



Let the victory over Polio continue with

Two Drops of Life

India is polio free. But polio still exists in few countries and it may come back. Ensure your child's complete protection. Make sure polio vaccine is given every time so that India maintains its victory over polio.

Department of Information & Public Relations, J&K

Polio Day
21 December 2025
Sunday
In all districts

Ensure every child under 5 years of age gets polio drops everytime

Dated: 16-12-2025
DIPK-9023/25

@diprjk @dipr_jk @informationprjk Information & PR, J&K

‘VIJAY DIVAS’

India’s decisive victory in 1971 war made country proud on global stage: LG Sinha

Lauds GoC Mishra for installing 108-foot-high mast National Flag at Kachrial

KNO News Desk

Jammu, Dec 16: Reaffirming the nation's collective resolve to uphold the ideals for which generations of soldiers have made the supreme sacrifice of their lives, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday said that India's decisive victory in the 1971 war, made the country proud on the global stage.

Paying homage to the martyrs, soldiers and officers, on the occasion of ‘Vijay Divas’ LG Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) unveiled a majestic 108-foot-high mast National Flag at Kachrial.

Addressing the gathering, the Lieutenant Governor said, “The land of Kachrial not only holds historical significance but it is also a holy land for the countrymen as every inch of this place gratefully remembers those brave soldiers who laid down their lives while guarding



sovereignty and integrity of the nation in 1965 and 1971 wars.”

He said, “May our beloved and victorious Tricolor fly high in the world,” reaffirming the nation's collective resolve to uphold the ideals for which generations of soldiers have made the supreme sacrifice.

LG Sinha paid heartfelt homage to the martyrs, soldiers

and officers whose unmatched valour and courage ensured India's decisive victory in the 1971 war, making the country proud on the global stage.

Highlighting the historical and emotional significance of Kachrial, LG Sinha described it as a sacred land for every Indian. “The land of Kachrial not only holds historical significance

but it is also a holy land for the countrymen, as every inch of this place gratefully remembers those brave soldiers who laid down their lives while guarding the sovereignty and integrity of the nation during the 1965 and 1971 wars,” he said.

The Lieutenant Governor lauded the Indian Army for the thoughtful initiative and congratulated the General Officer Commanding (GoC) 16 Corps, Lieutenant General PK Mishra, for installing the towering national flag. He termed the gesture as a powerful symbol of the nation's gratitude towards its armed forces and their unwavering commitment to the defence of the country.

“Our Tricolour is a symbol of our freedom, of our self-respect, and of sacrifices and martyrdom,” LG Sinha said, adding that the flag inspires every citizen to rise above self-interest and work for the unity and progress of the nation. [| More on P6](#)

Kashmir rivers, springs dry up amid drought like situation

Experts warn situation may worsen, increase forest fire risk

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Dec 16: Reduced snowfall and prolonged dry weather are having a severe impact on rivers, streams, and springs across Kashmir, marking a sharp contrast to December months in the past, when the region usually remained clad with thick snow blanket.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) level of river Jhelum, considered to be Kashmir's lifeline, has fallen to 0.65 meters at key points such as Sangam and Pampore. Its lowest level this season.

Several tributaries have dried up, while many natural springs in Pulwama, Shopian, and Bandipora have reduced flow, affecting drinking water in these areas, said an official.

He said that monitoring wells show groundwater levels dropping between 0.5 and 3 meters, and wetlands are



shrinking, impacting migratory birds.

“Every year, the situation worsens. Farmers are anxious as irrigation water is limited, and household supplies are strained,” said Bashir Ahmad, of Pulwama.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) reported a 17 per cent rainfall deficit across Jammu and Kashmir during the post-monsoon season from October 1 to December 10, with Srinagar recording a 47

per cent shortfall.

Other districts such as Baramulla (-67 per cent), Bandipora (-65 per cent), Shopian (-78 per cent), and Kargil (-93 per cent) also recorded below-average precipitation, while some districts, including Samba and Jammu, received excess rainfall.

Officials said the current dry spell, with minimal Western Disturbances bringing precipitation, has directly caused the [| More on P6](#)

LG Sinha pays tribute to J&K Police martyrs

KT News Desk

Jammu, Dec 16: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha paid homage to J&K Police Braveheart Ct. Amjid Ali Khan, who laid down his life in the service of the nation during an anti-terror operation in Udhampur.

