



## Rajnath compares India's anti-terror action to Sardar Patel's 'iron will'

» Op Sindoor proof of Bharat's will to respond strongly

» Art-370 abrogation ensured J&K's integration into country's mainstream

Sajid Raina

New Delhi, Dec 02: Terming "Operation Sindoor" as proof of India's strength to give a befitting reply to those who do not understand the language of peace and goodwill," Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday likened India's action against terrorism to the "iron will" and leadership of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

Addressing Sardar Sabha at Vadodara in Gujarat, Singh, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Sardar Patel always tried to resolve problems through dialogue, but never hesitated to choose a bold path as need so arose as in the case of the union of Hyderabad with India."

Commending the courage and dedication of the armed forces for the successful execution of 'Operation Sindoor,' Singh said that the world is



today acknowledging the bravery and capabilities of Indian soldiers. "The operation sent a clear message that "we're a peace-loving nation which

never provokes any country, but if provoked, does not spare those who try to cast an evil eye".

The Defence Minister

described Sardar Patel as a key contributor in uniting the nation, adding that his dream of 'One India, Best India' has been further strengthened under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Referring to the abrogation of Article 370, he stated that the decision ensured the integration of Jammu & Kashmir into the country's mainstream.

He emphasised that the Government is following the path shown by Sardar Patel, as a result of which, India, once surrounded by doubts, is today communicating with the world on its own terms.

He stated that unlike the past, the world now listens to what India has to say on international platforms. "India is marching ahead towards becoming a major economic and strategic power. This is due to the immense contribution of Sardar Patel," he added. | More on P6

## Kashmir reels under nearly 500 MW power deficit

◆ More receiving stations in pipeline

KPDCL meets seasons highest load at 1900 MWs

60% areas under local Discom flat rated

Riyaz Bhat

Srinagar, Dec 02: The Power Development Department (PDD) is facing a 'shortage of nearly 500 Megawatts (MWs) to meet the actual power demand' in Kashmir valley—plunging residents facing into extended blackouts.

An official informed the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that "The actual peak power demand in Kashmir is at least 2400 MWs but the local Discom (Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL)



this year so far has been able to cater only 1900 MWs."

The official further said that "On Sunday we were able to cater the season's highest load at least 1906 Megawatts (MWs). We will be able to cater a maximum of 2000 MWs."

On asking about the new power curtailment schedule, the official said, "As such there are no plans for any new power curtailment schedule. Our target is to provide a better and uninterrupted power supply."

He said, "We are expecting

some receiving stations for north and south Kashmir, we are hopeful that they will be commissioned soon so that some of the bottlenecks are resolved and we will be in a position to provide better power supply."

About the unscheduled power cuts, the official added that "The power outages are primarily because of the unauthorised use of power. People mostly in the flat rate areas are not using power judiciously | More on P6

## J&K's Raj Bhavan renamed as 'Lok Bhavan'

KNO Correspondent

Jammu, Dec 02: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor's Secretariat has announced the renaming of the Union Territory's Raj Bhavan to "Lok Bhavan, Jammu and Kashmir".

This building serves as the official residence and office of the Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory, according to an order accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

The order, signed by Principal Secretary Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari, states that the change is effective immediately.

Consequently, all references to Raj Bhavan, Jammu and Kashmir shall now be referred to as Lok Bhavan, Jammu and Kashmir.

This notification | More on P6

## CM to chair crucial cabinet meeting today

Likely to act on CSC report on reservation

KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, Dec 02: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah will chair a crucial meeting of the cabinet on Wednesday morning, which is likely to discuss the implementation of the cabinet sub-committee's report on reservation.

Sources told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the CM will chair the first meeting of the cabinet after the Durbar Move at 9:00 AM at his Wazarat Road residence in the winter capital, Jammu. The cabinet is expected to discuss the CSC report on the rationalization of reservation.

The CSC, headed by Minister for Social Welfare Sakina Ittoo, is understood to have recommended a 10 percent reduction

in the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) and Reserved Backward Area (RBA) quotas.

The cabinet panel has recommended against tinkering with the Scheduled Tribe-I, Scheduled Tribe-II, Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Classes, and Actual Line of Control and International Border categories.

All eyes will be on the cabinet's decision on the CSC report, given that the rationalization of reservation has become a major demand in Kashmir since 2024.

The existing reservation policy in Jammu and Kashmir is heavily tilted towards the reserved categories, with their share at 60 percent and Open Merit (OM) at 40 percent (KNO)

SMVDIME admission row

## 'Return grants & land first': CM Omar on religious quota demand

Says religion-based MBBS seats violate law, Constitution, policy

Asserts NEET admissions must stay merit-based

Sajid Raina

Rajouri, Dec 02: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said there can be no allocation of seats on religious lines in the proposed Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Institute of Medical Excellence (SMVDIME) at Katra, asserting that admissions have to remain strictly merit-based under NEET guidelines.



"Any institution advocating religious-based allocation must first stop taking government grants and return the land received free of cost, before amending its internal rules for exclusive admissions," the CM said while speaking to reporters during

his visit to Rajouri.

Referring to the ongoing public debate over reservation of MBBS seats, Omar, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the law, the Constitution and the university's own policy do not allow | More on P6

## CM approves age relaxation proposal

Sent to Raj Bhavan for consent

KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, Dec 02: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has approved the age relaxation proposal for aspirants of the Jammu & Kashmir Combined Competitive Examination, and the proposal has been sent to Raj Bhavan for consent.

In a post on X, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), NC spokesman and MLA Zaidal Tanvir Sadiq announced that Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has approved the age relaxation proposal.

"Chief Minister @OmarAbdullah Sb has approved and forwarded the age relaxation. The | More on P6

Operation Sindoor

## Persistent naval presence locked Pak fleet near ports, says Indian Navy Chief

Sajid Raina

New Delhi, Dec 02: Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi on Monday said that the Indian Navy's persistent presence in the northern Arabian Sea during Operation Sindoor compelled Pakistan's naval assets to remain positioned close to their bases, significantly limiting their operational mobility for several days.

Addressing the media in New Delhi, Admiral Tripathi, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "The Navy's forward deployment, which included the



positioning of a carrier battle group, created a deterrent effect that prevented Pakistan from venturing into the open seas."

He emphasised that the operation continues to remain active and | More on P6

## Sub-Zero chill grips J&K

Met predicts light snow at isolated areas on Dec 4-5

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Dec 02: Jammu and Kashmir continues to witness freezing temperatures with mercury plummeting below zero degrees Celsius in several areas of the regions, meteorological department said.

The department said that shallow to moderate fog is likely to persist at many places in Kashmir division and in isolated areas of the Jammu division in coming days.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Srinagar recorded a minimum temperature of minus 2.5 degree Celsius, while Qazigund and Pahalgam registered minus 2.4 degree Celsius



and minus 2.2 degree Celsius respectively. Kupwara recorded minus 3.1 degree Celsius, Baramulla with minus 4.3 degree Celsius, Pulwama with minus 3.8 Celsius, Shopian minus 5.0 degree Celsius and

Anantnag with minus 3.7 degree Celsius.

Other areas, including Gulmarg and Kokernag recorded zero degree Celsius and minus 0.6 degree Celsius respectively. | More on P6

## CS reviews implementation of 4 new Labour Codes



'Reforms to simplify processes, strengthen worker rights'

KT News Desk

Jammu, Dec 02: Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo on Tuesday chaired a high-level meeting to review the implementation status of the four new Labour Codes,

one of India's most significant labour reforms aimed at simplifying compliance systems and improving worker welfare across Jammu & Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by the Secretary Labour & Employment, Secretary IT, Secretary Law, Labour Commissioner, Director Industries & Commerce Jammu and other | More on P6

## Financial transparency ensured in Ladakh, LG's authority intact: MHA

Sajid Raina

New Delhi, Dec 02: The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has ensured enhanced financial transparency and accountability in the Union Territory of Ladakh while retaining full powers with the Lieutenant Governor (LG), official sources from MHA said on Tuesday.

Under the new framework, Administrative Approval (AA) and Expenditure Sanction (ES) for major projects will be processed through the MHA, aligning Ladakh with other Union Territories without affecting the



LG's authority as the Competent Financial Authority.

"All decision-making powers, delegated financial authority and contract approvals remain fully with the LG," the sources told the news agency—Kashmir

News Observer (KNO).

The LG continues to approve contracts up to Rs 100 crore, while contracts above Rs 40 crore and up to Rs 100 crore are cleared by the Contract Committee, consistent with existing norms.

Officials highlighted that the administration has completed development works worth over Rs 11,562 crore in the past five years with more than 5,500 projects ongoing across the UT. "The financial and administrative system is fully functional, and day-to-day governance continues | More on P6

## In 2 years, over 2.05 cr youth registered on 'MY Bharat' platform: GoI informs LS

Raja Syed Rather

New Delhi, Dec 02: The Centre on Tuesday informed the Lok Sabha that more than 2.05 crore youth registered themselves on the 'MY Bharat' platform since its launch in November 2023, aimed at connecting young citizens with experiential learning and volunteering opportunities.

The details, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), were shared in a written reply by Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya. According to the Ministry,



registrations on the portal stand at 2,05,80,565, with detailed break-ups provided State/UT-wise, age-group-wise, gender-wise and rural/urban category-wise.

The Government said that

the highest share of registrations nationally falls in the 15-29 age bracket at 88.01 percent, followed by 11.34 percent among youth aged 29 and above, while 0.65 percent belongs to the 0-15 age group. In

terms of gender, 55.64% of the registered youth are male and 44.31% are female, while 0.05% identify as others. Around 68.39% of the total registrants are from rural areas.

The reply stated that the number of volunteering opportunities published and youth participation on the portal has increased steadily since 2023. State-wise year-wise figures of opportunities published, youth applied and participation have been placed in Annexure II.

Major contributors include Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, | More on P6



CS reviews modernisation plans for KU, JU Music & Fine Arts Institutes

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, DECEMBER 02: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, Tuesday chaired a meeting to review the ongoing expansion and augmentation plans for the Institutes of Music & Fine Arts associated with the University of Kashmir and the University of Jammu.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by the Additional Chief Secretary, Higher Education Department; Vice Chancellors of the two Universities; Divisional Commissioner, Jammu; and other senior officers.

The Chief Secretary underscored the crucial role of these institutes in nurturing and polishing the artistic and musical talents of J&K's youth. He observed that both institutes must be developed on modern lines with robust infrastructure to ensure an enabling academic environment for enrolled students.

Calling for a long-term vision, the Chief Secretary directed the Vice Chancellors to prepare Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for the creation of permanent campuses and



future expansion of both institutes. He reviewed the existing bachelor-level programmes and advised the Universities to explore the introduction of additional courses, including postgraduate programmes, in line with emerging needs in the fields of music and fine arts. Emphasizing the importance of academic excellence, the Chief Secretary urged the Universities to undertake necessary faculty

upgradation as per UGC norms and ensure that these institutes receive the same level of support, attention and institutional grooming as other departments under their administration.

The Vice Chancellors apprised the Chief Secretary of the current status of available infrastructure, ongoing courses and student intake capacities. They also highlighted certain constraints, particularly

related to non-availability of adequate land for establishment of independent campuses.

To resolve this bottleneck, the Chief Secretary directed the respective Divisional Commissioners to extend full support to the Universities in identifying and transferring suitable land parcels at the earliest, enabling timely establishment of permanent campuses for both institutes.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR (U T)  
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER  
MACHINERY DIVISION KASHMIR,  
MECHANICAL & HOSPITAL ENGINEERING  
DEPARTMENT, KASHMIR.

| FaxNo: 0194-2497093 | | xenmds-kmr@jk.gov.in |  
CORRIGENDUM 01 FOR AMENDMENT.

Name of work: Providing and fixing of informatory Retro Reflective Stickers and machine numbers on various snow Clearance Machines of Snow Clearance Control Room Budgam.

Reference: This office e-NIT No:- MDSK/TS /2025-26/69 Date:01.12.2025  
Due to a typographical error in the Tender Notice, please read “e-tenders are invited on percentage BoQ basis”instead of “e-tenders are invited on item rate basis.”

