



## Under PM Modi's guidance, we've scripted new chapter of inclusive dev: LG Sinha

» Lays foundation stone for construction of 449 new homes in Kathua, Samba

» Says collective action can surmount challenges, unity is strength

Yogesh

Samba (Jammu), Dec 09: Asserting that better infrastructure, education, health, employment, equal opportunities and social justice have always been government's priorities, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday said that under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi a new chapter of all-round and inclusive development has been scripted.

Talking to the reporters after laying the foundation stone of 105 houses damaged during the recent flash floods in Samba, LG Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Under the guidance of PM Modi, we have scripted a new history with all-round and inclusive development."

The Lieutenant Governor also visited Kathua and laid the foundation stone of 344 houses that were completely



devastated. These houses will be constructed at a cost of Rs. 34 crore. In Samba, 105 houses damaged during the recent flash floods will be rebuilt at a cost of Rs. 10.50 crore.

The construction costs for these 3-bedroom houses will be financed by an NGO, High-range Rural Development Society (HRDS India), which will also ensure modern amenities and facilities for home owners.

Addressing the gathering, the Lieutenant Governor

commended HRDS India for its noble endeavour and its support to the UT administration in ensuring dignified and secure housing for the affected families in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Unity is strength. Collective action can surmount challenges which appear unconquerable and we have witnessed this spirit during the crisis in August this year. Welfare of people of J&K is our top priority. We are committed to serve them and fulfil all their aspirations," the

Lieutenant Governor said.

He said the project for construction of new homes for affected families being completed with the help of HRDS-India, manifests our commitment to people and inclusive development of J&K. He also directed the district administration for inclusion of all the genuine beneficiaries, if anyone is left out.

The first phase of the initiative involves construction of 1,500 state-of-the-art, three-bedroom | [More on P6](#)

## Non-stop border surveillance, digital tools reduce infiltration, terror activities: MHA

'Security forces trained, equipped for modern terror threats; online radicalisation, terror financing tackled'

Sajid Raina

New Delhi, Dec 09: The Government of India has strengthened intelligence, inter-agency coordination, and border management over the past two years, resulting in improved detection of infiltration attempts, neutralisation of terror networks, and monitoring of online radicalisation, Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai said in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday.

In a written response to a Lok Sabha question by MP E Tukaram, Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai said the GoI has strengthened the capacity of Central and State law enforcement agencies to mitigate terror risks.

According to the news—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Rai said that inter-agency coordination between Central agencies and State police has facilitated joint operations against terror modules involved in recruitment, financing, and other activities.

"Key measures include the



expansion of Multi-Agency Centre (MAC) connectivity up to the district level to support analytical and predictive functions on violent extremism, emerging security threats, cryptocurrency, drug trafficking, terror financing, bio-terrorism, fake currency, and cyber threats," he said, adding that the MAC-to-Subsidiary-MAC network has been upgraded with improved hardware and network speeds and AI and machine learning-enabled software for real-time analysis.

"Agencies including the National Investigation Agency

(NIA), National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID), Intelligence Bureau (IB), and State Anti-Terrorism Squads (ATS) have enhanced digital tools for data sharing and analysis," he said.

The Union Minister said that the NIA has circulated its handbook on investigations under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act to all States and Union Territories, standardising investigative procedures.

The agency, he said, has also established the National Terror Database Fusion and Analysis Centre (NTDFAC) | [More on P6](#)

### DELHI BLAST CASE

## Baramulla doctor arrested for providing logistic support to suicide bomber

8 arrested so far; NIA brings 2 key accused to Anantnag forests, conducts searches

Ahmad Taimur

Srinagar, Dec 09: In a major breakthrough in the deadly Delhi blast case, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested another key accused, who is believed to have provided logistical support to the suicide bomber - Dr Umar Nabi.

In a statement, issued to news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the NIA said that it arrested Dr Bilal Naseer Malla, a resident of Baramulla.

"He was arrested in Delhi today by a team of the NIA," it said.

So far, eight arrests have been made in connection with the Delhi blast that claimed 11 lives and injured several others on November 10 this year.

The NIA said that Dr Bilal had sheltered the suicide bomber - Dr Umar - and provided logistical support to him, including accommodation, mobility, and assistance in planning. "He was also involved in destroying evidence linked to the blast," it said.

The anti-terror agency believes he was part of the larger conspiracy, which led to his arrest.

On November 10, a high-intensity explosion ripped through a near | [More on P6](#)

## CM Omar calls for strategic marketing to promote tourism 'Identify top 10 tourist-source airports for ads'



KT News Desk

Jammu, Dec 09: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday chaired a meeting to review tourism promotion and publicity activities of Tourism Department with a focus on enhancing

the J&K's visibility and increasing visitor engagement to further strengthen J&K's tourism profile.

The Chief Minister directed the Tourism Department to prepare an advance annual calendar of events to ensure | [More on P6](#)

### CM asks Jal Shakti Dept to focus on 100% saturation of FHTCs

KT News Desk

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday chaired a high-level review meeting on the status of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) projects across Jammu and Kashmir at the Civil Secretariat, with a focus on accelerating implementation and ensuring universal access to safe drinking water.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Jal Shakti Javed Ahmed Rana, Advisor to | [More on P6](#)

### Omar reviews urban projects taken up under SASCI

Major heritage, lakefront, urban mobility projects planned across Jammu, Srinagar, Anantnag

KT News Desk

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday reviewed the projects of the Housing & Urban Development Department being implemented under the scheme, Special Assistance to States for Capital | [More on P6](#)

## J&K Govt writes to Punjab CM, seeks end to harassment

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Dec 09: The Jammu and Kashmir Government has formally written to the Punjab Chief Minister, seeking immediate intervention over the alleged "extortion and harassment" faced by livestock and mutton dealers at Punjab's Shambhu and Madhopur checkpoints.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) the letter, dated December 4, was sent by Department of Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Kashmir, to the Punjab Chief Minister, requesting action to "ensure hassle-free movement" of livestock consignments bound for Jammu and Kashmir.

"Senior officials and National Conference leaders, including Provincial | [More on P6](#)

## J&K, Ladakh see sharp rise in foreign tourist arrival: Centre

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Dec 09: Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh have witnessed a significant surge in foreign tourist visits over the last five years, the Ministry of Tourism said in the Lok Sabha.

As per the data, Jammu and Kashmir according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) recorded a steep increase in Foreign Tourist Visits (FTVs) from 5,317 in 2020 to 65,452 in 2024—reflecting a strong post-pandemic recovery.

Ladakh UT also registered a substantial rise with 1,126 foreign tourist visits in 2020 to 39,704 in 2024.

Officials said that the upward trend indicates renewed global interest in both | [More on P6](#)

## Kashmir Cyber Crime Centre traces Rs 4.93 cr in online fraud cases this year, recovers Rs 2.80 cr

Awareness, quick reporting vital to recover lost money: DySP Malik

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Dec 09: The Cyber Crime Investigation Centre for Excellence (CICE), Kashmir has traced a total of rupees 4.93 crore linked to various online fraud cases this year, officials said on Tuesday.

Of the total amount, Rs 2.80 crore has been recovered, while Rs 2.13 crore has been kept on hold and will be returned to the victims after completion of the required legal formalities.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a Cyber Awareness



Session at Nitian's Career Institute, Hawal Srinagar, DySP Ashiq Hussain Malik, said that public awareness and timely reporting remain the most

effective tools to combat rising cybercrimes. "In today's digital age, everyone, including students, traders and professionals, carries a gadget and is

therefore vulnerable to cyber fraud. The only real defence is awareness," Malik said, as per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

He said cyber fraud cases are scattered across the Valley and not limited to any specific area, like Downtown or Civil Lines. "There is no hotspot for online fraud. It is widespread and growing with the expansion of digital access," he added.

DySP Malik said that reluctance or delay in lodging complaints helps fraudsters escape detection. | [More on P6](#)

## Cold wave deepens as dry conditions prevail in J&K, Ladakh

MeT predicts light snowfall in upper reaches next week

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Dec 09: Amid the prevailing dry spell, the cold wave intensified across Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh on Monday, with minimum temperatures plummeting sharply.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) in the Kashmir, Pulwama recorded the lowest temperature at minus 5.1 degrees Celsius, followed by Shopian at minus 5.0 degrees and Baramulla at minus 4.9 degrees. Pahalgam settled at minus 4.8 degrees,



while Srinagar recorded minus 3.7 degrees.

Other areas recorded: Pampore and Srinagar Airport minus 4.0 degrees, Awantipora minus 4.2 degrees, Budgam minus 4.1 degrees, Qazigund, Bandipora and Kupwara minus 3.6 degrees each.

Gulmarg stood | [More on P6](#)



# CS pushes for expansion of MBBS, PG seats across J&K GMCs

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, DECEMBER 09: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, Tuesday chaired a meeting to comprehensively review the augmentation of undergraduate and postgraduate seats across Government Medical Colleges (GMCs), Dental Colleges, Ayurvedic and Unani Colleges by the Health & Medical Education (H&ME) Department in J&K.

The meeting was attended by Secretary, Health & Medical Education Department; Director, SKIMS; Principals of Government Medical Colleges; Director, Coordination; and other senior officers of the department.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary, as per an official statement, took a detailed appraisal of the MD/MS, DM/MCh, DNB and MDS seats that were augmented during the previous academic year and reviewed the roadmap prepared by the medical colleges for further expansion in the coming session. Emphasising the need to strengthen super-speciality Health care in the UT, he directed the two Super Speciality Hospitals and SKIMS Medical College to ensure allocation of DM and MCh seats from the next academic session.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed the status of additional MBBS seats sanctioned for various medical colleges and urged the remaining institutions to apply for an additional 50 MBBS seats as soon as the application portal



is opened by the National Medical Commission (NMC). He informed the meeting that a college-wise assessment would be undertaken immediately after the portal is opened to closely monitor progress and ensure timely submissions.

Further, the Chief Secretary directed the Principals of Government Dental Colleges at Jammu and Srinagar to take all necessary measures to introduce new MDS courses and increase intake capacity. He also called upon the Ayurvedic and Unani Colleges to actively pursue enhancement of seats in their respective institutions.

Secretary, Health & Medical Education Department, Dr Syed Abid Rashid Shah, informed the meeting that each medical institution has designated a Nodal Officer for augmentation of UG and PG seats

to ensure strict compliance with NMC norms and timely completion of statutory requirements.

He revealed that during the previous academic session, medical colleges across J&K were augmented with 128 MD/MS seats, 46 DNB seats and 2 DM/MCh seats, while for the forthcoming 2026-27 session, the institutions are proposing to add 284 MD/MS seats, 35 DNB seats and 36 DM/MCh seats.

Regarding MBBS admissions, the Secretary stated that 50 additional seats each were sanctioned for GMCs at Anantnag, Baramulla, Rajouri and Doda, while 20 seats each were added to GMC Srinagar and GMC Jammu. He further informed that GMCs at Udhampur, Rajouri, Handwara and SKIMS Bemina are planning to apply for

an additional 50 MBBS seats in the upcoming session.

Director, SKIMS, Dr Mohammad Ashraf Ganie, apprised the meeting of the Institute's preparedness to apply for a substantial increase in seats during the forthcoming NMC application window. He stated that SKIMS is set to apply for around 130 postgraduate seats and 50 undergraduate seats in the next academic session, expressing confidence in meeting all regulatory requirements for securing the approvals.

The Principals of the respective medical institutions also shared their institution-specific plans for augmentation of UG and PG seats and assured that applications would be submitted promptly as soon as the NMC opens the portal in the weeks to come.

# Government committed to people-centric Governance: Sakeena Itoo



KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 09: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo Tuesday held an extensive public outreach session at Civil Secretariat, Srinagar, during which various Legislators, public delegations, employee associations and individuals raised several issues of public importance before the Minister.

During the session, as per an official statement a delegation of Jammu Kashmir Teacher's Joint Action Committee met the Minister and raised various issues of teaching community. The delegation expressed gratitude to Minister for formation of Committee regarding framing of transfer policy for ReTs.

Similarly, a delegation of Rehbar-e-Khel teachers met the Minister and sought regularization of Rehbar-e-Khel teachers who have

completed seven years of satisfactory service.

Likewise, a delegation of officers of Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Service met the Minister and raised various issues related to career progression before the Minister.

During the outreach session, several public delegations from different areas of Baramulla, Kupwara, Anantnag, Ganderbal, Bandipora, Kulgam and other districts also met the Minister and raised various issues related to health sector, education, essential supplies like drinking water availability, power as well as ration availability in view of ongoing winter months.

While interacting with these delegations, Minister Sakeena highlighted that this session is being held to review concerns of general public, assess their developmental need and gather on-ground feedback from public for improving governance delivery. The

Minister, while giving patient hearing to all delegations and individuals, assured them prompt redressal of genuine demands. She highlighted that the Government's top priority is to ensure accessible, transparent and accountable governance. "Our doors are always open for the people. Effective governance is possible only by listening, understanding and acting on public concerns," she stated.

The Minister further said that the Government led by Omar Abdullah remains committed to deliver good governance that reflects the aspirations of every section of society.

Meanwhile, MLA Pampore, Justice (Retd.) Hasnain Masoodi; MLA Sopore, Irshad Rasool Kar; MLA Lolab, Qaysar Jamshaid Lone and MLA Kangan Mian Mehar Ali also met the Minister and raised various issues pertaining to their Assembly Constituencies.

