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Department of Information & Public Relations, J&K
In collaboration with TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT, GOVT. OF J&K

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DIPK-8866/25 Dated: 10.12.2025

National Education Policy PM Modi's biggest gift to nation: LG Sinha

- » Focus on originality in education
- » Let children follow their passions
- » Educators must embrace transformative change

Yogesh

Jammu, Dec 10: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday described the National Education Policy (NEP) as the "biggest gift" given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the nation, asserting that the policy has transformed the fundamentals of teaching and learning in India.

Addressing the 40th anniversary celebration of Lawrence Public School here, LG Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Teachers hold a pivotal responsibility in shaping the future generation and preparing them for a rapidly changing world."

He said, "PM Modi gifted the National Education Policy to the country. It lays emphasis



on problem-solving, scientific temper and skill development among students," the LG said, highlighting that critical thinking and curiosity—central elements of the NEP—have always been part of India's cultural ethos. "Critical thinking and curiosity are nothing new; they are rooted in our culture. Education develops independent thinking," he added.

Urging teachers to nurture these qualities in every student, LG Sinha said the modern education system must focus on originality and creativity instead of producing

"mechanical minds." "Teachers should encourage curiosity and critical thinking. If we want to fully realise Bharat's potential, a new vision in education must emerge," he stated.

To illustrate the need to support a child's natural talent, the LG referred to the legendary mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan. "Ramanujan had extraordinary skills. He was allowed to pursue his passion for mathematics. Had he been forced into something else, the world would have been deprived of his contributions—number theory, infinite series

and continued fractions," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said both teachers and parents must allow children the freedom to follow their passion so their abilities can bloom without pressure. "Children should not be turned into mechanical minds. Their minds must remain natural, creative and free," he said.

Reflecting on global changes, the LG said the world has transformed significantly in the last two decades, and education must evolve accordingly. "Earlier, syllabi | [More on P6](#)

38th Infantry Commanders' Conference Success of 'Op Sindoor' reflects India's resolute response strategy: Army Chief

'Military diplomacy imp in building trust, cooperation with partner nations'
KNO Correspondent

Srinagar, Dec 10: Asserting that "Operation Sindoor" demonstrated India's military preparedness and resolve, Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi on Wednesday described its success as a key example of India's balanced, precise and firm response capability.

While speaking at the 38th Infantry Commanders' Conference at the Infantry School in Mhow, Madhya Pradesh, General Dwivedi, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Information warfare, cyber operations and space-based capabilities are emerging as decisive domains shaping the modern battlefield."

He said, "The Army is undergoing a rapid transformation to become a future-ready



Infantry said the Directorate is committed to continuous capability enhancement through doctrinal updates, indigenisation and professional military education.

Pertinently, the 2-day conference reviewed operational preparedness, force structure, capability development, training systems and welfare measures.

Senior commanders assessed ongoing projects and identified priority areas for shaping the Infantry's future direction.

Key discussions focused on integrating emerging technologies, strengthening operational readiness and accelerating modernisation through indigenous solutions in line with the national vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

The conference also examined the implementation of organisational reforms aimed at improving operational efficiency and strategic mobility.

Initiatives such as Bhairav Battalions and drone platoons were noted as significant steps towards | [More on P6](#)

force through technology-driven manpower reforms, streamlined capability development and organisational restructuring."

The Army Chief said India's strategic autonomy remains a core national principle and noted that the 'Neighbourhood First' policy continues to guide the country's foreign and security approach.

He said military diplomacy is playing an increasingly important role in building trust and cooperation with partner nations.

While addressing the gathering the Director General

Drought concerns grow as rainfall deficit surges in J&K

- » Prolonged dry spell leaves region with 86% rainfall deficit

- » Minimal precipitation expected next week

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Dec 10: Jammu and Kashmir has entered a severe rainfall deficit phase, with the region recording just 6.1 mm of precipitation between November 1 and December 9 against the expected 43.1 mm, resulting in an 86 per cent shortfall, Kashmir Weather reported on Wednesday.

According to the data obtained by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the region has experienced a significant rainfall deficit

between November 1 and December 9, with most districts recording substantially below-normal precipitation.

In the Kashmir Division, Anantnag received 10.7 mm against a normal of 43.7 mm (-75.5%), Budgam 7.5 mm (-77.5%), Bandipora 9.0 mm (-81.5%), Baramulla 5.4 mm (-87.7%), Ganderbal 4.8 mm (-88%), Kulgam 6.1 mm (-90.5%), Kupwara 14.0 mm (-77.4%), Pulwama 11.4 mm (-60.7%), Shopian 3.7 mm (-90.5%), and Srinagar 7.2 mm (-83.3%), resulting in a mean actual rainfall of 7.98 mm compared to the normal 44.7 mm, translating to a deficit of 82.1%.

In the Jammu Division, Doda recorded 4.8 mm (-90.2%), Jammu 6.7 mm (-71.5%), Kathua and Kishtwar both 0 mm (-100%), Poonch 3.5 mm (-91.4%), Rajouri 2.2 mm (-93.5%), | [More on P6](#)

Oppn raising SIR to keep 'ghuspathiye' in electoral rolls: HM Amit Shah

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 10: In a stinging attack at the Opposition over its criticism of the SIR, Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday said they are worried because they can no longer win elections by corrupt practices and claimed that the reason for Congress' defeat in polls was its leadership and not EVMs or "vote chori".

Intervening in a debate on election reforms in the Lok Sabha, Shah alleged that the Opposition is raising the issue of Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls to keep "avaidh ghuspathiye (illegal immigrants)" in the voters' list.

When the opposition MPs walked out later, Shah said no matter how many times the Opposition boycotts, the NDA will continue with its policy of detect, delete and deport



'ghuspathiye'.

The Opposition wants to normalise and formalise the 'ghuspathiye' and add them in electoral rolls, he said.

The BJP leader cited three instances of alleged "vote chori" by Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi.

"Post Independence, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was backed by 28 persons while Jawaharlal Nehru by two

persons and yet Nehru became the prime minister, this was vote chori," he said.

The minister said that the second "vote chori" was by Indira Gandhi, when she granted herself immunity after court set aside her election.

He said the dispute of third "vote chori" has just reached civil courts on how Sonia Gandhi became a voter before becoming citizen of India.

Shah also took a dig at the Congress and said the reason for its poll losses was its leadership.

"If someone asks a question in a presser he is dubbed as a BJP agent, if they lose a case, they accuse the judge, if they lose an election, they blame EVMs. Now when EVM blame does not hold, they brought up vote chori...still they lost Bhar. Now the | [More on P6](#)

Adopt modern project management practices: CM Omar to Housing Board Calls for timely execution of projects



KT News Desk

Jammu, Dec 10: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday chaired the 52nd meeting of the Board of Directors of the Jammu and Kashmir Housing Board (J&KHB) at the Civil Secretariat here, where detailed deliberations were held

on key policy and administrative matters.

The meeting was attended by Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Commissioner Secretary, | [More on P6](#)

Centre allocates 3 HFC buses to J&K

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Dec 10: The Union Ministry of Heavy Industries Wednesday informed the Lok Sabha that it has allotted three Hydrogen Fuel Cell (HFC) buses for Jammu and Kashmir under the National Hydrogen Mission.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the ministry said that a total of 100 hydrogen fuel buses have been deployed across the country, including three in J&K. The deployment is aimed at promoting low-emission mobility and reducing reliance on conventional fossil fuels. The HFC buses operate on fuel cell technology, producing water as the only by-product.

The ministry | [More on P6](#)

Country's citizens working for Aatma-Nirbhar, Viksit Bharat: LG Sinha

Attends HRDS India's 'Veer Savarkar International Impact Award' in New Delhi

Says Savarkar endured tremendous hardship, dedicated life to India's freedom

KT News Desk

Jammu, Dec 10: "Savarkar, the valiant son of Mother India endured tremendous hardship but every moment of his life was dedicated to freedom and development of this soil. Today, people of India



are working towards creating a Strong, Aatma-Nirbhar and Viksit Bharat, in line with Veer Savarkar's vision", the Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha said on Wednesday.

He was speaking at the 'Veer Savarkar International

Impact Award', organised by High-range Rural Development Society (HRDS India), in New Delhi.

In his address, the Lieutenant Governor commended the extraordinary initiative of HRDS India to remind the world about Savarkar's unmatched contribution to the motherland and restore his legacy in citizens' collective consciousness.

Paying homage to Veer Savarkar, the Lieutenant Governor recalled his life-long campaigns and unparalleled contribution to India's Freedom struggle.

"Savarkar is a symbol of India's success, India's strength, | [More on P6](#)

Glaciers in J&K under close lens: Centre on climate change

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Dec 10: The Union Government on Wednesday said it is monitoring glaciers in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh through multiple national programmes to study the effects of climate change on the Himalayan region.

Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology and Earth Sciences, Dr Jitendra Singh, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the Ministry of Earth Sciences, through the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR), has been monitoring Himalayan glaciers under the Cryosphere and

Climate programme, a component of the PACER sub-scheme.

NCPOR has been monitoring representative glaciers in the western and eastern Himalaya to understand glacial responses to climate change and their impact on downstream hydrology.

Dr Singh said the Department of Science and Technology has supported several research and development projects on Himalayan glaciers under the National Mission for Sustaining Himalayan Ecosystem and the National Mission on Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change.

The National Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF) Risk Mitigation Programme, implemented by the NDMA in four states and the | [More on P6](#)

10 vacancies of judges in High Court of JK & Ladakh

KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, Dec 10: As many as ten positions of judges are vacant in the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. Against a sanctioned strength of 25, the court is currently functioning with only 15 judges.

Official data available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) shows that the approved strength of judges for the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh is 25—comprising 19 permanent judges and six additional judges.

Of them, 15 are currently in position, leaving 10 vacancies in the High Court, which has jurisdiction over both Jammu & Kashmir and | [More on P6](#)

DC Srinagar, SMC Commissioner review winter preparedness across City

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR DECEMBER 10: Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Akshay Labroo along with the Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Faz Lul Haseeb carried out an extensive on-site review of snow-clearance arrangements across the City.

The visit, as per an official statement, was aimed to assess on ground readiness of Men and Machinery, Control Room operation and overall winter response preparedness.

During the visit, Chief Engineer Mechanical Engineering Department, Bod Raj; Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mir Imtiyaz Ul Aziz; Additional Deputy Commissioner, Aadil Fareed; Joint Commissioner SMC, Nuzhat Khurshid, Joint Commissioner SMC, Syed Abul Qasim; Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, SDM West Irfan Bahadur, Superintending Engineers of R&B, MED, SMC and other Officers accompanied the DC and Commissioner SMC.

The DC and SMC Commissioner inspected key sites including the MED Snow clearance Control Room at Shalteng, the Integrated Command & Control Centre (ICCC) at HMT, the SMC Control Room, and the JAKLINE



Yard. The Officers reviewed the response mechanisms, availability of equipment, communication systems and readiness of field teams.

At MED complex cum Control Room Shalteng, the DC and SMC Commissioner accompanied by Chief Engineer MED inspected the deployment of

men and machinery, functioning of control room and coordination mechanisms established to deal with snowfall and related exigencies.

On the occasion, the DC and SMC Commissioner were briefed that as many as 45 snow clearance machines are kept in ready state for deployment

of snow clearance along 35 routes comprising road length of 1634 kilometres under the jurisdiction of MED.

Both the Officers emphasized close inter-departmental coordination, round-the-clock control room functioning, and prompt response systems to address public grievances during winter emergencies. They underlined proactive planning, timely deployment of men and machinery and effective communication to tackle any situation evolved due to snowfall besides ensuring the smooth functioning of essential services.

The DC underscored the importance of swift mobilization of snow-clearance machinery to avoid disruptions. The SMC Commissioner directed field teams to remain alert and fully prepared to respond to any eventuality arising from snowfall, ensuring timely public assistance.

DC Srinagar and SMC Commissioner emphasized ensuring round-the-clock functionality of control rooms and swift mobilization of snow-clearance machinery to prevent disruption of essential services. They directed teams to remain fully prepared to address any situation arising from snowfall and to ensure timely assistance to the public.

DC Srinagar reviews progress on PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR DECEMBER 10: To assess the progress achieved in installation of Solar Rooftops under PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana across the district, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo (Chairman Monitoring and Management Committee PM-Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana) Wednesday chaired a review meeting at Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex.

Besides, Chief Planning Officer, as per an official statement issued, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Zonal Head J&K Bank, Executive Engineers of KPDC, CL, Lead District Manager (Banks), the meeting was attended by KPDC Engineers and empanelled scheme vendors who presented team wise appraisal of the ongoing installation works and current status under the centrally sponsored scheme.

Underlining the need for mass awareness campaigns,

door-to-door surveys and speedy registration of eligible households, the DC directed all stakeholders to ensure enhanced awareness, faster banking facility and time bound installation so that the benefits of the scheme must reach beneficiaries without delay. He directed all departments to accelerate implementation, remove procedural delays and ensure close coordination at every level.

He directed officers to work with renewed focus to reach all the eligible households within the district within stipulated timeframes so that consumers can avail benefits of the scheme.

During the meeting, the DC took a detailed division-wise assessment of the progress across all four Electric Divisions of Srinagar. He instructed KPDC Engineers to work in mission mode, enhanced coordination and expedite the scheme execution.

DC Kulgam clears multiple CLU cases in DLC meeting

KT NEWS DESK

KULGAM, DECEMBER 10: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan, who is also Chairman District Level Committee on Wednesday chaired a meeting of members and Officers of various departments to approve cases for change of land use (CLU).