All other terms, conditions and specifications as stipulated in the e-NIT shall remain unchanged.

Sd/  
Executive Engineer  
Machinery Division, Kashmir.

No: MDSK/TS/ 4250-54  
Date:02-12-2025.

DIPK-8651/25  
DATED: 02-12-2025

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE  
ENGINEER LAKE DIVISION NO.MISKEEN  
BAGH KHANYAR SRINAGAR,  
J&K LAKES CONSERVATION AND  
MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY, SRINAGAR.  
CORRIGENDUM

Subject:- Change in time of completion.

Reference:- This office freh NIT No.09 of 2025-26, issued vide No.LD-11/2230-2257 dt:27.11.2025.

Please read the time of completion for the below mentioned work advertised vide this office above referred NIT as under:-

Sr. No	Name of the work	Time of Completion	Instead of	
1.	Conservation and Rejuvenation of Brari Nambal Lagoon.	60 Days		30 Days

No: LD-11/2262-2288  
Dated: 27.11.2025

DIPK-8642/25  
DATED: 02-12-2025

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer,  
Lake Division NO.2"

DC Srinagar inspects progress on hostel for wards of Ex-Servicemen, Martyrs

KT NEWS DESK

SRNAGAR DECEMBER 02: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo Tuesday conducted a site visit to under completion Hostel for wards of Ex-Servicemen/ Martyrs at Peerbagh to inspect the quality and progress of work being executed on the project.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, was accompanied by the Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar; District Social Welfare Officer, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad; Tehsildar Chanpora, Kifayat Hussain,



Executive Engineer of R&B, Khalid Mehmood, Zila Sainik Welfare Officer and other Officers.

On the occasion, the DC took round of the various sections of the building and reviewed the

progress of ongoing construction works. The DC was informed that civil works part of the project, being built at an estimated cost of Rs 7.44 Crore is reaching its final stage.

The DC instructed the executing agency to expedite the remaining interior works and ensure that the project is fully completed on priority.

The upcoming hostel is a G+2 structure comprising 25 rooms with a capacity of 100 beds, designed to cater to the residential needs of the wards of ex-servicemen and martyrs.

Modern Charkhas installed at all Pashmina Spinning Centres

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 02: In order to secure the indigenous process of hand-spinning of world-famous Pashmina wool, the Department of Handicrafts and Handloom, Kashmir, has replaced traditional charkhas with 213 Modern Charkhas in all its 16 Pashmina Spinning Training Centres with an intake capacity of 20 trainees in each centre.

These training centres are functional in Srinagar, Pulwama, Shopian, Kulgam, Baramulla, Ganderbal, Anantnag and Bandipora districts.

DC Baramulla's intervention leads to Disability Certification Camp in Uri

KT NEWS DESK

BARAMULLA, DECEMBER 02: In a significant outreach initiative aimed at ensuring inclusive and accessible public services, a special disability certification camp was organised on Tuesday at CHC Uri on the directions of Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa.

The camp, as per an official statement was coordinated by the Chief Medical Officer Baramulla, Dr. A. G. Raina, with dedicated medical teams deployed to cater to specially-abled individuals from far-flung and remote areas of Uri.

Residents of these distant villages often face considerable challenges in travelling to district headquarters for essential services. Understanding this gap, the district administration brought the service directly to their doorstep, ensuring that beneficiaries could undergo on-spot medical assessment, documentation, and certification without unnecessary hardship.

During the camp, specialists from different medical fields evaluated cases related to physical, visual, hearing, and intellectual disabilities. The process was streamlined to avoid delays, with efforts made to ensure that no eligible person was left out.

Officials emphasised that the initiative is part of the district administration's broader commitment to strengthening last-mile delivery and extending essential welfare services to every corner of Baramulla, particularly to those who need them the most.

Mission Director reviews financial progress under JKCIP

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, DECEMBER 02: Mission Director HADP/JKCIP Sandeep Kumar Tuesday chaired a comprehensive review meeting of the implementing agencies to assess progress achieved under Jammu and Kashmir Competitiveness Improvement of Agriculture and Allied Sectors Project (JKCIP).

The meeting, as per an official statement, focused on reviewing financial progress achieved across all components of the project, with detailed discussions on allotments, actual expenditure, booked expenditure and the overall financial performance as per the prescribed format.

The meeting was attended by Directors of Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Sheep Husbandry, Fisheries and Horticulture Planning & Marketing from twin divisions, along with chief and Sub-Divisional level officers. The Director Research, SKUAST-Jammu/ Kashmir, along with respective Principal Investigators, also participated in the deliberations. Officers from Kashmir and Sub-Divisional officers of Jammu Division joined the meeting online through the designated link, while Directors and senior officers based in Jammu attended the session physically at the venue.

The Mission Director instructed all implementing agencies to furnish financial data covering the components of Climate

Smart & Market-Led Production, Agri-Business Ecosystem Development, Support to Pastoralists & Vulnerable Communities and Project Management & Knowledge Management, ensuring accuracy and timely reporting.

The Mission Director stressed the need for strict adherence to timelines and financial discipline. He directed all departments to complete the expenditure and submit the bills within the next three days. He further instructed the Chief Agriculture Officers of Jammu and Kashmir Divisions to organize Awareness Events under the Project Management & Knowledge Management component in the current month. He emphasized that these events must ensure the participation of Kri-shi Udyamis, Youth Clubs and active Self-Help Groups so that the benefits and objectives of the project reach the grassroots level effectively.

The Mission Director advised the Horticulture Department to prioritize area expansion activities, highlighting that the current season is ideal for such initiatives. He also directed the Sheep Husbandry Department to strengthen efforts under the Support to Pastoralists & Vulnerable Communities component to address the needs of vulnerable sections effectively. Throughout the meeting, issues raised by district officers of all concerned departments were heard with due consideration and suitable solutions were provided on the spot to facilitate smooth and coordinated implementation across districts.

JAMMU AND KASHMIR  
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION  
RESHAM GHAR COLONY, BAKSHI NAGAR, JAMMU-180016

Website: <http://jkpsc.nic.in>

Jammu: 0191-2566533

Subject: Filling up of posts of Lecturer (Education) in the School Education Department- Declaration of result of written test reg.

Notification No. PSC/Exam/S/2025/59 Dated: 01.12.2025

In pursuance of Rule 42 of MK Public Service Commission Conduct of Examinations) Rules, 2022 read with Rule 31 and 43 of AK Public Ser ice Commission (Business & Procedure) Rules, 2021, as amended upto date, the candidates as per Annexure-A to this notification are hereby declared to have qualified for the Oral Test/Viva Voce for the posts of Lecturer (Education in School Education Department on the basis of their performance in the Written Test which was held on 05.10.2025. The notification with respect to the dates of Interview/Viva-Voce shall be notified separately.

Note:

- i. For checking the result, candidates are advised to access the official website of the Commission i.e. <http://www.jkpsc.nic.in>.
- ii. The candidature of candidates shown in Annexure-A are purely provisional. The documents of the candidates will be verified at the time of interview and in case any discrepancy with regard to age/qualification/experience and other eligibility conditions is noticed at the time of interview or thereafter, the candidate shall not be allowed appear in the interview or where the candidate has already appeared in the interview, the candidature shall be deemed to have been cancelled ab-initio.
- iii. Only eligible candidates, possessing requisite qualification prescribed under rules, shall be allowed to appear in the Oral Test/Viva-Voce subject to the condition that they are within the prescribed age limit on the cutoff date.
- iv. The candidates shall produce their original certificates/ testimonials on the date of oral test/Viva-Voce.

This is subject to the outcome of writ petition, if any, pending disposal before any competent Court of Law.

Sachin Jamwal JKAS,  
Controller of Examination J&K Public Service Commission

No: PSC/Ex.Secy/2025/22

Dated: 01.12.2025

ANNEXURE-A  
To Notification No. PSC/Exam/S/2025/59 Dated: 01.12.2025  
Lecturer (Education)

S.NO.	ROLLNO
1	5700021
2	5700040
3	5700053
4	5700074
5	5700088
6	5700099
7	5700270
8	5700323
9	5700438
10	5700446
11	5700455
12	5700488
13	5700541
14	5700595
15	5700651
16	5700839
17	5701149
18	5701169
19	5701274
20	5701291
21	5701381
22	5701405
23	5701474
24	5701532
25	5701557
26	5701578
27	5701776
28	5701797
29	5701807
30	5701873
31	5701884
32	5701885
33	5701897
34	5701983
35	5702075
36	5702160
37	5702228
S.NO.	ROLLNO
38	5702253
39	5702294
40	5702410
41	5702435
42	5702450

43	5702467
44	5702496
45	5702775
46	5702846
47	5702918
48	5702966
49	5702978
50	5703124
51	5703180
52	5703185
53	5703254
54	5703348
55	5703358
56	5703417
57	5703479
58	5703486
59	5703498
60	5703524
61	5703644
62	5703668
63	5703680
64	5703785
65	5703799
66	5703962
67	5704020
68	5704028
69	5704169
70	5704234
71	5704288
72	5704291
73	5704355
74	5704358

83	5704656
84	5704685
85	5704691
86	5704740
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89	5704774
90	5704781
91	5704814
92	5704817
93	5704849
94	5704910
95	5704913
96	5704975
97	5704999
98	5705049
99	5705068
100	5705076
101	5705099
102	5705101
103	5705181
104	5705333
105	5705363
106	5705392
107	5705428
108	5705450
109	5705469
110	5705501
111	5705524
SAO.	ROLLNO
112	5705531
113	5705628
114	5705636
115	5705642
116	5705706
117	5705736
118	5705742
119	5705785
120	5705798
121	5705806
122	5705812
123	5705930

124	5705958
125	5705969
SAO.	ROLLNO
126	5705972
127	5706114
128	5706127
129	5706136
130	5706142
131	5706157
132	5706220
133	5706232
134	5706250
135	5706253
136	5706279
137	5706354
138	5706373
139	5706422
SAO.	ROLLNO
140	5706425
141	5706462
142	5706498
143	5706537
144	5706610
145	5706655
146	5706745
147	5706747
148	5706800
149	5706869
150	5706993
151	5706997
152	5707002

Sachin Jamwal JKAS,  
Controller of Examination J&K  
Public Service Commission

DIPK-8625/25

Dated: 02-12-2025

KASHMIR  
THUNDER

IS AVAILABLE  
AT ALL LEADING  
STALLS



NOTICE

I Want to correct my name in my Adhaar Card bearing no. 8876 7131 5061 as there is an error in my adhaar card  
From Zaiba Beigum w/o Mohammad Ambir Dar to Zubaida w/o Gh Rasool Wani as per my Domicile Certificate,  
Now i want to correct the same. In this regard if anybody have any objection he/she may contact Concerned Authority within 7 days after that no objection shall be entertained

Zubaida

W/o Gh Rasool Wani

R/o Gohwarpora, Chadoora, Budgam



## 4.29 lakh youth trained in J&K under SIM: Centre

RAJA SYED RATHER

New Delhi, Dec 02: The Centre on Tuesday said 4,29,954 (four lakh twenty nine thousand, nine hundred and fifty-four) youth were trained in Jammu and Kashmir under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) as part of the Skill India Mission (SIM), while multiple other centrally sponsored schemes continue to operate for reskilling and upskilling in the Union Territory.

In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Jayant Chaudhary said, "The Skill India Mission provides skill, re-skill and up-skill training through Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and other centres under schemes that include PMKVY, Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS), National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) and Craftsman Training Scheme (CTS)."

According to the State and UT-wise records placed before Parliament, Jammu and Kashmir has recorded 4,454 apprentices engaged under NAPS, 12,996 candidates trained under JSS, 4,29,954



trained under PMKVY, and 57,630 enrolments under CTS between their respective periods of implementation, the reply said, adding that the District Skill Committees in all States and Union Territories, including J&K, prepare District Skill Development Plans to identify local employment opportunities, skill gaps and available training infrastructure. The schemes are designed to align government interventions with sector-wise needs and industry demand.