“I salute the supreme sacrifice of our J&K Police Braveheart Ct. Amjid Ali Khan. The nation shall remain forever grateful to his exemplary valour and selfless devotion to duty. We stand in solidarity with the bereaved family of our martyr in this difficult hour,” the Lieutenant Governor said.

Meanwhile, LG Manoj Sinha has expressed grief over the passing away of Havildar Zubair Ahmad of the 13 Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry (J&K LI), who made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty. Havildar Zubair Ahmad succumbed to injuries sustained during a road construction blast on December 15 at Putaha [| More on P6](#)

India slams Pakistan, calls it 'global epicentre of terror' at UNSC

ANI

United Nations, Dec 16: India on Monday (local time) delivered a stinging rebuttal to Pakistan at the United Nations Security Council Open Debate on “Leadership for Peace”, firmly rejecting Islamabad's claims over Jammu and Kashmir's “unresolved disputes” as “unwarranted”, reiterating that the Union Territory along with Ladakh are an integral and inalienable part of India, and emphasising that they “were, are, and will always remain so.”

Referring to Pakistan's comments during the debate, India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Harish Parvathaneni, labelled Pakistan as the “global epicentre of terror” while calling it out for using the UN



platform to further its “obsessive focus on harming India and its people.”

He added that Pakistan, pursuing a divisive agenda, undermines its international responsibilities as a non-permanent UNSC member.

“I refer to the statement made by the representative of Pakistan today. India would like to reiterate that the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir [| More on P6](#)

India fences over 93% Pak border: MHA

‘Key to national security, prevent infiltration, curb smuggling’

Sajid Raina

New Delhi, Dec 16: Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Tuesday said that India has physically fenced more than 93% of its international border with Pakistan.

In a written reply to a query by two Trinamool Congress MPs, Jagdish Chandra Barma Basunia and Sharmila Sarkar, regarding the unfenced portions of India's international borders, Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), informed the Lok Sabha that fencing has been completed along 2,135.136 kilometres, accounting for 93.25 per cent of the total 2,289.66-kilometre India-Pakistan border.

The remaining 154.524 kilometres, or 6.75 per cent, is yet to be fenced, the reply added. It stated that border fencing



remains a key component of India's strategy to curb infiltration and enhance national security.

Notably, in total, India has a land border of 15,106.7 km and a coastline of 7,516.6 km, sharing boundaries with seven neighbouring countries.

The government's efforts to fence the Pakistan border are part of broader measures to secure India's sensitive

western frontier.

The government said fencing work along the remaining stretches is underway, with challenges in difficult terrains and strategically sensitive areas.

The completed fencing is expected to enhance surveillance, reduce cross-border smuggling, and prevent infiltration by hostile elements.

India has [| More on P6](#)

CIK busts terror-linked social activism network in Kashmir

12 suspects detained, incriminating digital material, SIM cards seized

KNO Correspondent

Srinagar, Dec 16: In a decisive blow to anti-national elements operating under the garb of social activism, Counter Intelligence Kashmir (CIK) on Tuesday conducted coordinated searches across multiple districts of the Kashmir, exposing a clandestine terror-support ecosystem masquerading as voices of social change.

In a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), a CIK spokesman said: “The searches were carried out in connection with FIR No. 03/2023, registered at Police Station CIK Srinagar under Sections 505 & 153-A IPC and Sections 13 & 18 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

The action [| More on P6](#)

At ₹8.40 crore, Baramulla’s Auqib Nabi scripts history for J&K at IPL auction

Joins Delhi Capitals; family, fans, cricketing fraternity in Kashmir celebrate; father says ‘prayers answered’

Waris Fayaz/Jahangeer Ganaie

Baramulla, Dec 16: Jammu and Kashmir cricket scripted a historic chapter at the IPL Season 19 mini auction as Baramulla-born pacer Auqib Nabi Dar was snapped up by Delhi Capitals for a staggering Rs 8.40 crore, making him one of the most expensive Indian players at the auction.

The high-profile signing, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), not only highlights Auqib's meteoric rise in Indian domestic cricket but also marks a proud and defining moment for Jammu and Kashmir—a region that continues to produce quality cricketers despite limited

infrastructure and exposure.

Reacting to his son's big breakthrough, Auqib's father, Ghulam Nabi Dar said celebrations had begun at home, with emotions running high.