During the meeting several CLU cases were examined and cleared as per established norms and guidelines.

The meeting, as per an official statement was attended by ACR, Reyaz Ahmad Shah; CAO, CHO, CMO, CEO, DFO, Exens, Tehsildars, and other officers and committee members.

SWD organizes theme based activities under BBBP

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 10: The Social Welfare Department (SWD), SANKALP Hub for Empowerment of Women, Mission Shakti Srinagar organized theme based Nukad Natak, Street Play and Rally at Government Higher Secondary School Gund Hasi Bhat under Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP).

The role play, as per an official statement, emphasised the importance of education for all, particularly for girls, as a vital foundation for the betterment of society, and further raised awareness about the significance of the girl child, the declining child sex ratio, the prevention of child marriage, and the provisions of the PC&PNDT Act, while underscoring the collective responsibility of communities, institutions, and policymakers to promote gender equality and safeguard children's rights.

Furthermore, a road rally was organized by the students, who marched from the school towards the local market to disseminate the message more widely, engage the community, and reinforce the need for sustained efforts toward social transformation and holistic development.

DLSA Kulgam observes World Human Rights Day

KT NEWS DESK

KULGAM, DECEMBER 10: In line with the Plan of Action formulated and Directions of Jammu & Kashmir Legal Services Authority and pursuant to directions of Chairperson District Legal Services Authority Kulgam, DLSA-Kulgam in collaboration with Anti-Corruption Forum HQ-Delhi, Wednesday organised a special programme to commemorate World Human Rights Day, at Al-Hilal Residential Educational Institute.

The programme, as per an official statement, witnessed participation of Students of the institute, Staff of DLSA, LADC's, PLV's and teaching faculty of the concerned Institute.

2-Day Yuva Vani 2.0 training for Youth Clubs begins in Shopian

KT NEWS DESK

SHOPIAN, DECEMBER 10: To strengthen youth engagement, skill development and entrepreneurial participation in agriculture and allied sectors, a two-day capacity-building training programme commenced Wednesday at Shopian for identified Youth Clubs of the district under Jammu & Kashmir Competitiveness Improvement of Agriculture and Allied Sectors Project.

The training programme, as per an official statement was organised by the Department of Agriculture Shopian with Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmed Lone presiding over the inaugural session.

The programme aims to empower youth club members, enhance their community leadership skills and strengthen their participation in local development processes.

During the inaugural session, the ADDC highlighted the significance of youth engagement in shaping a progressive farming society and appreciated the

efforts of the participants for their active involvement.

The ADDC urged the participants to utilize the training to positively influence their communities, promote constructive activities and contribute to grassroots developmental initiatives.

Officials from various departments and resource persons from KVK Shopian delivered technical sessions on youth mobilization, communication skills, community development, social awareness and public service linkages. The trainees were also briefed about opportunities available under different government schemes aimed at youth empowerment.

As part of the awareness campaign, educational Booklets were also distributed among youth clubs, ensuring that the youth receive comprehensive information and remain well-informed.

CAO, CHO, DSHO, representatives from KVK, officers/officials from line departments and other concerned also participated in the training programme.

Kathua Administration reconstitutes SPCA, calls for coordinated stray animal control

KT NEWS DESK

KATHUA, DECEMBER 10: The District Administration Kathua has reconstituted the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) Committee to strengthen the animal welfare mechanism and ensure effective implementation of directions issued by the Supreme Court of India.

The District Development Commissioner, as per an official statement issued on Wednesday, will act as the chairman of the committee, with the Chief Animal Husbandry Officer serving as the Member Secretary. The Committee also includes DFO Territorial, Assistant Warden Wildlife, Dy SP Headquarters, District Panchayat Officer, Executive Officer Municipal Council and a Lt. Colonel-rank Army officer as members.

Chairing a meeting in this regard, the DC underlined the mandate of the SPCA Committee, stating that its primary responsibility is to ensure scientific, humane and coordinated management of stray animals across the district. He asked stakeholder departments to work in synergy to implement the prescribed procedures and protocols for

animal care, relocation and safety. During the meeting, discussions were held on key responsibilities to be implemented by the stakeholder departments. These included removal and relocation of stray cattle and dogs from highways, institutional areas and public spaces to designated shelters by Municipal Bodies, PWD, NHAI and RDD. Provision of proper boundary protection around educational institutions, hospitals, stadiums, bus stands and similar premises was discussed as an essential measure to prevent entry of stray dogs. The need for regular inspection by municipal authorities and panchayats to identify and eliminate stray dog habitats also came under focus.

Further, the deliberations centered on ensuring that the relocated animals undergo sterilization, vaccination and timely veterinary care as per approved guidelines. Maintaining sufficient stocks of anti-rabies vaccines and immunoglobulin at hospitals was highlighted. The Committee also discussed the role of the Education Department in conducting awareness programmes on preventive behaviour around animals, first-aid measures in case of bites and proper reporting mechanisms.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, ANANTNAG CORRIGENDUM

In reference to Re-Advertisement Notice No. ADDC/Ang/2025-26/1190 dated 21.11.2025 followed by Corrigendum No ADDC/Ang/2025-26/1201-04 dated 25.11.2025 regarding engagement of contractual staff under the Small Business Development Unit (SBDU) and Business Help Desks (BHDs) under Mission YUVA, it is hereby informed that due to a technical issue in the previously shared Google application link, applicants were unable to submit their forms.

S.No	Name of the post	Remuneration per Month
1	SBDU Lead (1 Post)	Rs.50000/=
2	SBDU Coordinator (1 post)	Rs.35000/=
3	SBDU Financial Expert (1 Post)	Rs.35000/=
4	SBDU Enterprise Development Expert (1 Post)	Rs.35000/=
5	SBDU Marketing Expert (1 Post)	Rs.35000/=
6	BHD Lead (1 Post)	Rs.40000/=
7	BHD Coordinator (7 Post)	Rs.35000/=

A fresh link has been generated for submission of applications:

<https://forms.gle/zFw4bF81v68hfZTB6>

Further, the last date for submission of applications has been fixed as 21st December 2025. All other terms and conditions of the original advertisement notice shall remain unchanged.

Sd/-
Additional District Development Commissioner
(Nodal Officer, Mission YUVA), Anantnag

No: ADDC/Ang/YUVA/2025-26/1289-93
Dated: Dated: 8-12-2025

DIPK-8873/25
DATED: 10-12-2025

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL AND HOSPITAL DIVISION ANANTNAG

E mail Id xenmhd-ang@jk.gov.in

GIST of short term e-NIT No MHDA/TS/74 of 2025-26 DATED: 09-12-2025

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT short term e-tenders are invited on item rate basis from Registered contractors/Firms having experience in executing mechanical works for the below mentioned works:

S. No.	Name of the Work	Estimated Cost (In Rs)	Cost of Tender Doc. (In Rs)	EMD in Rs	Time of completion (Days)
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Maintenance of Snow Cat 4 th (New Holland 90 HP) and Unimog 423 of Snow Clearance Control Room Kulgam.	31500.00	200.00	650.00	07
2	Repairs to the Soil Compactor EC 5250 (K) of Snow Control Room Kulgam/Bathipora.	141000.00	200.00	2800.00	07
3	Corrective Maintenance of Snow Cat Farmtrac 14 of Mechanical and Hospital Sub Division 2nd Anantnag (Hq Pulwama).	95000.00	200.00	1900.00	07

• Position of Administrative Approval: Accorded vide No. M&HED/K/Acctt/35 of 2025-26 dated 08-05-2025 by Chief Engineer Mechanical and Hospital Engineering Directorate Kashmir.

• Position of Technical Sanction: Accorded

• Position of Funds: Available

1. Downloading of Bids: The Tender document Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the Govt. website www.jktenders.gov.in from 09 -12-2025 (16:00Hrs)

2. Submission of Bids: The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above website from 09-12-2025 (17:00Hrs) to 17-12-2025 (14:00Hrs) in two covers.

3. Opening of Bids: The bid uploaded on the Web Site up to due date and time will be opened on 18-12-2025 (14:00Hrs) in Office of the undersigned.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Mechanical and Hospital Division
Anantnag

No: MHDA/ TS-368/3576-77
Dated:09-12-2025

DIPK-8868/25
DATED: 10-12-2025

From The Parliament

Satellite internet under consideration for remote J&K, Ladakh: GoI

RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Dec 10: The Union Ministry of Communications on Wednesday informed the Lok Sabha that satellite-based technologies systems such as Starlink could be deployed in the future for the areas of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh where fibre deployment is not feasible to install.

It also informed the house that the two UTs has received Rs 562.91 Crore over the last five years for strengthening mobile and broadband connectivity under various Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN) schemes.

The ministry in a written



reply said that it has not conducted any separate survey

exclusively for disaster-prone areas. Telecom preparedness

during disasters continues to be monitored regularly through field reports, telecom service providers (TSPs), and coordination with local authorities."

The union government further said that Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are already in place to ensure telecom readiness and response during natural calamities across J&K and Ladakh.

It also stated that no separate disaster-specific training programmes were conducted in rural belts of the UTs. "Though preparedness is maintained through advisories

and review mechanisms."

The ministry said that "Satellite-based technologies including LEO, MEO systems like Starlink may be considered in the future for regions where fibre deployment is not feasible, such as remote and mountainous zones of the Union Territories. Under BharatNet, 5,034 Gram Panchayats nationwide have already been made service-ready using satellite connectivity."

It also said the connectivity funds provided to J&K and Ladakh is a part of the Rs 34,967 crore that was disbursed across the country between 2020-21 and 2024-25—(KNO)

Nine J&K blocks included in ABP

RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Dec 10: The Union Ministry of Planning has informed the Lok Sabha that it has included nine blocks from Jammu and Kashmir in its Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP) list, targeting improved governance in underdeveloped areas.

The ABP was launched in January-2023 that covers a total of 513 blocks across India as an extension of the Aspirational Districts Programme. "The initiative focuses on enhancing outcomes in key sectors like health & nutrition, education, agriculture, basic infrastructure and social development through

convergence of existing schemes and continuous monitoring."

The nine J&K blocks have that been selected under the programme includes Marwah Kishtwar, Man-kote Poonch, Khwas, Rajouri, Khari Ramban, Tulail Bandipora, Singh-pora Baramulla, Manzgam Kulgam, Keran Kupwara, Ichegoza, Pulwama and Thakrakote Reasi.

The ministry further stated that the programme serves as a governance improvement template—ensuring targeted interventions in identified blocks of Jammu & Kashmir through collaborative implementation of government schemes—(KNO)

‘4G connectivity boost for J&K, Ladakh’



RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Dec 10 (KNO): The Union Ministry of Communications has said that Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh have received a major boost in telecom connectivity wherein BSNL has installed a total of 2,080 new 4G towers across the two Union Territories as part of the ongoing revival plan for the state-owned telecom operator.

The ministry in a data presented in the Lok Sabha said that Jammu & Kashmir has been allocated 1,697 4G sites, of which 1,624 have already been commissioned and are operational on the ground. In Ladakh, 383 4G sites have been installed, with 304 commissioned so far.

The Ministry further said that the expansion is being implemented under a series of revival packages

approved over the past few years, including a Rs 69,000 crore package in 2019, a Rs 1.64 lakh crore package in 2022 and a Rs 89,000 crore spectrum support package in 2023, and an additional Rs 6,982 crore CAPEX support in 2025 for accelerating BSNL's nationwide 4G rollout.

The GoI said that in total, Rs 2.54 lakh crore has been spent so far from these revival packages on measures such as spectrum allotment, debt restructuring, AGR dues settlement, viability gap funding, CAPEX infusion, and VRS implementation.

The union government said the expansion will significantly strengthen telecom connectivity in border belts, rural pockets and remote hilly terrains in both UTs, where in BSNL remains a key service provider—(KNO)

J&K, Ladakh log 9,396 consumer grievances on NCH: Centre

RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Dec 10: The Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs has informed the Lok Sabha that Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh has registered 9,396 consumer grievances on the National Consumer Helpline (NCH) during the last three years.

The rising complaints reflects a steady rise in complaints related to e-commerce, online purchases, delayed deliveries and defective products.

The official data reveals that Jammu and Kashmir received 6,874 complaints in 2022, which increased to 7,967 in 2023, and 9,178 in 2024. "All grievances were resolved within the stipulated timelines."

It also said that for the Union Territory of Ladakh, the Ministry reported 136 complaints in 2022, followed by 137 in 202 and 218 in 2024. "All of which were disposed of successfully."

The ministry further said that the National Consumer Helpline has witnessed rapid expansion, with monthly complaints nationwide



rising from 37,062 in 2017 to 1,42,605 in 2025, driven largely by increased digital adoption and a surge in online transactions. "The share of grievances filed through WhatsApp has grown from 11 percent in October 2023 to 30 percent in October 2025."

To strengthen grievance redressal, NCH has launched AI-based speech recognition, translation systems and an AI-enabled chatbot under the NCH 2.0 initiative, aimed at simplifying complaint filing for consumers, including those from remote regions of J&K and Ladakh.

The Ministry also said that the Consumer

Protection Act 2019 continues to empower District, State and National Consumer Commissions to ensure speedy disposal of cases. "In the last three years, J&K Consumer Commission recorded 10, 19 and 30 new cases respectively, with cumulative disposals showing improvement."