The Minister said independent third-party evaluations

have been used to assess the impact of the schemes.

Citing previous assessments, he informed the House that PMKVY has shown positive employer response, while JSS has recorded increased incomes and livelihood outcomes among beneficiaries.

Similarly, ITI tracer studies and NAPS evaluations highlighted improvements in employability and apprenticeship participation.

On a query regarding the possibility of making at least one skill-training course mandatory in non-professional undergraduate programmes,

the government said the National Education Policy 2020 has already led to a revised curriculum framework under the University Grants Commission.

The framework includes provision for minor stream vocational courses with a minimum of 12 credits to build job-oriented skills.

The reply added that the government will continue strengthening industry partnerships, internship-linked learning and mobility programmes to align technical and higher education with market requirements—(KNO)

## Centre highlights J&K's afforestation work under GIM

SAJID RAINA

New Delhi, Dec 02: The Union government on Tuesday said Jammu and Kashmir continues to be one of the implementing regions of the country under the National Mission for a Green India (GIM) with afforestation and ecosystem restoration activities undertaken in selected landscapes during the last five years.

In a written reply to Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Kirti Vardhan Singh said GIM, operational since 2015-16, aims to protect, restore and enhance forest and tree cover while contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

As per the state-wise Annual Plans of Operation (APO) approved in the last five years, Jammu and Kashmir recorded 7,571 hectares under advance work, 5,423 hectares under creation and 3,652 hectares under maintenance, with the total cost of approved APOs at Rs 84.61 crore.

The Mission is one of the eight under the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) and is currently implemented in 17 states and



one Union Territory, including Jammu and Kashmir.

According to the government, funds are released subject to the submission of utilisation certificates, progress reports and compliance with Single Nodal Agency guidelines by the concerned state government. For Jammu and Kashmir, the funds allocated or released stood at rupees 36.72 crore, of which rupees 33.50 crore has been utilised, covering a total eco-restoration area of 1,778 hectares.

The reply did not provide district-wise details for J&K. It said

overall state-wise data on the areas taken up for eco-restoration is annexed for reference.

The Minister stated that delays or variations in approvals or fund disbursements depend on compliance by states with the Ministry of Finance procedures, including financial reporting and document submission.

Responding to a query on steps to ensure adequate funding for the Mission and livelihood benefits for forest-dependent communities, the government said the Ministry is prioritising vulnerable and degraded landscapes and strengthening convergence with ongoing schemes.

It also highlighted awareness and public participation activities through mass plantation drives during events such as World Environment Day, International Day of Forests and Van Mahotsav.

The reply reiterated that forest conservation and management are primarily the responsibility of state governments and UT administrations under legal frameworks, including the Indian Forest Act, 1927, the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980, and relevant state laws—(KNO)

## GOC Mishra commends troops' commitment



YOGESH

Jammu, Dec 02: General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the White Knight Corps, Lieutenant General P K Mishra on Tuesday commended the troops for their high morale, professionalism, and unwavering commitment in safeguarding the nation's borders under harsh terrain and weather conditions.

According to the details available, GOC Mishra undertook a visit to forward areas in the Bhimber Gali Sector to assess the prevailing operational preparedness and security situation along the Line of Control (LoC).

Lieutenant General Mishra was accompanied by the General Officer Commanding of the Ace of Spades Division.

The GOC White Knight Corps during the visit interacted closely with troops deployed in challenging high-altitude posts along the LoC.

He was given detailed briefings by field commanders on the current state of readiness, ongoing training activities, and the comprehensive measures being implemented to enhance surveillance capabilities, precision engagement systems, and overall operational effectiveness.

Lieutenant General Mishra emphasized the critical importance of maintaining constant vigilance, continuously strengthening operational preparedness, and relentlessly honing combat skills to effectively counter any emerging threats and meet future challenges.

The GOC reiterated the Indian Army's resolve to ensure the sanctity of the LoC remains inviolable and directed all ranks to remain proactive in upgrading both infrastructure and tactical capabilities in the sector—(KNO)

## 12 km of Zojila Tunnel excavated



RAJA SYED RATHER

Ganderbal, Dec 02: The construction of the strategically important Zojila Tunnel is progressing rapidly and remains on schedule for completion by 2028, officials said on Tuesday.

Retired Colonel Shiv Kumar, General Manager at MEIL - the company executing the project, informed that the work that began in late 2020 initially faced delays due to harsh winter conditions. However, once the weather improved in 2021, the pace picked up. Excavation started simultaneously from the Baltal side in Kashmir and the Minamarg side in Ladakh, he said.

Kumar said that out of the 13 km main tunnel, only 1.25 km of excavation is left, while 2.25 km of concrete lining has already been completed. "The work is moving smoothly, and our target is 2028," he added.

The Zojila project is divided into two parts.

Part 1, which includes a 17 km approach road, two short tunnels, seven cut-and-cover structures, a snow gallery, four bridges, a junction and an

avalanche-protection dam, has been fully completed.

Part 2 involves the construction of the main tunnel, where excavation is nearing its final stage.

Calling the tunnel a "lifeline for Ladakh", the General Manager said it will ensure year-round connectivity across the Zojila Pass, which remains closed for months every winter due to heavy snowfall. "Once completed, vehicles will be able to move even during peak winter. This will boost tourism, improve livelihoods and strengthen the regional economy," he said.

Kumar added that 78 per cent of the project workforce is local, generating much-needed employment in nearby communities. The total project cost is around 4,500 crore, with emphasis on sustainability by reusing locally available stone.

Last week, Ladakh Chief Secretary Dr Pawan Kotwal visited the eastern portal of the tunnel to review progress. He was accompanied by SDM Drass Vishal Atri and officers from NHIDCL and MEIL, including Project Manager Col. A.K. Shiv Kumar.

Officials briefed him that around 12 km of the tunnel has been completed, with about 1,200 meters still under execution. They said the tunnel breakthrough is expected by April next year.

Engineers also explained various technical aspects, including the tunnel's ventilation and safety systems. They said daily excavation progress varies based on rock strata but averages 2.5 to 3 metres.

Dr Kotwal praised the dedication of engineers and workers, noting that the Zojila Tunnel is among the longest and most challenging in the region. He said an early breakthrough would provide major relief, especially during medical emergencies involving critical patients from Ladakh.

The Chief Secretary also inspected alignment works and reviewed advanced surveying machines being used to maintain precision between the eastern and western portals. He described the visit as productive and appreciated the efforts of all teams involved in the crucial national project—(KNO)

## Medical college controversy reaches BJP head



SAJID RAINA

Jammu, Dec 02: A delegation of Jammu and Kashmir Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders on Tuesday met Union Health Minister JP Nadda and urged a review of the controversial admission of 42 Muslim candidates in the first MBBS batch at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Institute of Medical Excellence (SMVDIME), Katra.

The institute, run by the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB), has a total of 50 seats.

The controversy erupted after over 40 Muslim students gained admission to the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Institute of Medical Excellence (SMVDIME) through NEET merit. BJP and other Hindu leaders have protested, claiming some seats should be reserved for Hindus, noting that the institution is funded by contributions from Hindu devotees.

The BJP delegation, led by J&K BJP President and Rajya Sabha MP Sat Sharma, included Union Minister in PMO Dr Jitendra Singh, Leader of Opposition Sunil Sharma, MPs Jugal Kishore Sharma and Ghulam Ali Khatana, and several MLAs, including Dr Devinder Manyal, Sham Lal Sharma, and RS Pathania.

The delegation expressed concern over the composition of the first batch, highlighting

that 42 of the 50 seats have gone to non-Hindu candidates, the party said.

The party said the development had sparked resentment among devotees of Mata Vaishno Devi and groups that have contributed financially to the shrine.

The leaders said various social and religious organisations were holding protests demanding greater transparency in the admission process.

They warned that if the issue was not addressed promptly, it could trigger large-scale agitations, potentially affecting the peaceful environment in the region.

Emphasising respect for merit-based medical admissions and constitutional provisions, the delegation urged the Health Minister to consider the sentiments of millions of devotees associated with SMVD institutions.

They requested a thorough review of the admission process, measures for transparency, and mechanisms to reassure devotees about their representation in the institute.

Nadda listened to the delegation and assured them that the Ministry would examine the matter seriously, according to the statement. He said all aspects of the issue would be reviewed, while maintaining compliance with national norms governing medical education—(KNO)

## Tourism Dept works with stakeholders on winter arrivals

RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Dec 02: Joint Director of Tourism Kashmir, Waseem Raja, on Tuesday said the department is making all-out efforts to accelerate the revival of tourism in Jammu and Kashmir and is working closely with travel operators and stakeholders across the country to boost winter arrivals.

Raja said the department held a detailed meeting with travel leaders, hoteliers, tour operators and adventure tourism stakeholders to plan a series of promotional activities over the next two to three months. "We fully support them. I am grateful to all stakeholders for coming forward to promote tourism revival," he said.

Raja said post the

successful Kashmir Marathon, several major events are lined up for December, January and February. "Our Adventure Tour Operators Association is making a convention in December with more than 200 delegates. In January and February, Snow Celebration events will be organised in Gulmarg, Pahalgam and other destinations. Winter celebrations—including Christmas and New Year festivities—will continue across Kashmir," he said.

Raja said the Tourism Department has intensified its nationwide promotions. "In the past few months, we participated in multiple travel marts. Last week we were in Pune; before that, in Jaipur. More travel marts and

road shows are scheduled in different states in the coming months," he said.

He added that Maharashtra, Gujarat and West Bengal continue to be major tourism markets for Kashmir. "We discussed how we can promote J&K tourism in Pune and Maharashtra through road shows and how we can bring travel operators from there to our events. It was a very fruitful meeting."

Raja said tour operators are considered "brand ambassadors" of J&K tourism. "We will strive to attract as many operators as possible so they can contribute to our revival. We are making every possible effort to ensure tourism revival happens as quickly as possible," he added—(KNO)

## Sanatnagar flyover opens after CM's push

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Dec 02: Following "urgent directions" from the Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister the administration on Tuesday evening opened the Sanatnagar flyover for traffic movement. Senior officials from the Roads and Buildings (R&B) Department told said that the decision came after repeated public complaints over traffic jams and commuter distress in the area.

"The Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister passed urgent directions for immediate opening of the flyover as people were facing daily hardships. The structure is ready for traffic movement, while minor finishing works will continue," said the senior R&B official.

Notably, the Sanatnagar flyover, a key link on the Srinagar Airport Road and part of the city's broader decongestion plan, is expected to ease vehicular pressure and streamline traffic flow towards Hyderpora and Rambagh—(KNO)

### Flyover opening completes 'trio of NH-44 flyovers'

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Dec 02: The government on Tuesday evening opened the Sanat Nagar flyover for public movement, completing the trio of flyovers along the 3.23-km NH-44 decongestion corridor between Bemina and Nowgam.

A senior official from the Roads & Buildings (R&B) Department said that the opening followed "urgent directions" from Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary to end the daily traffic chaos at the junction.

"The flyover is traffic-ready. Minor works will continue, but public movement has been allowed," the official said.

With this, Bemina, Nowgam and Sanat Nagar flyovers are now all operational,

creating Srinagar's 'first 3.23-km NH-44 decongestion uninterrupted tri-flyover corridor' aimed at easing pressure on one of the busiest stretches of the city.

The official added that the Sanat Nagar segment had faced delays earlier due to technical issues and utility-shifting work, including power, drainage and telecom lines, but is now completed and open. "Those hurdles slowed us down, but the corridor is fully functional now," he said.