“The atmosphere here is completely festive. We always believed in Auqib's hard work and dedication. This moment is a reward for years of struggle and sacrifice,” he told KNO.

The father expressed his pride, saying, “It's a dream come true. Auqib has worked so hard for this. Initially, I was against his obsession with cricket, but over time, I realised it was his passion.”

Dar, a school teacher, added, “It feels like all our prayers have been answered. I want every young person to choose sports and stay away



from drugs. It's the true path of discipline and purpose.”

Leading the J&K contingent at the auction, the 28-year-old

right-arm pacer has steadily carved a reputation as one of the most reliable fast bowlers on the domestic circuit.

Known for his ability to swing the ball, maintain disciplined lines and lengths, and perform under pressure, Auqib has been a consistent match-winner for Jammu and Kashmir across formats.

Auqib's breakthrough came in the most recent Ranji Trophy season, where he delivered a series of match-defining spells and finished with an impressive 44 wickets, placing him among the top wicket-takers in the country. His performances against established domestic sides did not go unnoticed, eventually triggering a competitive bidding [| More on P6](#)

Cold wave tightens grip across Kashmir

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Dec 16: Cold conditions intensified across Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh on Tuesday as minimum temperatures dropped sharply at most places, plunging several areas of the Kashmir Valley well below the freezing point compared to the previous day.

As per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), in the Kashmir region, Srinagar recorded a minimum temperature of minus 1.8 degrees Celsius, a sharp fall from 1.9 degrees Celsius recorded a day earlier. Qazigund settled at minus 2.2 degrees Celsius against 2.2 degrees Celsius on Monday, while Pahalgam recorded [| More on P6](#)

Army intensifies patrols in LoC higher reaches, hinterland to keep terrorists at bay

Yogesh

Jammu, Dec 16: The Army has intensified patrols in the higher reaches of the Jammu region to prevent infiltration and maintain constant vigil over sensitive areas along the Line of Control.

Sources told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) Army has strengthened its presence along high ridges, dense forests, and mountain passes – regions that usually become inaccessible after heavy snowfall.

“This is part of the Army's winter security plan. During the cold season, fog, mist, and reduced civilian movement can create favourable conditions for terrorist activity,” they said, adding, “The lack of snow this



season could potentially be exploited by terrorists attempting to infiltrate these areas.”

In districts like Rajouri and Poonch, there are several mountain caves where infiltrators often hide after crossing the border.

While the upper reaches of Ramban, Reasi, Kishtwar, Doda and Kathua [| More on P6](#)

CS reviews mining reforms, revenue mobilisation, tech-driven enforcement in J&K

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, DECEMBER 16: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, Tuesday chaired a review meeting of the Mining Department to assess the progress of mining sector reforms, revenue realisation measures, technological interventions and enforcement mechanisms aimed at curbing illegal mining across J&K.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary, as per an official statement reviewed the department's performance in implementing policy reforms, auctioning of mineral blocks and strengthening monitoring systems, while underscoring the need for transparency, sustainability and maximisation of revenue from mineral resources.

The Chief Secretary, on the occasion, commended the role of BISAG-N in creating a robust and efficient mining surveillance system equipped with modern technological features.

He took a live demonstration of the vehicle tracking system, public grievance redressal platform and ATMC cameras installed at key exit points, and expressed satisfaction over the system's potential to significantly deter illegal mining and unauthorised transportation of minerals.

Emphasising the importance of scientific assessment of mineral resources, the Chief Secretary directed the department to undertake G3-stage geological studies of



major mineral blocks such as lignite, marble, graphite and granite through MECL, so as to establish clear estimates of mineral reserves and attract better investor response during future auctions.

The Chief Secretary impressed upon the department to expedite the operationalisation of 110 non-operational minor mineral blocks across various districts to unlock their revenue potential and ensure availability of construction material for developmental works. He also directed the department to remain uncompromising in dealing with illegal mining and to create sufficient deterrence through strict enforcement and penal action.

About the mining reforms and major achievements made by the Department, the ACS Mining, Anil Kumar Singh informed that the e-auction of seven limestone blocks was formally launched by the

Union Minister of Coal and Mines on November 24, 2025, marking a major step towards scientific and transparent exploitation of major minerals. Under the Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI) 2025-26, he added that the Department had secured a grant of 100 Cr after implementing key mining reforms, including adoption of a Minor Mineral Policy, allocation of all minor mineral blocks through auction mode, introduction of mine closure provisions with monitoring mechanisms, and initiation of survey, mapping and exploration of identified minor mineral blocks.

