; everything by reason and right,” she

added. Sheinbaum showcased Mexico's efforts to combat drug trafficking, citing the seizure of over 40 tons of drugs and the arrest of thousands linked to criminal groups. She emphasized that problems cannot be resolved through tariffs, but rather through dialogue and cooperation.

She stated “We categorically reject the White House's slander against the Mexican government for having alliances with criminal organizations, as well as any intention of intervention in our territory. If such an alliance exists anywhere, it is in the United States armories that sell high-powered weapons to these criminal groups, as demonstrated by the United States Department of Justice itself in January of this year.”

“In four months, our government has seized more than 40 tons of drugs, including 20 million doses of fentanyl. It has also arrested more than ten thousand people linked to these groups,” she added.

Earlier in the day, US President Donald Trump announced on his social media platform Truth Social that he had imposed a 25 per cent tariff on imports from Canada and Mexico, as well as a 10 per cent tariff on goods from China, citing concerns over illegal immigration and drug smuggling, including fentanyl.

The US President has taken action under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), emphasizing the need to protect Americans and fulfil a campaign promise.

Trump stated that the tariffs were implemented to protect US citizens from the threats posed by illegal immigration and drug trafficking.

## King Charles “profoundly shocked, saddened” by dreadful Washington DC air accident

LONDON, Feb 2 (Agencies): Britain's King Charles III on Sunday expressed his profound sadness and stated “profoundly shocked and saddened by the dreadful news” of the recent air accident in Washington, DC, which claimed the lives of 64 people.

Sharing a message on X, he wrote, “My family and I have been profoundly shocked and saddened by the dreadful news of the tragic air accident in Washington, DC, which has led to such a devastating loss of life.”

The King's message of sympathy was directed not only to the victims' families but also to the

first responders who quickly rushed to assist in the aftermath of the incident.

“Our hearts, and our special thoughts, are with the people of the United States and our deepest possible sympathy goes to the families and loved ones of all the victims. I would also like to pay a particular tribute to the emergency responders who acted so quickly to this horrendous event,” he said.

Sixty-four people, including four crew, aboard a commercial airliner of American Airlines died Wednesday night after it collided with a military Black Hawk helicopter in midair near Reagan



Washington National Airport. It crashed into the Potomac River.

Three Russian nationals also died in the plane crash, the Russian Embassy in the US said in a statement, the Rus-

sian state media reported on Saturday. The statement was based on a confirmation from the US Department of State according to TASS.

The Russian nationals “lived permanently

in the USA and worked as coaches in American figure skating clubs,” the Russian Mission said.

The American Eagle Flight 5342 was travelling from Wichita to Reagan National Airport in Arlington, Virginia, just over the Washington line, according to American Airlines.

Remains of 41 victims have been recovered, the DC fire chief said Friday as per CBC News. US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth said the crew of the military aircraft were from the Bravo Company 12th Aviation Battalion at Fort Belvoir, an army base in Virginia that's about 14 miles away from the airport.

## Imperative for UN to be fit for purpose, call on member states to commit to Security Council reform: UNGA President Yang

UNITED NATIONS, Feb 2 (Agencies): As the United Nations turns 80 this year, it is imperative for it to be fit for purpose, UN General Assembly President Philemon Yang has said, calling on all member states to “engage actively” and commit to reform, including of the Security Council.

Yang, who is set to travel to India from February 4 to 8 on his first official visit to the country as President of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly, said the global body must acknowledge the need to adapt to the change of times.

“I believe it is imperative for the United Nations to be fit for purpose, to better address the many pressing issues of global concern. As the UN marks its 80th anniversary we must acknowledge the need to adapt to the change of times, to a manifestly different geopolitical context to that of 1945,” Yang told agency in an exclusive interview here.

In response to a question on UN reforms, particularly of the powerful 15-nation body on which the needle has not moved much over the past few decades, he said there is no doubt that the calls for reform have been loudest about the UN Security Council.

“Again here, the Pact for the Future provides us with a boost of political momentum for the success of the intergovernmental negotiations during this session. I am fully supportive of the member-

ship to follow through with ambition and determination, particularly at a moment where we see a deadlocked UN Security Council on matters of key importance for the maintenance of international peace and security,” Yang said in the written interview ahead of the visit.

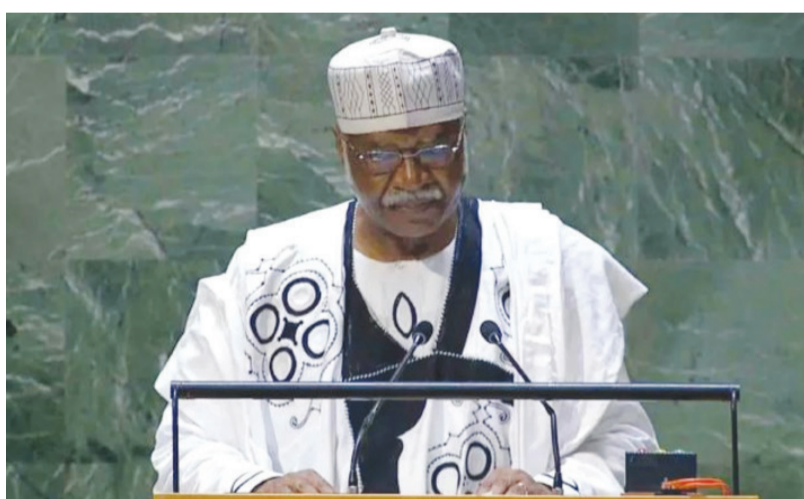
Yang added that the Pact emphasises the importance of making the Council more representative.

“This includes addressing the historical injustice against Africa as a priority and improving the representation of underrepresented and unrepresented regions and groups. I am hopeful that we will be able to see a consolidated model being agreed to at the end of this session and I call on all member states to engage actively and commit to reform an institution that is vital for our collective security.”

At the landmark Summit of the Future during the high-level General Assembly session in September last year, world leaders had adopted by consensus the ambitious Pact of the Future along with the annexes – the Global Digital Compact and the Declaration on Future Generations.

On UN reform, Yang further said that in this regard, the General Assembly has played and continues to play a key role.

“In fact, since the end of the Cold War, the General Assembly has been constantly reviewing



its effectiveness and efficiency through the process of revitalization of the work of the Assembly.”

Yang emphasised that as the most representative body in the United Nations system, the General Assembly has the potential to lead the way into the future. As it was exemplified in September 2024, at the Summit of the Future, the Assembly was able to adopt by consensus the Pact and its annexes, charting the way forward for humanity.

India has been at the forefront of years-long efforts to reform the Security Council, saying the UN body does not reflect current geopolitical realities and underscored that it rightly deserves a permanent seat at the horse-shoe table. India last sat at the UN high table as a non-permanent member in 2021-22.

In response to a question on

and the 2030 Agenda, he said.

“Its implementation requires collective efforts by all relevant stakeholders—member states, international and regional organizations, civil society, and the private sector. Nations and their leaders must work hand in hand to address complex challenges and leverage innovation,” he said.