Commuters welcomed the development. "This junction troubled people for years. Opening it will finally bring some relief," said Javid Ahmad, a commuter from Hyderpora. Another commuter from Rawalpura said, "Traffic would choke here every evening. This was long overdue."—(KNO)



EDITORIAL

A New Blueprint For Jammu & Kashmir’s Tourism

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah’s announcement to develop nine new sustainable tourism destinations marks a pivotal and welcome shift in Jammu and Kashmir’s tourism strategy. By anchoring this “mega project” in environmental responsibility and local community benefit, the government is finally aligning its vision with global best practices and, more importantly, with the long-term welfare of its people. His stark assertion that “tourism, or any

industry that does not benefit locals, will not survive”, should be the foundational principle guiding every policy from here on. For too long, the narrative around Kashmir’s tourism has been one of fragile dependency, on seasons, on snowfall, and on geopolitical calm. While the Chief Minister rightly pins hopes on December snow to revive a challenging year, this climatic uncertainty precisely underscores the need for the diversification he now proposes. Relying

solely on seasonal peaks is an unsustainable economic model. The new plan to develop year-round, sustainable destinations can create a more resilient sector, providing stable livelihoods beyond the traditional summer and winter peaks. The concurrent launch of the Kashmir chapter of SKAL International, a global tourism network, is a strategic masterstroke. It signals a confident re-entry onto the world stage, moving beyond mere promotion to forging professional

bonds that facilitate “business with friends.” This network can be instrumental in marketing these new destinations, attracting conscientious investment, and embedding Kashmir within a global circuit of quality, sustainable travel. However, the vision’s success hinges entirely on execution. “Sustainability” and “community benefit” must be tangible, not just rhetorical. Development must prioritise ecological carrying capacity, use local materials and labour, ensure

fair revenue-sharing models, and celebrate indigenous culture. It must avoid creating exclusive enclaves that bypass local economies. The goal should be to make residents not just employees, but stakeholders and guardians of their heritage. As winter’s darkness gives way to spring, as the CM poetically noted, this initiative promises a longer, more enduring spring for Kashmir’s economy. The path is charted; the will to walk it consistently will define its legacy.

India's Commitment To Disability Rights

India’s disability framework has evolved through progressive legislation like the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, emphasising equality, dignity, and accessibility across all sectors

Press Information Bureau

India's Vision for an Inclusive and Accessible Nation

In India, where diversity thrives as the cornerstone of national identity, a strong movement for disability rights is growing, driven by the government’s commitment towards true inclusivity and self-reliance for everyone.

According to Census 2011, there are 2.68 crore persons with disabilities in India which constitute 2.21 percent of the total population. Out of these, approximately 1.50 crore are male and 1.18 crore, are female. According to The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, a “person with disability” is someone who has a long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which, in interaction with barriers, hinders their full and effective participation in society equally with others.

Backed by forward-thinking policies and dynamic programmes, the Government ensures that no one is deprived on account of their disability, and creates pathways to opportunity and active societal involvement for every individual.

India's Legal and Policy Framework for Disability Rights

India's legal and policy framework for disability rights is dynamic and shapes a landscape where accessibility, education, and empowerment are not just ideals but realities for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs).

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016

This Act was enacted in 2016 and came into effect on April 19, 2017, replacing the Persons with Disabilities Act of 1995. It recognises 21 categories of disability, mandates reservation in education and employment and places a legal duty on governments to ensure accessibility, non-discrimination and full participation for persons with disabilities. It also introduces a centralised certification regime and strengthens rights to inclusive education, employment and community living.

The National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999

The Act establishes a national body dedicated to the welfare of individuals with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation, and Multiple Disabilities, along with related matters and incidental provisions.

Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) Act, 1992

The Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) was initially established as a registered society in 1986 and later became a statutory body under an Act of Parliament in 1993. The RCI Act, 1992, amended in 2000, mandates the Council to regulate and monitor training programmes for rehabilitation professionals, standardise syllabi, and maintain the Central Rehabilitation Register of qualified personnel in the fields of rehabilitation and special education.

Scheme for Implementation of Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 (SIPDA)

The Scheme for Implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (SIPDA) is an umbrella programme of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD). It provides financial and technical support to Central Ministries, States, and UTs for implementing the RPwD Act through projects that promote accessibility, inclusion, awareness, and skill development for persons with disabilities.

Key Government Initiatives and Schemes

The government has adopted a wide range of initiatives and schemes to ensure accessibility and inclusion for persons with disabilities:

Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan (Accessible India Campaign)

Launched on 3 December 2015, the

Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan or Accessible India Campaign marks a significant step towards building an inclusive and accessible nation. Guided by the vision of “Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas,” the campaign addresses long-standing barriers faced by persons with disabilities. It focuses on achieving universal accessibility across three key domains — built infrastructure, transport systems and information and communication technology (ICT) — ensuring equal access and participation for all.

India, as a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), is committed to building an accessible and inclusive society.

In a significant stride towards building a digitally inclusive India, the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) has launched the revamped Sugamya Bharat Appat the International Purple Fest 2025.

The upgraded app, designed with a user-first and accessibility-first approach, serves as India's digital accessibility hub, providing persons with disabilities easy access to information, government schemes, and essential services.

It features an accessibility mapping tool that enables users to locate and rate public spaces, encouraging community-driven accessibility data.

The app also offers a comprehensive directory of schemes, scholarships, employment opportunities, and educational resources curated for persons with disabilities.

Equipped with a grievance redressal module, the app allows users to report inaccessible infrastructure directly, promoting transparency and accountability. It is compatible with assistive technologies, supports multiple Indian languages, and is available on both Android and iOS platforms.

Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/Fitting of Aids/Appliances (ADIP)

The ADIP Scheme, launched in 1981, aims to help persons with disabilities (PwDs) get durable, scientifically manufactured, and modern aids and appliances that support their physical, social, and economic rehabilitation.

These devices are provided to help PwDs live more independently, reduce the impact of their disabilities, and prevent further complications. All aids and appliances given under the scheme must be properly certified for quality and safety. The scheme also provides for corrective surgeries, when needed, before fitting assistive devices.

A Sound of Hope – Kritika's Journey to Hearing

Three-year-old Kritika from Nagpur was diagnosed with bilateral severe-to-profound sensorineural hearing loss, which made it difficult for her to hear or speak. On February 6, 2024, she underwent a cochlear implant surgery under the ADIP (Assistance to Disabled Persons) Scheme, supported by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD).

Post-surgery, Kritika attended regular therapy sessions at the Digital Diagnostic Clinic, Nagpur, an empanelled centre under the ADIP Cochlear Implant Programme. Now, 11 months after implantation, she has made remarkable progress — she can comprehend sounds, speak familiar words clearly, and follow verbal commands.

She is now enrolled at an Anganwadi in a Marathi Medium Government School in Nagpur. Her parents express immense happiness and gratitude, proud to witness their daughter's steady progress and newfound ability to experience the world through sound.

Deendayal Divyangjan Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS)

This Central Sector Scheme of the Government of India provides financial assistance to voluntary organisations engaged in the education, training, and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities.

Initially launched in 1999 and revised and renamed in 2003, the scheme aims to create an enabling environment that ensures equal opportunities, equity, social justice, and empowerment for persons with disabilities. It also promotes voluntary participation to

strengthen the effective implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

National Divyangjan Finance and Development Corporation (NDFDC)

The National Divyangjan Finance and Development Corporation (NDFDC) is a public sector organisation under DEPwD. Established in 1997 as a not-for-profit company, NDFDC works to promote the economic empowerment of persons with disabilities (PwDs).

It provides financial support for self-employment and income-generating activities through State Channelising Agencies (SCAs) and partner banks such as public sector and regional rural banks.

NDFDC operates two main loan schemes: Divyangjan Swavalamban Yojana (DSY): Provides concessional loans to individual PwDs.

Vishesh Microfinance Yojana (VMY): Supports self-help groups and joint liability groups for the welfare and rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities in the country.

Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO)

Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO) is a Schedule ‘C’ Mini-ratna Category II Central Public Sector Enterprises, registered under Section 8 (Not for Profit motive) of the Companies Act 2013, (corresponding to Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956) is functioning under the Administrative Control of Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities. It is 100% owned Govt. of India Central Public Sector Enterprises with an objective of benefiting the persons with disability to the maximum extent possible by manufacturing Rehabilitation Aids for persons with disabilities and by promoting, encouraging and developing the availability, use, supply and distribution of Artificial Limbs and other Rehabilitation Aids to the disabled persons of the country. Profitability is not the motive of the operations of the Corporation and its main thrust is in providing better quality of Aids & Appliances to larger number of disabled persons at reasonable price.

In endeavour to enhance outreach of benefits of ADIP scheme by providing aids and assistive devices to Persons with Disabilities across the country, ALIMCO has started the opening of Pradhanmantri Divyasha Kendra (PMDK) at National Institutes (NIs) and Satellite/ Regional Centers working under DEPwD, Govt. of India on PAN India basis.

ALIMCO is the only manufacturing company producing various types of assistive devices under one roof to serve all types of disabilities across the country.

Unique ID for Persons with Disabilities (UDID)

The Unique ID for Persons with Disabilities project is being implemented to create a national database of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) and issue a Unique Disability Identity Card (UDID) to each individual. This initiative ensures transparency, efficiency, and ease in delivering government benefits to PwDs while maintaining uniformity across regions. It also aids in tracking the physical and financial progress of beneficiaries across various administrative levels.

The UDID project aims to build a comprehensive end-to-end system for issuing Universal IDs and Disability Certificates. This system includes:

Nationwide availability of PwD data through a centralised web application  
Online application submission for Disability Certificate/UDID card (offline submissions are also allowed and digitised later)  
Efficient assessment process by hospitals or Medical Boards to calculate disability percentage  
Elimination of duplicate PwD records  
Online renewal and update of information by or on behalf of PwDs  
Management Information System (MIS) reporting framework  
Integrated management of various government benefits/schemes for PwDs  
Support for additional disabilities in the

future (currently 21 disabilities, subject to updates)

The Divyangjan Card, also known as the E-Ticketing Photo Identity Card (EPICS), is a railway identity card for people with disabilities (Divyangjan) that allows them to get concessions on train travel. Applicants may apply or renew the card through the Indian Railways Divyangjan portal or the central government services portal. The card is issued on the basis of a valid disability/concession certificate (UDID is accepted for some categories).

PM-DAKSH-DEPwD Portal

PM-DAKSH DEPwD is the digital platform created by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD). It is intended as a one-stop hub connecting persons with disabilities, training institutes, employers, and job aggregators under the national skill & employment ecosystem.

The portal features two key modules: Divyangjan Kaushal Vikas: Implements the National Action Plan for Skill Development of Persons with Disabilities (NAP-SDP), offering Unique Disability Identity (UDID)-based registration, over 250 skill courses, online learning resources, and details on training partners, study materials, and trainers.

Divyangjan Rozgar Setu: A dedicated platform bridging PwDs and employers, offering geo-tagged job vacancies (over 3,000 across various disabilities) with private sector details. MoUs with companies like Amazon, Youth4Jobs, and Godrej Properties boost employment prospects.

National Institutes and Composite Regional Centres (CRCs)

9 national institutes, namely National Institute for Empowerment of Persons with Visual Disabilities (NIEPVD), Dehradun, Ali Yavar Jung National Institute for Speech & Hearing Disabilities (AYJNISHD) National Institute for Empowerment of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (NIEPID), Secunderabad, National Institute for Empowerment of Persons with Multiple Disabilities (NIEPMD), Chennai, Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya National Institute for the Physically Handicapped (PDUNIPPD), Delhi, Swami Vivekanand National Institute of Rehabilitation Training and Research (SVNIRTAR), Cuttack, National Institute for Locomotor Disabilities (NILD), Kolkata, Indian Sign Language Research & Training Centre (ISLRTC), National Institute of Mental Health and Rehabilitation (NIMHR), Sehore, and Atal Bihari Vajpayee Disabled Sports Training Centre – Gwalior focus on helping people with hearing and speech disabilities.

Additionally, 30 Composite Regional Centres (CRCs) have been approved in various States/UTs as outreach centres providing rehabilitation services, training professionals, and creating awareness about the needs and rights of PwDs.

Divya Kala Mela: A Platform for Empowerment

In 2025, the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) and the National Divyangjan Finance and Development Corporation (NDFDC) organised multiple editions of the Divya Kala Mela across India, celebrating entrepreneurship, creativity, and inclusion among Divyangjan. The fair aligns with the “Vocal for Local” initiative, providing a platform for economic empowerment, skill-showcase and cultural celebration of persons with disabilities.