# JDI Kashmir condoles demise of former senior assistant Gh. Qadir Hajam



KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 09: The Joint Directorate of Information (JDI) Kashmir Tuesday expressed profound sorrow and grief over the passing of its former Senior Assistant, Gh. Qadir Hajam, who passed away after a brief illness.

The employees paid rich tributes to the departed soul and prayed for eternal peace to him, while also expressing heartfelt solidarity with the bereaved family during this moment of grief.

# I&C Dept congratulates 2 J&K craftsmen for winning national awards

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR/NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 09: The Industries & Commerce Department extended heartfelt congratulations to two outstanding craftsmen from Jammu and Kashmir, who were honoured on Tuesday with the prestigious National Awards by the President of India, Draupadi Murmu at a grand ceremony, organized by the Ministry of Textiles at New Delhi.

The Department, as per an official statement, also extended felicitations to two other craftsmen who were honoured with Certificates of Excellence for their contribution in their respective crafts during the function.

In a press release issued, a spokesman of the Handicrafts and Handloom Department, Kashmir, stated that this honour is a fitting tribute to the extraordinary skill, lifelong dedication and invaluable contribution of Manzoor Ahmad Khan, renowned carpet weaver



from Rainawari, Khawaja Nazir Ali, famous for Sozni embroidery from Alamgiri Bazaar, Srinagar, who were conferred with National Awards and Mashkoora Hameed from Budgam (Sozni embroidery) and Mir Arshad Hussain from Srinagar (papier mache), who were honoured with Certificate of Excellence, towards preserving and promoting the rich craft heritage of Jammu & Kashmir. "The department is filled with immense pride and joy as 02 master craftsmen have been conferred with one of the highest national recognition and two more honoured with

Certificate of Excellence, in the field of handicrafts and handlooms by the President of India," he said.

The Spokesman further stated said their exquisite craftsmanship has not only kept our centuries-old traditions alive but has also earned global admiration. "They have become role models for thousands of artisans across J&K and were brought into the limelight during the recently held Know Your Artisan campaign by the department," he said, adding the entire artisan community celebrates this historic moment with great pride.

# DC Kupwara visits fire-affected family, reviews relief measures



KT NEWS DESK

KUPWARA, DECEMBER 9: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Shrikant Suse, Tuesday visited Malik Mohallah, Kupwara, where a tragic fire incident occurred late last night, resulting in the unfortunate loss of a young life and injuries to another person.

The Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Kupwara, Mufti Fareed-u-Din, DySP Headquarters and other senior officers of the district administration.

During the visit, the

adequate treatment.

DC Kupwara further directed the concerned Tehsildar to carry out a detailed assessment of the damage caused by the fire and to process the case for relief as per the extant norms and guidelines. He stressed the need for prompt relief measures so that the affected family does not face any further hardship.

While interacting with members of the local community, the Deputy Commissioner underscored the importance of fire safety awareness, particularly during the winter season when such incidents tend to increase. He urged residents to remain vigilant, adopt necessary precautionary measures and adhere to safety advisories issued by the authorities from time to time.

The Deputy Commissioner reaffirmed the commitment of the district administration to strengthening disaster preparedness and emergency response mechanisms across the district to minimise loss of life and property in such incidents in the future.

# DC Baramulla reviews CSR, Award Money Projects

KT NEWS DESK

BARAMULLA DECEMBER, 09: Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, Tuesday chaired a review meeting regarding the ongoing projects under Award Money and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) at the Meeting Hall of the DC Office, Baramulla.

During the meeting, the DC took a comprehensive review of the physical and financial progress of the works being executed during the financial year 2025-26.

The DC, as per an official statement, directed the concerned officers to complete all the pending works of previous award-related projects in the Agriculture and allied sectors in the current month without fail.

Meanwhile, the DC instructed the concerned department heads to submit the Utilization Certificates (UCs) for all completed and ongoing projects immediately.

Furthermore, Minga Sherpa directed SICOP to submit geo-tagged photographs of all 20 construction sites, along with the latest status of execution and progress reports, for proper documentation and verification.

The chair emphasized strict adherence to timelines, transparency in execution, and accountability at all levels to ensure effective utilization of public funds.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Planning Officer, Principal Government Medical College Baramulla, Medical Superintendent Associated Hospital GMC and other officers.

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

| Fax No: 0194-2497093 | website: www.medkashmir.org |

### CORRIGENDUM 01 FOR DATE EXTENSION

Name of work: - Fabrication of Heavy Duty Platform With Flooring & Lifting Ramp on MAHINDRA

BLAZO X M DURA 35 GVWTon , 8x4 Cab Chassis (Cab chassis is available with the Department)

Reference: - This office e-NIT No.: - MDSK/TS /2025-26/66 Date:26-11-2025 (Tender ID: 2025\_PWDJK\_296427 \_1)

In view of the representation of the firm, the critical dates of the above referred e-NIT is extended as under: -

S.No.	Description	Previous Dates	New Dates.
01.	Last date of downloading/ submission of bids	11-12-2025 upto 06:55PM	16-12-2025 upto 06:55PM
02.	Date of opening of bids online	12-12-2025 at 02:00 PM	17-12-2025 at 02:00 PM

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

Sd/  
Executive Engineer  
Machinery Division, Kashmir.

No: MDSK/TS/4454-57 Date: 09-12-2025. DIPK-8851/25 DATED: 09-12-2025

## DEPARTMENT OF SHEEP HUSBANDRY KASHMIR GOVT. OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR SHEEP BREEDING FARM DAKSUM

(Tech Sec.)

Email: sbfdaksum-shdk@jk.gov.in

### AUCTION NOTICE

In view of the poor response from general public for auction of livestock at SBF Daksum, it is once again informed that this office has fixed another date for auction of some animals (Sheep) at SBF Daksum on 13-12-2025 (11:00 a.m)

So the interested persons are hereby informed through this notice to attend the said programme on the scheduled date and time.

The auction will remain open till the exhaustion of the stock.

Conditions of Auction/Sale shall be as follows:

- 1) The successful bidders shall have to pay the auction/sale amount in cash on spot.
- 2) The committee reserves the right to accept or cancel any bid or sale without assigning any reason in the interest of department.
- 3) Other terms and conditions shall be laid down on spot.

No: SBFD/Tech/Auction/2025-26/1472-78  
Dated: 09-12-2025

DIPK-NB-2710/25  
DATED: 09-12-2025

Sd  
Deputy Director  
Sheep Breeding Farm  
Daksum



## 8 J&K players in IPL 2026 auction

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar Dec 09: In a significant recognition of Jammu & Kashmir's rising cricketing standards, eight players from the region have secured a place in the final shortlist for the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 mega auction slated for December 16 at the Etihad Arena in Abu Dhabi.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) released its refined list of 350 eligible players on Tuesday.

The list was narrowed down from nearly 1,390 initial entries based on team requirements and recent domestic performances.

From the Jammu & Kashmir Cricket Association (JKCA), eight players have found their names among the shortlisted group: Auqib Nabi, Nasir Muzaffar, Atif Mushtaq, Waseem Khanday, Vivrant Sharma, Abid Mushtaq, Qamran Iqbal, and

Ashwin Murugan.

Leading the J&K contingent is Baramulla-born pacer Auqib Nabi, who has steadily carved a reputation as one of the finest swing bowlers in the domestic circuit. The 28-year-old has consistently delivered for J&K across formats, with his standout performance coming in the last Ranji Trophy season where he bagged 44 wickets, placing him among the top bowlers nationwide.

Alongside Nabi, several other promising J&K players have made it to the list. The group represents a balanced mix of all-rounders, pacers, and young batting prospects who have impressed in various domestic tournaments that includes asir Muzaffar – known for his composure in the middle order, Atif Mushtaq – a consistent performer in white-ball cricket, Waseem Khanday – a reliable run-getter with strong T20 credentials,



Vivrant Sharma – who has earlier been associated with Sunrisers Hyderabad, Abid Mushtaq – J&K's dependable spin-bowling all-rounder, Qamran Iqbal – talented opener with aggressive stroke play and Ashwin Murugan – impressive fast-medium bowler emerging through.

Officials from JKCA say the shortlisting reflects the continuous improvement in local cricketing standards, crediting better infrastructure, enhanced coaching systems, and increased exposure in domestic tournaments.

The upcoming auction will offer 77 available spots across the ten franchises. The shortlisted lineup includes 240 Indian and 110 overseas players, with a strong emphasis on emerging domestic talent—224 uncapped Indian players form a major part of the pool.

While 40 players have placed

themselves in the top base price category of Rs 2 crore, the majority of cricketers—227—fall in the Rs 30 lakh bracket, a range often favoured by teams looking to secure promising young players.

Jammu & Kashmir has gradually built a meaningful presence in the IPL over the last decade. Earlier, players such as Abdul Samad, Umran Malik, Parvez Rasool, Rasikh Salam, Yudhvir Singh, Mohammad Mudhasir, and Manzoor Pandav made it to various franchises. While some gained substantial game time, others saw limited on-field opportunities but benefitted from elite-level exposure and training environments.

Cricket lovers in the region see the inclusion of eight players in the auction pool as a milestone, hoping that many of them secure contracts and continue J&K's growing contribution to the league—(KNO)

## J&K transporters call strike for Dec-15

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Dec 09: Accusing the government of 'consistent neglect' and "discriminatory treatment", the Jammu and Kashmir Transport Welfare Association on Tuesday announced a one-day token strike on December 15, saying the transport sector in the Union Territory is "on the verge of collapse" due to official apathy and unaddressed grievances.

Addressing a press conference in Srinagar, the Association's General Secretary, Sheikh Mohammad Yousuf said that transporters from both Jammu and Kashmir divisions have unanimously decided to suspend operations for a day to protest against the "failure of the government to resolve key issues" despite repeated appeals.

"We have been highlighting our legitimate demands for years, but the government continues to ignore us. The entire transport sector, which provides livelihoods to thousands of families, is suffering. We are left with no option but to go on strike," Yousuf said.

He added that after the token strike, the Association would give the government a 'seven-day ultimatum', warning that if their concerns remain unaddressed, transporters across the Union Territory will take a "major decision" involving an indefinite strike.

The transporters' leader said the sector is reeling under a combination of "ill-conceived government decisions, excessive taxation and lack of coordination in transport planning." He said that the unregulated expansion of e-buses, sharp hikes in fitness



and green taxes, and arbitrary e-challans being issued to drivers are the most pressing issues.

"The e-buses are being operated without any route regulation or timetable. They move wherever they want, sometimes to Budgam, sometimes to Sumbal or Baramulla, encroaching on the routes already allotted to private operators. This is not regulation; it's chaos," he said.

Yousuf also alleged that despite repeated memorandums and meetings, the authorities have not enforced a uniform timetable for e-buses and RTC buses in Kashmir, unlike in Jammu, where, he said, such coordination exists.

The Association also listed four major demands before the J&K government: Regulation of e-buses and a halt on further expansion until private transporters are given a level playing field or an option to operate electric fleets under a subsidy scheme; implementation of a fixed timetable for all e-buses and RTC vehicles to prevent route conflicts; Immediate rollback of tax hike, including sharp increases in fitness charges, green tax with ranging from RS: 8,000 to RS: 15,000, and renewal fees for older vehicles,

which have reportedly reached Rs: 25,000.

They also demanded transparent implementation of e-challan rules, ensuring that challans are issued only with proper evidence and accountability.

Yousuf said most drivers and small transport owners are already under severe financial strain, earning as little as Rs: 10,000–Rs: 12,000 a month after repaying bank loans. The frequent e-challans, he said, are adding to their distress.

"E-challans are being issued indiscriminately. Many drivers don't even know why they have been fined. Photos are taken from behind, sometimes without proper verification or uniformed officials on site. There has to be accountability in this system," he said.

He appealed to the Lieutenant Governor-led administration to hold talks with transport associations from both regions before the situation escalates further. "We are not asking for favours, only fairness," Yousuf said, urging the government to treat transporters as partners in progress rather than obstacles to change—(KNO)

## Signals can't manage traffic alone: SSP Traffic

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Dec 09: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Traffic City, Ajaz Ahmad Bhat on Tuesday said that traffic lights in Srinagar cannot function independently at present due to excessive pressure and incomplete supporting infrastructure. This, he said, compels authorities to manually regulate movement during peak hours.

Speaking to reporters at Hawal Srinagar, SSP Bhat said the signal lights don't work on their own. "When the traffic pressure increases, we are forced to switch off the signals and manage the flow manually," he said.

The SSP added that several open intersections in the city have been temporarily closed on a trial basis to study movement patterns and identify choke points. "Large vehicles turning at open intersections block traffic behind them. To ease flow, we have closed a few intersections and are observing how traffic behaves," he said.

Bhat said the department will soon allow passage for small vehicles at some points while ensuring safety for pedestrians through properly designed zebra crossings and walkways, many of which are still under development.

He said the Intelligent Traffic Management System (ITMS) will soon be integrated into the city's network to enable automated



and contactless regulation. "Once the ITMS becomes fully operational, traffic lights will work independently and efficiently," he said.

Referring to Srinagar's persistent bottlenecks, especially in downtown areas, the SSP said narrow stretches and roadside structures continue to obstruct smooth flow. "Some structures that block major corridors are being relocated as part of a broader decongestion plan," he added—(KNO)

### From The Parliament

## J&K has 77,483 teachers in Govt schools: GoI

RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Dec 09: Jammu and Kashmir has a total of 77,483 teachers across primary, upper primary and secondary level government schools, Union Ministry of Education informed the Lok Sabha. The ministry said that the Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) in the Union Territory stands at 11 at primary level,

8 at upper primary and 12 at secondary schools—indicating comparatively favourable teacher availability in government institutions.