Yang underscored that it has been made clear time and time again that “we can only make progress through collaboration and partnership. World leaders must ensure that the commitments in the Pact are implemented in a comprehensive and sustainable manner.”

“The success of the Pact lies in translating those commitments into tangible, transformative outcomes, especially at the national level. My message to the leaders of the world is clear: we have no time to lose.”

As Cameroon's Prime Minister, Yang visited Delhi to attend the CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on Africa in March 2013.

To a question on how he sees India's outreach to Africa, Yang said that over the years, India's relationship with African countries has gained momentum across various areas, including trade, investment, sustainable development and people-to-people ties.

On strategic partnerships and global governance, India is strengthening alliances with Afri-

can nations to enhance cooperation on security, counterterrorism, and combating climate change.

“India champions Africa's voice in global forums, advocating for reforms in international institutions to better reflect African interests,” he said.

Yang highlighted that India's support for the Common African Position on UNSC reform and efforts to include the African Union as a full member of the G20 during its Presidency are clear examples of this partnership.

Yang noted that following his 2013 visit to India, Indian company Africur Pharmaceuticals opened a pharmaceutical manufacturing unit in 2018 in Douala, with an investment of approximately 26 million dollars. In the same vein, several Indian companies have become involved in the field of electricity supply in Cameroon.

He added that Indian companies are investing in various sectors across Africa helping to create jobs and fuel economic growth.

For decades, India has also provided development assistance, including grants and loans for infrastructure projects, capacity building, and education, through its Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme.

“Overall, India's outreach to Africa reflects a growing recognition of the continent's potential and a desire to foster mutually beneficial relationships,” he said.



## Natrang stages new play 'The Bear' in English in Sunday Theatre Series

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 2: Natrang staged a new English play 'The Bear' written by Russian playwright Anton Chekhov here today at Natrang Studio Theatre under its weekly theatre series 'Sunday Theatre'.

Presented by Natraj Natya Kunj and directed by Balwinder Pal Singh, the play captivated audiences with its exploration of themes like love, pride, social satire, and the absurdity of human behavior.

With its sharp wit and emotional undercurrents, 'The Bear' successfully brings to life Chekhov's keen observations of human nature, leaving the audience both entertained and reflective.

The Bear by Anton



Chekhov explores themes of love, pride, and transformation. The story unfolds in the drawing room of Popova's estate, where she has been mourning the death of her husband for seven months and has sworn off all social interaction. Her solitude is disrupted when Grigory

Stepanovitch Smirnov, a debt-ridden landowner, arrives demanding payment for a debt her late husband owed him.

Popova refuses to pay, and the two engage in a heated argument. Smirnov, determined not to leave until he is paid, insists on staying. The confrontation intensifies as they try to out-

maneuver each other, with each displaying their stubbornness and pride. However, despite their initial hostility, a mutual attraction begins to develop between the two. Smirnov, who has always believed women to be foolish, is caught off guard by his grow-

ing feelings for Popova. Likewise, she begins to see a different side to Smirnov beyond his gruff exterior.

As the tension between them escalates, it eventually turns into an unexpected declaration of love. The play concludes with Popova and Smirnov embracing, marking the transformation of their antagonism into love.

The artists who participated in the play included Balwinder Pal Singh as Smirnov, Deepshikha Sharma as Popova and Amit Bhalla as Luka. The lights of the play were designed and executed by Neeraj Kant whereas the music of the play was scored by Kartik Kumar. The show was coordinated by Mohd Yaseen.

## Dogri Sanstha Jammu celebrates its 81th Foundation Day



### Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 2: Dogri Sanstha, Jammu celebrated its 81th Foundation Day in a simple but an impressive function organised at Dogri Bhawan, Karan Nagar, Jammu. It pertinent to add here that, on this auspicious day of Basant Panchami in 1944 Dogri Sanstha, the oldest and most active literary organisation of UT of Jammu and Kashmir was founded by a group of 6 persons namely Prof. Ram Nath Shastri, Pt. Dinu Bhai Pant, B.P. Sathe, Sansar Chand Baru, D.C. Prashant and N. D. Mishra. Sanstha has been working tirelessly for the last so many years now for preserving and promoting mother tongue Dogri and regional cultural heritage.

On this occasion Dogri Sanstha honoured Prof. Lalit Magotra for being conferred prestigious Padma Shri, the 4th highest civilian award

### Top News Report

While expressing his gratitude for same, Prof. Lalit Magotra said that such an honour is in fact the blessings of all Dogras. He further said that for the last 80 years, Sanstha has been very active in putting best of efforts for achieving the set goals successfully whether its inclusion of Dogri in 8th schedule or other achievements.

He recalled the long journey of Dogri Sanstha and said that the foundation day inspires us to introspect about our efforts yielding results thus getting inspired to become even more proactive for the noble cause of mother tongue and our cultural traditions.

Rajeshwar Singh 'Raju', General Secretary Dogri Sanstha Jammu while sharing his views on the auspicious day said that it is in fact an important day for the organisation and this one is special one because Prof. Lalit Magotra, president

Dogri Sanstha, an icon himself and the guiding force for taking the organization to new heights has been honoured with prestigious Padma Shri, which is in fact an honour for Sanstha as well as for the entire Dogra community.

He hoped that Dogri Sanstha will continue flourishing under his able leadership and come up to expectations of Dogras in future also.

On this location 'Dogri Kavi Goshthi' was also organised in which Prof. Lalit Magotra, Jnderjit Kesar, Sushil Begana, Dr. Ashok Khajuria, Brij Mohan, Abdul Quddir Kundaria, Sunil Sharma, Randhir Singh Raipuria, Dr. Nirmal Vinod, Ashok Angurana, Rajeshwar Singh Raju, Pawan Verma, Kuldeep Kippi, Manju Sharma Ratanpal, Pankaj Sharma, Rajni Thappa, Tarun Charak, Sanjeev Kumar kushal Singh katta, Pankaj Sharma, Vageesh Sharma, Neha Sharma presented their thought provoking and amusing poetry.

Susheel Begana conducted the proceedings of Kavi Goshthi and Pawan Verma coordinated the function. Vote of thanks was presented by Veena Gupta, vice president Dogri Sanstha.

The function was attended by litterateurs and literature lovers in quite a good number.

## Police organizes awareness programme on New Criminal Laws



### Top News Report

BUDGAM, Feb 2: Police in Budgam organized an awareness programme on three new criminal laws (NCLs) at Town Hall Budgam under the supervision of SSP Budgam Shri Nikhil Borkar-IPS.

The programme was attended by DySP Headquarters Budgam Saqib Ghani-JKPS, SHO PS Budgam, I/C PP Soibugh, DLSA Budgam, officers of Social Welfare & Rural Development Departments, students and general public of different areas of the district.

The initiative aimed to educate the general public, particularly students about enactment of new criminal laws, ensuring awareness and compliance with the updated legal framework.

DySP Headquarters Budgam and I/C PP

Soibugh explained the nuances of the new laws, clarifying their implications and stressing the importance of adherence to legal statutes for maintaining societal order.