The 26th Divya Kala Mela took place from August 23 – 31, 2025 in Patna, Bihar. Approximately 100 Divyang artisans and entrepreneurs representing around 20 states and UTs participated. 75 stalls displayed handicrafts, handlooms, embroidery, packaged food, eco-friendly items, toys, stationery and accessories from across India.

The event also featured special zones for assistive devices, a job fair, cultural performances and accessibility-friendly infrastructure to ensure inclusivity for all attendees.

The 23rd and 24th editions of the Divya Kala Mela were held in Vadodara and Jammu respectively in early 2025. The fairs featured assistive technology showcases,

cultural performances, skill linkages, and job opportunities, highlighting inclusion through art, enterprise, and empowerment.

Purple Fest 2025- India's Festival of Inclusion

The Purple Fest is India's largest celebration of inclusion, accessibility, and empowerment of persons with disabilities (PwDs). The festival brings together Divyangjan, innovators, educators, and policymakers from across India to showcase best practices, assistive technologies, and cultural performances that promote inclusion.

At this year's Purple Fest organised in Goa, the government unveiled major digital and educational initiatives aimed at deepening accessibility:

· Revamped Sugamya Bharat App: An upgraded accessibility platform featuring screen-reader support, voice navigation, multilingual interface, and direct grievance redressal.

· Accessibility in Learning – Three Key Launches:

· IELTS Training Handbook for PwDs – created by Believe in the Invisible (BITI support), offering adapted materials and ISL video links.

· Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)- Certification in ISL Interpretation (CISLI) / Skill Course for SODA (Siblings of Deaf Adults) and CODA (Children of Deaf Adults)-17 candidates from various parts of India appeared for the assessment, all of whom successfully completed the course.

Specialised Basic Training Programme on American Sign Language (ASL) and British Sign Language (BSL) launched at Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre to introduce ISL professionals to the fundamentals of ASL and BSL, provide knowledge of grammar, syntax and vocabulary and strengthen professional opportunities for Indian interpreters in international forums.

Promotion of Indian Sign Language (ISL)

The Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC), set up in 2015 under DEPwD, serves as the nodal institution for advancing ISL across India. In December 2024, the Government launched PM e-vidya Channel 31 on DTH, exclusively dedicated to ISL training for hearing-impaired students, special educators, and interpreters.

On Sign Language Day 2025, ISLRTC unveiled the world's largest ISL digital repository, featuring 3,189 e-content videos—now accessible to teachers, learners, and the Deaf community.

The Indian Sign Language Dictionary has now expanded to include over 10,000 terms, while the digital repository features a rich collection of academic videos, finger-spelling resources, and more than 2,200 glossary videos across subjects such as history, geography, economics, and sociology. Indian Sign Language has also evolved as an academic discipline, supported by over 1,000 instructional videos designed to enhance teaching and learning.

Complementing these efforts, the PRASHAST App facilitates early identification and screening of disabilities in schools, ensuring timely intervention and personalised learning support. To date, more than 92 lakh students have been screened at the preliminary level through the app.

In 2020, the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC) even signed an MoU with the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) to translate textbooks for classes I-XII and other teaching materials into ISL. This process is expected to be completed by 2026.

Conclusion

The evolution of disability affairs in India reflects a growing recognition of the rights and potential of persons with disabilities. The establishment of dedicated departments and initiatives exemplify a commitment to fostering inclusivity, creativity, and resilience within the community. By providing platforms for showcasing talent and facilitating economic opportunities, these efforts not only empower individuals but also contribute to a more inclusive society where every individual can thrive with dignity.

The views expressed by contributors on this page are their own and do not necessarily reflect the policies or positions of the newspaper



# DLSA Srinagar holds programme on HIV/AIDS rights, prevention

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 02: In continuation of the week-long awareness campaign on the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS, the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Srinagar, in collaboration with the Jammu & Kashmir AIDS Control Society, Tuesday organised a special awareness programme at the District Court Complex, Srinagar.

The programme, as per an official statement, was organised under the aegis of Jammu & Kashmir Legal Services Authority. The programme was held under the supervision of Haq Nawaz Zargar, Principal District & Sessions Judge (Chairman, DLSA) Srinagar, along with Shazia Tabassum, Member Secretary, Jammu & Kashmir Legal Services Authority.

The programme was formally inaugurated by the Chairman, DLSA Srinagar.

In his address, the Chairman DLSA emphasized that awareness and prevention remain the most effective tools in the fight against HIV/AIDS and called upon all stakeholders to work collectively towards building an informed, sensitive and stigma-free society. He highlighted the



crucial role of Legal Services Institutions in spreading social and legal awareness at the grassroots level and reaffirmed the unwavering commitment of the Legal Services Authority towards protecting the rights, dignity and well-being of every individual.

Stressing the importance of early detection, timely treatment and social support, he urged the participants to act as ambassadors of awareness so that the message of prevention, compassion and inclusion reaches every section of society.

Tabassum Qadir Parray, Secretary, DLSA Srinagar, while speaking on the occasion, highlighted the significance of observing World HIV/AIDS Day through

sustained awareness efforts.

Imtiyaz Ahmad, Assistant Director, J&K State AIDS Control Society, delivered a comprehensive and informative lecture highlighting the causes, modes of transmission, preventive measures and available treatment for HIV/AIDS. He laid special emphasis on responsible behaviour, routine testing and timely access to medical support.

Tasneem Kausar, Deputy Chief Legal Aid Defence Counsel, also addressed the gathering and sensitized the participants about the deep-rooted social stigma attached to HIV/AIDS, urging the audience to adopt an approach based on empathy, understanding and non-discrimination.

During the interactive session,

the queries raised by the Legal Aid Defence Counsels were effectively addressed by the resource person, further enhancing the awareness and clarity regarding HIV/AIDS prevention and management.

The programme witnessed the active participation of staff members, Legal Aid Defence Counsels and Para Legal Volunteers of DLSA Srinagar.

The awareness programme was conducted under the theme "Overcoming Disruption, Transforming the AIDS Response," reflecting the collective commitment of all stakeholders to strengthen public awareness, promote preventive healthcare and ensure access to justice for all.

# Educational institutions across Jammu division observe World AIDS Day

KT News Desk

JAMMU, DECEMBER 02: To mark World AIDS Day, Educational Institutions across Jammu Division organised multiple activities to spread awareness about prevention and remove the stigma attached to the disease.

Government Polytechnic Reasi, as per an official statement issued on Tuesday, under the guidance of Principal Er Arun Bangotra, observed World AIDS Day. The Institution's Red Ribbon Club, in collaboration with J&K State AIDS Control Society organised diverse activities, including poster making competition, debate competition and a Rangoli contest. An awareness rally consisting of 150 students spread prevention messages, followed by faculty-led sessions stressing early testing, safe practices and eliminating stigma against HIV/AIDS.

GDC Ramkote: The Red Ribbon Club of Government Degree College Ramkote, in collaboration with Jammu and Kashmir AIDS Control Society, organized a Poster Making Competition themed "Overcoming Disruption, Transforming the AIDS Response".

The students of BA Semester



Ist participated in the competition and expressed their views on HIV/AIDS by making attractive posters. As many as 10 students participated in the competition organized under the guidance of the College Principal Dr. Rakesh Kumar Koul.

GDC Paloura: As part of AIDS Awareness Week 2025 campaign, Red Ribbon Club of Government Degree College Paloura, in collaboration with NSS Unit of the college, organised a Walkathon to foster awareness about prevention of AIDS and other STI diseases. The walkathon culminated with a collective pledge to support the victims of HIV AIDS by removing taboos related to it

GCW-Gandhi Nagar: Red Ribbon Club, PSPS GCW,

Gandhi Nagar, in collaboration with J&K AIDS Control Society (JKACS), H & ME Department, organized Poster Making competition, Rangoli making Competition and Walkathon under the aegis of this year's theme 'Overcoming Disruption, Transforming the AIDS Response'. In the Rangoli Making Competition, First position was bagged by Samudhani & Group 7th sem, Second position went to Sanchita & Group-7th Sem and the Third position was shared by Vanshika & Group and Akriti Khanna & Group 7th Sem.

Esha bagged first position in the poster making competition, while second position was bagged by Sakshi and the third position was secured by Afsana Kouser- all from the 7th Sem.

# Director Agriculture Kashmir inaugurates 2-day capacity-building programme at Lalmandi



KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 02: Director Agriculture Kashmir, Sartaj Ahmad Shah Tuesday inaugurated a two day capacity building programme on "Untie the yield complexities for realising the yield potential in oil seed with special reference to Rapeseed" at Agriculture Complex Lalmandi Srinagar.

The workshop is organised by SKUAST -K in collaboration with agriculture and farmer welfare department Kashmir, under Holistic Agriculture Development Programme, Project no 11 "Promotion of Oilseeds".

Speaking on the occasion, the Director, as per an official statement, said the primary objective of such workshops is to train the concerned officers from different districts of Kashmir division for efficient and successful implementation of project "Promotion of Oilseeds Project" at grassroot level. He said the officers are

provided with the solutions, streamlining procedures and preparation of strategies to identify and explore the potential of oilseed crops in different areas of the region.

Shah emphasised the importance of such a workshop in achieving desired impact. He said the programme is designed to equip the officers with the necessary knowledge and expertise to successfully execute "Promotion of oilseed Project".

The workshop would be a significant step towards empowering the concerned officers from different districts to contribute effectively to the goals of said project.

Experts from ADR, MRCPC Khudwani, SKUAST-K and the agriculture department presented their lectures during different sessions of the day one of the workshop.

The programme was attended by the concerned officers from district kupwara, Baramulla, Ganderbal, Budgam, Srinagar and Bandipora.

# EPFO holds awareness seminar on PMVBRY in Kupwara



KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 02: Employee's provident fund Organisation (EPFO), Srinagar organised a seminar on the Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana (PMVBRY) at the Industrial Estate Bremri Kupwara.

The seminar, as per an official statement issued on Tuesday, attended by employers and employees from the local industrial units, focused on creating awareness about the scheme's objectives, key benefits, and operational framework.

EPFO officials explained how the PMVBRY aims to promote job creation by encouraging employers to hire new workers and integrate them into the formal workforce. They further highlighted the vital role industries play in effectively utilizing the scheme to generate new employment opportunities and extend social security benefits to first-time employees.

Participants were encouraged to take full advantage of the scheme to support industrial growth and strengthen the region's workforce.

# DC Bandipora inspects development projects, reviews power infrastructure

KT News Desk

BANDIPORA, DECEMBER 02: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, Tuesday conducted a series of inspections across the district to assess the progress of key developmental projects and review critical power infrastructure.

The visit, as per an official statement, commenced with the inspection of the Construction of Residential Apartments for PRI's/ Protected Persons at Watapora Bandipora, a major infrastructure project being executed by the Public Works Department (PWD).

The project, with an original cost of Rs 614.37 lakh, is currently under execution and is slated for completion by March 2026.

Reviewing the work, the Deputy Commissioner issued clear directions to the executing agency to strictly maintain quality standards, ensure efficient material management, and adopt best-engineering practices during construction. She instructed PWD to expedite the pace of work, deploy adequate manpower, and maintain regular on-site



supervision to achieve the targeted completion timeline.

Later, the DC visited Aloosa Bandipora to inspect the Construction of Block Development Council Complex, being executed under the Rural Development Department (RDD). She reviewed the progress achieved so far and directed the concerned officers to remove bottlenecks, if any, and complete the project within the stipulated timeframe. She reiterated that these residential infrastructures play a vital role in strengthening grassroots governance, and therefore require focused attention.

During the tour, the Deputy Commissioner also visited the Ajar Grid Station to take stock

of its functioning, operational capacity, and ongoing maintenance measures.

While interacting with the officials of the Power Development Department, the DC stressed the need to accelerate the installation of smart meters across all areas of the district.

She emphasised that smart metering will improve power regulation, reduce technical and commercial losses, and ensure better service delivery to consumers. The Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by Assistant Commissioner Development Bandipora, Assistant Commissioner Panchayat Bandipora, AEE R&B Bandipora and other concerned field officials.