The ministry further informed that online and digital learning in J&K is guided by the PRAGYATA guidelines, which focus on safe digital education, limiting screen time and encouraging parental supervision. It added that

digital initiatives, including ICT labs, smart classrooms and PM eVidya channels, are implemented under Samagra Shiksha based on annual plans submitted by the UT.

The information was shared in response to a question on online and offline classes, digital education regulations and teacher availability across the country—(KNO)

## No 'MY Bharat youth volunteers' deployment in J&K: Centre

RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Dec 09: The Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has informed the Lok Sabha that no 'MY Bharat Youth Volunteers' are currently deployed in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

As per the state and UT-wise data shared in Parliament, Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh have reported zero volunteers under the National Youth Corps (NYC) scheme at present. The total deployment across the country stands at 3,058 volunteers.

The Ministry said the deployment of 8,395 new volunteers is underway across 26 States and UTs which is expected to expand the scheme's reach nationwide. However, no specific deployment numbers for J&K were mentioned in the ongoing expansion plan.

The government added that the scheme includes induction training, refresher courses, supervision by district-level officers and structured monitoring mechanisms, applicable uniformly across all States and UTs.

The information was shared in response to a question regarding deployment status, training, supervision and future programme interventions under the National Youth Corps Scheme—(KNO)

## '3.8 lakh J&K kids benefit from Vidya Pravesh'

RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Dec 09: The Union Education Ministry has said that Jammu and Kashmir has been receiving central support under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 to integrate three years of pre-primary education into the foundational stage.

According to official data presented in the Lok Sabha, the ministry, said at least 1,34,249 children in J&K were covered under the Vidya Pravesh school-preparation module in 2022-23, followed by 1,30,640 students in 2023-24 and 1,19,160 students in 2024-25.

The Ministry further said that J&K is implementing the NIPUN Bharat Mission, which aims to ensure foundational literacy and

numeracy for all children by Grade 2. "Financial support is provided for teacher training, teaching-learning materials, assessment, and strengthening of pre-school education."

It also highlighted initiatives promoting the use of mother tongue and regional languages up to Class 5, noting that curriculum reforms, multilingual textbooks, and play-based learning tools such as Jaadui Pitara are being implemented nationwide, including in J&K.

The ministry further stated that these reforms are part of broader structural changes under NEP 2020 to improve early childhood learning, reduce academic stress, and promote multilingual proficiency—(KNO)

## 9 new polytechnics established in J&K: GoI

RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Dec 09: The Union Education Ministry has informed the Lok Sabha that nine new polytechnic institutes have been established in Jammu and Kashmir under the centrally sponsored scheme that were implemented by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE).

The scheme focuses on expanding access to technical education in unserved and underserved areas, with support for infrastructure such as classrooms, labs, hostels and industry-linked training.

The ministry further said that

a total of 170 polytechnics have been established across the country under this component. "J&K is among the States and UTs where new polytechnics were set up under the component 'Setting up of New Polytechnic' as part of the national skill development initiative." The government added that quality enhancement measures, including monitoring mechanisms and the recently launched MERITE scheme is aimed at improving governance and academic standards in technical institutions.

It is being implemented nationwide, benefiting polytechnics in Jammu & Kashmir as well—(KNO)

## '1,068 Cr MGNREGS funds for J&K'

RAJA SYED RATHER

Jammu, Dec 09: Jammu and Kashmir has received over Rs 1,068.36 crore under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in the ongoing financial year 2025-26.

Official documents tabled in the Lok Sabha according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) reveal that the Ministry of Rural Development, fund releases to J&K have shown notable variations over the past years, with the UT receiving Rs 1,151.20 crore in 2024-25, Rs 921.60 crore in 2023-24, Rs 1,051.00 crore in 2022-23, and Rs 950.14 crore in 2021-22. The data further shows that J&K has generated 242.03 lakh person-days under MGNREGS in 2025-26 so far as on 04 December. It also said that the UT had generated 409.38 lakh person-days in 2024-25, 374.73 lakh in 2023-24 and 308.67 lakh in 2022-23.

As per the records, the Union Territory currently has 10.08 lakh active job cards under the scheme.

The Ministry also reported pending liabilities amounting to Rs 6.10 crore in wage dues and Rs 192.00 crore in material liabilities for J&K as of December-2025—(KNO)

## Workshop keeps journalist Mudasir Ali's memory alive

KNO

Charari Sharief, Dec 09: A media workshop was conducted at Life School in Charari Sharief town of Budgam district on Tuesday to honour senior journalist and editor Mudasir Ali who passed away in 2020 due to alleged medical negligence.

The workshop also marked the first year of the establishment of Mudasir Ali Podcast Studio, an audio-visual lab set up at Life



School in the honour of Ali who was working as a senior editor at Greater Kashmir when he passed

away on November 20, 2020.

Ali, a resident of Charari Sharief, also wrote extensively on J&K's politics, conflict and environment for national and international media outlets including The Foreign Policy, New Humanitarian and others. To commemorate his commitment to rigorous and ethical reporting, the 'Mudasir Ali Podcast Studio' provides an opportunity to a select group of students who are trained in the basics of news gathering and

reporting operations, media ethics and equipment handling.

Akash Dutt, a Teach To Elicit fellow, who trained the selected group of students over the last one year, said that the media acted as the 'immune system' of a society. "Just as the immune system identifies threats to keep a body healthy, a responsible media identifies bias and propaganda to keep a society informed."

—Continued on  
www.kashmirthunder.in



EDITORIAL

J&K Govt’s Vital Step In The Right Direction

The high-level consultation between Jammu and Kashmir government and NITI Aayog marks a critical and welcome evolution in the Union Territory’s fight against drug addiction. Moving beyond fragmented efforts, the administration is now seeking to build a comprehensive, expert-backed, and sustainable strategy. This shift from reactive enforcement to a holistic, health-centric model is precisely what this public health crisis demands. J&K Chief Secretary’s outline of a five-pillar strategy—enforcement, IEC campaigns, counselling,

treatment, and rehabilitation—correctly identifies the continuum of care required. However, the true value of this consultation lies in its focus on the most challenging links: grassroots counselling and robust rehabilitation. As emphasised, a law-and-order approach alone is futile without community mobilisation and a pathway to reintegration. Addiction is not merely a crime; it is a complex socio-medical disorder that fractures families and erodes the social fabric. Treating it as such is the first step toward healing. The NITI Aayog official’s

commendation of J&K’s proactive stance and his suggestion to adapt the structured Himachal Pradesh model provide a valuable blueprint. Learning from other states’ successes and failures can prevent reinventing the wheel and accelerate implementation. The commitment of a dedicated NITI Aayog expert team to help formulate an action plan signals serious intent and promises much-needed technical rigour. The involvement of national institutions like AIIMS and PGIMER is equally crucial. Their insights into clinical protocols and counselling

methodologies will help standardise and up-grade treatment quality across J&K’s medical infrastructure, from PHCs to medical colleges. This collaborative initiative reflects a mature understanding that the government cannot wage this war in silos. It requires a “whole-of-society” approach, integrating enforcement agencies, health professionals, educators, community leaders, and families. The proposed strategy’s success will ultimately depend on its translation from the conference room to the community. It will need sustained funding, trained human

resources, persistent awareness drives, and, above all, compassion to dismantle stigma. By seeking national expertise and aiming for a model that prioritises long-term recovery over short-term detention, the J&K administration has taken a vital step. The challenge now is to convert this strategic consensus into a relentless, on-ground campaign that offers hope, healing, and a dignified future to those ensnared by addiction. The well-being of J&K’s youth, and indeed its societal health, depends on this follow-through.

India’s Solar Momentum

129 GW solar push takes non-fossil share beyond 50% of total installed capacity

Press Information Bureau

India’s solar journey is powering its emergence as a global clean energy leader. As the founding member and host of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) headquarters in Gurugram, India has championed solar energy deployment, finance, and technology transfer across more than 125 member nations. In October 2025, India hosted the 8th ISA Assembly in New Delhi, bringing together ministers and delegates worldwide to advance strategies for resilient solar value chains, inclusive access, and accelerated adoption of solar energy.

The surge in solar installations over the past decade has played a pivotal role in doubling India’s total installed electricity capacity. Presently, solar capacity stands at 129 GW, while the non-fossil electricity capacity has crossed 259 GW, accounting for over 50 % of the nation’s total installed power capacity as of October 2025, marking a historic shift toward low-carbon energy.

By coupling rapid domestic deployment with global collaboration, India is laying the foundation for a resilient, sustainable, and solar-powered energy future that sets benchmarks for the world.

Driving the Green Transition: India’s roadmap under Panchamrit Framework

Rapid progress in renewable energy expansion is driven not only by market momentum but also by a robust policy and strategic framework. National targets and global climate commitments, outlined under the Panchamrit Declaration at COP26 in Glasgow (November 2021), provide a clear roadmap for a sustainable energy future.

The five key components of the Panchamrit framework are as follows:

500 GW of Non-Fossil Fuel-Based Installed Electricity Capacity by 2030– Encompassing solar, wind, biomass, hydro, and nuclear energy, this target aims to substantially increase the share of clean energy in India’s electricity mix.

50% Share of Installed Electricity Capacity from Non-Fossil Sources by 2030 – Designed to diversify the energy portfolio and reduce dependence on fossil fuels.

Reduction of Total Projected Carbon Emissions by 1 Billion Tonnes by 2030 – Reflecting India’s commitment to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions through cleaner energy and enhanced efficiency measures.

Reduction of Carbon Intensity of the Economy by 45% by 2030 (compared to 2005 levels) – Promoting energy efficiency, low-carbon technologies, and sustainable industrial practices.

Net Zero Emissions by 2070 – A long-term goal aimed at balancing emissions with carbon removal, ensuring sustainable development.

India’s Solar Surge: A Remarkable over 40-fold increase

The solar sector has expanded at an unprecedented pace over the past decade, growing from just 3 GW in 2014 to 129.92 GW by October 2025—a remarkable over 40-fold increase. This rapid growth has made solar the largest contributor to the renewable energy portfolio, surpassing wind, hydro, and biomass capacities.

The surge in solar capacity is driving a steady increase in the share of renewable energy in the overall power mix. These achievements underscore India’s commitment to a low-carbon energy transition and highlight the pivotal role of solar energy in building a resilient, sustainable, and secure electricity system.

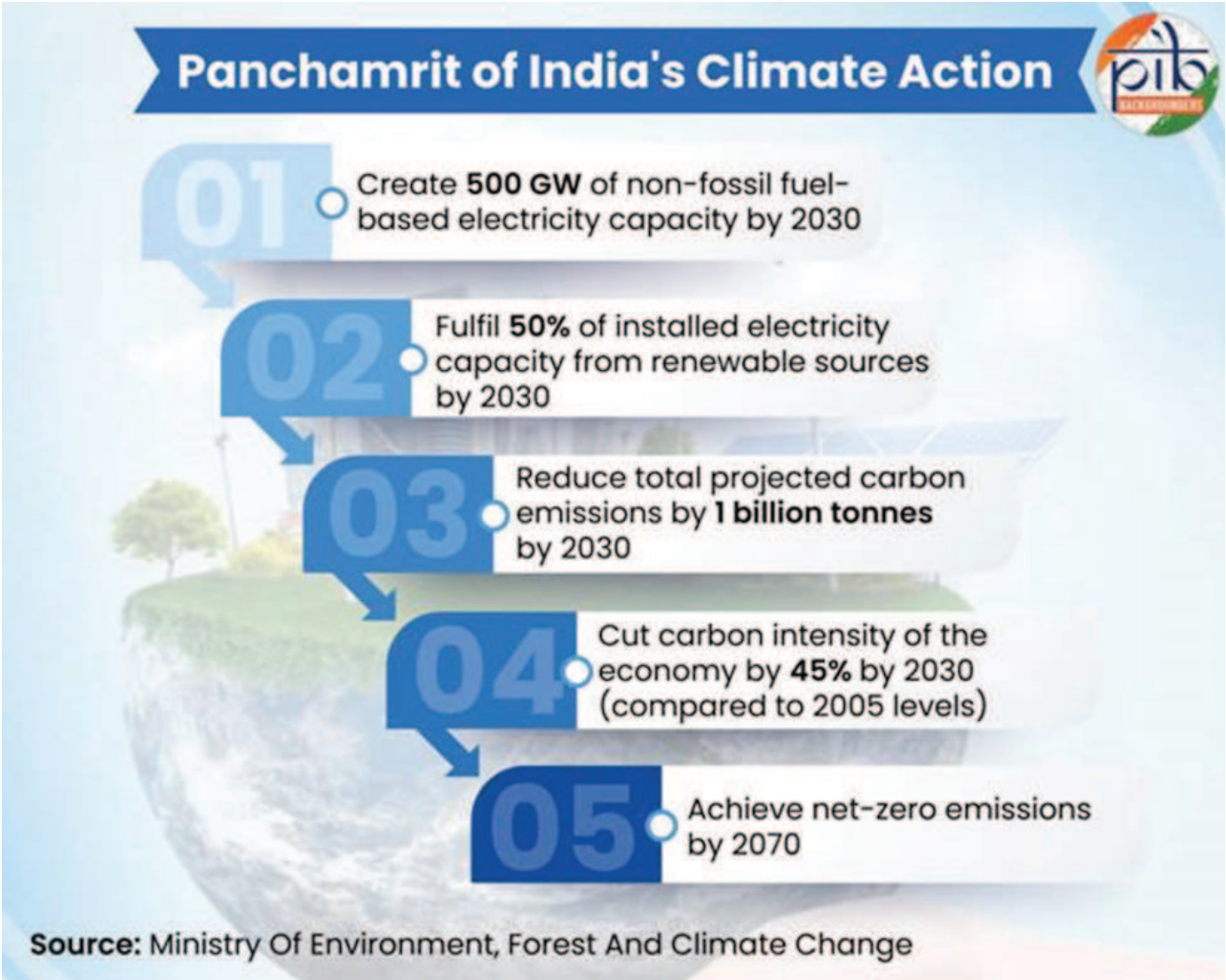
India’s standing in Global Renewable Energy According to the IRENA Renewable Energy Statistics 2025, India ranks: 3rd in solar energy 4th in wind energy, and 4th globally in total installed renewable energy capacity

These rankings underscore India’s growing influence in global clean energy markets and its pivotal role in advancing affordable, accessible, and sustainable energy for all.