The programme witnesses active participation from students and the general public who engaged in interactive discussions, questions and sought clarifications on the legal provisions presented.

The new laws include provisions that ensure justice for the victims of crime and the society at large. Modernization of the investigation process through the use of technology has been included and the new laws also set timelines for trials.

The participants appreciated the role of Police in organising such awareness programmes in the district.

## J&K's golden transformation under BJP's 10-year rule

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 2: Jammu & Kashmir has experienced an extraordinary transformation during the BJP's 10-year rule, marked by unparalleled development and stability.

According to BJP spokesperson & former Vice Chairperson, Balbir Ram Rattan, the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019 was a game-changer, fully integrating J&K with India and paving the way for economic growth, social harmony, and investment.

Balbir Ram Rattan responded to misleading remarks by National Conference (NC) leaders, emphasizing that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, the region has seen groundbreaking infrastructure advancements, including improved road connectivity, new tunnels, and railway projects, all of which have boosted tourism and trade.

He said that J&K has also attracted major



investments, providing job opportunities for youth, while world-class educational and health institutions like AIIMS, IIT, and IIM are revolutionizing the region.

He said that the BJP's security initiatives have led to a significant drop in terrorism, restoring peace and stability, while the government's zero-tolerance policy has been crucial in this success. Additionally, democratic processes such as panchayat and urban local body elections have empowered local governance like never before. The rights of refugees and marginalized communities, including Gork

has and Valmikis, were also addressed, ensuring inclusivity.

Balbir also praised the welfare schemes benefiting farmers, women, and the underprivileged, highlighting initiatives like PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, Ujjwala Yojana, and Ayushman Bharat. With skill development programmes and job opportunities, the youth have been given a chance to thrive.

This golden decade of progress under BJP has set a strong foundation for J&K's future, with the government committed to fostering continued peace, development, and inclusivity for the region's prosperity.

## Manjit Singh expresses deep concern over broad daylight robbery at a jewellery store

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 2: Apni Party Provincial President Manjit Singh has voiced deep concern over the recent robbery at a jewellery store in the Greater Kailash locality, where armed criminals looted the shop in broad daylight and fled with 1.5 kilograms of gold.

In his statement, Manjit Singh said, "With the rising crime rate in the Jammu city and adjoining areas, the recent robbery at Jewellery store in the Greater Kailash locality has further deepened the sense of insecurity among the masses."



He added, "Just a couple of weeks ago, armed criminals shot dead a person in broad daylight at Jewel Chowk, Jammu. Theft incidents are also being reported frequently. This situation not only creates a sense of insecurity among the masses but also raises questions about the performance of our law

enforcement agencies." Manjit Singh urged the police authorities to take immediate steps to restore public faith in the police and other law enforcement agencies.

He said, "I urge the police authorities to ensure that the criminals involved in the recent incidents of robbery, murder, and theft are apprehended and brought to justice. People want to live in peace with a reliable sense of security. Therefore, it is crucial to restore public faith in the police and other law enforcement agencies."

## FromPage No:1

## Is privatization of power distribution on the cards in J&K?

individual state governments.

Additionally, findings from a report drafted by JKEEGA suggest that privatization could result in a staggering increase in electricity costs, raising tariffs by as much as 200%. The current electricity rates, which range from Rs 2 to Rs 3 per unit, could escalate to Rs 8 per unit.

The backdrop of this discussion is the widespread discontent regarding the government's plan, especially from engineers who believe that the population of J&K, which is significantly larger than that of other UTs combined, presents unique challenges that privatization will not address effectively. According to Census 2011 data, J&K has a population of 12.2 million, while the total population of all UTs combined is only 3.6 million.

## Mysterious Deaths in Rajouri: AIIMS Delhi team meets patients, records clinical history

unexplained deaths of 17 people belonging to three families between December 7 and January

19, officials said.

To mitigate the situation and prevent further casualties, 87 families comprising 364 individuals were shifted from the village to three isolated centres in Rajouri — Government Nursing College, Government Boys Higher Secondary School, and Government Medical College where they are under observation.

To ensure the safety of the remaining 808 households, comprising 3,700 individuals, in Badhaal, the village has been divided into 14 clusters monitored by multi-department teams of 182 officials, sources said.

All shops and establishments in the village have been sealed, and ration is being provided under strict supervision, an official said.

The remote village has been declared a containment zone and prohibitory orders have been imposed on all public and private gatherings.

## Digital addiction among Kashmir's children reached 'pandemic level': Doctors

their children's screen habits. "The parents must encourage their children to participate in enriching activities that inculcate learning and creativity," he said.

Similarly, noted paediatrician Dr

Kaisar said that internet overuse has become a widespread issue. He called it a "pandemic" that requires collective action from parents, teachers, doctors and society as a whole.

"Children should be engaged in alternatives that provide them with more joy and fulfillment than mobile phones, while parents must take responsibility by investing quality time with their children to prevent addiction," Dr Kaisar said.

Both experts said that mobile phones should be completely avoided for children up to five years of age, and beyond that, strict content filtering and time restrictions should be implemented. They compared mobile phone usage to electricity—essential in today's world but something that should only be used when necessary.

The doctors called for limiting mobile use to half an hour in the morning and half an hour in the evening to ensure that children do not develop an unhealthy attachment to digital devices.

Another crucial point they raised was the behaviour of parents themselves, saying that excessive mobile use by adults in front of their children normalises screen addiction. Parents need to set an example by limiting their own screen time, promoting interactive family activities, and encouraging outdoor play, they said.

Beyond personal responsibility, both doctors highlighted the need for a societal approach to address-

ing digital addiction. They said the government, in collaboration with educators, healthcare professionals, the media and other stakeholders must take an active role in spreading awareness about the responsible use of mobile devices.

This includes ensuring that children are primarily exposed to educational and informative content while keeping them away from harmful and non-productive digital influences, they added.

Dr Sushil and Dr Kaisar said the psychological effects of prolonged screen time on children are concerning. They cited studies showing increased risks of anxiety, poor attention spans, disrupted sleep patterns and social isolation.

To combat this growing crisis, they said the focus should be on creating a balanced environment where children can benefit from technology without falling into its trap.

## Jammu and Kashmir Seal Easy Win, Enter Ranji Quarter-Finals

runs to win. Baroda were dismissed for 166 in their first innings and struggled again in their second innings, managing only 182/7 at lunch on Day 4. They required 184 more runs to win, despite some resistance, they were unable to chase the target. Jammu and Kashmir's dominant

performance with both bat and ball helped them secure the comprehensive win, ensuring their advancement to the quarter-finals of the competition.

## Cloudy weather forecast in Kashmir valley as Srinagar chills at 1°C; dense fog in northern states

a blanket of snow for the past few days. Although snowfall and these layers of snow may look breathtaking and mesmerising, it also hampers the daily activities of the people residing there.

Further down, the weather department has forecast dense fog in isolated places over Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh.

Dense fog covered the national capital on Sunday morning affecting visibility.