# Director Colleges tours Pir Panjal region, reviews academic activities

KT News Desk

JAMMU, DECEMBER 02: Director Colleges J&K, Dr Sheikh Ajaz Bashir conducted an extensive tour of the Government Degree Colleges in the Pir Panjal region to gain firsthand insight into academic activities and engage directly with students and faculty to know their concerns, challenges and expectations.

During interactive sessions at GDC Rajouri, GDC Poonch and GDC Surankote, the Director Colleges, as per an official statement issued on Tuesday highlighted the significance of SIGMA – the Student Integrated Grievance and Messaging Application. He urged the students to subscribe to the platform immediately, describing it as a major reform initiative aimed at empowering students with real-time updates on departmental initiatives and offering them a direct channel for redressal of issues that may lie beyond the scope of individual Colleges.

The Director Colleges also briefed students on the key takeaways of the National Education Policy (NEP 2020), particularly the academic flexibility provided through multiple entry and exit options. He encouraged students to make



informed use of these provisions to shape their academic trajectories.

In the meetings with faculty members, the Director reiterated the importance of strengthening the Mentor-Mentee Model, noting that an effective mentoring system is crucial for addressing emerging challenges, including concerns related to substance abuse. He sought full cooperation from faculty to ensure the meaningful implementation of the model across campuses.

At GDC Poonch, the Director Colleges congratulated Principal Dr. Jasbir Singh for initiating the process for seeking Autonomous Status for the college immediately following his visit in August. Expressing

satisfaction, he noted that achieving autonomous status would position the institution for academic excellence and institutional innovation.

The Director Colleges also held a detailed interaction with the Boards of both the Girls' and Boys' Hostels at GDC Poonch. The issues concerning hostel facilities were discussed and necessary directions were issued for their prompt redressal.

During his visit to GDC Rajouri, the Director Colleges underscored the academic vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and its emphasis on granting greater autonomy to progressive higher education institutions.

While discussing the

prospects of Autonomous Status under NEP, he stated that autonomy offers substantial institutional advantages, including enhanced academic flexibility, scope for curricular innovation, independent examination and evaluation systems and a stronger institutional identity. He highlighted that, as the oldest and largest college in the district, GDC Rajouri is well-positioned to approach the UGC for the grant of Autonomous Status, noting that the present moment is both appropriate and opportune for the institution to submit its application in line with UGC norms.

At GDC Surankote, the issue of student absenteeism was deliberated extensively. The Director impressed upon the college administration the need to strictly adhere to the Directorate's Policy Planning and Development Portal for the digital onboarding of students, ensuring transparency, accountability and improved student engagement. The visit concluded with the Director reaffirming the Department's commitment to strengthening academic ecosystems, improving student well-being and accelerating reform initiatives across all degree colleges in the region.

# ‘Wall of Shame’ Initiative JMC conducts street play, wall art drive

KT News Desk

JAMMU, DECEMBER 02: Under the Wall of Shame initiative, the Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) Tuesday organised an impactful street play near Jewel Chowk Science College to spread awareness about cleanliness and responsible civic behavior. School students from St. Peters also participated enthusiastically. They painted on the surrounding walls, transforming the black spot into an attraction for the visitors.

The location, as per an official statement which was previously neglected and often used for open urination, emitted foul odors and remained unhygienic, was transformed to create public awareness. Natrang artists, along with school students, presented engaging street plays educating people about the importance of not throwing garbage or urinating in the open. The students further contributed by creating vibrant and meaningful wall paintings that promoted hygiene and civic

responsibility.

Commissioner, Municipal Corporation Jammu, Dr. Devansh Yadav, was present on the occasion. Addressing the gathering, Dr. Yadav stressed the need for collective participation to maintain cleanliness across the city.

He said, "Every section of society—children, youth, elderly and women—must come forward to ensure cleanliness. Only when we all will become aware and stop spreading filth then our future generations inherit a clean and healthy environment. Without this collective effort, the dream of the Swachh Bharat Mission will remain incomplete."

The event also witnessed the presence of Joint Commissioner Health & Sanitation, Abdul Sattar, Health Officer, Dr. Vinod Sharma, Incharge IEC, Dr. Divya Sharma, Compost-cum-Transport Officers, Dharamveer Singh, Ranjan Sharma, school students, teachers, swachhta champions and local residents, all of whom contributed to the success of the awareness program.

# DC Doda reviews development works under District Capex Plan

KT NEWS DESK

DODA, DECEMBER 2: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Doda, Harvinder Singh Tuesday chaired a meeting in the conference hall, DC Office Complex to review progress under the District Capex Plan. The meeting took stock of the pace of ongoing development works and assessed the physical and financial progress of the projects undertaken under the current year Plan.

A detailed sector-wise and constituency-wise presentation was made by the concerned departments. The meeting, as per an official statement, was informed about the sector and grant-wise number of proposed works, works tendered, allotted and taken up, completion status of previous year works and the financial status of the same.

The Deputy Commissioner also reviewed the closure of works on the BEAMS/PV Portal, constituency-wise status of works under CDF and progress under several flagship initiatives including SASKI Projects, the Heritage Programme and Dharti Aabha.

The meeting further discussed projects undertaken under UT Capex and NABARD. The officers presented detailed work-wise and road-wise status reports across multiple sectors.



## Camera rolls in Bijbehara

Umaisar Gull Ganie

Bijbehara, Dec 02: For the first time, a film shooting was carried out in the Bijbehara town of Anantnag district on Tuesday.

A crew from outside along with a local production house arrived here in the morning to shoot a short movie based on Kashmiri willow.

Nadeem Khawaja, Assistant Line Producer, told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that their team is shooting in Bijbehara. “The coordination and support from police has made the shoot successful.”

“We are working smoothly and we are receiving wonderful hospitality from the people of Kashmir. The public has given us immense love and warmth,” Nadeem said.

He further said that their team has lined up several projects that are supposed to be shot here during the winter season. “We have also planned to shoot in snowfall. We have a Kashmir based production house and we coordinate with crews from outside to facilitate their shoots,” he said.

“The location where we took shorts today for the movie is an achievement because I believe that the shooting here is quite difficult. This is the first time any shoot has taken place in this area. Police made excellent security arrangements and I am very grateful to them,” he said.

He said that the LG administration's swift action restored the normalcy in Kashmir after the Baisaran Pahalgam terror attack that helped a lot in reviving the film shooting activities. “Earlier, no one even was willing to come here, but nowadays, we are witnessing film and other production shoots happening across Kashmir.”

He said the film industry can help in creating livelihood opportunities. “The situation is such that even educated youth are working as roadside vendors. We want them to earn through good platforms. This is a big field and we are trying to promote it.”

Khawaja urged the government to streamline permissions and other related procedures. “The government should pay attention and resolve these issues so that line producers do not face problems in future.” (KNO)

## Delhi's air turns hazardous again

Multiple stations breach 'severe' mark

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 02: Air quality in Delhi deteriorated further on Tuesday evening, reaching an AQI of 372 and edging closer to the 'severe' mark, with more than 15 locations already in that category.

The 24-hour average AQI on Tuesday at 4 pm stood at 372, compared to 304 on Monday and 279 on Sunday, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

Out of 39 monitoring stations, 16 recorded AQI in the 'severe' category with readings above 400 — a level known to seriously impact health — according to CPCB's Sameer app.

Stations in the 'severe' range included Burari, Anand Vihar, Mundka, Bawana, Vivek Vihar,



Rohini, Sonia Vihar, Ashok Vihar, Punjabi Bagh and others.

As per CPCB standards, an AQI between 0–50 is considered 'good', 51–100 'satisfactory', 101–200 'moderate', 201–300 'poor', 301–400 'very poor', and 401–500 'severe'.

According to the Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi,

the city's AQI is likely to remain in the 'very poor' category over the next few days. The forecast also predicts mist/haze during the night.

Surface winds are likely to blow from the southwest at calm to light speeds, gradually increasing to below 5 kmph in the afternoon. Wind speed is expected to rise to

about 10 kmph from the north during the evening and night.

Meanwhile, the transport sector accounted for 18.4 per cent of Delhi's pollution on Tuesday, the highest among local contributors, followed by peripheral industries at 9.2 per cent, and emissions from neighbouring cities: Noida (8.2 per cent), Ghaziabad (4.6 per cent), Baghpat (6.2 per cent), Panipat (3.3 per cent ) and Gurugram (2.9 per cent).

Transport emissions are forecast to contribute 15.6 per cent on Wednesday.

On the weather front, Delhi recorded a maximum temperature of 25.8 degrees Celsius, 0.5 degrees above normal, while the minimum settled at 9.6 degrees Celsius, 0.1 degree above normal, the IMD said.

For Wednesday, the department has forecast fog, with maximum and minimum temperatures expected to be around 24 and 8 degrees Celsius, respectively.

## Arshid Ahmad Lone posted as Chief Pay & Accounts Officer KPDCL

KNO Correspondent

Srinagar, Dec 02: The government has ordered a reshuffle in the Finance Department, transferring several senior accounts and audit officers in Kashmir.

Among the important changes, Arshid Ahmad Lone, Chief Accounts Officer (CAO) at Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), has been posted as Chief Pay & Accounts Officer, Chief Engineer, Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Ltd (KPDCL).

As per the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the transfer has been made through a Government Order issued by the Finance Department, with Arshid Ahmad Lone, who was also holding additional charge as CAO, Srinagar Development Authority, now relieved of both roles and set to take up his new assignment at KPDCL vice Mr. Altaf Hussain Hajam.

Officials said the posting places Arshid Ahmad Lone in a key financial oversight position within Kashmir's power distribution sector. (KNO)

## ‘Putin's India visit aims to secure energy, defence supplies, trade flows’

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 02: Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to India this week aims to secure energy supplies, stabilise defence deliveries and ensure bilateral trade continues smoothly despite strong Western sanctions, GTRI said on Tuesday.

Putin will land in New Delhi on December 4 for the 23rd India-Russia Annual Summit.

“It is a high-stakes working visit shaped by necessity to lock in energy security, stabilise defence supply lines and keep bilateral trade functioning under the weight of Western sanctions,” Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) founder Ajay Srivastava said.

India's current engagement

with Russia rests on three pillars -- energy, defence and diplomacy, he noted.

Russia has become India's largest crude oil supplier, accounting for 30–35 per cent of total oil imports, turning discounted crude into the foundation of the partnership, he added.

Defence forms the second pillar as Russia continues to supply and service a majority of India's frontline platforms, fighter jets, submarines, tanks and air defence systems, and talks will continue on maintenance support and future acquisitions, Srivastava said.

The two countries may formalise a new payment framework, using dirham or integrate Russia's SPFS system with India's RuPay network, he said.



After Russia was partially removed from SWIFT, payments shifted to a multi-currency system, the UAE's dirham (60–65 per cent), rupee (25–30 per cent), and Chinese yuan (5–10 per cent).

India's merchandise trade with Russia remains sharply imbalanced, with modest export growth alongside

persistently high energy-driven imports.

Exports rose from USD 4.3 billion in FY24 to USD 4.9 billion in FY25, with shipments of USD 2.25 billion in April–September 2025.

The export basket is narrow and skewed toward a few industrial and chemical items -- machinery (USD 367.8 million),

pharmaceuticals (USD 246 million) and organic chemicals (USD 165.8 million) -- together account for most of the value in the first half of FY26.

Consumer-oriented and high-visibility categories remain marginal -- smartphones (USD 75.9 million), Vannamei shrimp (USD 75.7 million), meat (USD 63 million) and garments at just USD 20.94 million -- underscore India's limited penetration in Russia's retail markets and electronics value chains despite geopolitical churn, think tank GTRI said.

On the import side, it said dependence on Russian energy and commodities continues unabated.

India's imports stood at USD 63.2 billion in FY24 and inched up to USD 63.8 billion

in FY25; in April–September 2025 alone, imports were USD 31.2 billion.

Petroleum dominates overwhelmingly, led by crude oil (USD 23.1 billion) and petroleum products (USD 2.5 billion), followed by coal (USD 1.9 billion).