Additionally, the newly launched e-Jagriti portal integrates platforms like e-Daakhil, CONFONET and OCMS—enabling citizens of J&K and Ladakh to file complaints, upload documents, pay fees and attend hearings virtually—(KNO)

‘3.6 lakh MGNREGA job cards cancelled in J&K, Ladakh’

RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Dec 10: The Union Ministry of Rural Development has informed the Lok Sabha that Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh witnessed the deletion of more than 3.6 lakh MGNREGS job cards between 2019-20 and 2024-25.

The Ministry also confirmed that 79,674 workers were removed from the rolls during a one-month verification window from October 10 to November 14, 2025.

Official data reveals "Jammu and Kashmir accounted for 3,06,271 job card deletions, with yearly figures ranging from 33,032 in 2019-20 to 73,015 in 2023-24. Ladakh recorded 5,670 deletions during the same period."

The Ministry further said the deletions were part of routine verification to remove fake, duplicate or incorrect entries, families that have permanently shifted, and cases where

the lone job card holder had passed away.

"During the targeted verification drive held between October 10 and November 14 this year, 79,070 MGNREGS workers were removed in Jammu & Kashmir, and 604 in Ladakh. Officials clarified that these deletions were not linked to the National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS) or Aadhaar-based payment mechanisms," the ministry said.

The Ministry urged the states and UTs to ensure no eligible household is wrongly removed, including women workers who form a significant portion of the rural labour force under MGNREGS.

It has also issued a new Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) requiring public display of proposed deletion lists, Gram Sabha verification, appeals, and Aadhaar-linked checks to safeguard genuine beneficiaries—(KNO)

Srinagar airport operations stabilizing: Director

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Dec 10: Asserting that numerous steps have been taken to enhance passenger comfort and maintain operational efficiency Srinagar International Airport Director Javed Anjum on Wednesday said that flight operations at the terminal are stabilizing.

"Srinagar Airport, like many others, was also affected due to cancellations," Anjum told selected group of media persons that "On the first day we had five cancellations and 16 the next. But gradually, the situation started improving, seven, six, and then five. The operations are now stabilizing," he added.

Anjum said passengers are being kept informed in real time through multiple channels.

"We intimate passengers through our Twitter handle, press



groups and IndiGo messages. IndiGo Airlines is also informing travellers in advance about flight cancellations and accommodating them on other flights," the Director said.

"We are hopeful that in the

coming days, we will achieve 100 percent on-time performance."

On passenger facilities, Anjum said cleanliness and comfort have been made a top priority. "Our toilets and washrooms are monitored throughout the day. We have deployed a special female team led by a ladies' supervisor to maintain women's washrooms," he said.

He added that the airport has ensured better crowd management and additional seating for travellers. "We have adequate seating arrangements both on the city side and inside the terminal, so passengers can sit comfortably, especially in cold weather," he said.

"Crowd management is efficient. There is no congestion in departure halls or queue areas," he added.

Anjum also highlighted the airport's efforts to assist

passengers with special needs. "We have a dedicated health test facility at the airport that helps elderly passengers, women with children, wheelchair users and people with disabilities or special needs," he said.

The Director also shared that the airport's focus remains on providing a smooth and comfortable travel experience. "Our goal is to make Srinagar Airport a passenger-friendly space where everyone feels cared for and informed, even during operational challenges," he said.

As already reported by KNO, the flight operations at Srinagar Airport neared normalcy on Tuesday as IndiGo resumed most of its services.

The airline's CEO, also shared that airline is back on its feet and also apologizes for delays and cancellations—(KNO)

‘Jammu airport least affected in nationwide IndiGo disruptions’

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Jammu, Dec 10: Stating that the Jammu air terminal was among the least affected during the recent nationwide IndiGo flight disruptions, Jammu Airport Director Devender Yadav on Wednesday said flight operations at the airport remain fully stable.

Addressing a press briefing at the Jammu Airport Conference Hall, Director Yadav said, "All stakeholders worked in very close coordination to ensure uninterrupted facilitation and smooth movement of passengers, during recent IndiGo disruptions."

He said, "Flight operations at Jammu

Airport have been stabilised and the airport remained least affected during the recent IndiGo flight cancellations and delays occurring at various airports nationwide."

The Director said that the Airports Authority of India staff, CISF, airlines, ground-handling teams, 'May I Help You' desks and housekeeping staff played a key role in maintaining seamless operations.

He also said special assistance was provided to senior citizens, children, pregnant women and passengers with reduced mobility. "Ad-hoc seating was arranged in various areas and station managers of concerned airlines were instructed to remain present for direct supervision," the Director added.

Highlighting the focus on hygiene, Director Yadav said additional housekeeping staff were deployed, toilet cleaning frequency was increased and supervisors were instructed to intensify monitoring across the terminal. "All food and beverage outlets were directed to maintain sufficient supplies and remain operational throughout flight handling hours to ensure no disruption in passenger services," he added.

Housekeeping teams, the director said, ensured the overall cleanliness of washrooms, common areas and terminal premises, maintaining a high level of hygiene.

—Continued on
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45 snow-clearance machines on standby



REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Dec 10: As Kashmir awaits season's first major snowfall, 45 snow-clearance machines are on standby to cover 35 major routes spanning 1,634 km under MED's jurisdiction. Both the DC and the SMC Commissioner stressed round-the-clock functioning of control rooms, close inter-departmental coordination and timely deployment of men and machinery to ensure uninterrupted essential services.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, along with SMC Commissioner Faz Lul Haseeb, conducted an extensive citywide inspection to assess winter preparedness and snow-clearance readiness. The officers reviewed the functioning of control rooms, deployment of machinery, and coordination mechanisms during visits to key facilities, including the MED Control Room at Shalteng, the Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC) at HMT and the SMC Control Room at JAKLINE Yard. The DC and the SMC Commissioner were accompanied by senior officials, including Chief Engineers, Joint Commissioners, Chief Planning Officers, Superintending Engineers of R&B, MED, SMC and other line department officials. Both the officers took firsthand stock of ground-level arrangements.

At the MED Shalteng complex, officers

were informed that 45 snow-clearance machines are ready to cover 35 major routes spanning 1,634 km under MED's jurisdiction. Both the DC and the SMC Commissioner stressed round-the-clock functioning of control rooms, close inter-departmental coordination and timely deployment of men and machinery to ensure uninterrupted essential services.

They also urged field teams to remain alert and responsive, ensuring timely assistance to the public during weather-related emergencies. During their visit to the ICCC at HMT, officers reviewed its operational readiness for real-time monitoring and emergency coordination, interacting with teams from multiple departments working round-the-clock to oversee winter arrangements.

Later, both the officers inspected the SMC Control Room at JAKLINE Yard, assessing the availability of equipment and preparedness of snow-clearance units to respond swiftly to any snowfall-related disruptions.

As already reported by KNO, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, had earlier said the Valley is "fully prepared" for the harsh winter, with comprehensive plans for snow clearance, essential supplies and emergency response in place—(KNO)

EDITORIAL

SPCAs: A Welcome Shift Towards Stray Animal Management

The directive from the Divisional Commissioner of Kashmir to swiftly form Societies for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCAs) and devise a multi-departmental plan is a welcome step in tackling the perennial issue of stray animals. This move, mandated by the Supreme Court, transcends the typical reactive and often cruel measures, offering a framework for a more humane, scientific, and sustainable solution. It acknowledges that the problem of stray animals is not one of animal proliferation

alone, but of human failure in waste management, civic planning, and public health oversight. This initiative correctly identifies the twin pillars of any effective strategy: animal birth control (ABC) and responsible waste management. Stray dog populations explode primarily due to the availability of food from unregulated garbage dumps. By ordering municipal bodies to regulate waste dumps, the administration is striking at the root cause. Simultaneously, the directive to identify land for ABC centres

moves beyond the futile cycle of culling, which is both inhumane and scientifically proven to be ineffective in the long term. Sterilisation and vaccination programmes are the only sustainable way to stabilise and gradually reduce stray populations while preventing rabies. The emphasis on forming SPCAs at the district level is crucial. It decentralises responsibility and creates institutional frameworks for enforcement, rehabilitation, and public education. The order for extensive Information, Education,

and Communication (IEC) campaigns on first aid for dog bites and pet adoption protocols represents a proactive public health and welfare approach. It seeks to build a more informed and compassionate community, shifting public behaviour from fear and hostility to cautious coexistence and responsible pet ownership. However, the success of this comprehensive plan hinges entirely on sustained execution, adequate funding, and inter-departmental co-ordination. Identifying land for ABC centres is

the first step; they must be adequately staffed, funded, and made operational. IEC campaigns must be persistent, not one-off events. Waste management orders must be strictly enforced. This holistic blueprint, if implemented with sincerity, can transform a chaotic and dangerous public nuisance into a managed aspect of urban life. It promises safer streets for citizens and a more dignified existence for animals. The challenge now is to move swiftly from directive to action on the ground.

Handicrafts At The Heart Of India's Rural Economy

With an enriching combination of rich heritage, skilled artisans, and consistent policy support, India's handicraft sector is well-placed to drive inclusive growth, support rural livelihoods, and contribute meaningfully to India's economic progress in the coming years

Press Information Bureau

India's handicraft sector plays a vital role in the country's economy, especially in rural areas. It provides livelihoods to a large number of artisans and craftspeople across rural and semi-urban regions, contributes to exports, and helps preserve India's rich cultural heritage. With 318 GI-tagged handicraft products and around 455 formally classified craft categories, the sector reflects the remarkable diversity of India's creative traditions.

The Art Behind Every Handicraft

Handicrafts are goods predominantly made by hand even though some tools or machinery may also have been used in the process; such goods are graced with visual appeal; possess distinctive features, which can be aesthetic, artistic, ethnic or culturally attached and are amply different from mechanically produced goods of similar utility. India is one of the world's important suppliers of handicrafts; and with growing global demand for authentic, sustainable handmade products, the country is uniquely positioned to scale up its handicraft economy. A vast number of artisans across the Indian states, possess inherent skills, techniques and traditional craftsmanship, forming the backbone of the Handicrafts Industry. Even though a majority of the artisans engage in crafts work on a part-time bases with low capital investment, the value addition remains high making handicrafts a viable source of income. The sector is highly labour-intensive and decentralized, spread across the length and breadth of the country.

Celebrating India's Craft Heritage

National Handicrafts Week (December 8-14) is observed annually to celebrate India's artisans and highlight the cultural and economic significance of the handicraft sector. It provides an opportunity to recognize the contribution of craft communities, promote traditional skills, and reinforce the Government's commitment to strengthening this vital segment of the rural economy.

Recognizing Excellence in Craftsmanship

A key feature this year is the National Handicrafts Awards, which recognize exceptional master crafts persons for their outstanding contributions to India's craft heritage. These include the Shilp Guru Awards, the highest honour in the handicrafts sector, and the National Awards, which acknowledge excellence and innovation across diverse craft forms. Together, these awards celebrate the skill, creativity, and cultural stewardship of artisans across the country.

ECONOMIC STRENGTH OF THE HANDICRAFT SECTOR

Employment and Artisan Demographics

The handicrafts industry employs a large number of artisans, particularly from rural areas. India currently has an estimated 64.66 lakh handloom and handicraft artisans, with a significant share concentrated in states such as Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Assam, Odisha, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu. As of August 2025, women accounted for 71% of the handloom weavers and 64% of total artisans. Such a strong participation of women underscores the sector's role in supporting women's employment and empowerment in rural and semi-urban communities. The sector plays an important role in uplifting the social stature of the economy, with a diverse artisans' workforce—majority belonging to Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs). This reflects a broad-based involvement of various communities in craft activities, making the handicraft sector a vehicle for inclusive growth and livelihood across different sections of society. The Indian Handicrafts Sector also provides part-time or supplemental employment to agrarian households and others, helping

ensure smooth income flows during off-seasons and periods of insufficient agricultural work. Moreover, since crafts can be practiced with small setups (often home-based) and with minimal capital, they offer a viable source of livelihood, especially to households in remote areas.

As of 2024, the Pehchan Artisan Identification programme has registered over 32 lakh artisans. Nearly 20 lakhs of these artisans are women, highlighting the scheme's role in empowering rural women economically.

The Government recognizes handicrafts as a key source of livelihood, aiding in strengthening local non-farm employment. Many traditional craft skills are passed down through generations and with institutional support, these skills are being recognised and promoted. The Government's initiative to issue Pehchan ID cards to artisans is aimed at bringing these artisans into the formal economy, enabling them to avail benefits under the Government of India Schemes. By formalizing artisan identities and organizing them, the groundwork is being laid for better working conditions and bargaining power for craft workers.

Export Performance

In the first half of FY2025 (April-September 2025), India's total textiles & apparel (including handicrafts) exports stood at US\$ 18,235.44 million. India's handicraft exports have grown impressively, as also witnessed by stable performance of total textiles & apparel sector despite the global challenges. In the year 2024-25, the export of handicrafts (excluding hand-knotted carpets) reached 33,122.79 crore, up from 20,082.53 crore in 2014-15. Key categories of exports during the year 2024-25 include art metal wares (4,386 crore), woodwares (8,524 crore), hand-printed textiles (3,217 crore), embroidered and crocheted goods (4,350 crore), and imitation jewellery (1,511 crore) among others. These numbers reflect the range of India's craft exports and demonstrate the global appetite for Indian craft products. With around 37%, USA remains a major buyer, while 61% of India's handicrafts are destined for other major markets.

With India's robust economic growth and the government actively assisting exporters, the outlook for handicraft exports remains positive.