The fog was accompanied by cold winds. According to IMD, the lowest temperature in Delhi on Sunday is 10 degrees Celsius. It has predicted rain for Delhi on February 3.

Meanwhile, Dehi's air quality was recorded in the "very poor" category. According to the Central Pollution Control Board, Air Quality Index was logged at 340 at 8 am this morning.

An AQI rating is categorised as

follows: 0-50 (good), 51-100 (satisfactory), 101-200 (moderate), 201-300 (poor), 301-400 (very poor), and 401-500 (severe).

Cold weather conditions continue to grip the national capital, with residents seeking refuge in night shelters to escape the biting cold.

On Saturday night, many were seen huddled in shelters across areas like Nizamuddin and Lodhi Road, looking for warmth amid the harsh conditions.

The shelters are usually simple structures—either, community centres, or tents — with basic amenities like heaters to provide warmth.

In coordination with various NGOs, the Delhi government has made efforts to provide warm clothing, blankets, and heated spaces to accommodate the growing number of people turning to these facilities.

Tinku Kumar, a caretaker of one of the night shelters said, "We have 20 beds for the people. All of the people have been provided with food and blankets including medicines."

The dip in morning and night temperatures is attributed to north-westerly winds coming from the Himalayas.

## J&K Police lodge FIR against fraudster, five unauthorised labs seized

consequences.

## OfBusiness Connectivity Reaches 26 States + 7 UTs in India, Delivering 170,000 Consignments to SMEs in 2024

GURUGRAM, Feb 2 (Agencies): OfBusiness (OFB) is India's leading and most efficient B2B commerce platform, specializing in the metals, chemicals, Agri-products, and apparel businesses.

OfBusiness engaged with over 4000 transporters from across India, for small and big trucks, that travelled 65 million kilometers, delivering about 7 million tonnes of material. The materials were delivered across India and to about 15 foreign countries, including US, Australia, UK, Dubai, France, Germany, Brazil, Malaysia and Vietnam - the Company said.

In the process, the Company facilitated indirect jobs for more than 350,000 people, in addition to the labours engaged in loading and unloading of materials, the company said.

"Connectivity is one of the key functions at OfBusiness being a B2B commerce platform. Since our businesses are spread across metals, chemicals, Agri-products and apparel, it has always been our priority



to ensure safe and timely delivery of all our consignments. In the year 2024 we delivered 170,000 consignments in 26 States & 7 UTs covering over 500 cities to SMEs. Through our AI enabled robust network, we are also exporting our material to about 15 countries. To ensure safe delivery of all consignment, we have an AI-enabled monitoring system that does real-time tracking of all consignments, and such live updates

are shared with SMEs we are catering to. We are also able to reach a larger base of transporters across India through our AI-enabled, transparent, bidding platform. In the process, we do engage with large transporters but extend preferential opportunities to small transporters for their sustainable livelihood", said Vikram Singh, Business Head - OfBusiness.

In about 10 years, OfBusiness has created two unicorns, the

other being - Oxyzo, established in 2016 - the financial services arm of OfBusiness, which supports over 2 million SMEs with working capital. The Company's AI enabled platform, Nexizo.AI, processes 25 million data points annually for more than 50 million Government Tenders and Documents - helping SMEs in business growth.

OfBusiness has recently announced its expansion of the steel business, infusing about Rs. 3000 crores in the next three years. The company supplies steel to companies such as L&T, Adani, J Kumar, Dilip Buildcon, Ashoka Buildcon. OfBusiness also plans to get into new categories such as pre-painted galvanized iron (PPGI) adding onto thermo-mechanically treated (TMT) bars and structures.

The expansion of business would also enhance engagement with transporters for additional trucks and create more employment opportunities.

OfBusiness is USD 2.5 billion in revenues.

## TVS Motor Company's Sales Grow By 17% in January 2025

BENGALURU, Feb 2 (Agencies): TVS Motor Company recorded monthly sales of 397,623 units in January 2025 with a growth of 17% as against 339,513 units in the month of January 2024.

Two-Wheeler  
Total two-wheelers registered a growth of 18% with sales increasing from 329,937 units in January 2024 to 387,671 units in January 2025. Domestic two-wheeler registered growth of 10% with sales increasing from 268,233 units in January 2024 to 293,860 units in January 2025.

Motorcycle registered a growth of 12% with sales increasing from 155,611 units in January 2024 to 174,388 units in January 2025. Scooter registered a growth of 29% with sales increasing from 132,290 units in January 2024 to 171,111 units in January 2025.

Electric Vehicle  
EV sales registered a growth of 55% with sales increasing from

16,276 units in January 2024 to 25,195 units in January 2025.

International Business  
The Company's total exports grew by 46% increasing from 69,343 units in January 2024 to 101,055 units in January 2025. Two-wheeler exports registered a growth of 52% with sales increasing from 61,704 units registered in January 2024 to 93,811 units in January 2025.

Three-Wheeler  
Three-wheeler of the Company registered growth of 4% with sales increasing from 9,576 units in January 2024 to 9,952 units in January 2025.

TVS Motor Company (BSE:532343 and NSE: TVSMOTOR) is a reputed two and three-wheeler manufacturer globally, championing progress through sustainable mobility with four state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities located in India and Indonesia. Rooted in our 100-year legacy of trust, value, and passion for customers, it

takes pride in making internationally accepted products of the highest quality through innovative and sustainable processes. TVS Motor is the only two-wheeler company to have won the prestigious Deming Prize. Our products lead in their respective categories in the J.D. Power IQS and APEAL surveys. We have been ranked No. 1 Company in the J.D. Power Customer Service Satisfaction Survey for four consecutive years. Our group company Norton Motorcycles, based in the United Kingdom, is one of the most emotive motorcycle brands in the world. Our subsidiaries in the personal e-mobility space, Swiss E-Mobility Group (SEMG) and EGO Movement have a leading position in the e-bike market in Switzerland. TVS Motor Company endeavours to deliver the most superior customer experience across 80 countries in which we operate.

## Cannabis in excess could damage 'working memory', study finds

NEW DELHI, Feb 2 (Agencies): Heavy use of cannabis could affect a human's working memory, which is how the brain retains and uses just-learned information to perform tasks, according to a new study.

Working memory helps a person follow instructions they've just been given or to mentally visualise and manipulate information, like solving a math problem.

Researchers, including those from the University of Colorado, US, analysed the effects of cannabis use in more than 1,000 young adults aged 22 to 36. MRI brain scans of the participants were taken while they performed tasks that tested working memory, reward, emotion, among other cognitive functions.

The study, published in The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Network Open, found that cannabis had a significant effect on brain function during working memory tasks, and a less significant one while performing other tasks.

"In this study of young adults, lifetime history of heavy cannabis use was associated with lower brain activation during a working memory task," the

authors wrote.

"As cannabis use continues to grow globally, studying its effects on human health has become increasingly important. By doing so, we can provide a well-rounded understanding of both the benefits and risks of cannabis use, empowering people to make informed decisions and fully comprehend the potential consequences," first author Joshua Gowin, an assistant professor of radiology at the University of Colorado, said.