Policy in Action: Accelerating India’s Solar Ambitions

India’s commitment to achieving net-zero emissions is being translated into action through a series of large-scale government programmes. These initiatives are designed to accelerate renewable energy adoption, promote sustainable living, and strengthen India’s clean technology ecosystem.

PM Surya Ghar



PM Surya Ghar mission is one of the central pillars of India’s push toward renewable energy and net-zero emissions. Launched on 13 February 2024 with a Cabinet approval, the scheme has a total outlay of 75,021 crore. Its aim is to provide rooftop solar systems to one crore households, providing up to 300 units of free electricity every month.

The scheme encourages the adoption of renewable energy sources, supporting the commitment to India’s commitment to reduce its carbon footprint.

As of December 2025, 23.9 lakh households have already installed rooftop solar with installation capacity of 7 GW of clean energy and 13,464.6 Cr Subsidy released under PM Surya Ghar, putting the scheme firmly on course to achieve its goal of 1 crore solar-powered homes.

National Solar Mission

Launched in January 2010, the National Solar Mission (NSM) is a flagship initiative of the Government of India aimed at promoting the large-scale deployment of solar energy across the country. The mission plays a key role in achieving India’s renewable energy targets and its commitment to a low-carbon future.

Driven by policy support under the NSM and complementary initiatives, solar energy capacity has witnessed exponential growth over the past decade. The sector’s growth has been driven by a diversified portfolio of solar technologies, including:

Ground-Mounted Solar Power Plants: 98.72 GW

Grid-Connected Rooftop Solar Systems: 22.42 GW

Hybrid Solar Projects (solar component only): 3.32 GW

Off-Grid Solar Systems: 5.45 GW

This progress demonstrates India’s continued leadership in renewable energy deployment and aligns with its broader goal of achieving 500 GW of non-fossil fuel-based electricity capacity by 2030, as committed under the Paris Agreement and reiterated at COP summits.

Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Solar PV

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), Government of India is implementing the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme under the National Programme on High Efficiency Solar PV Modules to achieve Giga Watt (GW)-scale manufacturing capacity in high-efficiency solar PV modules, with a total outlay of 24,000 crore, to promote domestic

manufacturing of high-efficiency solar PV modules and reduce import dependence. The scheme offers incentives for five years post-commissioning based on actual sales and efficiency performance, with selection through a transparent process. It is being implemented in two tranches—Tranche I ( 4,500 crore, approved April 2021) and Tranche II ( 19,500 crore, approved September 2022)—with Letters of Award issued for setting up 48,337 MW of integrated and partially integrated manufacturing capacity.

Did you know?

As of September 2025, the PLI scheme for solar PV has attracted 52,900 crore in investment and generated around 44,400 jobs. The PLI amount is linked to local content, encouraging development of a robust solar PV ecosystem, promoting advanced technology, and strengthening India’s energy self-reliance.

As of June 2025, the scheme has attracted 48,120 crore in investment and generated around 38,500 jobs. The PLI amount is linked to local content, encouraging development of a robust solar PV ecosystem, promoting advanced technology, and strengthening India’s energy self-reliance.

PM-KUSUM Scheme

Launched in 2019, the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha Evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM) scheme promotes solar energy use in agriculture by enabling farmers to become energy producers. The scheme consists of three components:

Component A: Installation of small grid-connected renewable energy plants on barren or fallow land.

Component B: Installation of standalone solar pumps in areas with limited grid access.

Component C: Solarisation of existing grid-connected agricultural pumps, allowing farmers to feed surplus power into the grid.

As of October 2025, more than 9 lakh standalone pumps have been installed under Component B. Under Component C, a total of 10,535 grid-connected solar pumps have been solarized, and 9,74,458 Feeder-Level Solarization (FLS) pumps have been completed.

Further, the scheme is extended until March 31, 2026, ensuring continued benefits for farmers and subsidy extended for solar pumps up to 15 HP, with central finance assistance (CFA) ranging from 30% to 50%, benefitting farmers in remote regions like the Northeast and hilly areas.

Solar Parks & Ultra-Mega Solar Power

Projects

The Development of Solar Parks and Ultra-Mega Solar Power Projects Scheme was launched in December 2014 by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) with an initial target of 20 GW, later enhanced to 40 GW in March 2017. As of 31st October 2025, 55 solar parks with a combined sanctioned capacity of 39,973 MW approved across 13 states. A total of 14,922 MW capacity of solar projects has already been installed in these Parks and the balance are under various stages of implementation.

The scheme has been extended until 31st March 2029 for completion of all approved solar parks. These parks facilitate development of shared infrastructure like acquisition of land, power evacuation systems, road, and water facilities etc., for large-scale deployment of solar power projects.

Solar Synergy: India Leading International Alliances for Solar Energy

India has firmly established itself as a global leader in clean energy and climate action, actively contributing to the international agenda through strategic partnerships and innovation. As a founding member of Mission Innovation and the Clean Energy Ministerial, India co-leads critical initiatives focused on Smart Grids, sustainable biofuels, and off-grid electrification, reflecting its commitment to global clean technology deployment.

At COP26 in Glasgow (November 2021), India unveiled the Panchamrit framework, including a commitment to achieve net-zero emissions by 2070, earning global recognition for its climate leadership. India has already surpassed its 2030 target of 50% of electricity capacity from non-fossil-based sources five years early, reinforcing its position as a global clean energy leader.

A cornerstone of India’s international engagement is its leadership in solar energy through strategic alliances such as the International Solar Alliance (ISA), co-founded with France. Headquartered in Gurugram, ISA is an inter-governmental organization dedicated to mobilizing global investments in solar energy, promoting deployment, technology transfer, finance aggregation, and capacity-building across member nations.

International Solar Alliance ISA 8th Assembly - Key Highlights

The 8th Assembly of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) convened in New Delhi from October 27 to 30, 2025.

Key Takeaways

- India’s solar capacity surged to 129 GW in 2025, up from 3 GW in 2014.
- Non-fossil power crosses 50% of India’s 500 GW capacity.
- Nearly 24 lakh households have adopted rooftop solar until December 2025 under PM Surya Ghar with installation capacity of 7 GW of clean energy and 13,464.6 Cr Subsidy released.
- PM-KUSUM facilitated close to 9.2 lakh standalone solar pumps under component B, boosting clean energy use in agriculture.
- As of 31st October 2025, 55 solar parks with a combined sanctioned capacity of 40 GW approved across 13 Indian states.

Over 550 delegates and 30+ ministers from 125+ Member and Signatory countries convened under India’s presidency.

President Droupadi Murmu highlighted that solar energy is about empowerment and inclusive development, not just power generation.

Inclusive agenda launched ensuring that no woman, no farmer, no village and no small island is “left behind” in the solar revolution.

Reinforcement of the “One Sun, One World, One Grid” vision alongside emphasising job creation, rural livelihoods, women’s leadership and digital inclusion as metrics of success.

Defined four strategic pillars: Catalytic Finance Hub, Global Capability Centre & Digitisation, Regional & Country Engagement, and Technology Roadmap & Policy.

The 8th Assembly of the ISA, held in New Delhi in October 2025, brought together ministers and delegates from over 125 countries to discuss strategies for accelerating global solar adoption. The Assembly reaffirmed collective commitments to advancing solar finance, resilient supply chains, and inclusive access to affordable renewable energy, underscoring India’s pivotal role in shaping the global solar agenda.

Complementing this, the One Sun, One World, One Grid (OSOWOG) initiative, proposed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2018, focuses on interconnecting renewable energy grids across countries. By enabling solar-rich regions to supply power globally, this initiative aims to create a transnational renewable-energy network that promotes energy security and sustainability.

These achievements have earned India growing international recognition for its climate leadership and balanced development approach. The G20 New Delhi Leaders’ Declaration (2023) acknowledged the importance of promoting “Lifestyles for Sustainable Development (LiFE)” and appreciated India’s leadership in advancing climate and environmental priorities. Similarly, the International Energy Agency (IEA) has described India as “a major driving force in global energy trends,” noting that the world’s energy future “cannot be planned without India at the table.” Together, these affirmations underscore India’s pivotal role in shaping the global clean-energy transition and promoting sustainable, inclusive growth.

Conclusion

India’s solar journey exemplifies how targeted policy, technological innovation, and strategic collaboration can transform a nation’s energy landscape. Solar energy has not only become the backbone of India’s renewable power mix but also a catalyst for sustainable economic growth, energy security, and climate leadership. By combining large-scale deployment with global partnerships through the International Solar Alliance and initiatives like OSOWOG, India is demonstrating that solar power can be both a domestic solution and a driver of global clean energy progress.

As India continues to expand its solar capacity, foster innovation, and enable inclusive access, it is charting a clear path toward a resilient, low-carbon future—showing the world that solar energy is central to achieving both national and global climate ambitions.

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



## Stray Animal Issues

# Identify land in every district for Animal Birth Control Centres, stray rehabilitation: Div Com Kashmir

## Reviews ATR as per Supreme Court Directions

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 09: To ensure effective implementation of the directions issued by the Supreme Court of India in the Suo Moto Writ Petition "City Hounded by Strays, Kids Pay Price" vs State of Andhra Pradesh, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, on Tuesday chaired Divisional level Committee meeting with Deputy Commissioners, SSPs, and divisional heads of all concerned departments to review the Action Taken Reports submitted by respective officers and agencies.

During the meeting, the



Divisional Commissioner, as per a statement, called for the immediate constitution and registration of Societies for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) by all Deputy Commissioners.

He directed departments to



conduct a survey and mapping of government offices and establishments to prevent the entry of stray animals by ensuring proper fencing and deployment of chowkidars.

Garg also instructed departments to nominate nodal

officers for collecting data from institutions and establishments regarding compliance with the Supreme Court's directions.

The Div Com further directed the Director Health Services, Principal GMC Srinagar, Director RDD, Director Colleges, and

Director School Education to launch extensive IEC campaigns to raise awareness among the public and students about first aid after dog bites and the essential follow-up treatment measures.

The Director of Animal Husbandry was instructed to run similar IEC campaigns on the protocols for adopting pets.

Regarding the availability of essential medical supplies, the Div Com asked the Health Department to ensure adequate stock of Anti-Rabies Vaccines in all health institutions.

He also called for the identification of land in each district for setting up Animal Birth Control (ABC) centres and facilities for the rehabilitation of stray animals.

Additionally, Garg urged SMC officials to regulate waste management dumps, which often attract stray dogs and pose risks to children and the elderly.

## Satish Sharma inaugurates blood donation camp at Trikuta Group of Colleges



KT News Desk

JAMMU, DECEMBER 9: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs; Information Technology, Transport, Youth Services & Sports and ARI & Trainings, Satish Sharma, Tuesday inaugurated the 10th blood donation camp at Trikuta Group of Colleges, Jammu.

The camp, as per an official statement was organised in memory of the institution's Founder Chairman, Late Dr Roop Lal Sharma, on the occasion of his birth anniversary.

Satish Sharma commended the Trikuta Group and Shri Sain Charitable Trust for consistently upholding the spirit of social responsibility through meaningful initiatives. He emphasized that voluntary blood donation is a noble act that not only saves lives but also strengthens the culture of compassion and civic duty among the youth.

He stated that the government remains committed towards supporting such humanitarian endeavors and ensuring robust health infrastructure across Jammu & Kashmir.

The Minister appreciated the exemplary participation from students, faculty and staff. "The willingness of

over 100 volunteers to come forward and donate blood reflects the positive mindset and commitment of our youth towards nation-building," asserted the Minister.

The event began with a tribute to Late Dr. Roop Lal Sharma, whose vision of education rooted in service to society continues to guide the institution. His contributions to educational development and social upliftment were fondly remembered by all present.

Chairperson of Shri Sain Charitable Trust, Suman Sharma, spoke about the importance of regular and voluntary blood donation for supporting the hospitals and critical-care patients. She thanked the Minister for his continued encouragement towards his community-focused initiatives.

The programme was attended by the Managing Directors of the Trust Ritesh Sharma, Ravish Sharma and CEOs of the Trust besides the Principals and senior faculty members of the colleges under the Trikuta Group.

The Minister reiterated that strong community participation can significantly complement the government efforts in strengthening healthcare systems.