Strategic inputs such as fertilisers (USD 1.3 billion) and food oils -- sunflower seed oil (USD 633 million) -- remain significant, while diamonds (USD 202 million) add to the non-energy bill.

“The result is a structurally asymmetric relationship as India relies on Russia for energy security and inputs, while struggling to scale value-added exports, leaving the bilateral trade equation lopsided and vulnerable to shocks in global commodity prices,” GTRI added.

## CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### Rajnath compares

Voicing the Government's unwavering resolve to safeguarding national interests ever since it came to power, Singh stated that before 2014, India was ranked 11th in the world in terms of economic size, and today, it has reached the fourth position, poised to soon join the top three economies.

He added that the Government has been working with the goal of 'Minimum Government, Maximum Governance', while carrying forward Sardar Patel's legacy of an independent nation through political and geographical unity. “Our government is binding India with a fabric of cultural, social, spiritual, and economic unity. We are moving forward with the vision of ‘Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat’. We aim to build a Viksit Bharat by 2047,” he said.

The Defence Minister said that the Government is carrying forward the national security vision of Sardar Patel who had emphasised on defence modernisation and indigenous production of weapons & ammunition. “Today, due to the ‘Make-in-India’ initiative, we are becoming Aatmanirbhar in defence production, while exporting military equipment to friendly countries. Our defence exports have increased nearly 34-fold in the last 11 years. We aim to achieve defence production worth Rs 3 lakh crore and defence exports worth Rs 50,000 crore by 2029,” he said.

Singh stated that Sardar Patel's entire life was a symbol of purity and honesty, and inspired by these high ideals, the Government aims to get the Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill 2025 passed in Parliament, which requires those in the highest positions to behave ethically against corruption. “This means that if a person in office is arrested under any serious charge and is not granted bail within 30 days, they will be automatically moving from their post,” he said.

He urged the youth to strive and realise the dream of a developed India, stating that maintaining the unity, integrity & sovereignty of the nation is a responsibility that Sardar Patel left to the future generations of the country. “It is our responsibility to keep the country and society united. We must pledge that we will not only inculcate the values of Sardar Patel with complete devotion and purity, but will also prepare future generations for them. This would be a true tribute to the legacy of Sardar Patel,” he said. (KNO)

### Kashmir reels

and that is one of the main reasons for the power tripping. “As of now 60 percent of the areas in Kashmir are flat rated.”

Pertinently, in the 3rd week of November, KNO reported that the peak power demand in Kashmir has crossed 1900 Megawatts mark while the power generation from local plants has reduced by nearly 75 percent.

Officials had informed that there was a peak power load of 1925 MWs in the Kashmir division. “However, there was an average power load of 1566 MWs during the 24 hours.”

In the last week of October, the official had informed KNO that there were additional 800 MWs allocated from the centre. “From this year, we have 1300 MW from the central pool. We

have started banking with other states.” (KNO)

### J&K's Raj Bhavan

follows a communication from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, and aligns with the directives issued by the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir. (KNO)

### ‘Return grants

division of seats on the basis of religion.

“When the decision to establish a medical college in the university was taken, it was done with full understanding that seats cannot be divided on religious grounds. They approved the NEET system, and in NEET exams, only merit counts,” he said. “Students who secured marks and got admission cannot now be punished because their religion is different.”

On infrastructure concerns in the region, Abdullah raised the issue of deteriorating road conditions due to ongoing widening, four-laning and tunnel projects. He said the existing stretches should be properly maintained until the new tunnels become functional.

“Today (Tuesday) I left Srinagar at 6.30 am and travelled via Mughal Road, Bafiaz, Poonch to Rajouri. I have seen the road conditions myself. I will forward this to the Government of India and request Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to speed up the Border Roads works,” he said, noting that these roads fall under the Ministry of Defence.

Responding to a query on bunker construction in border areas, the Chief Minister said the process will continue depending on feasibility. “Some people demand individual bunkers, but there isn't enough space and resources everywhere. Where possible, individual bunkers will be made, and where they aren't, community bunkers will be built,” he said.

Asked about the demolition of a journalist's residence in Jammu, CM Omar said the action was not carried out under the NC government. “Those who appointed the officer who executed this should be questioned,” he added. (KNO)

### CM approves

proposal has now been sent to Raj Bhavan for its consent,” Sadiq said in the post.

As per sources, CM has approved a one-time age relaxation proposal for aspirants of JKCE-2025. (KNO)

### Persistent naval

therefore operational specifics cannot be disclosed publicly. “It is an ongoing mission and operational details are naturally classified,” he stated. “However, it is known that our immediate response and the posture we maintained ensured that the Pakistan Navy remained confined to its ports, air bases and the Makran coastline.”

According to him, the deployment was part of measures undertaken to address emerging maritime requirements, and the Navy stood prepared to respond to any contingency. “The Navy did what was required, and was ready to do whatever further was asked of it,” he said.

Admiral Tripathi added that the strategic outcome of the operation was not limited to naval containment alone.

He said that the events during those initial

days had noticeable consequences on Pakistan's commercial maritime activity. Shipping lines reportedly began diverting traffic away from Pakistani terminals, while insurance premiums for vessels heading to the region saw a steep rise.

“Global shipping firms showed reluctance in sending merchant vessels to Pakistani ports due to the risk environment at sea,” he said. “With insurance charges climbing sharply, the number of ships willing to call at those ports reduced.”

He underlined that this disruption carried economic implications for Pakistan during the peak activity period of the operation.

The Navy Chief also noted that maritime domain awareness had been enhanced since then to prevent any security gaps.

Admiral Tripathi said the Navy continues to sustain a high operational tempo in the region and is closely tracking all maritime movement. “Every development at sea is being monitored and we are ensuring that maritime security is maintained without interruption,” he said. (KNO)

### Sub-Zero chill

The Srinagar Airport recorded minus 3.0 degree Celsius while Pampore registered minus 4.2 degree Celsius.

In the Jammu region, the minimum temperature at Jammu was 8.6 degree Celsius, Katra 8.5 degree Celsius, Kathua 8.2 degree Celsius, and Jammu Airport 9.0 degree Celsius.

Banihal recorded minus 0.5 degree Celsius, Baderwah with 0.9 degree Celsius, Batote with 4.8 degree Celsius, Udhampur with 3.6 degree Celsius, and Samba 2.6 degree Celsius. Other areas such as Rajouri, Kishtwar, Reasi, Ramban, and Doda registered minimum temperatures ranging from 2.2 to 6.5 degree Celsius.

The official figures further reveal that the Ladakh and Leh regions recorded minus 6.6 degree Celsius, Kargil with minus 4.8 degree Celsius and Nubra Valley recorded minus 5.0 degree Celsius.

The Meteorological Centre Srinagar has also forecast dry weather in Jammu and Kashmir on December 3 with partly to generally cloudy conditions expected from December 9 to 13.

“There is a possibility of brief spells of light snow at isolated higher reaches on December 4–5, 8, and 14–15 respectively,” officials said.

The officials have advised the residents to exercise caution while travelling due to fog and low visibility areas particularly in the Kashmir division.

They also urged people to take necessary precautions against cold, especially in higher altitude areas where temperatures remain significantly low. (KNO)

### CS reviews

senior officers.

The Chief Secretary noted that consolidation of multiple labour legislations into four streamlined codes marks a major milestone in enhancing the ease of doing business while reinforcing rights and protections for the workforce.

He called for strengthening the institutional and legal frameworks required for the smooth adoption of these codes in the UT. Stressing

the importance of stakeholder outreach, he directed the Labour & Employment Department to roll out a sustained IEC campaign and undertake comprehensive capacity-building programmes for employers, workers and implementing agencies.

The Chief Secretary also emphasised the need to ensure full integration with the National Labour Portal so that the reforms are implemented uniformly and transparently. The Chief Secretary further instructed the department to expedite amendments in rules and issue all essential notifications to ensure that compliance under the new regime becomes faster, easier and less cumbersome for all stakeholders.

On this occasion Secretary, Labour & Employment, Kumar Rajeev Ranjan, explained that 44 Central labour laws have now been subsumed into four comprehensive codes, creating a unified and modern regulatory framework.

He informed that the Code on Wages, 2019 streamlines legislation relating to minimum wages, wage payment, bonus and equal remuneration, ensuring a statutory minimum wage for every worker and introducing a national floor wage to bring uniformity across sectors. The code also eliminates gender-based discrimination, explicitly protecting transgender workers, and shifts minor offences from criminal to monetary penalties to prevent harassment.

Regarding the Industrial Relations Code, 2020 it was revealed that the same integrates laws governing trade unions, standing orders and industrial disputes, providing a single framework for industrial relations.

It introduces fixed-term employment with benefits at par with permanent staff, raises the applicability threshold for Standing Orders from establishments with 100 to 300 workers and provides for two-member Industrial Tribunals to expedite dispute resolution. It also mandates a 14-day notice period for strikes and lockouts and lays down clearer criteria for recognising trade unions.

The Secretary further explained that the Social Security Code, 2020 consolidates nine major social security laws related to EPF, ESI, gratuity, maternity benefits, employment exchanges and welfare boards. It extends social security to gig workers, platform workers and other unorganised sector workers, who are formally recognised for the first time.

The code also establishes a dedicated Social Security Fund for unorganised workers, reduces EPF appeal deposits to ease employer burden and expands the definition of dependents to include grandparents and in-laws for female employees.

Likewise, the Occupational Safety, Health & Working Conditions (OSH&WC) Code, 2020 merges 13 laws on workplace safety and working conditions, enabling single electronic registration for establishments with 10 or more workers, ensuring uniform safety standards across industries and simplifying licensing procedures through a consolidated framework. It also strengthens protections for contract labour and interstate migrant workers.

Further the Labour Commissioner, Charandeep Singh informed the meeting that the rationalisation of labour laws has led to a

substantial reduction in compliance requirements. He noted that the number of sections has been reduced from 1,228 to 480, rules from 1,436 to 351, registrations from eight to one, and licenses from four to one.

Similarly, the number of forms has come down from 181 to 73, registers from 84 to eight and returns from 31 to a single consolidated return. The number of sections prescribing imprisonment has been reduced from 87 to 22, and new mechanisms such as improvement notices and compounding of offences have been introduced to prioritise corrective measures over punitive action.

Highlighting the major gains expected from these reforms, it was stated that compliance has become significantly simpler with the adoption of a single license, single registration and one consolidated return in place of multiple earlier requirements.

### Financial transparency

seamlessly,” MHA sources said.

Ladakh's administration operates through e-office mode, ensuring that all procedural approvals are processed efficiently, enhancing accountability and reducing delays.

The LG retains unrestricted powers over contingent and miscellaneous expenditures within the approved budget under General Financial Rules.

The sources said that this step strengthens governance rather than curtails authority. “It allows quicker clearance for high-value projects, ensures uniform standards and improves coordination for strategic border-region development. The change is supportive, not interference,” they said.

Strategic priorities, including infrastructure, border connectivity, tourism, renewable energy, and rural development, remain under full administrative control of the UT.

Officials reiterated that the measure is an administrative reform to improve transparency and efficiency while maintaining the LG's powers intact. (KNO)

### In 2 years, over

Uttar Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir.

The Minister also shared the count of institutional partnerships built through the platform. Since inception, a total of 29,512 partners / MY Bharat Organisations (MBOs) have been registered.

These include 2,687 government organisations, 9,744 knowledge institutions, 432 for-profit organisations, 306 not-for-profit organisations and 16,343 youth clubs.

Regarding engagement, 24,82,862 registered youth have participated in at least one experiential learning or volunteering activity so far, the reply stated.

This includes participation across opportunities and events such as the Unity March 2025 – Sardar@150, Civil Defence Volunteer registrations, Constitution Day pledges, and Anti-Addiction campaigns.

The overall youth engagement percentage across all activities stands at 12 percent.

The Ministry said the portal continues to act as a national framework to encourage youth participation in nation-building activities. (KNO)







# Pope urges Middle East to reject ‘horror of war’ at end of first overseas trip

REUTERS

Beirut, Dec 02: Pope Leo bade farewell to Lebanon on Tuesday with a fervent appeal to leaders across the Middle East to listen to their people's cries for peace and to change course away from the "horror of war."