For the study, young adults who had used cannabis more than 1000 times were considered 'heavy users'. In the study group, 88 were classified as heavy cannabis users, 179 as moderate and 736 as non-users.

While performing working memory tasks, heavy users of cannabis showed a reduced activity in brain regions involved in important cognitive functions, such as decision-making, memory, attention and emotional processing, the researchers said.

"These findings identify negative outcomes associated with heavy lifetime cannabis use and working memory in healthy young adults that may be long lasting," they wrote.

## Anatomic lung resection linked to improved survival for early-stage lung cancer: Study

ILLINOIS, Feb 2 (Agencies): New research presented at the 2025 Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS) Annual Meeting reveals that anatomic lung resections, such as lobectomy and segmentectomy, are associated with better long-term survival than wedge resection for patients with early-stage non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC).

The study analysed outcomes for more than 32,000 stage 1A NSCLC patients using data from the STS General Thoracic Surgery Database (STS GTSD), with long-term follow-up linked to the National Death Index and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services database, which provides up to 10 years of survival data.

Lobectomy for stage 1A NSCLC offered the highest survival rates, with a 5-year overall survival (OS) of 71.9 per cent and 10-year OS of 44.8 per cent. Segmentectomy, which resulted in a 5-year OS of 69.6 per cent and a 10-year OS of



44.2 per cent, proved to be a viable alternative. Both lobectomy and segmentectomy demonstrated better outcomes than wedge resection, which had a 5-year OS of 66.3 per cent and a 10-year OS of 41.4 per cent.

This research highlights the profound effect of using real-world data to provide critical

insights that complement findings from randomised controlled trials (RCTs). While RCTs suggest an equivalence between lobectomy and sub-lobar resections, this real-world study offers clinicians additional insight. It provides a broader perspective applicable to diverse patient populations and healthcare settings.

"This study reinforces the need for nuanced decision-making, integrating both RCTs and real-world data to deliver the highest quality of care," said Christopher Seder, MD, a thoracic surgeon at Rush University Medical Center, Chicago. "By analyzing outcomes in a variety of healthcare settings, we can offer informed recommendations, ultimately improving patient outcomes across the board."

The findings come at a pivotal time when cardiothoracic surgical practices are evolving rapidly, integrating innovative tools and approaches that prioritize patient safety and long-term health. Dr Seder added, "This research is a significant step forward in understanding the long-term implications of surgical choices for lung cancer patients. Using real-world data to complement RCT findings offers surgeons additional context for tailoring treatment strategies."

## White blood cell count may predict severity of COVID-19: Study

*A Covid-19 diagnosis is no longer as frightening as it used to be, thanks to developments in treatment choices. However, a new study reveals that leukocyte (white blood cell) count may now be used to identify who is more likely to develop more significant disease symptoms.*

OHIO, Feb 2 (Agencies): A COVID-19 diagnosis is no longer as frightening as it used to be, thanks to developments in treatment choices. However, a new study reveals that leukocyte (white blood cell) count may now be used to identify who is more likely to develop more significant disease symptoms.

"As the authors highlight, post-acute sequelae of severe acute respiratory coronavirus 2 infection significantly affects quality of life, often leading to severe disability. This effect is particularly pronounced in women, who already experience higher rates of cognitive impairment after menopause. By understanding underlying factors, we can better address these challenges and work to mitigate the cascade of symptoms that follow," says Dr Monica Christmas, associate medical director for The Menopause Society.

Of people worldwide suffer from the ongoing effects of Covid-19--which is caused by



the SARs-CoV-2 virus--even months after the initial diagnosis. Cognitive impairment and fatigue are the most common lingering symptoms, with cognitive impairment affecting 70% of patients. Older adults--especially women--are the most at risk.

Although healthcare professionals know a lot more about Covid-19 than they did at the

start of the pandemic in 2020, there are still many lingering questions regarding its effect on the human body. Although it is primarily a respiratory disease, sustained effects on multiple organ systems have been documented. Previous studies have shown an excessive immune response to a Covid-19 infection.

Researchers in this latest

study, based on secondary analysis of data from the Women's Health Initiative, sought to better understand preexisting risk factors that may make certain adults--especially older postmenopausal women--more vulnerable to more serious ongoing symptoms. Specifically, they examined whether leukocyte count (a widely available clinical marker of systemic inflammation) was associated with COVID disease outcomes.

Based on the results, the researchers concluded that leukocyte count is an independent predictor of COVID symptom severity in postmenopausal women. These results extend the evidence that low-grade inflammation is not only an outcome of COVID symptom severity but may also precede the acute Covid-19 infection. Additional research in this area is necessary, but the initial work is promising because leukocyte count represents an easily accessible, inexpensive clinical marker.

## Antibody treatment helps prevent severe bird flu in monkeys: Study

WASHINGTON DC, Feb 2 (Agencies): The antibodies target a stable part of the bird flu virus, ensuring that the immune protection can resist new variants and offer long-term protection against the globally spreading airborne infection.

A prophylactic antibody-based immune therapy protects monkeys against severe disease caused by H5N1 avian flu, University of Pittsburgh and NIH Vaccine Research Center researchers report in Science.

The broadly neutralizing antibody, which recognizes a relatively stable region of the bird flu virus, is less prone to losing its efficacy than antibodies targeting influenza's more mutation-prone structures.

This feature ensures that the immune protection can withstand the possible emergence of

virus variants, akin to the SARS-CoV-2 mutants that evolved during the COVID-19 pandemic, and provide lasting protection against a globally spreading airborne infection.

"This type of prevention can be very useful in controlling infection outbreaks and containing the bird flu pandemic," said co-corresponding author Douglas Reed, Ph.D., associate professor of immunology at Pitt's School of Medicine and the Center for Vaccine Research.

"In our testing, the antibody performed beautifully. The antibody could be useful as a prophylactic of severe disease in vulnerable populations, and it also helped us establish the testing threshold for antibody levels in the blood, which would be useful for judging the immune protection generated by a universal flu vaccine."

In a new study, monkeys pre-treated with

a moderate dose of a broadly neutralizing MEDI8852 antibody were universally protected against severe disease and death.

In addition to confirming the antibody's efficacy in preventing serious adverse health outcomes, scientists were also able to establish its minimum serum concentration required for protection -- a measurement useful for establishing the protective threshold of a potential universal flu vaccine.

The research sets the stage for the development of medical countermeasures against future influenza virus pandemics.

Serum levels of MEDI8852 sufficient for protection remained stable for 8 to 12 weeks.

It suggests that, if given early, it could protect first responders and others caring for patients at the beginning of an outbreak of H5N1.

## “We don’t go to Champions Trophy thinking...”: Gambhir on India-Pakistan clash

*All eyes will be on Dubai on 23 February when India takes on Pakistan at Dubai International Cricket Stadium, in a match that is sure to be pivotal to the fortunes of each side as they attempt to qualify for the knockout stages of the event.*

MUMBAI, Feb 2 (Agencies): Indian team head coach Gautam Gambhir has downplayed the extra significance of his side's contest against arch-rival Pakistan at the upcoming ICC Men's Champions Trophy, stating that every game is important and the goal is to win the trophy, not just a particular match.