Empowering Craftsmanship: Government Support for Handicrafts

The Government has demonstrated support for the handloom and handicrafts sector through a slate of dedicated schemes and policy interventions. This consistent support has been crucial in modernizing the sector, enhancing artisans' incomes, and ensuring the sector's resilience. Key government initiatives and their impacts include:

National Handicraft Development Programme (NHDP):

NHDP is the flagship scheme for handicraft sector promotion. It has an approved outlay of 837 crore for FY2022-26. During 2023-24, 2,325 projects and events were sanctioned under NHDP, benefiting 66,000+ artisans.

The scheme provides comprehensive support to handicraft clusters and artisans through basic inputs, infrastructure support, and capacity enhancement to cater to target markets. Its components are designed to offer end-to-end assistance, create a conducive environment, and ensure fair competition with machine-made products.

The focus is to bring every artisan into the mainstream while preserving traditional crafts by offering marketing platforms, infrastructure support, and design and skill training for new entrants. Along with strengthening the sector and empowering artisans, the scheme also extends social security through initiatives like Aam Admi Jeevan Jyoti Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Yojana, including pension support for elderly artisans.

In essence, NHDP scheme adopts the following three-pronged approach to put the sector on high growth trajectory as well as

preserving existing cultural heritage: -

Promoting premium handicraft products for the niche market.

Expansion of production base for utility-based, life style and mass production handicraft products.

Empowerment and sustainability of artisans along with preservation and protection of heritage/ languishing crafts.

Empowering Artisans Through Structured Skill Development Initiatives

Today, standardized production, skilled manpower, design databases, quick & efficient prototyping, and better communication skills are essential to match the evolving production and distribution of crafts to both national and global markets. With advancements in tools & technology, the artisan workforce in India is evolving rapidly. To support artisans in these areas, "Skill Development in Handicraft Sector" under the NHDP has been conceptualized to fulfil these requirements and has the following four components:

Design and Technology Development Workshop: Focuses on meeting current market design needs by developing new designs and prototypes using the existing skills of artisans.

Guru Shishya Hastshilp Prashikshan Program: Aims to transfer traditional craft knowledge from master crafts persons to new artisans through technical and soft-skill training, helping bridge the skill gap and create a trained workforce for market needs.

Comprehensive Skill Upgradation Program: Bridges skill gaps by reviving traditional crafts through National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) training, enabling skill upgradation, design innovation and artisan skills.

Improved Toolkit Distribution Program: Provides improved toolkits to artisans to enhance productivity, ensure uniform quality, and support larger-scale production in the handicraft sector.

SECTOR PROMOTION THROUGH ARTISAN CLUSTERS

Comprehensive Handicrafts Cluster Development Scheme (CHCDS)

Complementing NHDP is the Comprehensive Handicrafts Cluster Development Scheme (CHCDS) with an outlay of 142.5 crore for FY2022-26. The objective of the program is to develop handicraft clusters with world-class infrastructure to meet the business needs of local artisans and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), enabling higher production and export.

The clusters aim to support artisans and entrepreneurs in establishing modern units equipped with advanced infrastructure, updated technology, and adequate training and human resource development inputs, along with market linkages and production diversification.

The broad objectives of the program are as follows:

To enhance the competitiveness of selected clusters by increasing market share and productivity through higher unit value realization.

To integrate scattered artisans, strengthen grassroots enterprises, and link them with SMEs to achieve economies of scale, build critical mass, and meet global market requirements of quality and standardization. To provide essential support and linkages in infrastructure, technology, product diversification, design development, raw material banks, marketing, promotion, and social security to ensure long-term sustainability.

The strategy includes strong technical and program management assistance for capacity building, designing interventions, and implementing them through a competent professional agency.

Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI)

India's handicraft sector is closely linked to the country's rural development efforts and supports non-farm livelihoods. There are over 100 handicraft clusters under the Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI), which aim

to recognize the talent, creativity, enterprise and hard work of rural artisans in a variety of fields, and to make traditional industries more productive, profitable and capable of generating sustained employment, subsequently empowering and converting artisans into self-governing entrepreneurs.

Self-Reliant Artisans

Under schemes like the Aam Admi Jeevan Jyoti Yojana (component of National Handicrafts Development Programme), the Government supports the formation of artisan collectives or producer companies in these clusters and provides them need-based interventions like design & technical development workshop etc.

The aim is to integrate artisans into the financial and marketing mainstream while preserving their traditional crafts.

Market Access, and Global Integration

The handicraft sector's support to rural development is further evidenced by its inclusion in various government programs. For instance, by supporting GI tagged products that keep traditional skills alive, the One District One Product (ODOP) initiative highlights regional products of many districts, thereby supporting development. Many Self-Help Groups (SHGs) engage in artisanal production, supported by capacity-building and eco-friendly innovations. In order to connect rural artisans with urban marketplaces that also offer global integration, the Government facilitates marketing events and exhibitions.

In FY 2023-24 alone, 786 domestic and international marketing events were sanctioned under National Handicraft Development Programme, alongside design and training initiatives, benefitting around 66,775 artisans across India. In 2025-26, a total of 132 marketing events have been planned under NHDP. These events are designed to strengthen market access for artisans.

Platforms Enhancing Visibility & Opening New Market Linkages

Indie Haat – Showcasing India's Handicraft and Handloom Heritage: The 2025 edition of Indie Haat, held from 12th to 18th February 2025 at the National Crafts Museum & Hastkala Academy, New Delhi, featured a vibrant display of 80 different types of handcrafted and handwoven products, created by 85 artisans and weavers from across the country.

Special Handloom and Handicraft Exhibition at IITF: As part of the India International Trade Fair (IITF) at Bharat Mandapam, the Ministry of Textiles organized a Special Handloom and Handicraft Exhibition cum Sale, curated by the Office of the Development Commissioner for Handlooms and Handicrafts. The Pavilion showcased 206 stalls representing handloom and handicraft traditions from 27 states, along with a thematic display on "Tribal Treasures of Indian Textiles."

Handloom Sector Initiatives

Given the close kinship between handlooms and handicrafts, the Government sanctioned 356 Small and 2 Mega Handloom clusters, organised 880 Marketing events, sanctioned 42,895 MUDRA Loans, enrolled 5,34,162 weavers under Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY)/ Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) and formed 163 Producer Companies (as on 02.12.2025) to benefit Handloom weavers across the country during the last 5 years. These benefits have reached nearly 6.45 lakh handloom weavers across the country.

Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for MSME Participation: Further, to enhance MSME participation, the Government has amended the scheme by reducing the investment requirement for new applicants. The investment requirement is reduced from Rs.300 crore to Rs.150 crore (Part-1) and Rs.100 crore to Rs.50 crore (Part-2). The minimum incremental turnover criteria have also been reduced from 25% to 10% and the product basket has been expanded to include more man-made fibre (MMF) apparel, fabrics, and

technical textiles. The requirement of setting up a new company for availing the benefit of the Scheme has also been removed.

Skill Development Support: Alongside production incentives, schemes like SAMARTH – Scheme for Capacity Building in Textile Sector have been extended to train artisans and weavers. Under Samartha, 5.35 lakh beneficiaries were trained and 4.20 lakh provided job placements as of December 2025.

Market Promotion and Infrastructure: To promote textile and handicraft trade both nationally and internationally, the Ministry facilitates Export Promotion Councils (EPCs), including traditional product-focused councils such as the Handloom Export Promotion Council (HHEC), Carpet Export Promotion Council (CEPC), and the Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH), as well as industry associations, for participation in trade fairs and expos. The Ministry also supports the Global Mega Textile Event, Bharat TEX, which showcases the strength of India's textiles value chain and highlights the latest innovations in the textile, fashion, and handicraft sectors, positioning India as a preferred global destination for sourcing and investment.

Export Promotion Initiatives: India's exports of Textile & Apparel, including handicrafts, demonstrated remarkable resilience in the first half of FY 2025-26 despite global headwinds. To promote the sector's exports (including handicrafts) globally and improve its export competitiveness, the Government implemented Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies (RoSCTL) scheme. Textile products not covered under RoSCTL (implemented for apparel/garments and made-ups) are covered under the scheme – Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP), that will reduce hidden export costs (taxes & duties). Additionally, since MSMEs largely contribute to production of handicrafts, the recent Export Promotion Mission, through its two components NiryatProtsahan (focusing on financial enablers) and Niryat Disha (focusing on non-financial enablers), is expected to contribute in the overall production, delivery and growth of the handicrafts sector.

Broader Policy Reforms

The most recent policy reforms include GST Rationalisation and Integration of 29 labour laws into 4 labour codes viz. the Code on Wages 2019, the Code on Social Security 2020, the Code on Industrial Relations 2020 and the Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions 2020. GST rate cuts on idols, paintings, inlay work, terracotta, handbags, artware, tableware have brought a huge relief for artisans and crafts people. This encourages indigenous production under Vocal for Local, reduces dependence on import and, creates jobs. The codes together support worker welfare and dignity. Provisions like Universalisation of Minimum Wages, Prohibition of Gender Discrimination and Extended Social Security will benefit all workers.

Conclusion

India's handicraft sector plays a crucial role in the country's economy and cultural identity. By supporting millions of artisans across rural and semi-urban areas, it reflects India's deep reservoir of traditional skills and craftsmanship. With growing global interest in handmade and sustainable products, the sector has strong potential for expansion. Government initiatives & schemes, covering skill training, cluster development, marketing support, digital platforms, and export facilitation, are aimed at creating better opportunities for artisans and helping them access wider markets. These interventions are improving productivity, strengthening value chains, and enabling artisans to earn more predictable and higher incomes.

With an enriching combination of rich heritage, skilled artisans, and consistent policy support, India's handicraft sector is well-placed to drive inclusive growth, support rural livelihoods, and contribute meaningfully to India's economic progress in the coming years.

Div Com Kashmir reviews winter preparedness for vehicular movement at Zojila Pass

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 10: In view of winter season, Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Anshul Garg, on Wednesday chaired a meeting to review the regulation of vehicular movement on the Srinagar–Sonmarg–Gumri (SSG) road and the opening and closure schedule of the Zojila Pass, which connects the Union Territories of Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir.

During the meeting, the Divisional Commissioner, as per an official statement urged District Administrations of Kargil and Ganderbal, SSP Rural Kashmir, and officers from BRO and BEACON to maintain close coordination for timely opening and closure of the Zojila Pass based on weather conditions and road status, in consultation with BRO and VJAYAK.

Officials briefed the Div Com that the current cut-off timing for allowing vehicular movement is 5:00 AM to 10:00 PM from the Kargil side, and 11:30 AM to 5:00 PM from the Ganderbal side.

The Div Com directed District Administration Ganderbal to provide necessary accommodation to stranded passengers in case of snowfall, road closure, or any untoward incident.

The RTO Kashmir and SSP Rural were instructed to ensure that only mechanically



fit vehicles ply on the route. The RTO was also asked to operationalize weighing bridges along the SSG road.

Emphasizing strict adherence to Traffic Department advisories, the Div Com called for deployment of recovery cranes along the Zojila Pass and directed the MED to support BEACON with additional machinery.

The Health Department was tasked with ensuring smooth functioning of the Sonmarg hospital and establishing medical camps as needed.

The Div Com also stressed the setting up of a joint control room comprising District Administration Ganderbal, Police, SDRF, CRPF, and other agencies for coordinated management and emergency response.

Directions were also issued to SSP Traffic and SDRF to ensure adequate deployment of personnel for smooth vehicular movement.

To facilitate movement of emergency vehicles from Kargil side, the Div Com directed for magisterial permission to the vehicles to track the vehicles.

In order to ensure effective flow of information, the Div Com directed for operationalization of distribution wireless sets among the nodal officers.

The meeting was attended by DC Ganderbal, DC Kargil, SSP Ganderbal, SSP Kargil, officers from IMD, MED, PWD (R&B), RTO Kashmir, CEO Sonmarg Development Authority, Executive Director NHIDCL Srinagar/Leh, and representatives of BSNL, Jio, and Airtel.

Div Com Kashmir calls for vibrant winter tourism activities in Sonamarg

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 10: Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Anshul Garg, Wednesday chaired a meeting to assess the preparedness for winter tourism activities at Sonamarg, following the operationalization of the all-weather Sonmarg Tunnel, which has ensured uninterrupted road connectivity to the famed tourist destination.

During the meeting, the Div Com, as per an official statement, stressed the need for the District Administration Ganderbal and the Sonamarg Development Authority (SDA) to adopt a vibrant and proactive approach in planning and executing diverse winter tourism and winter sports activities. He highlighted that the improved winter access provides a unique opportunity to promote Sonamarg as a premier winter destination and significantly enhance tourist

footfall during the season.

The Div Com directed the concerned officers to ensure that hotel facilities, accommodation units, and tourist service establishments are thoroughly inspected ahead of the winter season. He emphasized strict adherence to food safety norms, fire safety protocols, and other essential public convenience measures to guarantee a safe and comfortable experience for tourists.

Anshul Garg further underlined the importance of coordinated efforts between district authorities, police, and tourism bodies to ensure seamless arrangements, including snow clearance, traffic regulation, emergency response, and availability of essential services throughout the winter months.

The meeting was attended by the Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, SSP Ganderbal, CEO Sonamarg Development Authority, and other senior officers from the district and line departments.

District Admin Anantnag conducts CBRN mock exercise to test disaster readiness



KT News Desk

ANANTNAG, DECEMBER 10: Strengthen emergency preparedness for disaster management in CBRN scenario, the District Administration Anantnag in collaboration with NDRF/SDRF, Fire & Emergency Services, Civil Defence, Health and other line departments, organised a mock exercise Wednesday at Dak Bangalow Khanabal.