In addition, the department has operationalised a star rating system for minor mineral mines, established the State Mineral Exploration Trust, and notified District Mineral Foundation Trust (DMFT) Rules in accordance with revised PMKKKY

guidelines, thereby strengthening institutional frameworks for sustainable mining. A major focus of the review was the Integrated Mining Surveillance System (IMSS), developed for the first time by the department in collaboration with BISAG-N (Bhaskaracharya Institute for Space Applications and Geoinformatics). The system integrates GPS tracking, RFID, e-challan, weigh-bridge data and public grievance redressal mechanisms on a real-time digital dashboard to enhance transparency, accountability and compliance in mining operations. The department reported that 114 system-generated triggers were verified on the ground, resulting in confirmation of 14 cases of illegal mining and imposition of penalties amounting to ₹90 lakhs.

Moreover it was given out that a pilot run of GPS-enabled mineral-carrying vehicles has been

successfully conducted in District Samba, with plans to extend GPS, RFID and e-challan compliance to all mineral transportation across the UT by January 26, 2026 after carrying out an extensive IEC campaign. The department is also setting up Quick Response Teams (QRTs) at the district level with modern gadgets and logistics to respond swiftly to illegal mining activities, supported through SASCI, DMFT and regular budgetary resources. PoS machines for on-the-spot digital challan and compounding are being provided to enforcement agencies to ensure immediate action on violations.

For the financial year 2025-26, the department has set a revenue target of 300 Cr, including 200 Cr from minor minerals and 100 crore from RCC-related activities, while revenues from major minerals are projected in FY 2026-27 following completion of the limestone auction process.

The Chief Secretary stressed the need for time-bound implementation of reforms, deeper use of technology, and close coordination among departments to ensure transparent, environmentally sustainable mining here.

He directed the department to adhere to set timelines, strengthen field-level monitoring and fully leverage digital systems to eliminate illegal mining and maximise public benefit from mineral resources of the UT.

J&K Bank organises Capacity Building Workshop for FPOs

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 16: In its continued efforts to strengthen institutional credit flow to the agriculture sector, J&K Bank Tuesday organised a Workshop-cum-Capacity Building Programme on Creating Credit Awareness for Farmers Producer Organisations (FPOs) at its corporate headquarters.

The Bank's General Manager (Government Business) Ashutosh Sareen chaired the session that was held in the presence of General Manager (Retail, Agriculture & MSME) Rakesh Magotra, DGM Aneet Kanwal Singh, representatives of the FPOs and other senior officers of the Bank.

The workshop aimed at sensitising FPOs about the banking system, availability of credit facilities, and structured financing options tailored for collective farming institutions.

Addressing the participants, General Manager Ashutosh Sareen, as per an official statement, emphasised the Bank's commitment to supporting FPOs as key drivers of agricultural transformation and rural prosperity.

He said, "At J&K Bank, we are deeply committed to strengthening the agricultural ecosystem by empowering Farmer Producer Organisations with seamless access to institutional credit. Through initiatives like our dedicated Loan Scheme for FPOs and NABSanrakshan credit guarantees, we are enabling high-tech farming, infrastructure development, and market linkages—paving the way for sustainable growth and prosperity for our farmers."

"FPOs play a pivotal role in aggregating farmers, improving bargaining power and enabling value addition", he added.

Further, he highlighted

that access to timely and affordable credit is crucial for strengthening FPOs and enabling them to operate as sustainable and commercially viable entities.

Earlier, while congratulating the participants for taking the lead in carrying forward the FPO initiative, General Manager Rakesh Magotra said, "There may be challenges along the way, but the end results will be rewarding and beneficial for all stakeholders. This is a mission you have undertaken with a larger purpose. With nearly 95 per cent of farmers in the UT being small and marginal, FPOs have emerged as an effective platform to promote their welfare, particularly by enabling structured and sustainable credit linkages."

He also highlighted the range of agriculture-focused financial products and services offered by the Bank and encouraged FPOs to proactively engage with the Bank for meeting their working capital and long-term credit requirements. On behalf of the Bank, he assured the participants of full guidance from the Bank's specialised agriculture and MSME vertical.