All eyes will be on Dubai on February 23, when India takes on Pakistan at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium in a match that could be pivotal to both teams' chances of qualifying for the knockout stages of the tournament.

While Gambhir acknowledges the emotional attachment associated with matches between India and Pakistan, he believes the clash in Dubai is just one step in India's journey toward winning a third Champions Trophy title, following their triumphs in 2002 and 2013.

“Look, we do not go to the Champions Trophy thinking that the 23rd is the most important game for us. I think five games, all the games are important,” Gambhir told Star Sports at the annual Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) awards night in Mumbai as quoted by ICC.

“The mission to go to Dubai is to win the Champions Trophy, not only win one particular



game. But yes, if that is one game in the middle of winning the Champions Trophy, we are going to try and take it as seriously as possible.”

“And more importantly, I think when two countries, India and Pakistan, play against each other, obviously the emotions are really high, but ultimately the contest remains the same,” he concluded his point.

Just eight teams will compete in this year's Champions Trophy, with India and Pakistan placed in Group A alongside Bangladesh and New Zealand. Only two teams from each group will advance to the knockout stages.

Gambhir highlighted the key difference between the Champions Trophy and the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup, emphasizing the tournament's high stakes and minimal margin for error.

“Champions Trophy is a com-

pletely different challenge as compared to the 50-over World Cup because literally every game is a make-or-break, so you cannot stop anywhere in this tournament,” Gambhir noted.

“So hopefully we are going to start off really well, because ultimately, if you want to go on and win the competition, you have to win five games.”

India has named an experienced 15-player squad for the tournament, with skipper Rohit Sharma joined by fellow big names Virat Kohli, Mohammed Shami, Hardik Pandya, Kuldeep Yadav, KL Rahul, Jasprit Bumrah and Ravindra Jadeja alongside the more youthful trio of Shubman Gill, Yashasvi Jaiswal and Arshdeep Singh.

Gambhir knows it will take contributions from the entire squad for India to win the Champions

Trophy and is backing his two most experienced players to step up and perform well.

Rohit and Kohli are two of the three surviving members from India's successful Champions Trophy side that won the final against England at Edgbaston in 2013 and Gambhir thinks the duo can rise to the occasion once again.

“I think both Rohit and Virat, they add so much value to the dressing room. They add so much value to Indian cricket as well. They've got to play a massive role (in the Champions Trophy),” Gambhir added.

“And I have said it before as well, those guys are so hungry, they want to play for the country. They have the passion to play for the country and deliver for the country,” he concluded.

India squad: Rohit Sharma (c), Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul, Hardik Pandya, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Kuldeep Yadav, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami, Arshdeep Singh, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Rishabh Pant, Ravindra Jadeja.

India's Group Stage Fixtures:  
February 20 - India vs Bangladesh, Dubai

February 23 - India vs Pakistan, Dubai

March 2 - India vs New Zealand, Dubai.

## “Our belief carried us to the title...”: Shrachhi Rarh Bengal Tigers captain Rupinder after HIL win



NEW DELHI, Feb 2 (Agencies): The thrilling Men's Hockey India League 2024-25 season concluded in spectacular fashion as Shrachhi Rarh Bengal Tigers edged out Hyderabad Toofans 4-3 in a gripping final at a packed Birsamunda International Hockey Stadium in Rourkela.

Jugraj Singh (25', 32', 35') delivered for the Tigers when it mattered the most as he netted a scintillating hat-trick in the final. However, the title-deciding match lived up to its billing as it went down to the wire with the scoreline level at 3-3 till the very last quarter. However, Sam Lane (54') converted a penalty corner with just six minutes remaining on the clock to seal the

deal for the Tiger.

With the victory, Shrachhi Rarh Bengal Tigers also claimed Rs 3 crore prize money.

Talking about his team's roller-coaster journey in the tournament, Shrachhi Rarh Bengal Tigers Captain Rupinder Pal Singh said as per a HIL press release, “It has been an incredible journey for us, especially with the return of the Hockey India League after a seven-year hiatus. We owe a big thanks to Hockey India for organising the tournament so flawlessly. Our path as a team had its share of ups and downs, but in the end, everything came together perfectly. It was our belief that carried us to the title, and I am immensely proud of

my team for their hard work and resilience throughout the tournament.”

Further talking about his strategy for the final, Rupinder said, “We were determined to execute our penalty corner strategies more effectively, especially after missing key opportunities in the semifinals. In the final, it was crucial for us to make the most of those chances, and we did. Additionally, we concentrated on tightening our defensive structure and maintaining maximum possession. All of these efforts helped us bounce back in the match and ultimately secure the title.”

Notably, the Shrachhi Rarh Bengal Tigers had topped the group stage as well with 19 points from 10 games, having secured 6 wins, 3 losses in regular time, and 1 shootout defeat. In the semifinals, they defeated Tamil Nadu Dragons 2 - 2 (6 - 5 on shootouts).

Jugraj Singh turned out to be the standout performer for the Tigers as he emerged as the tournament's top scorer with 12 goals to his name.

## “He has added a lot of maturity...”: Haddin lauds Allan Border Medal favourite Travis Head

MELBOURNE, Feb 2 (Agencies): Australia's hard-hitting batter Travis Head is shaping up to be a favourite to win the Allan Border Medal for the Most Outstanding Male Australian Cricketer of the Year, with his domination extending to all formats.

During the voting period starting from Australia's home series against West Indies in the 2023-24 season till the end of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy against India, the left-hander made 1,427 runs in 29 matches and 36 innings across all formats, at an average of 43.24, with four centuries and five fifties. His best score is 154 and has emerged as the team's top-run-getter in this phase.

The batter has had strong outings whenever it mattered the most, be it in franchise cricket during the Indian Premier League (IPL), in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup or the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

Former Australian captain Brad Haddin has heaped praises on the big-hitting south-paw, saying that he has grown into a wonderful cricketer “over the last couple of years”, a



period which has seen him break the hearts of Indian fans with match-winning tons in ICC World Test Championship final, ICC Cricket World Cup final and the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

“I do not think it's just been 12 months with Travis Head, I think he has grown into a wonderful cricketer over the past couple of years,” he said as quoted by Fox Cricket.

“We have seen how adaptable he is in his game and I think the thing now is he has added maturity. We have always known him as a matchwinner but now he has added a lot of maturity to his game, he wins a lot of the big moments for Australia.”

“You only have to go through the last 12 months, every big event, Travis Head's name is

at the top,” concluded Haddin.

Head had bagged the Shane Warne Test Player of the Year Award back in 2022, but has not won the Allan Border Medal.

Haddin commended skipper Pat Cummins and coach Andrew McDonald for letting Travis play his natural game and be an “out and out match winner” irrespective of the game situation.

“I think Patty and the staff deserve a lot of credit for the way they have handled him, allowing him to go out and win matches.”

“At times it would not work, we have not seen much of that, but they have allowed him to go out and be the player he wanted to be and now we are seeing some unbelievable rewards,” signed off Haddin.