## DC Baramulla reviews SASCI projects



KT NEWS DESK

BARAMULLA, DECEMBER 09: Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, Tuesday chaired a detailed review meeting to assess the physical and financial progress of various ongoing projects under the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI) programme at the meeting hall at DC Office Baramulla.

At the outset, the DC, as per an official statement, took a comprehensive project-wise review of the ongoing works and sought updates on the current status, achievements, and timelines.

The DC instructed officers to maintain strict adherence to the approved deadlines and ensure that all ongoing projects are executed with high

standards of quality and transparency. Furthermore, Minga Sherpa emphasized the importance of proper financial management and utilization of funds, directing departments to ensure that expenditure remains aligned with physical progress on ground.

Stressing the importance of SASCI in strengthening infrastructure and improving public service delivery across the district, the DC reiterated that the timely completion of these projects would significantly benefit citizens at the grassroots level.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Planning Officer, Nisar Ahmad; Assistant Commissioner Development, Chaudhary Mudasir Hussain and other senior officers from various departments.

## DC Kupwara reviews compliance on stray dog management

KT News Desk

KUPWARA, DECEMBER 9: Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Shrikant Suse Tuesday chaired a meeting of the District Level Committee (DLC) to review and strengthen measures aimed at curbing the stray dog menace across the district.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by SSP Kupwara, Syed Al-Tahir Gilani; ADC Kupwara, Gulzar Ahmad Khan; SE R&B, DySP Handwara, ACD, CEO, Chief Animal Husbandry Officer, Executive Officers of Municipal Committees, and other concerned officers.

During the meeting, a detailed discussion was held on a range of critical issues, including Identification and securing of various institutions like hospitals, sports complexes, pan-chayat ghar, schools and bus stands, establishment of designated feeding spots and ensuring adequate animal shelter capacity, progress on sterilization and vaccination of stray dogs under ABC (Dog) Rules, 2023,



conducting regular inspections to ensure no stray dog habitats on institutional premises, ensuring mandatory stock of Anti-Rabies Vaccine (ARV) and Immunoglobulin in all hospitals, conducting awareness programmes in schools on preventive behavior, first aid, and reporting dog-bite incidents, deployment of adequate security and ground-keeping staff at stadiums and sports complexes, securing transport hubs and improving waste management systems to prevent stray dog congregation, review of monthly reports from

Municipal bodies, appointment of Nodal Officers by all departments, preparedness of Health Department (Government & Private Hospitals) to maintain adequate stock of ARV and immunoglobulin and ensure proper management of dog-bite cases.

All concerned departments were instructed to designate Nodal Officers for effective coordination. The District Administration will supervise, coordinate, and monitor all related activities to ensure timely and effective implementation of the directions issued.

## ADC Baramulla reviews bio-medical waste management system

KT News Desk

BARAMULLA, DECEMBER 09: Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Baramulla, Syed Altaf Hussain Musvi, Tuesday chaired a review meeting at the Meeting Hall of the DC Office to assess the Bio-Medical Waste Management mechanisms across the district.

The meeting was convened to ensure that all health institutions and allied agencies adhere to mandated protocols for safe, scientific, and environmentally responsible disposal of bio-medical waste.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Baramulla, Medical Superintendent Government Medical College (GMC) Baramulla,

and the Executive Officer Municipal Council Baramulla, along with other concerned officers.

At the outset, the ADC took a comprehensive review of the current practices being followed in segregation, storage, collection, and transportation of bio-medical waste generated from hospitals, health centres, diagnostic labs, and other healthcare facilities.

The ADC emphasized that strict compliance with the Bio-Medical Waste Management Rules is essential to prevent environmental hazards and safeguard public health.

Reiterating the administration's commitment to maintaining a clean and safe environment, the ADC said that

bio-medical waste management is not only a regulatory requirement but a shared responsibility that directly impacts the health of the community.

He urged all stakeholders to work in close coordination for efficient and transparent management of biomedical waste across Baramulla district.

The ADC instructed the health institutions to ensure 100% source segregation using color-coded containers and conducting proper training to the staff to effectively implement waste disposal.

He called for strengthening coordination between the municipal authorities, the CMO office, and GMC Baramulla to ensure timely disposal without any lapses.

## 'Hamara Shauchalay-Hamara Bhavishya' Campaign

## DC Ramban leads district-level awareness programme

KT News Desk

RAMBAN, DECEMBER 09: As part of the ongoing "Hamara Shauchalay-Hamara Bhavishya" campaign being observed from 19th November to 10th December 2025 under World Toilet Day initiatives, the District Administration Ramban Tuesday organized a comprehensive district-level awareness programme in the Conference Hall of DC Office.

The event was presided over by Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Aliyas Khan and

coordinated by the Rural Development Department (RDD).

The program witnessed enthusiastic participation from ADC Varunjeet Singh Charak; ACD Sheraz Ahmed and BDO Sunil Kumar besides officials from the line departments, prominent citizens, students and local residents.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the importance of collective responsibility in safeguarding public health through proper sanitation practices.

## 3-day mobile Passport Van Service camp begins in Kishtwar



KT News Desk

KISHTWAR, DECEMBER 09: A three-day Mobile Passport Van Service Camp commenced here Tuesday as part of the Public Outreach Programme launched by the Regional Passport Office (RPO) Jammu.

The camp was organized in collaboration with the District Administration Kishtwar and under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Pankaj Kumar Sharma.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Pawan Kotwal inaugurated the camp in the presence of Section Officer MEA- Gol Sunil K. Khar and other officers.

Interacting with the media, the ADC and the Section Officer from RPO Jammu informed that residents of

Kishtwar district availed the facility by booking appointments through the official website — [www.passportindia.gov.in](http://www.passportindia.gov.in)

They added that applicants had already selected their slots for the Passport Van Service, which will remain stationed at the DC Office Complex Kishtwar from December 09 to December 11, 2025.

The DC, on behalf of the District Administration, appreciated the initiative of RPO Jammu aimed at extending vital services to the residents of Kishtwar.

Section Officer RPO Jammu informed that similar camps will be organized in other districts of Jammu Province in the coming months to extend passport-related services to citizens residing in remote and far-off areas.

## SMVDU hosts workshop on innovation, entrepreneurship

KT News Desk

JAMMU, DECEMBER 09: School of Energy Management and School of Business, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University (SMVDU) successfully organized a one-day workshop on Innovation and Entrepreneurship in collaboration with the Jammu and Kashmir Science Technology and Innovation Council, Department of Science and Technology, UT of J&K.

The event, as per an official statement, aimed to promote an ecosystem of creativity, problem-solving and start-up culture among students, researchers and early-stage innovators.

The workshop commenced with a welcome address by Associate Professor School of Energy Management Dr. Sanjeev Anand, who highlighted



the importance of innovation-driven growth for regional and national development.

Dean Faculty of Management, Prof. Ashutosh Vaishshtha emphasized that platforms like these are crucial for nurturing young talent and empowering them with the skills required to translate ideas into viable entrepreneurial ventures.

The Chief Guest of the

function, Vice Chancellor SMVDU Prof. Pragati Kumar shared insights on emerging opportunities in technology-driven sectors, government support mechanisms and the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration for impactful innovation. He shared many examples of recent innovation and stressed that the participants should look into this

emerging issue.

Assistant Director JKSTIC, Shruti Khanna briefed the participants about government schemes, funding opportunities and innovation support programs offered by the Council.

Head Department of Continuing Education and Extension (DCEE) University of Delhi, Prof. Kumar Ashutosh spoke on "Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Tourism in Jammu Region," highlighting the shift from pilgrimage to adventure, eco and heritage tourism. He emphasized innovation, local entrepreneurship, success cases like Patnitop Ropeway and Bhaderwah model, challenges of seasonality, skills and opportunities in wellness and digital platforms, advocating a balanced, sustainable ecosystem.

## Durga Nagar Welfare Committee seeks intervention from Jal Shakti Minister on water crisis

KT News Desk

JAMMU, DECEMBER 09: A delegation of Durga Nagar Welfare Committee (DNWCC) Tuesday called on Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, here at the Civil Secretariat Jammu.

The delegation sought Minister's urgent intervention in resolving the water supply issues affecting Durga Nagar, Dogra Nagar and adjoining localities.

The delegation apprised the Minister that the existing water supply services remain inadequate, leaving residents to face hardships due to irregular and insufficient water availability.

They expressed concern that



households are increasingly compelled to rely on private water tankers. The members of the committee further pointed out that the population in the area has grown significantly over the years, leading to increased demand on the already stressed water supply system.

They urged the need for comprehensive upgradation of the existing infrastructure,

including construction of an additional water reservoir and upgradation of Muthi feeder to ensure equitable distribution.

Seeking Minister's personal intervention, the delegation requested immediate and long-term measures to establish a permanent, reliable and sustainable water supply mechanism for the affected neighbourhoods.



## Several former trade union leaders join JKNPF

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Dec 09: The Jammu and Kashmir Nationalist Peoples Front (JKNPF) on Tuesday said several prominent former trade union leaders, along with their supporters formally joined the party.

Those who joined include Aziz Ahmad Parry, Ex District President Anantnag (CNGEEU); Ghulam Ahmad Shah, Ex District President Budgam (CNGEEU); Mohd Maqbool Pandith, Ex District President Pulwama (CNGEEU) and senior members and supporters of the Central Non-Gazetted Electrical Employees Union (CNGEEU).

The joining ceremony took place in the presence of Mr. Jafar Ahmad Khan, Party President; Mr. Basit Bashir Gagroo, Senior Vice President; Mr. Shiraz Ahmad Pandith, JKUT Youth President and all constituency in-charges of J&K UT

On the occasion, the party leadership welcomed the new members and appreciated their decision to be part of a platform committed to transparency, accountability, and public welfare. This mass



joining reflects the growing trust and confidence of the people in the party's vision and leadership, the JKNPF said in a statement issued here.

"Across the Valley, the political landscape is strengthening day by day as citizens increasingly recognize the Party's efforts in redressing public issues, providing people-centric solutions, and ensuring active engagement with communities. These continuous joinings demonstrate the widening support base and the strong connection the Party is building with the masses," the statement said.

The party reaffirmed its commitment to work tirelessly for the welfare of the people and welcomes all those who believe in progressive, transparent, and responsible governance.

## J&K Resident Commission holds workshop on mental awareness, work-life stress



KT News Desk

New Delhi, Dec 09: The Resident Commission, Jammu & Kashmir government, organised an exclusive workshop on "Mental Awareness & Work-Life Stress" in collaboration with MAAsterG.

A team of expert doctors, led by Dr. Sunita, Director and Professor at Maulana Azad Medical College, Dr. Siddharth, a renowned Consultant

Dermatologist and Skin Specialist and Dr. Rajiv Mehta, Director and Professor of Physiotherapy at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, provided specialized medical services during the event.

The programme was organised in association with the government AYUSH Dispensary, Resident Commission under the supervision of Additional Resident Commissioner, J&K, Anil Sharma.

Around 100 officers and officials of the Resident Commission and its sub-offices participated in the workshop.

The Additional Resident Commissioner, while presenting vote of thanks, said that the session would significantly benefit the employees and staff in managing mental stress and maintaining a healthier work-life balance. He said that similar programmes shall be organised in the coming days.

## New modern goods shed inaugurated at Chhan Arorian Station

KT News Desk

Jammu, Dec 09: In a significant step towards enhancing freight infrastructure, Northern Railway's Jammu Division has inaugurated a state-of-the-art goods shed at Chhan Arorian Railway Station on the Jammu-Kathua section. The new facility marks a major advancement in the division's efforts to improve efficiency and speed in its freight network.

Under the directives of the Railway Board, the goods shed is designed to handle both inbound and outbound freight traffic, offering a modern, streamlined platform for the movement of goods. The facility has been systematically constructed to facilitate loading and unloading processes, providing greater convenience to traders and accelerating cargo movement. The goods shed will operate daily for 16 hours, from 6:00 AM to 10:00 PM, significantly increasing the station's freight handling capacity and enabling the operation of full goods trains.

The railway administration



has also issued guidelines to ensure dedicated space and efficient handling for special categories of goods, further optimizing the facility's operations.

To ensure smooth functioning and safety, Divisional Railway Manager Vivek Kumar, along with Senior Divisional Commercial Manager Uchit Singhal and Senior Divisional Engineer Shubham Pawar, conducted an inspection of the goods shed today. During the visit, the officials reviewed the facilities, security arrangements, and freight handling procedures. Mr. Kumar personally examined loading and unloading processes, provided instructions to staff, and emphasized safety and operational efficiency.

## CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### Under PM Modi's guidance,

pre-fabricated "Smart Houses." Designed for modern living and efficiency, these technologically advanced homes offer superior resilience against future climate challenges and include facilities such as boundary walls and cowsheds. The construction of these houses is slated for completion within six months from the commencement of foundation work.

HRDS India will provide free life insurance coverage for the next 15 years and free annual health check-ups for all family members. The NGO will also cover the maintenance of the houses for the next five years.

The Lieutenant Governor spoke on the rapid transformation taking place across the two districts of Kathua, Samba and various sectors in the UT of J&K following massive push post 2019.

He stated that sincere efforts have been made to improve the quality of life of every citizen in Kathua and Samba.

He called upon the citizens and all stakeholders to discharge their responsibility in ensuring that the pace of development does not slow down and benefits of development reach the last person in the queue.