During the workshop, a detailed presentation was made to familiarise participating FPOs with various credit facilities and Government-sponsored schemes relevant to their operations. Participants were also sensitised about loan facilities against Electronic Negotiable Warehouse Receipts (e-NWRs) to support post-harvest liquidity and price realisation.

The programme witnessed active participation from FPO representatives, who interacted with Bank officials and sought clarity on various credit-related aspects. The participant FPOs thanked the Bank for building their capacities through such detailed credit awareness programs.

MSME DFO Srinagar holds stakeholder meet in Sonamarg

KT NEWS DESK

GANDERBAL, DECEMBER 16: The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), Government of India, Br MSME DFO Srinagar held a stakeholder meeting at Sonamarg with the Chief Executive Officer, Sonamarg Development Authority, and local hoteliers to examine the feasibility of establishing a Laundry Common Facility Centre (CFC) under the MSE-Cluster Development Programme (MSE-CDP).

During the meeting, Assistant Director, MSME, Saheel Alaagband explained in detail the guidelines of the MSE-CDP Scheme and highlighted that financial assistance up to 95% is available from the Government for eligible projects, enabling MSMEs and service enterprises to avail substantial support for common facilitation centre.

The hoteliers and their managerial representatives welcomed the initiative and expressed keen interest in the proposed Laundry CFC. They suggested that another meeting be convened to rope in more hoteliers and to discuss the proposal in greater detail so as to ensure wider participation and consensus.

DC Bandipora interacts with teachers

Stresses leadership role in improving learning outcomes

KT NEWS DESK

BANDIPORA, DECEMBER 16: Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, Tuesday held an interactive session with teachers from all five educational zones of the district at the Conference Hall, Mini Secretariat Bandipora.

The interaction was attended by the Chief Education Officer Bandipora, Altaf Hussain Tara; Deputy Chief Education Officer Bandipora, Dr G.M. Pujar; Zonal Education Officers of all zones and teachers representing various schools of the district.

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, underscored the pivotal role of the teaching fraternity in shaping the future of the district. She called upon teachers to work

with renewed dedication, discipline and commitment to bring visible improvement in the overall education scenario of Bandipora. Emphasizing quality education, she stressed the need to focus on better learning outcomes and concerted efforts to raise the district's literacy rate.

During the interaction, the Deputy Commissioner sought suggestions and views from teachers on strengthening academic standards and improving educational infrastructure across the district. She assured full administrative support for initiatives aimed at enhancing the quality of education. Teachers, on the occasion, shared valuable feedback and put forth several constructive suggestions for improving teaching-learning processes and academic performance in schools.

DC Shopian conducts field visit to Mughal Road, Sedow

Reviews expansion alignment, playfield proposal

KT NEWS DESK

SHOPIAN, DECEMBER, 16: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta Tuesday conducted a field visit to Mughal Road and Sedow area to review the proposed expansion of the Mughal Road and development of playfield.

During the inspection, the DC reviewed multiple alignment options being explored for widening and upgradation of the road from Shopian to Pulwama. Detailed discussions were held with engineers and revenue officers on land availability, road safety measures, minimising impact on environment and other pre execution necessities. The Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned departments to conduct comprehensive technical and environmental assessments and submit detailed reports to facilitate informed decision-making.

Later, the DC visited Sedow area to review the proposal for development of a playfield. While interacting with officers on site, the DC highlighted the need for quality sports infrastructure to promote physical fitness,



channelise youth energy in a positive direction and encourage local talent. Instructions were issued to expedite necessary formalities and feasible plan preparation for early execution of the playfield project.

The DC was accompanied by the Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Zainapora, officers of the Mughal Road project, Tehsildar, Shopian, Executive Engineer R&B, Wildlife Warden and other officials

Handicrafts & Handloom Dept flags off artisans for GI Mahotsav in New Delhi

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 16 – In a major boost to promotion of GI registered crafts, Handicrafts and Handloom Department, Kashmir, Tuesday flagged off a group of 06 artisans from Numaish Gah, here Tuesday, for participation in GI Mahotsav, scheduled to begin from December 18 till December 21, in Noida Haat, New Delhi.

The Mahotsav is designed to provide a robust national platform for GI artisans and sellers from across the country to exhibit their unique products, establish direct



market linkages with buyers and celebrate country's diverse culture and craft traditions.