## “Serious problems with shot selection...”: SL coach Jayasuriya after loss to Australia

GALLE, Feb 2 (Agencies): Following his side's loss to Australia in the first Test at Galle, Sri Lankan coach Sanath Jayasuriya expressed disappointment with his team's shot selection and their inability to convert promising starts into big scores.

Australia delivered a strong all-round performance, filled with record-breaking efforts from Steve Smith, Usman Khawaja, Mitchell Starc and Nathan Lyon to defeat Sri Lanka by an innings and 242 runs to retain the Warne-Muralitharan Trophy and take a 1-0 lead in the two-match series.

Following the match, Jayasuriya said as quoted by ESPNCricinfo, “There was a serious problem with shot selections, as well as with handling situations. I do not think certain players have handled situations well. They are experienced players, and they have to be more mature.”

The former all-rounder also remarked that the team has played a lot of cricket and “should know how to play”.

“I have talked to them about this. But we have got to talk to them in detail about this now.



Also, we cannot blame the wicket. Because we saw how the wicket behaved. This was a very good wicket. For a long time, we have not seen such a good wicket in Galle, on the third and fourth days,” he added.

A crucial issue was Sri Lankan players not being able to convert their starts into big scores. During the first innings of Australia, six batters played 50 balls or more. But in Sri Lanka's innings, only Dinesh Chandimal played more than 50. In the second innings, Chandimal, Angelo Mathews, Kamindu Mendis and Kusal Mendis got off to solid starts but failed to hold down the fort for their team.

Jayasuriya called for more consistency in converting starts into something impactful.

“The biggest problem is the batters who are taking a start but are

not going to play a long innings. This is something I always mutter. We saw Usman Khawaja, Steve Smith and Josh Inglis, all three of them took a good start and they converted them to big hundreds. This conversion must be there. We are not consistent in that. Our players should know that these are our conditions and we must make use of these conditions. There were lots of opportunities but we did not make use of them,” the coach said.

Coming to the match, Australia won the toss and opted to bat first. Coming to the match, Australia won the toss and elected to bat first. A 92-run partnership between Usman Khawaja and Travis Head (57 in 40 balls, with 10 fours and a six) kickstarted things off for Australia. Steve Smith became the fourth Australian to touch the 10,000 mark

in Tests and centuries from him and Khawaja marked Australia's day one end at 330/2.

On the next day, misery and runs from Australian batters continued to pile up for Sri Lanka and the spin bowling trio of Prabath Jayasuriya (3/193), Jeffrey Vandersay (3/182) and Nishan Peiris (0/189) looked hopeless beyond repair. Smith fell to Vandersay (141 in 251 balls, with 12 fours and two sixes) after the team crossed the 400-run mark while Khawaja converted his century to a maiden double ton, making 232 in 352 balls, with 16 fours and a six.

Josh Inglis on his Test debut, also slammed a 94-ball 102 with 10 fours and a six, taking Australia beyond the 600-run mark. Contributions from Alex Carey (46\*), Beau Webster (23) and Mitchell Starc (19\*) helped Australia reach 654/6 declared, their highest-ever score in Asia, outdoing the 617 runs scored against Pakistan in Faisalabad in 1980.

If Australia had batted once in these two days, Sri Lanka was made to do it twice. In the first innings, SL ended day two at 44/3 but ended the innings at 165 thanks to

Dinesh Chandimal, who played a valiant knock of 72 in 139 balls, with nine fours.

Matthew Kuhnemann (5/63) took his second Test wicket, while Nathan Lyon got three scalps. Mitchell Starc also got two to become the fourth Australian to complete 700 international wickets.

Sri Lanka could not remove the 489-run deficit in the second innings, as by day four, they were bundled out for 247 runs, with Jeffrey Vandersay (53 in 47 balls, with seven fours and two sixes scoring maiden Test fifty and Dinesh Chandimal (31 in 49 balls, with three fours), Angelo Mathews (41 in 59 balls, with six fours), Kamindu Mendis (32 in 26 balls, with four boundaries and a six), skipper Dhananjaya de Silva (39 in 50 balls, with eight fours) and Kusal Mendis (34 in 47 balls, with four boundaries) throwing away their wickets after getting starts.

Kuhnemann and Lyon took four wickets each, crushing the Lankan Lions by an innings and 242 runs.

Khawaja took home the 'Player of the Match' title.

## Bangladesh cricket board panel to probe premier league corruption allegations

DHAKA, Feb 2 (Agencies): The Bangladesh Cricket Board has established an independent inquiry body to assist its Anti-Corruption Unit in probing a slew of corruption allegations over the last couple of weeks in the Bangladesh Premier League.

This marks the first official corruption investigation in the BPL since

2013 as the league faces challenge with delayed player payments and ticketing controversies.

“As part of its ongoing efforts, the BCB is in the process of establishing an Independent Inquiry Body to further support the ACU in its investigations,” a BCB press release said.

“The BCB remains dedicated to ensuring



a fair and transparent cricketing environment, and will continue to take all necessary actions to safeguard the integrity of the sport in Bangladesh.”

Recent media reports have alleged instances of corruption, naming specific players and matches, although these claims have not yet been substantiated by the

BCB's ACU.

“The BCB has also come across media coverage regarding potential anti-corruption concerns about the BPL. The Board reiterates its firm commitment to upholding the integrity and spirit of the game,” added the release.

“The BCB strictly adheres to the ICC Anti-

Corruption Code for Participants and maintains a zero-tolerance policy towards corruption in any form.

The BCB anti-corruption unit is continuously monitoring all matters relating to integrity within Bangladesh cricket, addressing them with due confidentiality and discretion.”

# Gene therapy promises individualised management of disease for each patient: Dr Jitendra

## Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 2: "Gene therapy promises individualised management of disease for each patient. Even if two individuals suffer from the same condition—be it cancer, kidney disease, or any other ailment—the treatment could be different in each case, guided by the individual's unique genetic makeup, pre-existing susceptibilities and inherited vulnerabilities.", stated Dr. Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology; Earth Sciences and Minister of State for PMO, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, while inaugurating the Centre for Advanced Genomics & Precision Medicine at AIIMS Jammu.

Set up in collaboration with 4 base Care, the Centre aims to usher in a new era of personalised medicine, leveraging cutting-edge genomic research to provide targeted treatment based on individual genetic profiles.

Underscoring the transformative potential of gene therapy, the Minister emphasised that with genomic advancements, doctors would no longer rely on a one-size-fits-all approach but would tailor treatments to maximise efficacy and specificity for each individual. The newly launched Centre for



Advanced Genomics & Precision Medicine places AIIMS Jammu among the frontrunners in India's medical research landscape. By integrating genomic data with AI-driven diagnostics, the centre aims to enhance early disease detection, optimise treatment strategies, and reduce the trial-and-error approach in medical prescriptions. Experts at the event noted that this

facility would play a pivotal role in advancing precision oncology, cardiovascular genomics, and genetic screening for rare disorders.