The mock drill was held under the supervision of Additional Deputy Commissioner (CEO, DDMA) Anantnag and focussed on evaluating the response capabilities, coordination mechanism and operational readiness for any disaster-like situation at district level.

During the mock exercise, the participating teams practiced key operations including rapid assessment and sealing of affected area, evacuation and triage of victims, decontamination procedures, on-site medical management and transportation of casualties and coordination between field responders, Emergency Operation Center, and District Authorities.

Officers and officials from key departments like NDRF/SDRF, F&E Services, Health, R&B, Revenue, Jal Shakti, RDD, FCS&CA, KPDC, I&FC, Horticulture, Agriculture and NSS/NCC volunteers, among others, participated in the mock exercise.

SCERT Kashmir concludes month-long training for over 3,000 Aayas

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 10: In a major boost to early childhood care and education in Jammu and Kashmir, the State Council of Educational Research and Training, Kashmir Division (SCERT-KD) successfully concluded a landmark month-long training programme for more than 3,000 Aayas (ECCE Helpers) across all 10 districts of the Kashmir division.

Implemented in collaboration with the Directorate of School Education Kashmir (DSEK), UNICEF and the Jammu & Kashmir Association of Social Workers (JKASW), the initiative is being hailed by educationists as the watershed event in the education landscape being the largest capacity-building exercise for school support staff in the region with the prospect of translating into holistic development of children. Each district trained 300 Aayas (ECCE helpers) through a phased

schedule conducted between November 3 and December 9, 2025.

The officials said the training focused on equipping Aayas (ECCE helpers) with essential skills, clarity on responsibilities and an understanding of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) framework.

Nearly 50 trained Resource Persons were deployed across districts after undergoing a three-day preparatory workshop at SCERT in October 2025.

The successful completion of the large-scale training marks a significant milestone in strengthening foundational learning in government schools across Kashmir. It recognises the vital role of Aayas in pre-primary classrooms and reinforces the commitment of SCERT-KD, UNICEF and partner organisations toward building supportive, child-friendly learning environments across the Valley.

DC Samba reviews animal welfare measures in line with Supreme Court Directions



KT News Desk

SAMBA, DECEMBER 10: A meeting of the District Level Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) was held Wednesday at the Meeting Hall of the District Administrative Complex. The meeting was chaired by Deputy Commissioner, Ayushi Sudan.

The meeting commenced with a welcome address by SPCA Member Secretary, Dr. Rahul Dev who briefed the meeting on the functioning and ongoing animal welfare initiatives. A detailed presentation was made regarding the latest directions issued by the Supreme Court of India vide Order dated 07.11.2025.

The directions highlighted, inter alia, the nomination of Departmental Nodal Officers for monitoring Government infrastructure with respect to adequate fencing, boundary walls, gates and other necessary structural or administrative

measures, along with submission of updated inventories. The meeting also deliberated upon specific instructions for Municipal Corporations, Municipal Councils, Municipal Committees, Panchayati Raj Institutions, Health Department, Youth & Sports Services Department, Education Department and other allied departments concerning the management and regulation of the stray animal population.

The Deputy Commissioner issued on-the-spot directions to all concerned departments to ensure strict compliance with the Supreme Court directives and instructed for submission of fortnightly compliance reports for onward transmission to the higher authorities. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Forest Department, Police Department, Panchayati Raj Institutions, Wildlife Department, Municipal Council and Municipal Committees, among others.

JKIMPARD, CBC hold workshop on Capacity-Building Plans for J&K Departments

KT News Desk

JAMMU, DECEMBER 10: Jammu & Kashmir Institute of Management, Public Administration and Rural Development (JKIMPARD) in collaboration with Capacity Building Commission (CBC) New Delhi organized one day workshop on Development of Capacity Building Plans (DCBPs) for government departments of Jammu and Kashmir at Convention Centre here.

The workshop was e-inaugurated by Chairperson, CBC, Radha Chauhan.

As per an official statement, Commissioner Secretary, GAD and Information, M Raju; Director, J&K IMPARD, Rehana Batul; Principal Advisor (States), CBC, Chandralekha Mukherjee; faculty members of JKIMPARD and other officers were also present on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, Commissioner Secretary GAD, M Raju highlighted the critical role of structured capacity-building strategies in strengthening public service delivery and fostering a citizen-centric administrative culture. He emphasized that Capacity Building Plans must be dynamic, data-driven, and aligned with emerging governance

priorities, including digital transformation, process re-engineering, and outcome-oriented planning.

Lauding JKIMPARD and CBC for spearheading this initiative, he noted that department-specific capacity-building frameworks would not only enhance institutional efficiency but also equip government personnel with the skills needed to respond effectively to evolving administrative challenges. He urged departments to adopt a coordinated approach and ensure that capacity-building activities translate into measurable improvements on the ground.

Speaking on the occasion, Director IMPARD highlighted the importance of systematic capacity building for strengthening the governance and service delivery.

Earlier, in her virtual address, Chairman CBC emphasised on the need for every department to institutionalize a structured approach to capacity building. She highlighted that formulation of department specific Capacity Building Plans marks the next crucial phase towards outcome-driven governance and improved service delivery. She also underscored the national vision of Mission Karmayogi and the role of structured Capacity Building

Plans in building a future-ready civil service.

During the workshop, Principal Advisor (States), CBC, while delivering a presentation, spoke in length about formulation of Capacity Building Plans with the help of AI Tool. She also shared the insights gained from similar initiative recently undertaken at Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.

Member (Admin), Capacity Building Commission, Dr. Alka Mittal also addressed the gathering through virtual mode.

During the workshop, more than 200 officers from various departments like General Administration, Social Welfare, School Education, Rural Development, Housing and Urban Development, Agriculture, Health Services, Home/Police, Transport, Command Area Development, Higher Education, Information Technology, Hospitality and Protocol besides Information & Public Relations participated. The participants prepared draft Capacity Building Plans for their respective departments.

Departmental presentations were also held during the workshop, marking a significant step towards finalising the data-driven Capacity Building Plans for the Union Territory.

AIDS, substance abuse awareness programme held at DISHA Institute Ramban

KT News Desk

RAMBAN, DECEMBER 10: Disha Institute of Paramedical & Nursing Science Ramban in collaboration with the Department of Information and Public Relation District Center Wednesday organised an AIDS Prevention and Awareness Programme to educate students and the wider community about HIV/AIDS prevention, early detection and the importance of adopting safe and responsible health practices.

The awareness programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, who delivered speeches, presentations and thematic performances focused on dispelling myths, promoting awareness and encouraging a supportive attitude toward persons living with HIV/AIDS.

Their presentations highlighted issues such as the need for accurate information, preventive measures and discouraging stigma associated with the disease. A vibrant cultural programme presented by the students added color to the event.



The event was graced by the presence of the Medical Superintendent, District Hospital, Dr. Sudershan Singh Katoch as the Chief Guest and the Drug Control Officer, Imtiaz Ahmed as the Guest of Honour.

Speaking on the occasion, the Medical Superintendent emphasized the critical role of awareness and early testing in preventing the spread of HIV. He discussed the common modes of transmission, preventive strategies, the availability of treatment facilities and the significance of community-based health education. He encouraged the youth to become ambassadors of health

awareness and to promote responsible behaviour in society.

The Drug Control Officer, in his address, spoke extensively about the growing issue of drug abuse, its direct and indirect relation to the spread of diseases, and the need for strict regulation and responsible behavior. He highlighted the importance of counselling, rehabilitation and collective action to curb substance misuse among the youth.

In his concluding remarks, the Principal of DISHA Institute, Hilal Wani expressed gratitude to the Information department officers, faculty members and students for their active involvement.

DLSA Ramban observes World Human Rights Day

KT News Desk

RAMBAN, DECEMBER 10: The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Ramban in coordination with Tehsil Legal Services Committee Ukhral, organized an awareness program to mark the World Human Rights Day.

The event focused on educating the public about fundamental rights, constitutional safeguards and the legal remedies available for protecting individual dignity and freedom. The program witnessed the presence of Panel Lawyers, Legal Aid Defense Counsels, Para Legal Volunteers and other officials of the DLSA.

The Resource Persons Advocate Balbir Singh Bali, Assistant LADC Rajinder Singh and other officials present highlighted the significance of this year's theme, emphasizing that human rights are not merely legal provisions but essential principles that guide a just and humane society. He urged the participants to remain vigilant, informed and

compassionate, stressing that "the true strength of a community lies in how it protects the rights of its most vulnerable members." He also encouraged the public to make full use of the legal aid mechanisms available through DLSA and TLSCs to ensure that no individual is denied justice due to lack of awareness or resources.

The program served as a platform to foster meaningful discussion on the everyday challenges citizens face in exercising and defending their rights.

The DLSA Ramban emphasized the need for proactive legal awareness, highlighting that an informed community is better equipped to prevent rights violations and uphold justice. The authority further noted that consistent outreach efforts strengthen public confidence in legal aid institutions and reinforce the district's commitment to human rights protection.

Similar programs were organized across other villages and towns of district Ramban by the respective Tehsil Legal Services Committees.

Director Horticulture flags off farmers on exposure visit to PAU



KT News Desk

JAMMU, DECEMBER 10: The Director Horticulture Jammu, Gul Sayed Wednesday flagged off the Exposure Visit of Farmers and Orchardists to Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) in Ludhiana.

The visit of farmers has been organised under the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) for the

year 2025-26. The programme was held in the presence of Chief Horticulture Officer Jammu, R.K. Kotwal, DLSMS, Rakesh Kumar Bhagat and HDO Bhalwal, Ravinder Kumar.

The exposure visit aims to enhance the technical knowledge of farmers and orchardists by providing firsthand experience of advanced horticultural practices and technologies being adopted outside the Union Territory.

Youth showcase sporting excellence as MY Bharat hosts vibrant sports meet in Zainapora Block

Jahangeer Ganaie

Shopian, Dec 10: The Zainapora block of south Kashmir's Shopian district witnessed an energetic wave of youth enthusiasm on Wednesday as MY Bharat Youth organised a lively block-level sports event, bringing together young athletes from various villages for a day filled with competition, camaraderie, and celebration.

The playground, usually home to small-scale local matches, transformed into a bustling sports arena echoing with cheers, whistles, and applause. Youngsters participated in volleyball, badminton, track races, and multiple athletic contests, turning the venue into a hub of youthful talent and fitness-driven activities.

Adding significance to the event was the presence of Ms Masrat Jan, President of Smile Foundation, who appreciated the efforts of MY Bharat in promoting sports culture in rural belts. She interacted warmly with the participants and expressed deep satisfaction over the enthusiasm displayed by the youth.

"Watching young boys and girls engage in healthy competition gives us immense hope," she said. "Sports mould character, teach discipline, and empower youth to dream big. We are committed to supporting



such initiatives that uplift and inspire communities."

Deputy Director MY Bharat Youth Volunteer, Pradeep Kumar, was also present and lauded the organisers for providing village youth with an organised platform to display their abilities.

Speaking on the occasion, Pradeep highlighted the broader impact of sporting activities on personality development.

"Sports build stamina, self-confidence, and leadership qualities," he said. "They teach punctuality, teamwork, and resilience — all of which play a crucial role in shaping a young person's future. MY Bharat aims to ensure that every block across the UT has access to well-structured sporting opportunities."

Police officers on the occasion also said that sports keep

youth positively engaged and protect them from harmful social influences.

"When young people remain active on the sports field, they stay away from the menace of drugs," he noted. "Events like these encourage them to focus on healthy lifestyles and responsible choices. This is the kind of community-building we need."

Young athletes shared their

enthusiasm, calling the event an inspiring break from routine and an opportunity to test their skills against competitors from neighbouring villages.

Javid Ahmad, an emerging volleyball player, said, "We rarely see such professionally organised sports events in our block. Participating here motivates us to train harder and perform better."

Another participant, sprinter Sameer Hussain, who secured a medal in the 200-metre race, said the event helped boost confidence. "These competitions give us exposure and help us understand our strengths. We hope such events continue regularly."

At the end of the programme, the winners were felicitated with medals, trophies, and certificates amid loud cheers from locals and fellow athletes. Officials encouraged the youth to continue playing sports consistently and make it a part of their lifestyle.

Residents of Zainapora welcomed the initiative, noting that such events not only energise the youth but also uncover the region's untapped sports potential. Many expressed hope that MY Bharat's continued efforts will pave the way for more inter-block and district-level tournaments in the future, strengthening the sports framework in south Kashmir.

Army's Chinar Corps organises medical camp in Uri



KT News Desk

Srinagar, Dec 10: In a continued and heartfelt effort to serve, support and uplift the border communities of Jammu & Kashmir, the Kalapahar and Pir Panjal Brigades organised a comprehensive three-day Medical Camp across the villages of Salamabad, Nambla and Gingal from 08 to 10 December 2025. A highly dedicated medical team comprising 08 civilian specialist doctors and five Indian Army Medical Officers formed the backbone of this effort.

Over the course of three days, the camp witnessed over 1,350 civilians from all three villages and neighbouring hamlets eagerly participating and benefiting from the services offered. PRO (Defence), Srinagar said in a statement issued here.

He said the presence of specialist doctors allowed for focused care - orthopaedic cases such as joint pain, old fractures and mobility issues received proper evaluation; gynaecological consultations provided vital support

to women's health; dermatological conditions common in harsh climatic zones were addressed and paediatric concerns received careful attention.