In a press statement issued Tuesday, a spokesman

of the department stated that the artisans shall represent Kashmir in Wagguv, Namda, Walnut Wood Carving, Crewel, Chainstitch and Kashmir tweed GI registered

crafts in the trade fair, organized by Ministry of MSME in collaboration with PHD Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

Kashmir has 15 GI

registered crafts, out of which 08 were registered by GI Registry Chennai in April this year which include the languishing crafts like Wagguv, Namda and Gabba.

The spokesman further stated that the artisans shall represent Kashmir's globally acclaimed handmade products, reflecting the region's exceptional craftsmanship, authenticity and centuries old cultural legacy. "Their participation is expected to create new market opportunities, promote GI awareness and strengthen the recognition of Kashmiri handicrafts at the National level," he added.

KASHMIR
THUNDER



IS AVAILABLE
AT ALL LEADING
STALLS

Kashmir's cold snap takes a toll on hearts

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, Dec 16: Cardiologists in Kashmir have expressed concern over a rise in heart attacks and strokes during the harsh winter months, warning that extreme cold significantly strains the cardiovascular system. They said the number of cardiac emergencies almost doubles in winter compared to warmer seasons.

Cardiologist Dr Mohammad Ashraf Khan said prolonged exposure to low temperatures leads to constriction of blood vessels—a condition known as vasoconstriction—which sharply increases the heart's workload.

"During winter in Kashmir, we observe more than a twofold rise in cases of heart attacks and strokes," he said. "Cold weather narrows blood vessels, causing blood pressure to rise. This forces the heart to pump harder, which can trigger life-threatening cardiac events, particularly in people with underlying heart disease."

Dr Ashraf explained that cold conditions also increase blood viscosity, making it thicker and more prone to clot formation, thereby elevating the risk of heart attacks and strokes. "Patients with diabetes, hypertension, high



cholesterol, and smokers are especially vulnerable. Winter further aggravates their health risks," he added.

Dr Khan further highlighted seasonal lifestyle changes that contribute to the problem. "During winter, people consume excessive tea, sugary drinks, and calorie-dense foods to stay warm. This often leads to poor sugar

control and weight gain, both of which are major risk factors for heart disease," he said.

Another worrying trend, he noted, is the misinterpretation of early symptoms. "Initial signs of a heart attack are frequently mistaken for chest infections, acidity, or muscle pain. This delay in correct diagnosis and treatment can prove fatal," he cautioned.

Dr Zahoor Bhat, another cardiologist, called for adopting preventive measures during the cold season. He advised people to keep themselves adequately warm by wearing layered clothing, including woollen caps, gloves, and scarves, and to ensure proper heating inside homes. "Outdoor activity should be restricted during extreme cold spells," Dr Bhat said. "People should opt for light indoor exercises and strictly avoid sudden strenuous activities, which can abruptly overload the heart."

He emphasised the importance of maintaining a heart-healthy diet. "Winter is not an excuse to abandon healthy eating. A balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, and lean proteins is crucial. Intake of salt, sugar, and saturated fats must be limited to control blood pressure and cholesterol," he advised. Doctors stressed that hydration remains vital even in cold weather. They said people often drink less water in winter, leading to dehydration, which can thicken blood and increase clotting risk.

They urged the public to remain alert to warning signs of heart attacks—such as chest pain, shortness of breath, sweating, nausea, or pain radiating to the arms or jaw—and stroke symptoms, including facial drooping,

arm weakness, difficulty speaking, or sudden loss of balance.

Timely medical intervention can save lives, the doctors emphasised, advising people not to ignore symptoms and to seek immediate care at the nearest health facility.

Doctors recommended wearing layered clothing and protecting the head, hands, and feet from cold exposure. They said regular check-ups are essential, especially for high-risk individuals.

Focus on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins; reduce salt, sugar, and fried foods, and engage in light exercises like stretching, yoga, or walking indoors, they said, advising against heavy physical work, particularly in extreme cold.

The health experts further advised people to avoid smoking and excessive tea or coffee, saying these increase cardiac risk. "Drink adequate water despite reduced thirst in winter and do not dismiss chest discomfort, breathlessness, or sudden weakness; seek medical help immediately," they said.

According to doctors, awareness, timely precautions, and early medical attention can significantly reduce winter-related cardiac deaths in the Valley—(KNO)

Policeman killed in Udhampur encounter, operation on: IGP Jammu



YOGESH

Udhampur, Dec 16: Inspector General of Police (IGP), Jammu Zone, Bhim Sen Tuti on Tuesday said that a policeman was killed in the ongoing encounter with terrorists in Udhampur district, while terrorists have fled toward the dense forest after initial firefight.