The Lieutenant Governor also expressed gratitude to the district administration, police, army, CAPFs, Disaster Response forces, emergency responders, civil society members, and everyone involved in the relief and rescue operations.

An assistance amounting to Rs. 8.22 crore and Rs.1.38 Crore was respectively disbursed to the affected families in Kathua and Samba.

During his visit to Kathua, the Lieutenant Governor inaugurated and dedicated Indoor Sports Stadium to the youth.

The District Administration Kathua has partnered with corporate entities to elevate sports infrastructure and youth engagement through the construction of a state-of-the-art Indoor Sports Stadium, complemented by outdoor basketball and volleyball courts.

Swami Atma Nambi, President, HRDS India; Col. Mahan Singh (Retd.) Chairman, DDC Kathua; Keshav Dutt Sharma, Chairman, DDC Samba; Members of Legislative Assembly; Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary; Nalin Prabhat, DGP; Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner, Jammu; Shiv Kumar Sharma, DIG Jammu-Samba-Kathua Range; Ayushi Sudan, Deputy Commissioner Samba; Rajesh Sharma, Deputy Commissioner Kathua, members of HRDS India, senior officials of police and civil administration, prominent citizens and people from all walks of life attended the foundation stone laying ceremony. (KNO)

### Non-stop border

with big-data analytical capacity and improved coordination with the Directorate of Forensic Science Services for prioritised forensic analysis.

"Online radicalisation cases are being pursued by NIA and State police, leading to arrests, charge-sheets, and convictions. An Organised Crime Network Database is being developed on NATGRID to facilitate secure data sharing between NIA and State ATSS, with upgraded tools such as 'GANDIVA' supporting multi-source data collection," he added.

Rai added, "The National Security Guard has expanded inter-agency coordination with States and UTs, conducted joint exercises, and trained personnel for counter-terrorist operations, including mock drills for counter-hijack, hostage rescue, and metro and rail interventions."

Border guarding forces have been equipped with surveillance technologies, including drones, thermal imagers, night-vision devices, sensors, and radar systems, he added.

Under the Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System, electronic surveillance, fencing, patrolling, and drone use have been increased.

These measures have resulted in reduced infiltration attempts, higher interception of drones, and recovery of arms, ammunition, and narcotics, the Union Minister said.

He said multiple terror networks have been neutralised through coordinated operations.

Rai said the government has proposed modernisation and assistance programs for Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), State police, and central and state agencies. "Forensic modernisation projects worth over Rs 4,800 crore have been approved, including Rs 233 crore for 25 States and UTs to upgrade State Forensic Science Laboratories with advanced equipment," he said.

National Forensic Sciences University off-campus centres have been established at 16 locations, and eight new Central Forensic Science Laboratories are being set up.

Financial outlays for police infrastructure schemes for CAPFs total Rs 21,710 crore from 2021 to 2025-26, while Rs 350 crore has been earmarked under centrally sponsored schemes for State India Reserve Battalions and specialised units.

CAPFs and State police forces continue to receive equipment, training, and technological upgrades for operational communication, surveillance, and inter-agency coordination, the Union Minister said. (KNO)

### Baramulla doctor

Delhi's iconic Red Fort, killing 11 people and injured several others. The blast was carried out by Dr Umar. The incident had put security agencies across Delhi and the entire country on high alert.

The NIA has so far arrested eight accused individuals, while multiple raids have been conducted across various states. The agency, working closely with central and state authorities, is mapping out the entire conspiracy network.

According to the NIA, it is tracing every angle, link, and associate connected to the terror attack to expose the full extent of the plot.

Meanwhile, the agency today morning conducted searches in the forests of south Kashmir's Anantnag district in connection with the Delhi blast case. It had brought along two key accused, including Dr Adeel and Jasir Bilal for spot identification.

The NIA team was accompanied by Jammu and Kashmir police and the Army, while the two accused led the teams to the forest area "Some suspected items were recovered from the forest area after disclosures made by the two accused," officials said.

During the investigation of the case, it was revealed that Dr Adeel was the close associate of Dr Umar. It was only after the arrest of Dr Adeel and Dr Muzammil that Jammu and Kashmir police busted the white-collar terror module and recovered over 2,900 kg of explosives from Haryana's Faridabad. (KNO)

### CM Omar calls

better planning, effective execution and improved coordination. He stressed the need for high-quality, meaningful designs and effective presentation at national and international travel marts, and instructed that all stalls and promotional material must reflect the true strength and potential of J&K tourism.

Directing targeted promotional strategies, the Chief Minister said that tourism publicity and advertising should be focused on airports with high footfall of tourists in cities such as Jaipur, Udaipur and Goa. He asked the department to identify the top ten airports in the country in terms of tourist traffic and undertake focused advertising and marketing campaigns at these locations.

The Chief Minister also called for early finalisation of dates for the Kashmir Marathon and stressed on incentivizing participation of local and national-level runners and enthusiasts by having a wide spread of prizes so that it encourages greater participation. He directed that a title sponsor should be identified for the Kashmir Marathon on the pattern of major marathon events such as the Delhi and Mumbai Marathons. He further suggested introducing themed short-distance runs such as a "Tulip Run" during spring and a "Chrysanthemum Run" during the autumn season.

He emphasised the use of Virtual Reality (VR) technology at travel mart stalls, stating that immersive digital walk-throughs of destinations would generate greater interest and create a strong recall value among potential

tourists.

Earlier, the Department of Tourism gave a presentation on publicity and promotion initiatives taken during 2025, highlighting a multi-pronged strategy to position Jammu and Kashmir as a leading all-season global tourism destination. It was informed that high-impact digital campaigns through social media, short videos, reels and airport screen promotions have significantly enhanced online engagement. The department's official handles have crossed 10 lakh followers, registering over 300 per cent growth in engagement and more than four million views across platforms.

The meeting was attended by Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Additional Chief Secretary Tourism Ashish Chander Verma, Managing Director, J&K Tourism Development Corporation, Directors of Tourism Kashmir and Jammu, and other concerned officers.

### CM asks Jal Shakti

the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Additional Chief Secretary Jal Shakti Shaleen Kabra, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Mission Director JJM, Director General Budget, Director General Codes and other senior officers of the concerned departments.

Additional Chief Secretary, Jal Shakti Department, presented a detailed overview of the implementation of JJM across both Kashmir and Jammu divisions. The presentation covered component-wise completion status of the scheme, progress in execution of civil works, and the pace of mechanical and electrical works during the last two years.

A comprehensive district-wise review was conducted focusing on functional household tap connection (FHTC) coverage across all 20 districts of Jammu and Kashmir. The meeting also discussed in detail the usage of high-density polyethylene (HDPE) pipes strictly as per CPHEEO manual, procurement and supply status of pipe material including GI, DI and HDPE pipes, and progress of mapping of the entire pipe network and water supply infrastructure on the PM Gati Shakti platform.

The Chief Minister stressed that quality of materials and workmanship must not be compromised at any level, and all works must strictly adhere to CPHEEO standards and approved technical specifications.

He further directed that all pipe network mapping and infrastructure data must be updated in real time on the PM Gati Shakti portal to enhance planning, transparency and inter-departmental coordination.

### Omar reviews urban

Investment (SASCI).

The meeting was attended by Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Principal Secretary Finance Santosh D. Vaidya, Commissioner Secretary, H&UDD, Mandeep Kaur, Deputy Commissioner Anantnag Fakhruddin Hamid, Commissioner, Jammu Municipal Corporation & CEO, Jammu Smart City Limited Devansh Yadav, Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation & CEO, Srinagar Smart City Limited Fazlul Haseeb, Vice Chairman Lakes & Conservation Development Authority, Director General Budget Mohammad Sultan Malik and other concerned officers.

While reviewing the proposals, the Chief Minister observed that the projects have the potential to significantly improve urban livability, strengthen heritage conservation and boost tourism in urban centres. He emphasised that all works must be people-centric, environmentally sustainable and aligned with long-term urban planning goals.

He also directed that local legislators and stakeholders be taken on board at the planning and implementation stages to ensure smooth execution. He instructed that periodic progress reports be submitted to his office and any bottlenecks be flagged and resolved in a time-bound manner.

Earlier, the respective CEOs of the Smart City

Limiteds presented detailed updates on projects being taken up under the SASCI Scheme funded by the Government of India.

The CEO, Jammu Smart City Limited, informed that several projects are being undertaken to address issues such as heritage conservation, traffic congestion, drainage, unorganised vending, unplanned utilities and underdeveloped heritage corridors. To ensure sustainability, a series of integrated urban interventions have been proposed under the Scheme.

He further informed that revitalisation of the CBD and the historic core is a key component of the plan. The proposed interventions include construction of multi-level car parking facilities at congested locations such as Parade Ground, Mubarak Mandi, Jewel Chowk, Gandhi Nagar-Warehouse and Tanga Stand-Gumat Bazaar. Other projects include utility upgradation and beautification works, development of a Temple Corridor connecting Bawe Mata, Har Ki Pauri and Mahamaya, construction of a model vegetable mandi at the Sabzi Mandi, a shopping complex at Indira Chowk and a clock tower (Ghanta Ghar) at Parade Chowk.

CEO, Srinagar Smart City Limited, presented the proposed neighbourhood development and revitalisation of the Nigeen Lake waterfront. He informed that a 4.5-km-long Nigeen Lake frontage will be developed with continuous public access, development and upgradation of ghats, upgradation of Cherry Park and comprehensive redevelopment of the precinct in the area which would significantly enhance public amenities and tourism potential.

He also briefed the meeting about restoration of Qalai Andar (Walled City of Srinagar), including improvement of public spaces, conservation of heritage structures, creation of green spaces and restoration of key gateways such as Kathi Darwaza, Sangeen Darwaza and Bacchi Darwaza, along with improved drainage and pedestrian-friendly pathways. Public spaces at Devi Angan will also be enhanced.

He further apprised the meeting about the proposed Greenfield development at Anantnag near KP Road, including riverfront development with an eco-park, city park, cycle tracks, pathways, gazebos, kiosks and construction of a smart library near Aairpat Nallah.

### J&K Govt writes

President Nasir Aslam Wani, Minister, Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Satish Sharma and representatives from the Mutton Dealers Association have sought time to meet the Punjab Chief Minister," sources said, adding that the CM, who was abroad is likely to return tonight, after which the meeting is expected to be scheduled.

The move follows the recent warning by the Kashmir Wholesale Mutton Dealers Association of a "possible price hike" in the Valley, citing heavy "unofficial payments" allegedly extracted from transporters at multiple Punjab checkpoints.

"We were informed that a formal communication has already gone from the Consumer Affairs Ministry Kashmir to Punjab. A delegation will visit once the Chief Minister returns and we are hopeful that the matter will be resolved at the top level," said a senior member of the Mutton Dealers Association.

He added that the delegation comprising NC leaders, government officials and dealer representatives, was ready to proceed to Punjab for talks once the meeting is fixed.

"The delegation has 'sought appointment from the Punjab CM's office' and expects a 'positive outcome' once the meeting is held. (KNO)

### Cold wave deepens

at minus 2.5 degrees, Kokernag minus 0.5 degrees, Ganderbal minus 2.6 degrees, Kulgam minus 0.9 degrees, and Sonamarg minus 4.5 degrees. Zethan Rafiabard recorded minus 5.2 degrees, while Zojila Pass was the coldest at minus 19.0 degrees.

In the Jammu region, temperatures remained above freezing but the chill persisted. Bhaderwah recorded the lowest at 0.9 degrees Celsius, followed by Rajouri at 0.4 degrees.

Jammu city recorded 7.3 degrees, Katra 10.1 degrees, Kathua 7.6 degrees, Jammu Airport 7.5 degrees, Udhampur 2.0 degrees, Samba 2.3 degrees, Banihal 3.7 degrees, Ramban 4.6 degrees, Kishtwar 4.2 degrees, Doda 5.4 degrees, Batote 6.6 degrees, and Reasi 6.5 degrees.

In Ladakh, the deep freeze continued with Leh recording minus 8.5 degrees, Kargil minus 7.2 degrees, and Nubra Valley minus 6.0 degrees. Officials said minimum temperatures are likely to fall further over the next few days if the dry spell continues.

The Meteorological Department said generally cloudy weather is expected across Jammu and Kashmir on Monday, with partly cloudy conditions likely over the next few days.

The MeT office said weather is expected to remain partly cloudy from December 10 to 12, with a possibility of light snowfall over some higher reaches of north and central Kashmir between December 13 and 15.

Partly cloudy conditions are likely from December 16 to 18, followed by generally cloudy weather with chances of light snowfall at isolated higher reaches from December 19 to 21. (KNO)

### Kashmir Cyber Crime

"Every online fraud leaves behind a digital footprint. We can trace emails, SIMs, IMEI numbers and connected accounts, but we need victims to come forward in time," he said.

According to the officer, cyber police in Kashmir have managed to recover rupees 2.80 crore from scammers so far this year, while another rupees 2.13 crore has been frozen in various accounts and will be transferred back to the rightful owners once legal processes conclude.

The DySP warned youngsters against the use of online betting apps, saying such platforms have been banned by the government and their use now amounts to a cognisable offence.

"If anyone is found using these money-based betting apps, FIRs will be registered. Teenagers often assume they can't be traced online, but every activity leaves a digital trace," he said.

Malik mentioned other emerging online threats such as blackmailing, harassment and misuse of social media, saying young people often act in haste without realising the legal and personal consequences.