Dr. Jitendra Singh pointed out that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, India has prioritised technology-driven progress in the healthcare sector. He cited the government's efforts in promoting indigenous research

and biotechnology, highlighting the exponential growth in India's bio-economy—from a mere \$10 billion in 2014 to nearly \$130 billion today, with an ambitious target of \$300 billion in the near future. He further stated that with over 9,000 biotech startups compared to just 50 in 2014, India is rapidly emerging as a global leader in medical innovation.

The Minister stressed the need for an India-specific genomic database, highlighting the country's unique genetic diversity. "India is a subcontinent in itself, with over 4,600 distinct demographic groups. Our gene sequencing efforts, which have already mapped 10,000 healthy individuals across 99 communities, will help create a robust dataset tailored to Indian-specific health challenges," he said. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to completing one million genome sequences in the coming years to enable more accurate disease prediction and personalised interventions.

Dr. Jitendra Singh also pointed out the resurgence of infectious diseases alongside the rise in non-communicable diseases, urging a hybrid approach combining traditional diagnostics with genetic insights. "India has already proven itself in preventive healthcare, pioneering innovations like the world's first DNA-based COVID-19 vaccine and the HPV vaccine. With

this new centre, we will further strengthen our ability to prevent, diagnose, and treat diseases using cutting-edge technology," he said.

A key objective of the centre is to make precision medicine affordable and accessible to the masses. While personalised treatments have traditionally been costly, AIIMS Jammu aims to leverage indigenous research and government-backed biotech initiatives to bring down costs and integrate precision medicine into public healthcare programs.

The Minister highlighted initiatives like Ayushman Bharat, which has provided health coverage to millions, and the recently launched Bio-E3 policy, which focuses on biotechnology for economic growth, environmental sustainability, and employment generation. He stated that the government's National Research Foundation (Anusandhan) will play a crucial role in funding next-generation research in genomics and personalised medicine.

Dr. Jitendra Singh elaborated on how Precision Medicine could be a game-changer for cancer treatment, enabling doctors to design targeted therapies instead of relying solely on conventional chemotherapy and radiation. He cited India's recent success in conducting the first-ever genetic therapy trial for haemophilia at CMC Vellore, where patients showed a

60% improvement in clotting factor production, with zero bleeding episodes. The trial, acknowledged globally and published in the New England Journal of Medicine, underscores India's rising stature in genetic research.

He also noted that genomic medicine would play a crucial role in tackling lifestyle diseases such as diabetes, which is now affecting younger age groups in India. A recent study found that the prevalence of Type 2 diabetes in Jammu is slightly higher than the national average, making AIIMS Jammu's research even more critical in developing effective intervention strategies.

Dr. Jitendra Singh concluded his address by reaffirming the government's vision of a Viksit Bharat by 2047, where healthcare is not only curative but also predictive and preventive. "This is just the beginning. The future of medicine is personalised, and India is well on its way to leading the world in genomic healthcare," he said.

Earlier, in his welcome address, Director AIIMS Jammu, Dr Shakti Gupta was all praise for Dr Jitendra Singh for his support in the setting up and continuous upgradation of AIIMS Jammu.

Dr YK Gupta President AIIMS and Dr V Srinivas Director AIIMS New Delhi also spoke on the occasion.

# GGM Science College honours late Wazir Mohd Hakla Poonchi with Display of Photograph



## Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 2: In a commendable initiative to honour the contributions of Late Wazir Mohd Hakla Poonchi and to inspire future generations to follow his path of dedication, service, and patriotism, Govt Gandhi Memorial (GGM) Science College Jammu has displayed the photograph of the postal stamp issued in his name along with his portrait in the Browsing Centre cum Reading Room of the college.

This initiative was undertaken under the instructions of the higher authorities of the Department of Higher Education, Government of Jammu and Kashmir.

The photographs were handed over to Prof. (Dr) Romesh Kumar Gupta Principal of the College by Shamsheer Hakla

Poonchi in presence of Dr Narinder Kumar, Dr Ashaq Hussain and Dr. Mohd Maqem in the College.

While recalling the contributions of Late Wazir Mohd Hakla Poonchi, Prof. (Dr) Romesh Kumar Gupta added that Hakla was a distinguished nationalist leader, philosopher, writer, scholar, and intellectual of Jammu & Kashmir.

His lifelong dedication to the upliftment of marginalized communities and his patriotic contributions during the 1965 and 1971 wars exemplify his unwavering commitment to the nation. He played a pivotal role in strengthening communal harmony and worked tirelessly for the betterment of society, particularly for the underprivileged sections.

While handing over the Photographs to the College authorities, Shamsheer Hakla Poonchi elaborated that recognizing the invaluable service of Late Wazir Mohd Hakla, to the nation, the Government of India, under the leadership of Prime Minister, approved the issuance of a postal stamp in his honor.

The Ministry of Communications, Department of Posts, Philatelic Division, sanctioned this initiative during a Philatelic Advisory Committee meeting held on 25th July 2022 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, under the chairmanship of Minister of State for Communications, Devusinh Chauhan. The postal stamp was officially released on 24th July 2024 at Raj Bhawan, Srinagar, J&K, by Lieutenant Governor of J&K, Manoj Sinha.

# Shiksha Niketan High School celebrates its 56th Foundation Day



## Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 2: Shiksha Niketan High School Gandhi Nagar celebrated its 56th Foundation Day with fervour on the auspicious occasion of Basant Panchami on Sunday.

Principal Ramesh

war Mengi, Trustee of the School Rita Mengi, Director RMPS Rakshan Mengi and Director Gandhi Nagar and Pushp Vatika Rishiek Mengi along with special guests and the representatives of sister concern schools, were present on the occasion.

The festivities will include a traditional Hawan ceremony, symbolizing purification and the invocation of blessings for the academic year ahead.

The Hawan was followed by traditional chants and offerings, promoting unity and harmony within the school community.

This celebration not only honors the founding father of our esteemed institution Dev Dutt Mengi but also reinforces his ideals and commitment to fostering a nurturing and inclusive environment for all our staff members and students.

# CRPF honours its Martyr from Ramban

## Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 2: 84 Bn CRPF, in conjunction with GC CRPF Hiranagar, organized a function to honour the martyrdom of Shaheed Ct/Dvr Mushtaq Ahmad at Oakfield International School Parnote Ramban.

Shaheed Ct/Dvr, a resident of Parnote



Ramban, laid down his life in the service of the nation, while fighting Maoists in Narayanpur

Chhattisgarh, on February 2, 2008, during his posting in 63 Bn CRPF. He is survived by his


wife Veer Naari Rubina Begum and two sons.

The function was attended by nearly 100 people, including his wife, children, relatives, village elderlies, media persons and CRPF personnel.

During the function, floral tributes were paid to the martyr and two minutes silence was observed in the memory

of the martyr. Further, 84 Bn CRPF assured the family members of the martyr of all the possible assistances, being the nearest CRPF Unit.

The family members, village elderlies, thanked CRPF for organizing the function to honour the supreme sacrifice made by the Shaheed Ct/Dvr Mushtaq Ahmad.



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