Talking to reporters, the IGP Jammu said, "A cordon-and-search operation was launched yesterday evening in Soan village following a specific input. The input proved accurate and an encounter broke out when a small team of the Special Operations Group (SOG) came under fire from terrorists."

He said that during the exchange of fire, a policeman Amjad Ali Khan of Poonch, sustained critical

injuries. "He was evacuated for medical treatment, but unfortunately succumbed to his injuries due to excessive blood loss," the IGP said.

He said that after the initial firefight, terrorists fled toward the dense forest. "The entire area stands cordoned off and a joint combining operation has been launched with the support of the Indian Army and CRPF," he said.

"The terrain is extremely difficult, with hilly features and thick forest cover. As per the original intelligence, three terrorists were hiding there, which was later confirmed during the encounter. The operation is on to track terrorists," he said.

DGP PRABHAT LEADS W R E A T H - L A Y I N G C E R E M O N Y

Meanwhile, Director

General of Police Nalin Prabhat, as per KNO, led the solemn wreath laying ceremony at the District Police Lines in Udhampur, to honour constable Amjad Ali Khan of the 22nd Battalion of the Indian Reserve Police (IRP) who died fighting terrorists in the operation.

Besides the DGP wreaths were laid by IGP (Jammu Zone) Bhim Sen Tuti, Deputy Commissioner Saloni Rai, along with senior police officers, CRPF personnel and district administration officials, who paid floral tributes to the fallen policeman.

A gun salute was given as a final farewell, following which the mortal remains were sent to his hometown in the Mendhar border area of Poonch district for burial, officials said—(KNO)

Kashmir mutton traders aghast as 'Punjab stays silent on harassment'

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Dec 16: Twelve days after the Jammu and Kashmir Government formally wrote to the Punjab Chief Minister seeking an end to alleged extortion and harassment of livestock transporters at Shambhu and Madhopur checkpoints, there has been no response from the Punjab administration, fuelling anger and frustration among Kashmir's mutton traders.

The communication, dated December 4, was sent by the office of the J&K Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Transport and allied departments, requesting "an urgent appointment" with the Punjab Chief Minister to resolve issues concerning the interstate movement of livestock to J&K. However, despite repeated follow-ups, Punjab has not even acknowledged the letter, insiders from the Mutton Dealers Association said.

"It's shocking that even after a formal letter from one government to another, there's total silence. The transporters are being bled dry at these checkpoints, and nobody in Punjab seems to care," said a senior mutton dealer.

The J&K Government had earlier flagged the issue after reports of "illegal payments and harassment" at Punjab's transit points surfaced, with dealers warning of a possible 'price hike' if the extortion continued unchecked.

"We are being pushed to the wall," said Mehraj Ud Din, General Secretary of the Kashmir Mutton Dealers Association. "Our government did its job by taking up the issue officially on December 4. The question is, why is Punjab silent? Does this mean they endorse what's happening on the highways?"

Dealers have urged the Punjab government to immediately intervene and direct its enforcement agencies to stop illegal practices that obstruct livestock transport to J&K.

"If this continues, it will hit not just traders but consumers in the Valley. Prices will shoot up, and the blame will rest squarely on Punjab's inaction," Mehraj Ud Din said, adding, "As of now, we are waiting, but there should be a decision on this soon; otherwise, our stance may shift."—(KNO)

CS reviews land, infrastructure issues of JNVs, KVs

KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Dec 16: Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo on Tuesday chaired a high-level meeting to review the availability of land and infrastructure for Central Government educational institutions, including Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs) and Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs), that are either non-functional or presently operating from temporary premises across various districts of Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by the Secretary, School Education Department, Ram Niwas Sharma; Commissioners of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti and Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan; Director School Education, Jammu and Kashmir; Regional Officer, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan, Jammu, along with other senior officers of the department.

Deputy Commissioners from all districts participated in the meeting through video conferencing. During the review, the Chief Secretary sought district-wise and school-wise details regarding the current infrastructural status of these institutions. He specifically enquired about the availability or identification of suitable land



for the construction of permanent school buildings, as well as the arrangements made for their temporary functioning until permanent infrastructure is established. Emphasising the importance of timely intervention, he impressed upon the district administrations and concerned departments to ensure that all procedural formalities are completed expeditiously to facilitate smooth functioning of these institutions.