He urged parents to encourage their children to seek help instead of hiding such issues. "We treat every case sensitively and assure privacy to both male and female victims. Keeping silent only worsens the problem," he said.

Addressing speculation about organised cybercrime operations in the Valley, the DySP clarified that 'no illegal call centres' have been detected in Kashmir. "We have not received a single complaint or found evidence of such setups. However, outside J&K, particularly in states like Bihar, West Bengal, and Uttar Pradesh, such networks do exist," he said.

Malik said that although fraudsters frequently change SIM cards, devices and locations after each scam, their digital footprints ultimately lead investigators to them.

The officer said awareness, caution and co-operation with cybercrime police are the only ways to prevent and recover from digital fraud. "Cyber safety starts with awareness. If people act swiftly and responsibly, we can trace the fraudsters and save their money," he said. (KNO)

### J&K, Ladakh see

UTs, supported by improved connectivity, upgraded tourist facilities and targeted promotion at international platforms.

The ministry confirmed that Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh were among the Union Territories represented in India's delegation at the World Travel Market (WTM) 2025 in London, where tourism products, adventure circuits and cultural experiences from the Himalayan region were showcased to global buyers.

"National and international tourist arrivals crossed 205 lakh in 2024, surpassing pre-Covid levels, with tourism contributing significantly to foreign exchange earnings and employment generation," the ministry said. (KNO)



# Division of Vande Mataram song led to partition of India: Amit Shah

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 09: The division of 'Vande Mataram' song for "politics of appeasement" led to partition of India, Home Minister Amit Shah said in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday, as he slammed Opposition for linking the debate on 150 years of the national song with the upcoming West Bengal elections.

Initiating the debate in the House, Shah said Vande Mataram was the "mantra" that awakened India's cultural nationalism, and remains as relevant today as it was during the freedom struggle. He stressed that the song will remain relevant in the days to come as well, in taking the country towards Viksit Bharat.

Shah also attacked Congress for questioning the need for a debate on Vande Mataram, and accused first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru of "dividing" the poem and limiting it to two stanzas.

"Yesterday some MPs in the Lok Sabha questioned what is the need to discuss Vande Mataram. The need for discussion... was as relevant when the song was written, during the freedom movement, today, and will be as relevant in 2047 when the Viksit Bharat would be achieved," Shah said.

"Some people are saying Vande Mataram is being discussed because elections are coming in West Bengal... They are trying to reduce the importance of Vande Mataram by linking it with Bengal elections," he said.

The home minister urged members to take the spirit of the message of Vande Mataram to the youth of the nation. He said the song was written by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in Bengal, but it spread across the nation,



and became the chant for India's freedom struggle. The home minister said the song was written years after India tolerated "Islamic attacks", and the British tried to impose a new culture on the country.

"The song reestablished the culture of witnessing nation as a mother. Even though the (British) government tried to ban it, and people were beaten and jailed for chanting Vande Mataram, it touched people's hearts and spread from Kashmir to Kanyakumari," he said.

That is why Maharshi Aurobindo said Vande Mataram is the mantra of India's awakening.

"India is the only nation whose boundaries have not been decided by any act, its borders have been decided by our culture, and culture has united it. That is why the idea of cultural nationalism, this cultural nationalism was awakened by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay," Shah added.

He also accused the Congress and Nehru of 'dividing' the song.

"Many members of Congress questioned why the discussion on Vande Mataram was required, calling it a diversionary tactic. We are not scared of taking up any debate. We do not stall Parliament, we have nothing to hide, we are ready to discuss any issue," Shah said.

"On the 50th anniversary of Vande Mataram in 1937, Jawaharlal Nehru divided it into two and limited it to two stanzas. This was the way Congress honoured Vande Mataram," he said, leading to protests from Opposition MPs.

Shah called it the beginning of appeasement politics, and said it led to partition of India.

"If they had not divided the song into two for appeasement politics, India would also not have been partitioned," he said, leading to more uproars from Opposition benches.

Shah added that in the 100th year of Vande Mataram, the country was under Emergency.

## India must define its own growth path amid fractured global alliances: Adani

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 09: Emphasising that India's sovereignty depends on mastering the resources beneath its soil, Adani Group chairman Gautam Adani on Tuesday said the nation must chart its own development path at a time when global alliances are increasingly fracturing.

Delivering the keynote address at the 100th foundation day celebrations of the Indian Institute of Technology (Indian School of Mines), Dhanbad, Adani said nations across the globe were acting in pure self-interest, and India must master the energy systems that fuel its growth.

"India's sovereignty in the 21st century will depend on a nation's command over its natural resources and its energy systems. India must chart its own development course in a world increasingly marked by national self-preservation and fractured global alliances," he added.

He said India must learn from history - when Bakhtiyar Khilji used fire to destroy the world-famed knowledge centre at Nalanda, and later, when the British used curriculum to reshape and weaken India.

In contrast, Adani said, "India does not sell dreams - it transforms dreams into reality." Adani cautioned against what he termed "narrative colonisation", saying countries that historically emitted the most



carbon now wished to prescribe how India should develop, despite India having one of the world's lowest per-capita emissions.

He said the country must not allow external pressures to delegitimise its aspirations and described the current era as India's "second freedom struggle", one for economic and resource independence.

Adani asserted that India must do what is best for itself - define its own development path, resist external pressures, and build sovereign capabilities in resources, energy and technology.

"If we do not control our own narrative, our aspirations will be delegitimised and our right to improve our standard of living portrayed as a global offence," he said.

Citing global data, Adani said India remains one of the world's lowest per-capita emitters even after achieving more than 50 per cent non-fossil installed power capacity ahead of schedule. Attempts to

downgrade India's sustainability performance without considering per-capita metrics or historical responsibility reflect biases embedded in global ESG frameworks, he said. Referring to the Adani Group's Carmichael coal mine in Australia, he said the project was built to strengthen India's energy security despite facing "one of the most contested environmental and political battles of the century."

"We were vilified in international media, dragged into courtrooms, and pressured to give up the project. We didn't back out... because it was about securing clean energy for the nation. You may be resisted, you may be ridiculed... they may write headlines, but we will write history," Adani said.

Adani noted that IIT (ISM) Dhanbad itself was born from a moment of national foresight. Over a century ago, the Indian National Congress, even

under British rule, had recommended establishing the institution to develop India's capabilities in mining and geology. This, he said, reflected a deep civilisational understanding that a nation cannot rise without mastering the strength of its own soil.

Adani also announced 50 annual paid internships for third-year students of IIT (ISM) Dhanbad and the setting up of an Adani 3S Mining Excellence Centre at the institute.

"People may call mining the old economy," he said, adding, "But without it, there is no new economy."

He urged students to "dream fearlessly, act relentlessly," embrace innovation and help build a confident, self-reliant India by becoming "custodians of the core" who build India's sovereign capabilities.

Adani, 62, is the founder and chairman of the Adani Group, India's largest integrated infrastructure group.

The group's businesses include a world-class transport logistics business, an integrated energy infrastructure portfolio that spans generation, transmission and distribution, natural resources, airports, defence and aerospace, among others.

Adani is India's first founder and first-generation entrepreneur to lead a business group to a market capitalisation of over \$200 billion.

## No airline, however large, will be permitted to cause hardship to passengers: Naidu

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 09: No airline, however large, will be permitted to cause hardship to passengers through planning failures and non-compliance with regulations, Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu said on Tuesday on the mass disruptions in IndiGo flight schedules.

Making a statement in the Lok Sabha, Naidu said "strict and appropriate action will be taken" against IndiGo for the flight disruptions that have affected passengers across the country.

The minister said the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has already issued notices to IndiGo and that the airline is being held fully accountable for the chaos caused by its internal crew-rostering failures.

Naidu said IndiGo flight schedules are stabilising and all other airlines continue to operate smoothly across the country.

"IndiGo was ordered to issue refunds promptly and more than Rs 750 crore has already reached passengers," the minister said.

He said airports across the country are reporting normal conditions, with no crowding or distress. Refunds, baggage tracing and passenger support



measures remain under the supervision of the ministry. Directorate General of Civil Aviation has issued show-cause notices to IndiGo's senior leadership and commenced a detailed enforcement investigation," Naidu said.

"Based on the report, strict and appropriate action will be taken," he said. Naidu said the government is determined to build a robust and competitive aviation ecosystem.

"Through our policies, we are encouraging more new airlines to start and operate in India," he said.

"Safety in civil aviation is completely non-negotiable," he added.

Expressing dissatisfaction over the minister's statement, opposition parties staged a walkout in the Lok Sabha.

## Govt cancels 5,371 licences of fertiliser firms for malpractices during Apr-Nov: Nadda

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 09: The government has cancelled 5,371 licences of fertiliser firms for black marketing, hoarding as well as for distributing substandard material, Union Minister of Chemicals and Fertilisers Jagat Prakash Nadda said in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday. In response to a question asked by BJP member Kiran Choudhary, Nadda said while states are empowered to take action on malpractices, the Centre takes action under the Essential Commodities Act of 1955 and the Fertiliser Control Order to check malpractices such as diversion, hoarding and overpricing.

He said action on substandard material is taken under the Fertiliser Control Order.

"We would like to tell you, as you asked, from April 1 to November 28, there were 5,058 show-cause notices in black marketing, FIRs



were lodged in 442 cases and licences cancelled were 3,732," Nadda said.

Similarly, in hoarding, there were 687 show-cause notices, 202 licence cancellations and 446 FIRs. In the case of distributing substandard material, show-cause notices were sent to 3,811 firms, as many as 1,437 licences were cancelled and 65 FIRs filed.

The minister also informed that in case of diversion, there were 3,058 show-cause notices, 464 licence cancellations and 96 FIRs.

"If I talk about show-cause notices in the past 7 months, it is 12,814, and 5,835 licences

were cancelled and 649 FIRs lodged. Out of this, 442 FIRs have been lodged on black marketing," Nadda said.

The minister said that the Centre has supplied fertilisers to every state and the supplies are monitored in real time through Integrated Fertiliser Monitoring System.

"Although we also know that the fertilizer is being diverted, it is also a known fact that the dealers are hoarding which has to be taken care of by the state government. But as far as the material is concerned, the fertilizer is concerned, they have reached on time

## CBI books Anil Ambani's son, Reliance Home Finance Ltd in Rs 228 cr bank fraud case

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 09: The CBI has booked the son of industrialist Anil Ambani, Jai Anmol Anil Ambani, and Reliance Home Finance Ltd. (RHFL) in a case of alleged cheating in Union Bank of India that caused a loss of Rs 228 crore to the public bank, officials said on Tuesday.

The CBI acted on a complaint from the bank (erstwhile Andhra Bank) against Reliance Home Finance Ltd., Jai Anmol Anil Ambani and Ravindra Sharad Sudhakar, both directors in RHFL, they said.

The company had availed credit limits to the tune of Rs 450 crore from the bank's SCF branch in Mumbai for business needs, the complaint stated.

The bank had laid down the condition to maintain financial discipline including timely repayment, service of interest and other charges and submission



of position of security and other required papers in time and routing the entire sale proceeds through the bank account.

The company failed to pay the instalments to the bank and hence, the said account was classified as a non-performing asset (NPA) on September 30, 2019, the officials said.

A forensic examination of the accounts was carried out by Grant Thornton (GT), for a review period from April 1, 2016 to June 30, 2019, which showed that borrowed funds were mis-apportioned and considered as diversion of funds, they said.

## Gold & Silver futures drop ahead of Fed outcome

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 09: Gold and silver prices declined in the futures trade on Tuesday as investors booked profits and adopted a cautious stance ahead of the outcome of the US Federal Reserve's policy meeting.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), the yellow metal futures for February delivery declined by Rs 718, or 0.55 per cent, to Rs 1,29,244 per 10 grams in a business turnover of 13,208 lots.

Silver futures also extended its losses for the second straight session. The white metal for the March 2026 contract plunged by Rs 1,042, or 0.46 per cent, to Rs 1,80,700 per kilogram in 13,823 lots. Silver had hit its record of Rs 1,85,234 per kg on Friday.

"Gold and silver witnessed mild profit-taking as traders awaited the FOMC meeting and a rebound in US Treasury bond yields," Rahul Kalantri, VP Commodities at Meh-ta Equities Ltd, said.

The US Federal Reserve's

two-day policy meeting begins later on Tuesday, with the rate decision and Chair Jerome Powell's speech due on Wednesday. The outcome is expected to offer clues on the central bank's stance heading into 2026.

He added that investor sentiment weakened after reports that the US Producer Price Index (PPI) data for October and November, earlier scheduled for release this week, will now be released in January, raising uncertainty over inflation and the Fed's next steps.

"However, continued gold buying by China for the 13th straight month and tightness in physical silver supply may offer downside support," Kalantri said.

In the international market, Comex gold futures for February delivery slipped by USD 13.9, or 0.33 per cent, to USD 4,203.8 per ounce from Monday's closing of USD 4,217.7 per ounce.

"Gold prices are trading slightly lower from the recent highs, amidst a rise in US bond yields, as traders look to 2026, beyond a

near-certain rate cut at the Fed's December meeting," Manav Modi, Commodities Analyst Precious Metal at Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said.

Meanwhile, Kevin Hassett, a potential successor to Fed Chair Jerome Powell, said it would be irresponsible to lay out a plan for rate cuts over the next six months.

Comex silver futures for March delivery were trading marginally higher at USD 58.43 per ounce in the overseas trade. The metal had reached an all-time high of USD 59.90 per ounce on Friday.