The first US pope wrapped up his first overseas trip as Catholic leader by addressing 150,000 people at a Mass on Beirut's historic waterfront, where he pleaded for Lebanon to address years of conflict, political crises and economic misery.

Leo said the region as a whole needed new approaches to overcome political, social and religious divisions.

"The path of mutual hostility and destruction in the horror of war has been traveled too long, with the deplorable results that are before everyone's eyes," Leo said. "We need to change course. We need to educate our hearts for peace!"

## MAY THE ATTACKS CEASE

Leo has been visiting Lebanon for three days on the second leg of an overseas trip that started in Türkiye, in which he has pleaded for peace in the Middle East and warned that humanity's future was at risk from the world's



proliferating conflicts.

The pope, a relative unknown on the world stage before his election to the papacy in May, has been closely watched as he made his first speeches overseas and interacted for the first time with people outside mainly Catholic Italy.

In Lebanon, he urged the heads of religious sects to unite to heal the country and pressed political leaders to persevere with peace efforts after last year's devastating war between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah, and continued Israeli strikes.

He also asked the international

community "to spare no effort in promoting processes of dialogue and reconciliation" and asked those with "political and social authority" to "listen to the cry of your peoples who are calling for peace."

In remarks at Beirut's airport moments before taking off for Rome, Leo made his first apparent reference to Israeli strikes, saying he had been unable to visit Lebanon's south because it is "currently experiencing a state of conflict and uncertainty."

"May the attacks and hostilities cease," he pleaded. "We must recognize that armed struggle

brings no benefit."

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun asked Leo to keep Lebanon in his prayers, saying: "We have heard your message. And we will continue to embody it."

## PAIN AFTER PAIN

Crowds had gathered at the waterfront hours before the start of Tuesday's Mass. They waved Vatican and Lebanese flags as Leo toured in an enclosed popemobile, offering blessings as some in the crowd used umbrellas to guard against a strong Mediterranean sun.

Maroun Al-Mallah, a 21-year-old student of landscape engineering, arrived at the site of Leo's Mass before dawn to volunteer and said the visit could be a reset for Lebanon.

"It was lovely to know there was a sign of hope coming back to Lebanon," Mallah told Reuters.

"Even in university, we just think what could come next. It's just pain after pain after pain ... especially after the third biggest explosion happened" at the port, he said.

Earlier on Tuesday, Leo visited a psychiatric hospital run by Franciscan nuns and prayed near rubble at the Beirut port, where a 2020 chemical explosion shredded parts of Beirut. The blast

killed more than 200 people and caused billions of dollars in damage, but an investigation into the cause has been stymied and no one has been held to account.

Leo laid a wreath of flowers at a memorial there and greeted about 60 blast survivors and relatives of the victims from different religions holding photos of their lost loved ones.

He gave each a rosary in a pouch bearing his coat of arms. One woman sobbed as she greeted Leo and asked if she could give him a hug. He nodded, and they embraced.

Cecile Roukoz, who lost her brother in the blast, said Leo "will raise his voice for justice, and we need justice for all the victims."

Lebanon, which has the largest proportion of Christians in the Middle East, has been rocked by the spillover of the Gaza conflict as Israel and Lebanese armed group Hezbollah went to war, culminating in a devastating Israeli offensive.

The country, which hosts 1 million Syrian and Palestinian refugees, is also struggling to overcome a severe economic crisis after decades of profligate spending sent the economy into a tailspin in late 2019.

# AI's impact could worsen gaps between world's rich and poor, UN report says



AP

Bangkok, Dec 02: Behind the hoopla over the promise of artificial intelligence lay difficult realities, including how such technology might affect people already disadvantaged in a data-driven world.

A new report by the United Nations Development Program notes most of the gains from AI are likely to be reaped by wealthy nations unless steps are taken to use its power to help close gaps in access to basic needs, as well as such advanced know-how.

The report released Tuesday likens the situation to the "Great Divergence" of the industrial revolution, when many Western countries saw rapid modernization while others fell behind.

Questions over how companies and other institutions will use AI are a near universal concern given its potential to change or replace some jobs done by people with computers and robots.

But while much of the attention devoted to AI focuses on productivity, competitiveness and growth, the more important question is what it will mean for human lives, the authors note.

"We tend to overemphasize the role of technology," said Michael Muthukrishna of the London School of Economics, the report's main author, told reporters. "We need to ensure it's not technology first, but it's people first," he said, speaking by video at the report's launch in Bangkok. The risk of exclusion is an issue for communities where most people are still struggling to access skills, electric power and internet connectivity, for older people, for people displaced by war, civil conflict and climate disasters. At the same time, such people may be "invisible" in data that will not take them into account, the report said. "As a general-purpose technology, AI can lift productivity, spark new industries, and help latecomers catch up," the report says. Better advice on farming, analysis of X-rays within seconds and faster medical diagnoses, more effective weather forecasts

and damage assessments hold promise for rural communities and areas prone to natural disasters.

"AI systems that analyze poverty, health, and disaster risks enable faster, fairer, and more transparent decisions, turning data into continuous learning and public value," it says.

Still, even in wealthy nations like the United States, the potential for data centers to devour too large a share of electricity and water has raised concerns. Ramping up power generation to meet higher demand may hinder progress in limiting the emissions of carbon from burning fossil fuels that contribute to global warming, while also causing health hazards.

The technology raises ethical, privacy and cybersecurity concerns: researchers have found hackers using AI to automate portions of cyberattacks. There also is the problem of deepfakes that can misinform or facilitate criminal activity.

Asian nations including China, Japan, South Korea and Singapore are well placed to take advantage of AI tools, the report notes, while places like Afghanistan, the Maldives and Myanmar lack skills, reliable power and other resources needed to tap into the computing potential of AI. Inequalities between regions within countries mean some places even in advanced economies are prone to be left behind. About a quarter of the Asia-Pacific region lacks online access, the report says.

If such gaps are not closed, many millions may be excluded from the kinds of devices, digital payment systems, digital IDs and education and skills that are required to participate fully in the global economy, falling further behind, said Philip Schellekens, the UNDP's chief economist for the Asia Pacific.

Other risks include misinformation and disinformation, surveillance that violates rights to privacy and systems that can act as "black boxes," reinforcing biases against minorities or other groups.

## IND vs SA, 2nd ODI

# Facing India with Kohli and Rohit nothing new, but it does bolster them, says Bavuma

PTI

Raipur, Dec 02: South Africa captain Temba Bavuma feels facing an Indian side with Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma is nothing new, but it does bolster the host.

Kohli's 52nd ODI ton and Rohit's 57 set up a 17-run victory for India in the opening ODI, giving it a 1-0 lead in the three-match series, with the second match to be played in Raipur on Wednesday.

"The inclusion of those two guys that does bolster the team. Like we said at the start of the series, these are two guys who have a lot of experience and a lot of skill and that can only benefit the team."

"It is not something that we are not aware of," Bavuma told the media ahead of South Africa's training session at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Stadium. Underlining their experience in international cricket, Bavuma recalled watching a young Rohit in the 2007 T20 World Cup, which India won as a school student. "We played against Rohit..."



I think it was in 2007, the T20 World Cup. I was still in school then. I mean, these guys have been around, so there is nothing new. These are world-class players," he said.

"(Coming up against them is) nothing new, we have come across it. We have been on the bad end of it. But we have also had good times against them. It all just makes the series a lot more exciting," he said.

Bavuma, meanwhile, said there was nothing for him to clarify on the use of the word "grovel" made by South Africa head coach Shukri Conrad during the fourth day's play in the second Test. "No, I don't think

it is distracting (and) no it's not for me to clarify," said Bavuma, who missed the opening ODI.

Bavuma heaped praise on Marco Jansen, whose 39-ball 70 took South Africa to the brink of a victory in the first ODI.

"From an all-rounder point of view, I don't know where the rankings sit (but) I am sure Marco Jansen, in any one of the formats, will definitely be in a top 10. His contributions, with bat (or) with the ball (and) sometimes even both, they have been immense to our success," he said.

"He is still a young guy, but he has had a lot of international

cricket that is under his belt. He is only growing into his own and becoming a lot more comfortable under his skin."

Bavuma did not read much into South Africa's loss in the first ODI. "We were 15 runs (17) short of them. The gap between the batting performances wasn't a big one. India played well; their two stalwarts stood up, but we were not too far off."

Bavuma, who has led South Africa to 11 Test wins in his 12 matches as skipper so far, said it was up to those in "suits" in Cricket South Africa to ensure there are more Test matches against top countries.

"All of us have been crying for more cricket, especially against the top nations," he said. "The Test series (against India) now, as much as there were two-match series, a lot of us would have wanted to see it going to a three or four-match series. When it's a side like India, they would have raised the standard, which would have forced us to raise our standards as well."

# Venezuela does not want 'a slave's peace': Maduro on US military threat



AFP

Caracas, Dec 02: Venezuela does not want "a slave's peace," President Nicolas Maduro told thousands of supporters Monday of a US military deployment he said has been "testing" his country for 22 weeks.

US President Donald Trump has ramped up pressure on Maduro with a major naval build-up in the Caribbean, bombings of suspected drug-ferrying boats, and ominous warnings to avoid Venezuelan airspace.

"We want peace, but peace with sovereignty, equality, freedom! We do not want a slave's peace, nor the peace of colonies!" Maduro, who accuses Washington of seeking to topple him, said at a rally in Caracas as Trump was expected to meet with his top national security officials to discuss Venezuela.

# I'm hoping South Africa lifts first World Cup soon: Shamsi

PTI

Dubai, Dec 02: South African left-arm wrist-spinner Tabraiz Shamsi felt that their recent wave of success in international cricket, which included an away Test series win over India recently, is a sign of Proteas' landing their maiden ICC World Cup sooner than later.

South Africa reached the 2023 ODI World Cup semifinals, finished runners-up in the 2024 T20 World Cup and then clinched the World Test Championship title in June this year before whitewashing India 2-0 in the recently-concluded away Test series.

Touching base with PTI on the sidelines of the fourth season of the ILT20, Shamsi, who is set to make his debut in the tournament for the Adani Sportsline-owned Gulf Giants, said the progress has been gradual yet encouraging. "You can see, probably since 2021-22, we started performing better and better in knockout games. We got to the semifinals of the 2023 World Cup, then the final of the T20 World Cup in 2024, and then won the World Test Championship against Australia. As South African cricket, we've been trending upwards, and I'm really hoping that we lift our first World Cup very soon," said Shamsi. South Africa outplayed India on their own conditions with off-spinner Simon Harmer emerging as the top wicket-taker with 17 scalps and was adjudged player-of-the-series.



Left-arm spin duo of Keshav Maharaj and Senuran Muthuswamy have also done well in the recent past when SA held Pakistan 1-1 in another away series. Shamsi was delighted to see the rise of spin in the pace bowling heartland. "Oh, unbelievable. It's been so many years of pain, especially for our Test team visiting India and being beaten quite comprehensively in the past. To see that the South African team has gone there and done so well, and especially seeing our spinners doing so well, that gives me a lot of joy because in past series the Indian spinners have given our batters a tough time."

"So for our spin bowlers to give the Indian batters a tough time... That was really nice to see. Of course, they have to be (the best in the world right now). Indian batters are very good at playing spin,

in my personal experience, and for our boys to trouble them so much in their home conditions, of course they have to be the best trio." Shamsi, whose joy knew no bounds after SA etched a series win in India after 25 years, found the variety in the spin department a matter of pride. "I'd add Aiden Markram as a fourth. We've got left-armers, right-armers, off-spin and left-arm orthodox—so we've got to back them in any condition," added Shamsi.

He opted out of a CSA central contract in 2024 to explore franchise opportunities but remained available for national selection.

"Obviously, every time you're part of the South African team, it's the best thing you can do for yourself as a player. Nothing gets bigger than playing for your country," said the 35-year-old who has played 55 ODIs and 70 T20Is.

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