The residents of Salamabad, Nambla and Gingal expressed profound gratitude for this outreach initiative. Initiatives like this Medical Camp go far beyond their immediate purpose. They strengthen the bond of trust, cooperation and mutual respect between the Indian Army and the local populace.

The Chinar Corps of Indian Army, while steadfast in its primary duty of safeguarding the nation's borders and ensuring peace in Kashmir Valley, continues to play an active role in Nation-Building, community development and humanitarian assistance. Through programs involving education, health, infrastructure development, disaster relief and youth engagement the Indian Army has consistently demonstrated its commitment to the holistic upliftment of remote communities.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

National Education

changed once in many years. Today, they change rapidly. Teachers must understand that it is crucial to develop skills in students," he said, adding that hybrid classrooms will soon become the norm.

LG Sinha emphasised that the role of teachers can no longer be limited to disseminating information. "In the coming days, teachers cannot remain just information providers. They must become mentors. Along with building skills and creativity, they must ensure students learn to chase their dreams," he said.

Quoting author Napoleon Hill, he said, "Dreams are the seedlings of reality. A burning desire to be and to do is the starting point from which a dreamer must take off."

The LG said teachers carry the profound responsibility of nurturing that desire in every student. "They must develop skills, inspire dreams, instill willpower and teach children the values of peace and brotherhood," he said, calling on educators to embrace a transformative approach aligned with India's aspirations for the future.

He said, "The world is experiencing transformative changes driven by cutting-edge technologies and schools must focus on using new tools to aid creativity."

The Lieutenant Governor applauded the legacy, enduring values and efforts of Lawrence Public School to holistic learning and shaping modern leaders. He said the school carrying forward its core values has produced successful alumni, who are proudly serving the nation.

He said, "Educational Institutions must pay special attention to four key aspects: Access, Equity, Quality, and Outcome. The dual goals for educators are to make students college-ready and future-ready and to familiarize them with continuously evolving skill sets, transforming them into 21st-century global citizens."

The Lieutenant Governor stated that the introduction of Artificial Intelligence will revolutionize the classroom, enabling teachers to use data analysis to understand student abilities and provide better mentoring.

He said, the hybrid classroom model, leveraging digital platforms, will ensure technology-driven education is accessible to all.

"Core responsibility of the teachers is to instil necessary skills, creativity, and give children dreams and determination. This also includes introducing them to their traditions, language, values, love, compassion, non-violence, and brotherhood," he said.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor felicitated women achievers for their significant contributions across various fields.

Satish Sharma, Minister for Youth Services & Sports, Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Science & Technology, Information Technology, ARI & Trainings; Vg. Cdr MM Joshi (Retd.), Chairman, Lawrence Public School; Manish Joshi, Managing Director; Ms Manya Joshi, Trustee; Shivani Joshi, Principal of School, teachers, students and parents were present.

Devyani Rana, Member of Legislative Assembly, Nagrota; Priya Sethi, former Minister of State; Padma Dr SP Varma, President, Gandhi Global Family, J&K; Lt Gen RK Sharma (Retd.), President, J&K Ex-Services League; heads of various institutions and senior officials also attended the celebrations. (KNO)

Success of 'Op Sindoor'

developing a network-enabled and technology-oriented Infantry force.

The event was attended by the Vice-Chief of Army Staff, Army Commanders, Infantry officers, regimental centre commandants and representatives from various Infantry formations. (KNO)

Oppn raising SIR

reason for your defeat is your leadership and not EVM or voters' list," the home minister said. "They think no one holds them accountable, 'bhagwan kare, I am proved wrong and one day Congress workers seek their accountability,'" he said.

Shah also accused the Opposition of spreading falsehoods on SIR and launched a strong defence of the exercise, asking whether democracy can be safe when the prime minister and the chief ministers are decided by 'ghuspathiye'.

He said the Opposition "gets angry when we talk of history, but how can any country or society move forward without history".

"The first SIR was conducted in 1952, when Jawaharlal Nehru was the prime minister and the Congress was in power. Then it happened in 1957 when Nehru was there, the third happened in 1961 and Nehru was there.

"Then it happened during Lal Bahadur Shastri's time, then again during Indira Gandhi's time, Rajiv Gandhi's time, Narasimha Rao's time, and then in 2002 during Atal Bihari Vajpayee's time which continued till Manmohan Singh's time," he said.

"No party had opposed this process because it is a process of keeping elections clean and keeping democracy healthy," Shah said.

He said the objective of the SIR of electoral rolls is to remove those who have died, add the names of those who have turned 18 and delete foreign nationals one by one.

"I want to say to the House and people -- Can a country's democracy be safe when the prime minister and the chief minister are decided by 'ghuspathiye,'" Shah said.

The BJP leader said the Opposition thinks that it is tarnishing the image of the government but in reality they are tarnishing the image of India's democracy.

"They kept on doing vote chori, vote chori, and took out 'ghuspathiye bachao yatra' and we won by 2/3rd majority in Bihar," he said.

The new tradition is that if they lose, they defame the EC and electoral rolls which is not good for the country's democracy.

"If electoral rolls were corrupted, why did you contest elections," Shah asked the Opposition in the Lok Sabha.

He said the BJP has lost more elections than it has won, but it never questioned the Election Commission.

"EVMs stopped election chori and that is why they are worried. Their method of election was not mandate but corrupt practices, and they have been fully exposed," he said.

Opposition worried as people of country do not vote for them and SIR will delete names of illegal immigrants who back them, he said.

Tradition of electoral loss began in 2014 and the Congress blamed EVMs, which were brought by Rajiv Gandhi in 1989, he said.

The EVMs were used for first time in 2004 and then in 2009 elections and on both occasions, the Congress won, but they started complaining only after 2014 loss, he said.

He stressed that Parliament is the biggest panchayat for discussions and the BJP-NDA people never run away from a discussion.

"We asked for having it later for two reasons -- they (Opposition) were asking for discussion on SIR and I believe discussion on SIR cannot be held because it comes under the Election Commission," Shah said.

"When they said we want to discuss election reforms, we agreed immediately. A debate was agreed on electoral reforms, but the majority of opposition members talked of SIR. On this SIR, one-sided falsehoods were being propagated in the last four months and efforts were made to mislead people," he said.

Adopt modern

Housing & Urban Development Department Mandeep Kaur, Divisional Commissioner

Jammu Ramesh Kumar, Director General Codes and Director General Budget, Managing Director, J&K Housing Board while as other senior officers posted outside Jammu participated through video conference.

The Board reviewed the minutes of the 51st meeting of the Board of Directors held on June 28, 2024 and action taken on the decisions.

During the meeting, the Board considered several agenda points, including proposals for development of a Mass Housing Colony at Birpur in Tehsil Bari Brahmana, District Samba, and construction of housing facilities on 41 Kanal 05 Marlas of land at Bhalwal, Jammu.

The Board also held detailed discussions on implementation of the J&K Rehabilitation Assistance Scheme, 2022 through the J&K Housing Board, engaging of legal counsel for court cases and filing of appeals before the Hon'ble High Court in various matters, and budgetary proposals for the financial years 2024-25 and 2025-26.

Chairing the meeting, the Chief Minister emphasized timely execution of housing projects, transparency in decision-making and strict monitoring of timelines. He directed that certain agenda items be reconsidered and revised to ensure greater financial prudence, technical soundness and long-term public benefit before being taken up for final decision.

Omar further directed the Housing Board to fast-track project implementation, adopt modern project management practices and ensure that affordable, safe and quality housing is delivered to the people, particularly to middle and lower income groups, emphasizing that projects to provide affordable housing for all sections of the society is the essential purpose for which J&K Housing Board has been established.

The Chief Minister also stressed rationalization of institutional structures, strengthening of financial discipline and enhanced coordination among departments to make the Housing Board more efficient and citizen-centric.

Drought concerns

Ramban 19.4 mm (-72.9%), Reasi 21.2 mm (-31.2%), Samba 1.0 mm (-88%), and Udhampur 7.6 mm (-83.1%), with a mean actual rainfall of 6.64 mm against a normal of 38.11 mm, indicating a deficit of 82.6%.

Faizan Arif of Kashmir Weather said the dry spell has persisted since November 5, with almost no rainfall across most parts of the Union Territory. "The prolonged absence of precipitation has significantly affected river flows, vegetation, and overall moisture levels," he said.

The water level of the Jhelum River at Sangam has fallen to -0.59 ft, slipping below the zero-gauge mark. While this is not the lowest level historically recorded, it is among the lowest readings observed in recent years. "With no major rainfall or snowfall forecast over the next seven days, river levels could decline further," Arif added.

The ongoing dry conditions have also heightened the risk of forest fires across many vulnerable zones in the region. "The combination of dry vegetation, lack of soil moisture, and daytime heating has created favourable conditions for fire outbreaks," he said.

Regarding broader climatic drivers, Arif cautioned against over-attributing the current dry spell to the Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO) or ENSO patterns.

"Linking the MJO directly to enhanced Western Disturbance activity after December 25 is misleading. Currently, the MJO is in Phase 8, close to the centre, and its amplitude is weak. A weak MJO has minimal influence on mid-latitude weather. Even if it lingers around Phase 8, there is no direct daily link to precipitation over Jammu and Kashmir," he explained.

Arif added that while statistical studies

suggest that certain MJO phases could enhance seasonal precipitation across Southwest Asia and the Middle East, this signal is probabilistic rather than a guarantee for specific rainfall events in the region.

Similarly, while some have attributed last year's dry winter to El Niño, this year's La Niña does not automatically imply a wetter winter.

"Atmospheric dynamics involve multiple interacting factors, including the North Atlantic Oscillation, Arctic circulation, the subtropical jet, Indian Ocean conditions, Eurasian snow cover, and internal variability. ENSO events merely tilt the odds for certain patterns rather than dictate them," he said.

Minimum temperatures recorded today in the Kashmir region include Srinagar at -1.9°C, Gulmarg at -5.5°C, and Zojila Pass at -18.0°C, while Jammu recorded 8.4°C and Banihal 5.4°C. In Ladakh, Leh registered -5.5°C and Kargil -5.1°C.

Arif said Western Disturbances have already increased in frequency and weak systems are expected to affect the region intermittently over the next two weeks, potentially bringing snowfall to higher reaches.

"Given the prolonged dry spell of over 50 days, it is reasonable to expect some precipitation in January unless unusual conditions persist," he added. (KNO)

Centre allocates 3

further informed the house that the government is supporting the adoption of Hydrogen Fuel Cell Technology under various R&D initiatives and pilot projects to assess feasibility in different terrains and climatic conditions, including high-altitude zones like J&K.

The ministry however clarified that no formal assessment has yet been conducted to evaluate the impact of HFC buses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the Union Territory. "Data collection and operational performance studies are underway across all deployment locations."

The National Hydrogen Mission aims to accelerate the use of green hydrogen in mobility, industry and energy sectors, with hydrogen-powered buses expected to play a future role in clean transportation—especially in environmentally sensitive regions like Jammu & Kashmir. (KNO)

Country's citizens

India's prosperity, India's resolve, India's dedication, India's sensitivity, India's simplicity, India's perseverance, India's culture, and India's dreams. For Savarkar, India was never merely a piece of land, but the centre of human civilization," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor said the national movement, inspired by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's 'Panch Pran' will fulfil Savarkar's vision and dreams.

He also stressed on countering the false narratives to protect historical truth and national pride.

The Lieutenant Governor extended his felicitation to all the award winners for their exceptional devotion and contribution to society and nation-building. He urged them to be the light to guide humanity towards peace, progress and prosperity.

"Veer Savarkar International Impact Award sends a message that the time has come to reclaim India's ancient glory and dedicate ourselves to achieving the goal of Viksit Bharat @ 2047," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Swami Atma Nambi, President, HRDS India; Dr. S. Krishna Kumar, Chairman Emeritus; K.G.Venugopal, Vice President; Aji Krishnan, Founder - Secretary, HRDS India; members of HRDS India and prominent citizens from

different walks of life attended the award ceremony.

Glaciers in J&K

Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, aims to establish Early Warning Systems to strengthen GLOF response.

The government said several Indian institutions and universities monitor Himalayan glaciers for studies, including glacier retreat and mass loss. The mean retreat rate of Hindu Kush Himalayan glaciers is 14.9 ± 15.1 metres per annum, with retreat rates varying across river basins.

NCPCR has been monitoring six glaciers in the Chandra basin in the western Himalaya since 2013, and field research is conducted through the 'Himansh' station.

Data shows the basin has lost about 6 per cent of its glacial area over 20 years. Annual retreat rates in the basin range from 13 to 33 metres.

The Union Minister further said more than 20 national institutions and state universities conduct glacier research, including the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research, Geological Survey of India, Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, National Institute of Hydrology, National Remote Sensing Centre, Divecha Centre for Climate Change, and universities in Delhi, Kashmir, Jammu, Ladakh, and several Indian Institutes of Technology.

Two glacial lakes in Sikkim — South Lhonak and Shako Cho — are monitored in real time.

Three Centres of Excellence for Glacial Studies were established at the Universities of Sikkim, Tezpur and Kashmir under programmes of the Department of Science and Technology.

On the ground, the retreat of glaciers such as Kolahoi is already reshaping ecosystems and livelihoods.

Once a major source of irrigation for rice paddies, apple orchards, saffron fields, and grazing lands, Kolahoi has thinned significantly, exposing bare rock and altering alpine habitats.