Manav Modi of MOFSL said the central bank buying and exchange-traded funds (ETF) inflows remain supportive for the bullion prices. The People's Bank of China added to its gold reserves for the 13th consecutive month, taking its holdings to about 74.12 million ounces.

"Silver ETF also saw robust inflows, with iShares adding 324 tonnes of silver in the last week, its largest weekly inflow since July. This raise reportedly means

## 'Screening for depression under govt primary healthcare may save up to Rs 482 billion'

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 09: Integrating universal screening for depression in India's primary healthcare system could be expected to generate a net savings of Rs 291 billion to Rs 482 billion, a study published in The Lancet Regional Health Southeast Asia has estimated.

Researchers, including those from the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER) in Chandigarh and National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) in Bengaluru, said the savings is equivalent to 0.19 per cent to 0.32 per cent of the country's gross domestic product.

People aged 20 and older would be cheaper to screen than those above 30, the study found.

The researchers also noted that the screening programme could save money if at least 60 per cent of patients receiving treatment go through public healthcare facilities.



Current practices involve 'opportunistic diagnoses' -- in which diagnosis is incidental, such as through tests done for other reasons -- and managing patients showing symptoms of the mental disorder.

Cashless healthcare services related to 22 procedures of the mental disorder specialty, including intellectual disability, schizophrenia and autism, are available to those eligible under the health benefit package of

Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri-Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY), according to a March 2025 statement by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

The study indicates "substantial public health and economic benefits" of integrating population-based depression screening into the primary healthcare system, the researchers said.

The findings also support the case for a primary healthcare oriented-health system, they

added.

Data from National Mental Health Survey and the National Sample Survey, along with those from previously published studies were analysed.

"The (universal depression screening) program is expected to generate net savings of Rs 291 billion (USD 3.7 billion) to Rs 482 billion (USD 6.1 billion), equivalent to 0.19 per cent to 0.32 per cent of GDP," the authors wrote.

"Expanding coverage to individuals aged 20 years and above, along with ensuring high diagnostic accuracy through quality training and supportive supervision, will be key to sustaining and maximising the programme's impact," they added.

The population-based screening is also projected to reduce depression-related suicides by about 15 per cent yearly, highlighting the importance of early detection and intervention in averting fatal outcomes, the authors said.



# India should not be dumping rice into US market; will take care of it: Trump

PTI

New York/Washington, Dec 09: US President Donald Trump has said that India should not be "dumping" rice into the United States market and he will "take care" of it, while stressing that tariffs will solve the "problem" easily.

Trump held a roundtable in the White House on Monday with representatives of the farming and agriculture sector as well as key members of his cabinet, including Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins.

He announced \$12 billion in federal aid for farmers.

Meryl Kennedy, who runs her family's agribusiness Kennedy Rice Mill in Louisiana, told Trump that rice producers in the southern part of the country are "really struggling" and that other nations are "dumping" rice into the US.

When asked by Trump which countries are dumping rice into America, Kennedy, sitting next to the President, replied, "India, and Thailand; even China into Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico used to be one of the largest markets for US rice. We haven't shipped rice into Puerto Rico in years." Kennedy said that this has been happening for years and did not start during the Trump administration. "But unfortunately, we're seeing it in a much bigger way now," she said.

She said that tariffs imposed by the Trump administration are working, "but we need to double down", to which Trump said, "You want more, I understand".

Trump then turned to Bessent and said, "India, tell me about India. Why is India allowed to do



that? They have to pay tariffs. Do they have an exemption on rice?" "No sir, we're still working on their trade deal," Bessent replied.

Trump then said, "But they shouldn't be dumping. I mean, I heard that. I heard that from others. They can't do that." Kennedy then told Trump there's a World Trade Organisation case against India.

Trump asked Kennedy to give him the names of the countries dumping rice into the US and instructed Bessent to note down the names. "India. Who else?" Trump said.

"India, Thailand, China into Puerto Rico, not into the continental US, but into Puerto Rico. Those are the main culprits," Kennedy said, adding that American farmers can feed the US as well as nations around the world, but "we need fair trade, not free trade".

Trump said this will be "so easy to settle".

"It's solved so quickly with tariffs to these countries that are illegally shipping. It's solved. Your problem is solved in one

day. That's why we have to win the Supreme Court case," he said, adding that this problem will be solved in "one day".

Lower courts in the US have ruled that Trump's use of emergency powers to impose tariffs on nations around the world is illegal, and the case will now be decided by the Supreme Court.

"It's so unfair. They go out of business. They put everyone out of business," Trump said.

Trump said that America lost half of its car industry and chip industry because these products were being manufactured in other countries, and previous administrations did not impose tariffs on these imports into the US.

"It's the same thing with rice. It'll be good, will get it solved very quickly. We just need the countries. Just give us the names of the countries. Tariffs, again. It solves the problem in two minutes," the president said.

Kennedy then said that they have "bought" the largest brands at retail, too, so they have an incentive to subsidise

their products. When Trump asked, "Who did that?" she said, "Indians".

"We'll take care of it. It's so easy," Trump said.

India is the largest producer of rice -- 150 million tonnes -- and has a 28 per cent share of the global market. It is also the top exporter, with a 30.3 per cent share of global exports in 2024-2025, Indian Rice Exporters Federation (IREF) data shows.

According to information on the website of the India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF), India exported about 2.34 lakh tonnes of rice to the US in the 2024 fiscal, less than 5 per cent of its total global basmati rice exports of 52.4 lakh tonnes.

West Asia remains the dominant destination for Indian rice, it said.

Among the rice varieties that India exports globally, "Sona Masoori" is preferred in markets such as the US and Australia.

Trump has imposed a 50 per cent tariff on India, the highest in the world, including 25 per cent for Delhi's purchases of Russian oil.

Indian Rice Exporters Federation National President Prem Garg had termed the 25 per cent reciprocal tariff as a temporary "hurdle" for rice shipments and had stated that India still retains a pricing advantage over competitors like Vietnam and Pakistan.

"This tariff is a temporary hurdle, not a long-term roadblock. With strategic planning, diversification, and flexibility, Indian rice exporters can protect and even expand their presence in the US market," Garg had said earlier this year.

## IPL 2026 auction to feature 350 players including 240 Indians

PTI

Mumbai, Dec 09: A total of 350 cricketers, including 240 Indians, will go under the hammer in the IPL auction to take place in Abu Dhabi on December 16, with South Africa's comeback man Quinton de Kock a surprise late addition to the final list.

Wicketkeeper-batter De Kock, who recently came out of his ODI retirement, has been kept at a base price of Rs 1 crore. The list also includes Australia batter Steve Smith at a base price of Rs 2 crore. Smith last played in the IPL in 2021.

A total of 1,390 players registered for the Player Auction. The number was pruned to 1,005 players before 350 were finally shortlisted to battle for 77 slots available including 31 for overseas players, across the 10 teams for the 19th edition of the world's biggest T20 league.

The first set of players in the auction includes India and Mumbai batters Prithvi Shaw and Sarfaraz Khan, who both have kept their base price at Rs 75 lakh each. Shaw had a regular run in the IPL from 2018 to 2024 but had gone unsold in the auction for the last edition, whereas Sarfaraz has not played in the competition since 2021.

The list shared by the IPL features two Australians in Cameron Green and Jake Fraser-McGurk, along with New Zealand and former Chennai Super Kings opener Devon Conway and South Africa's David Miller, with each of them keeping a base price of Rs 2 crore.

Venkatesh Iyer, who was



released by Kolkata Knight Riders, has listed himself at a base price of Rs 2 crore. Among domestic players, Kunal Chandel and Ashok Kumar, who are among the leading run-getters and wicket-takers respectively in the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy, are also in the final list.

Three-time winners KKR will go into the auction with the biggest purse of Rs 64.3 crores, followed by five-time champions CSK with Rs 43.4 crores. Sunrisers Hyderabad, who have won the IPL once, have the third highest purse of Rs 25.5 crores.

As many as 21 England players feature in the list, including wicketkeeper-batter Jamie Smith, pacer Gus Atkinson, Liam Livingstone and Test opener Ben Duckett.

Green, expected to garner a lot of attention in this auction, leads the list of 19 Australians, with Josh Inglis, Matthew Short, Cooper Connolly and Beau Webster being the other prominent

names. De Kock and Miller are among the 15 Proteas players in the IPL auction, along with fast bowlers Anrich Nortje, Lungi Ngidi, Gerald Coetzee and all-rounder Wiaan Mulder.

Fast bowlers Alzarri Joseph and Shamar Joseph, Akeem Auguste, Shai Hope and Roston Chase are among the nine players from the West Indies in the auction.

Sri Lankan spinners Wanindu Hasaranga, Dunith Wellalage, Maheesh Theekshana and Traveen Matthew will be among the dozen players from the island nation in the auction, along with Pathum Nissanka, Kusal Mendis and Kusal Perera.

Conway and Rachin Ravindra, who were released by CSK, are among the 16 New Zealand players in the auction.

Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Naveen ul Haq feature in the list of 10 players from Afghanistan.

## NATO stepping up spying activities in Arctic: Russian navy chief

REUTERS

Moscow, Dec 09: NATO countries have significantly stepped up their spying activities in the Arctic, Alexander Moiseev, the head of the Russian Navy, said on Tuesday, the TASS state news agency reported.

Moiseev was quoted as saying that anti-submarine aircraft based in Iceland had become much more active, a reference TASS said to US, British and Canadian surveillance planes.

Moiseev, who also spoke of NATO plans to deploy strategic surveillance drones in Finland, was cited as saying that NATO's aim was to contain Russian activities in the Arctic.

## Sri Lanka bids farewell to 2 IAF choppers involved in relief work

PTI

Colombo, Dec 09: Sri Lanka Air Force bid farewell to two IAF helicopters after they ended their rescue mission in cyclone-hit island nation, even as INS Gharial reached Trincomalee with 700 tonnes of essential relief material from Tamil Nadu.

The Indian Air Force (IAF) choppers, which departed on Monday, were involved in airlifting immediate relief supplies to distressed communities, evacuating those affected and providing air cover for those involved in rescue missions in the aftermath of havoc caused by Cyclone Ditwah and adverse weather conditions.

"Their contribution significantly enhanced Sri Lanka's national disaster response during a period of urgent need," the Sri Lankan Air Force said in a statement issued on their

official website on Monday.

The Indian High Commission in Colombo said the helicopters evacuated 264 survivors and airlifted about 50 tonnes of relief material, adding that more Indian relief action was due.

Meanwhile, the Indian Navy Ship (INS) Gharial reached Trincomalee

On Monday, with 700 tonnes of food items, essentials and clothing from Tamil Nadu.

"The consignment was formally received by Deputy Foreign Minister Hon Arun Hemachandra, who appreciated India's swift and sustained assistance," the mission posted on social media on Tuesday.

Tamil Nadu has sent about 1,000 tonnes of essential food items and clothes to Sri Lanka under Operation Sagar Bandhu. Of these, about 300 tonnes reached Colombo in 3 Indian Naval Ships on Sunday .

## 'There's no other player like Hardik Pandya in Indian T20 team'

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 09: Former India batting coach Sanjay Bangar believes there is no other player like Hardik Pandya in the national T20 set-up because the star all-rounder is capable of commanding a spot in the team merely as a specialist batter or bowler too. Out for more than two months due a quadricep injury during the Asia Cup, Pandya will return to the Indian squad for the home five-match ODI series against South Africa beginning in Cuttack on Tuesday.

"Look at all the all-rounders in world cricket now. Does England have a back-up for Ben Stokes? No. In one-day or even Test cricket, there is no back-up for Ravindra Jadeja. It is the same with Hardik Pandya," JioStar expert Bangar said.

"He (Pandya) can command a spot in the top five on his batting alone. He could also be one of the top three seamers in any team if he was just a bowler.

"The point is, to be that kind of all-rounder, you must earn your place with your batting and also with your bowling. There is no other player like Hardik Pandya in the Indian team." On Pandya's workload management, Bangar said he should at least play the first three matches against South Africa.

"We need to see how he copes," he said, insisting that it is too early to say if he should play six or seven T20Is before the World Cup.



"Playing in the SMAT (Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy) is different from the intensity of an international game. The team management must manage the workload of important players like him.

"So, if needed, we must do that for Hardik too. A fit Hardik Pandya allows the team to play its desired combination, especially with the spin options we have. That's why his presence is critically very vital." Before the India return, Pandya made a 42-ball 77 not out for Baroda in SMAT before bowling four overs at full tilt for 1/52.

Test and ODI captain Shubman Gill is also making a return after missing almost a month of cricket owing to a neck spasm suffered while attempting a slog sweep during the opening Test against the Proteas.

Bangar said Gill's growth as Test captain will benefit him in other

formats.

"The confidence Shubman Gill has now after doing so well in Test cricket over the last year will certainly help him. More than his skill, his mindset has grown. Taking extra responsibility as a Test Captain makes him a far more rounded player. He now understands the game situation and what is needed from him.

"At the top of the order, Shubman Gill could do the job for the team in T20I cricket. And if needed, Hardik Pandya could do a similar job in the middle order." Bangar felt Sanju Samson may find it difficult to get a slot in the Indian T20 side. "...his best spot in T20 cricket is still at the top. With players like Tilak Varma, Shivam Dube, or Hardik Pandya available, there may not be a place for him at number four, five, or six.

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