Scientists report that species such as musk deer, Himalayan ibex, and Hangul face shrinking habitats, while predators like snow leopards are increasingly spotted near villages.

Dr Shakeel Ahmad Romshoo, a renowned geologist and VC of IUST, said the glacier loses about 0.65 metres of ice thickness for every 1°C rise, reducing autumn streamflow and threatening water security downstream.

Historical data show Kolahoi has lost nearly a quarter of its area over six decades, with on-going pollution, deforestation, and rising temperatures accelerating melt.

Experts warn that continued retreat could reshape agriculture, biodiversity, and human settlements across Kashmir, while glacial lake outburst floods pose an additional hazard. (KNO)

10 vacancies of

Ladakh Union Territories.

The shortage is expected to go up as two sitting judges - Justice Vinod Chatterji Koul and Justice Javid Iqbal Wani - will retire on January 20, 2026, and March 23, 2026, respectively. Their retirement will raise the number of vacancies to 12.

Of the judges currently in position, eight are from the Bar quota and seven from the Service quota, leaving nine and one vacancies in these respective quotas. Appointments to the High Court are made under a 66:33 quota system, with 17 judges to be drawn from the Bar and eight from the judicial service. High Court judges are appointed by the President on recommendations of the Supreme Court Collegium. The process is initiated at the High Court level, where the Chief Justice, in consultation with the two senior-most judges of the court, identifies potential candidates for elevation. (KNO)

Deepavali inscribed on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list

PIB

New Delhi, Dec 10: Deepavali, one of India's most widely celebrated living traditions, has now been inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity today during the 20th Session of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee, held at the Red Fort, New Delhi

The inscription was adopted in the presence of Union Minister of Culture Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Shri Vivek Aggarwal Secretary, Ministry of Culture, along with the senior officials of Ministry of Culture and delegates from 194 Member States, international experts, and representatives of UNESCO's global network.

Addressing the international delegates, the Union Minister of Culture stated that the inscription marks a moment of immense pride for India and for communities across the world who keep alive the timeless spirit of Deepavali. Minister noted that the festival embodies



the universal message of "Tamso Ma Jyotirgamaya" the transition from darkness to light, symbolising hope, renewal, and harmony.

Highlighting the living and people-centric nature of the festival, the Union Minister emphasised that Deepavali thrives through the contributions of millions including potters crafting traditional diyas, artisans preparing festive decor, farmers, sweet makers, priests, and households that uphold age-old

customs. The recognition, the Minister noted, is a tribute to the collective cultural labour that sustains this tradition.

Union Minister also acknowledged the vibrant role of the Indian diaspora, whose celebrations across Southeast Asia, Africa, the Gulf, Europe, and the Caribbean have carried the message of Deepavali across continents and strengthened cultural bridges.

The inscription brings with it

a renewed responsibility to safeguard and transmit this heritage to future generations. Union Minister urged citizens to embrace the spirit of inclusivity and unity reflected in Deepavali and to continue supporting India's rich intangible cultural traditions. Recognised for its deep cultural significance and its role as a people's festival celebrated across regions, communities, and the global Indian diaspora, Deepavali embodies the principles of unity, renewal and social cohesion. Its diverse practices such as lighting of diyas, rangoli making, traditional crafts, rituals, community gatherings, and intergenerational transmission of knowledge reflect the festival's enduring vitality and its ability to adapt across time and geography. The nomination, prepared by the Ministry of Culture through the Sangeet Natak Akademi, followed an extensive nationwide consultation involving practitioners, artisans, agrarian communities, diaspora groups, individuals with

special needs, transgender communities, cultural organisations, and tradition bearers from across India. Their collective testimonies highlighted Deepavali's inclusive character, its community-led continuity, and its wide ecosystem of livelihoods from potters and rangoli artists to sweet-makers, florists, and craftspeople.

UNESCO's inscription acknowledges Deepavali as a living heritage that strengthens social bonds, supports traditional craftsmanship, reinforces values of generosity and wellbeing, and contributes meaningfully to several Sustainable Development Goals, including livelihood enhancement, gender equality, cultural education and community welfare.

The Ministry of Culture welcomed the decision, noting that the inscription will further promote global awareness about India's intangible cultural heritage and reinforce efforts to safeguard community-based traditions for future generations.

IndiGo crisis: Why situation precipitated, Delhi HC asks Centre

Flags loss to economy



PTI

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Wednesday questioned the Central government as to why the situation that led to the cancellation of a number of flights by IndiGo precipitated, and termed it a "crisis". The high court said besides trouble and harassment caused to the stranded passengers, the question is of the losses caused to the country's economy.

A bench of Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela also asked how other airlines could take advantage of the crisis situation and charge hefty sums for tickets from the passengers.

"The ticket which was available for Rs 5,000, the prices went up to Rs 30,000 to Rs 35,000. If there was a crisis, how could other airlines be permitted to take advantage? How can it (ticket price) go up to Rs 35,000 and Rs 39,000? How could other airlines start charging," asked the bench, which heard the matter for more than one-and-a-half hours.

The bench directed that by January 22, the next date of hearing, if the inquiry initiated by a committee is complete, its report should be submitted to the court in a sealed cover. "We appreciate the steps taken by the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the DGCA but what bothers us is how such a situation was allowed to precipitate, leading to stranding of lakhs of passengers at airports across the country.

"This has not only caused trouble to the passengers but also affected the economy of the country as in the present day, fast movement of passengers is an important aspect to keep the economy moving," the bench said. The court was informed by the counsel for the Centre and the Directorate General of

Civil Aviation (DGCA) that the statutory mechanism was totally in place and a show-cause notice was issued to IndiGo, which apologised profusely.

The government's counsel also said the crisis precipitated on account of various non-compliances of the guidelines issued by the authorities from time to time, including flight duty hours of the crew members. It said the unprecedented surge has been controlled and capped, which was never done before.

The court was hearing a public interest litigation seeking directions to the Centre to provide support and refunds to passengers affected by the cancellation of hundreds of flights by IndiGo. During the hearing, the bench expressed dissatisfaction over the manner in which the petition was filed without any research and documentation.

The counsel for IndiGo informed the court that the crisis occurred on account of multitude of factors, including unforeseen issues. The court directed the airline to make arrangements for compensating the stranded passengers, not only for cancellation of flights but also for other troubles caused to them.

"Since a committee has already been constituted where IndiGo will have an opportunity to put forth its case, we refrain from making any observation as to the reason for disruptions of flight operations of respondent No. 3 (airline).

"While we have taken cognisance of the issue in public interest, we make it clear that the observations are aimed to ensure that best public interest is served both by the government and the airline (IndiGo)," the bench said.

The court also directed the authorities to ensure that the situation normalises soon and all airlines employ adequate number of pilots.

Commercial tower in Dubai named after Shah Rukh Khan sold out for over Rs 5K cr



PTI

Dubai, Dec 10: Danube Group has sold a one million sq ft premium commercial tower in Dubai, named after Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan, for over Rs 5,000 crore on strong demand for office space.

Dubai-based Danube Properties is developing a commercial tower 'SHAHRUKHZ by Danube' on Sheikh Zayed Road here at a total cost of around Rs 3,500 crore. At an event held on late Tuesday at the Dubai Exhibition Centre, Danube group Founder and Chairman Rizwan Sajan announced that the tower has been completely sold out. The event, which was attended by Shah Rukh Khan, saw participation of around 7,000 people, including real estate brokers. The company has achieved sales bookings of AED 2.1 billion (over Rs 5,000 crore) from the tower, much higher than initial estimates.

"To see a project of this scale in Dubai carry my name is both an honour and a reminder of

how generosity and vision can come together. Dubai has always embraced me with warmth - it's a city built on courage, imagination, and the belief that nothing is impossible," Khan said.

Last month in Mumbai, Danube Group in presence of the Bollywood actor had launched the 55-storey commercial tower for sale. The company will complete this tower by 2029.

When asked about the total project cost, Sajan on Monday had told PTI that it would be around Rs 3,500 crore including land, and construction among other expenses.

He said the investment would be met through internal accruals and advances from customers against sales.

"The commercial project is set to become one of the most prestigious business landmarks in Dubai," said Rizwan Sajan, who is an Indian, born in Mumbai. Considering the success of this project, Both Rizwan Sajan and Shah Rukh Khan hinted that there could be more towers named after him.

India-US trade talks progressing, US team in Delhi for negotiations: Goyal

PTI

Jaipur, Dec 10: Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Wednesday said talks with the US on the proposed bilateral trade agreement are progressing.

He said that the US team is in New Delhi for the negotiations.

"Talks are continuously progressing with them. We are moving forward towards a bilateral trade agreement," Goyal told reporters here at the Pravasi Rajasthani Divas. He indicated that he may meet the visiting US official team.

A delegation led by Deputy US Trade Representative (USTR) Rick Switzer is in the national capital for two-day trade talks with his Indian counterpart Rajesh Agrawal.

The US' chief negotiator for the pact, Assistant US Trade Representative for South and Central Asia Brendan Lynch, will hold discussions with India's chief negotiator and Joint Secretary in the Department of Commerce, Darpan Jain.

The visit is crucial as India and the US are working to finalise the first tranche of the pact. This is the US officials' second trip since the imposition of a 25 per cent tariff and an additional 25 per cent penalty on Indian goods entering the American market due to the purchase of Russian crude oil. The US officials last visited India on September 16.

On September 22, Goyal also led an official delegation to the



US for trade talks. He had also visited Washington in May. The talks are also important as Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal had recently stated that India is hopeful of reaching a framework trade deal this year itself, which should address the tariff issue to the benefit of Indian exporters.

While noting that the Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) will take time, Agrawal said that India is engaged in protracted negotiations with the US on a framework trade deal that will address the reciprocal tariff challenge faced by Indian exporters.

India and the US are having two parallel negotiations -- one on a framework trade deal to address tariffs and another on a comprehensive trade deal.

In February, leaders of the two countries directed officials to negotiate an agreement. It

was planned to conclude the first tranche of the pact by the fall of 2025. So far, six rounds of negotiations have been held. The agreement aims to more than double bilateral trade to USD 500 billion by 2030, from the current USD 191 billion.

The US remained India's largest trading partner for the fourth consecutive year in 2024-25, with bilateral trade valued at USD 131.84 billion (USD 86.5 billion exports).

The US accounts for about 18 per cent of India's total goods exports, 6.22 per cent of its imports, and 10.73 per cent of its total merchandise trade. According to exporters, the agreement is important as India's merchandise exports to the US declined for the second consecutive month in October, falling by 8.58 per cent to USD 6.3 billion due to the hefty tariffs imposed by Washington.

Health experts warn about dangerous side of energy drinks no one talks about

TOI HEALTH

New Delhi, Dec 10: A recent case study highlights a serious stroke risk linked to excessive energy drink consumption. A man who drank eight daily experienced dangerously high blood pressure and a stroke. Health experts are now urging for stricter regulations on sales and advertising, especially for younger demographics, due to potential cardiovascular dangers beyond caffeine.

Do you grab energy drinks like they're fuel for survival? If so, this is your sign to hit pause. They might make you feel energetic for a while, but energy drinks can do more harm than good. A new case study published in the journal BMJ Case Reports suggests that increased consumption of energy drinks may pose a serious stroke risk. The findings have prompted health experts to call for tighter regulation of the sales and advertising of these drinks.

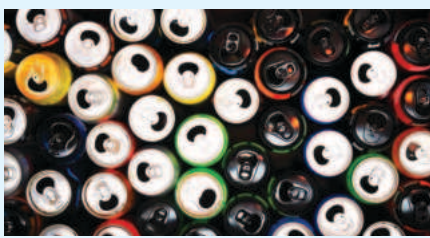
Silent Heart Attack Symptoms Women Often Miss | Spot the Warning Before It's Too Late | Dr Rajeev Agrawal

A man with a mystery illness
Energy drinks are popular among young people. From fitness enthusiasts to those pulling an all-nighter, many youngsters

consume energy drinks to stay alert, energetic, and focused. However, this case study warns of the possible risk of a serious stroke in people who consume too many strong energy drinks daily. A healthy man in his 50s was rushed to hospital with a stroke in his thalamus, the part of the brain involved in sensory perception and movement. He experienced weakness on his left side, along with numbness. He also had other difficulties with balance, walking, swallowing, and speech, collectively known as ataxia. Upon admission, doctors found his blood pressure was 254/150 mm Hg, which is considered extremely high.

The doctors began administering drugs to lower his blood pressure, and his systolic pressure, reflecting arterial pressure during the heart's pumping action, fell to 170 mm Hg. Once he returned home, his blood pressure began to rise again, remaining persistently high despite the escalation of his medication.

Doctors then asked the man more about his daily diet and habits, which led to a shocking revelation. He drank an average of eight energy drinks every day, each containing 160 mg of caffeine, amounting to a daily intake of 1,200-1,300 mg. The recommended maximum daily intake of caffeine is 400 mg,



according to the CDC. The doctors advised him to quit energy drinks, and his blood pressure returned to normal. Blood pressure-lowering drugs were no longer needed. However, despite this, the man did not regain full feeling on his left side. "I obviously wasn't aware of the dangers drinking energy drinks was causing to myself. I have been left with numbness in my left hand, foot, and toes even after eight years," he said. Another 2024 study published in the journal Heart Rhythm, doctors cautioned that energy drinks may trigger life-threatening cardiac arrhythmias in patients with genetic heart diseases

Energy drinks linked to increased cardiovascular risk

The man's lack of awareness about the potential cardiovascular risks associated with

heavy energy drink consumption led to the medical emergency. However, the authors of the report said they were not surprised, as many people remain unaware of the potential cardiovascular disease risks of energy drinks.

"The year 2018 saw major UK supermarkets implement a voluntary ban on sales of [these drinks] to under-16s in a drive to tackle obesity, diabetes, and tooth decay, but less explored are the possible increased risks of [energy drinks] for cardiovascular disease, including ischaemic [restricted blood supply or blood clot] and haemorrhagic [bleed in the brain] strokes, particularly in younger demographics otherwise expected to have lower stroke risk," they said.

Energy drinks contain more than 150 mg of caffeine per litre. Most are also very high in glucose-based sugar content and varying quantities of other chemicals. "This declared amount is the 'pure caffeine', but other ingredients contain 'hidden caffeine'—for example, guarana is thought to contain caffeine at twice the concentration of a coffee bean. The hypothesis is that the interaction of these other ingredients, including taurine, guarana, ginseng, and glucuronolactone, potentiates the effects of caffeine, heightening stroke

[cardiovascular disease] risk through numerous mechanisms," they explained. The authors also warned that energy drinks may contain high levels of caffeine. "The average [energy drink] is said to contain around 80 mg of caffeine per 250 ml serving, compared with 30 mg in tea and 90 mg in coffee, but in some cases can contain up to 500 mg in a single serving," they said.

They added that this report represents just one case. "While the current evidence is not conclusive, given the accumulating literature, the high morbidity and mortality associated with stroke and [cardiovascular disease], and the well-documented adverse health effects of high-sugar drinks, we propose that increased regulation of [energy drink] sales and advertising campaigns (which are often targeted at younger ages) could be beneficial to the future cerebrovascular and cardiovascular health of our society."

Note: The information provided in this article is for educational purposes only and is not intended as medical advice. Always consult a qualified healthcare professional before starting any new medication or treatment, or before changing your diet or supplement regimen.

Australia’s social media ban won’t stop cyberbullying

PTI/THE CONVERSATION

Perth (Australia), Dec 10: The Australian Federal government’s Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act, commonly referred to as the “social media ban”, is now in effect.

In the months leading up to the ban, there have been a lot of stories about what will actually happen once the legislation is active, and many people believe the ban will prevent cyberbullying. It won’t – because bullying is a social problem, which can’t be solved with a quick technical fix.

What is happening?
The ban requires that social media platforms take reasonable steps to prevent Australians under the age of 16 from having an account on those platforms.

The platforms definitely included in the ban are Facebook, Instagram, Threads, Kick, Reddit, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitch, X (née Twitter) and YouTube.

This list is dynamic and will likely change and grow over time.

Some platforms are, initially at least, definitely not subject to the ban, including Discord, GitHub, Google Classroom, LEGO Play, Messenger, Pinterest, Roblox, Steam and Steam Chat, WhatsApp and YouTube Kids. What isn’t happening?
There are a lot of myths and

misunderstandings circulating about the ban. Some people have the impression the ban is a broad piece of legislation to prevent any online harms children and young people might encounter. It isn’t.

Rather, this legislation narrowly targets social media platforms, and can only prevent teens and young people from having an account on those platforms. Despite recent concerns raised about the gaming platform Roblox, for example, it is not subject to the ban as its primary purpose is gaming, not social media.

Similarly, while teens may not be able to have accounts on these platforms, they may still be able to access content on many of them.

On YouTube, for example, under-16s can still watch public YouTube videos. They just can’t subscribe to channels, like videos or leave comments.

Cyberbullying
Cyberbullying – or bullying that extends into online spaces and platforms – is a significant issue for young Australians.

A 2021 report found that more than one third of Australian young people had experienced bullying online within a six month period.

Many teens, parents and trusted adults hope the ban will prevent cyberbullying. Some of the most recognisable faces and loudest voices



promoting the ban are bereaved parents who believe their children were cyberbullied to the point of suicide.

That is incredibly tragic, and any parent in that situation would understandably be pushing for change so no one else has that awful experience.

Unfortunately, the social media ban will not stop cyberbullying.

In fact, it may not reduce cyberbullying significantly at all.

While under-16s won’t have Snapchat and Instagram accounts, they will still have access to messaging platforms such as WhatsApp, Messenger, Discord and others.

peers, colleagues and classmates, and much less often strangers.

In some ways the term cyberbullying itself is unhelpful. It puts focus on the “cyber” component, when the bullying is actually the problem.

Bullying is widespread in Australian schools and well beyond.

Dealing with cyberbullying

If you or a young person you know is facing cyberbullying, there is plenty of guidance available.

Youth mental health service Reachout offers very clear advice for young Australians on how to deal with cyberbullying.

Strategies include slowing down before young people respond to bullying content, taking the space to calm down before doing anything, keeping screenshots and evidence, trying not to check for new messages or content too often, and blocking or reporting those doing the bullying.

For parents and trusted adults supporting young people dealing with bullying, the eSafety Commissioner’s website also provides clear, actionable advice. Indeed, having the support of at least one trusted adult is a key part in helping young people navigate and cope with experiences of cyberbullying.

The social media ban is a fairly blunt tool, and does not have the complexity needed to directly address or necessarily even reduce

cyberbullying. However, if the ban allows Australian families to continue, or even begin, conversations about young people’s experiences online, then that’s of real value to young Australians.

For parents and trusted adults, keeping that conversation going is vital. An open door to a trusted adult is key to supporting young people, no matter what they experience online.

For under-16s, they should keep in mind that they have not broken the law if they get around the ban. The onus is entirely on platforms to prevent under 16s having accounts.

No magic button
Under-16s, their parents, and their trusted adults, should feel perfectly able and safe to have full and frank conversations about any online experiences, including on social media platforms. There is no quick fix, no magic button that will stop cyberbullying. The social media ban certainly won’t do it – and it shouldn’t give young people or adults a false sense of security.

For young Australians, having access to trusted adults is vital to reducing online bullying, building resilience, and shifting the culture.

In situations where trusted adults are not available, young people should remember organisations like ReachOut, Headspace and the Kids Helpline (1800 551 800) are there to provide support, too.

‘He’s like an elder brother to me’: Jitesh Sharma shrugs off Sanju Samson ‘rivalry’

PTI

Cuttack, Dec 10: Jitesh Sharma, who has emerged as India’s preferred wicketkeeper-batter in T20 format with less than two months left for the World Cup, has played down his ‘competition’ with Sanju Samson in the squad, saying it only brings out his “A-game” to the fore, strengthening the side. India once again preferred Jitesh over Sanju for the opening T20I of the five-match series against South Africa, a game the hosts won convincingly by 101 runs at Barabati Stadium on Tuesday.

“He (Sanju) is a great player. If you have to compete against him and play shoulder to shoulder, then I have to bring my A-game. I think we both are trying to play for India, not for other teams,” the 32-year-old said at the post-match interaction.

Sanju, who finished last year as India’s leading T20I run-getter with 436 runs including three centuries, had formed a formidable opening pairing with Abhishek Sharma.

But the return of Shubman Gill to the T20I top order has unsettled the batting line-up, pushing Sanju lower than his preferred opening position.

Over 1 billion people faced childhood sexual violence in 2023: Lancet

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 10: Over a billion individuals worldwide aged 15 and above had experienced sexual violence during childhood, while around 608 million females were exposed to intimate partner violence in 2023, according to estimates published in The Lancet journal.

Highest prevalence of both intimate partner and sexual violence were found to be concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. In these regions, the health impacts of violence are compounded by high rates of HIV and other chronic conditions, researchers noted.

In India, prevalence of intimate partner violence was estimated at 23 per cent among women aged 15 and above. Over 30 per cent of women and 13 per cent of men aged 15 and above are estimated to have experienced sexual violence as a child. The researchers



analysed data from the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) Study 2023, the “largest, most comprehensive effort to quantify health loss across places and over time”. The US’ University of Washington coordinates the GBD study.

“Globally, in 2023, we estimated that 608 million females aged 15 years and older had ever been exposed to IPV (intimate partner violence), and 1.01 billion individuals aged 15 years and older had experienced sexual violence during childhood,” the authors wrote. The study provides new evidence

linking sexual violence against children and intimate partner violence to a wider range of health outcomes than previously recognised, resulting in significantly higher levels of health loss and disability, they added.

Anxiety and major depressive disorders were among the eight leading causes of disability developed as a result of intimate partner violence, while experiencing sexual violence as a child was associated with 14 health outcomes, including mental health and substance use disorders and chronic illnesses.

Intimate partner violence was linked to 145,000 deaths worldwide, mostly from homicide, suicide, and HIV/AIDS. The researchers also estimated nearly 30,000 women to have been killed by their partners in 2023.

Exposure to sexual violence as a child was associated with 290,000 deaths worldwide in 2023, predominantly from suicide, HIV/AIDS, and type 2 diabetes, the study found.

Self-harm and schizophrenia were found to be the leading causes of disability among men -- and anxiety the leading cause among women -- due to sexual violence during childhood, especially in south Asia.

Addressing violence against women and children is not only a matter of human rights but also a crucial public health priority that can save millions of lives, improve mental health outcomes, and build resilient communities, the researchers said.

Injuries test you mentally; wanted to come back stronger, bigger, better: Hardik Pandya

PTI

Cuttack, Dec 10: India’s ace all-rounder Hardik Pandya feels a positive mindset has helped him return to the ground “stronger, bigger and better” after injury setbacks led to self-doubt.

Pandya’s return from a nearly two-month layoff due left quadriceps injury propelled India to a massive 101-run win against South Africa in the opening T20I here on Tuesday.

The 32-year-old all-rounder blazed to an unbeaten 28-ball 59 and 1/16 with the ball as he announced his return to the side after suffering the injury during the Asia Cup.

“My mindset was really about coming back stronger, bigger, better. Injuries test you mentally and at the same point in time, it kind of puts a lot of doubts...and a lot of credit to the loved ones,” said Pandya in a video posted on bcci.tv.

“I’ve stood strong, I’ve done a lot of things with grace and that has helped me to become even more confident, back myself and really trust my skillset...I really believe in myself as a player. I’ve always believed that



if you don’t believe in yourself, how would others believe you.” Pandya, who will be a key member in India’s T20 World Cup campaign in two-months’ time, added.

The cricketer said that he is someone who derives confidence from within and doesn’t bother too much about what others think about him.

“I think I have been a very honest, very real person in life as well, which has helped me a lot. I don’t really sugarcoat a lot of things in my life. It’s never about the other person, it’s never about how others think or how others perceive. It’s always about how I feel inside.

Pressure mounts on Gill as India look to press advantage in Mullanpur



PTI

Mullanpur, Dec 10: Yet to stamp his authority in the shortest format, Shubman Gill would be eying major gains on home soil when a well-rounded India look to extend their dominance over South Africa in the second T20 International here on Thursday.

With only a travel day separating the first two games of the five-match series, Gill won’t mind getting straight into the middle in search of a substantial knock.

India steamrolled South Africa in the series opener but the mid-dling returns from Gill, since his T20 comeback in Asia Cup back in September, remains a talking point.

Following an impressive debut as Test captain in the UK, Gill was brought back into the T20 setup. Even though Sanju Samson and his Punjab teammate Abhishek Sharma were doing the job at the top of the

order, the team management showed immense faith in Gill’s abilities as a T20 opener. The batter from Kerala was displaced and he has since then struggled to find a place in the playing eleven. The Test and ODI captain can seamlessly perform the role that Virat Kohli performed for India till the T20 World Cup last year but the team, with batting options till number eight, has doubled down on its fearless approach since the triumph in Barbados, leaving little room for an anchor. Gill certainly can’t go hammer and tongs like Abhishek Sharma in the powerplay and therefore needs to figure out what works best for him.

Besides Gill, captain Suryakumar Yadav, who has failed to find consistency over the past 12 months, is also facing additional scrutiny. Couple of months down the line, Suryakumar would be leading India’s World Cup defence at home and considering the added responsibility, flow

of runs from his bat form a crucial piece of the puzzle heading into the ICC showpiece.

In the colder environment of New Chandigarh, India are unlikely to tinker with the winning combination.

Returning to national duty from injury, Hardik Pandya reaffirmed his status as the leading all-rounder in the game. His 28-ball 59 made a massive difference on a sticky wicket while it took him one ball to make an impact with the ball.

The selection on Tuesday also indicated that two strike bowlers, Arshdeep Singh and Kuldeep Yadav, will not be part of the same eleven due to the need for batting till number eight.

Arshdeep got the nod on this occasion and India’s leading wicket-taker in the format was once again able to provide the early wickets bowling alongside Jasprit Bumrah.

South Africa, on the other hand, would be looking for a drastically better outing with the bat after being bundled out for 74 in the run chase of 176. There is no time to reflect on the scale of the defeat and that can only be a good thing for the visitors.

“Nowadays in T20 cricket, there’s not much time to look around and absorb. But the biggest factor was obviously not being able to build partnerships, settling after losing wickets and getting some momentum on our side. So yeah, we’ll have brief conversations,” said skipper Aiden Markram.

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SRINAGAR

MOVIES WATCHLIST

Thursday, 11th December

JOE STUDIOS PRESENTS
A RIZ STUDIOS PRODUCTION
AN ARVIND KASHYAP FILM
DHURANDHAR
HINDI ATMOS - 02:05 PM, 06:15 PM
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