Secretary, School Education Department, Ram Niwas Sharma, apprised the meeting of the present status of each JNV and KV and highlighted the specific requirements of land and buildings for their effective functioning.

He assured that the department would take all necessary steps to ensure early operationalisation of the non-functional schools from the forthcoming

academic session, in coordination with the district administrations and central institutions.

The Deputy Commissioners, in turn, briefed the meeting about the land parcels and buildings identified in their respective districts for these schools. They informed that the process for transfer and allotment of land would be initiated shortly, following the assessment of feasibility and completion of requisite formalities in consultation with the authorities of JNVs and KVs.

The Chief Secretary reiterated the government's commitment to strengthening educational infrastructure across J&K and directed all stakeholders to work in close coordination to ensure that students are provided access to quality education through well-equipped and fully functional institutions at the earliest.

Two residential houses damaged in Shaheed Gunj Fire

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Dec 16: Two residential houses were damaged in a fire incident that broke out in Shaheed Gunj area of Srinagar on Tuesday evening, officials said. The officials said that the timely intervention of the authorities prevented the flames from spreading further.

An official said that two adjoining three-storeyed residential houses were damaged in the blaze that broke

today out late this afternoon. He said that the fire incident was reported at around 4:38 PM and was doused by multiple fire tenders from Habba Kadal, Batamaloo, MR Gunj and Shaheed Pora stations. "The flames were brought under control by 5:16 PM—preventing the fire from spreading to nearby houses in the densely populated locality," he said. Meanwhile, eyewitnesses said thick plumes of smoke rose from the spot.

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

From The Parliament

Rs 235 Cr released for PRIs in 5 yrs: GoI

RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Dec 16: The Centre on Tuesday said that it has released Rs 235 crore during the past five years to strengthen Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in Jammu and Kashmir.

In a written reply to a query, Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj informed Lok Sabha that under the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) Jammu and Kashmir received Rs 25 crore in 2020–21, Rs 40 crore in 2021–22, Rs 40 crore in 2022–23, and Rs 65 crore each in 2023–24 and

2024–25. Capacity building, training of elected representatives and officials, and strengthening basic Panchayat infrastructure—are some of the areas where funds were used, the reply stated.

It said that under the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan, more than 7.25 lakh participants from J&K were trained between 2022–23 and 2025–26 with an aim to improve governance, planning, and service delivery at the grassroots level.

Also, for uplifting the Panchayat infrastructure in

the Union Territory, approval has been granted for the construction of 1,000 Gram Panchayat Bhawans, besides the procurement of 1,318 computers to promote digital governance and transparency in rural local bodies, the reply stated. It said that to bridge the digital divide, the Ministry is implementing initiatives such as eGramSwaraj, AuditOnline, and the People's Plan Campaign in Jammu and Kashmir, which will reinforce participatory planning, online monitoring, and accountability in Panchayat functioning—(KNO)

129 PACS operating in Ladakh: Centre

RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Dec 16: The Centre on Tuesday said that 129 Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) are currently functional in the Union Territory of Ladakh, with 10 of them approved for computerisation under Phase I of the national PACS Computerisation Project.

Replying to a written question in the Lok Sabha, the Union Ministry of Cooperation stated that Ladakh has 169 PACS that cater to the rural population, and every panchayat in the UT has a functional society despite the region's sparse population and difficult terrain. It said that five PACS each from Leh and Kargil were approved for computerisation, and an additional 23 PACS have been proposed for inclusion under Phase II of the computerisation project.

Ladakh has also adopted Model Bye-Laws for PACS, which enable them to undertake over 25 diversified business activities and improve transparency and governance, the reply said, adding that three multipurpose PACS, three dairy cooperatives and one fishery cooperative have already been formed in the UT, under National Cooperative Expansion Initiatives.

Pertinently, to strengthen the cooperative sector, steps like capacity-building programmes, IT support, ERP training and integration of PACS with services like Common Service Centres and Jan Aushadhi Kendras are also being implemented by the government to strengthen the cooperative sector in Ladakh—(KNO)

‘Floods damage 0.78 lakh hectares of crops in J&K’

RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Dec 16: Heavy rains and floods damaged crops over nearly 0.78 lakh hectares across Jammu and Kashmir during the current year, the government informed Parliament on Tuesday.

The Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare in a written reply informed the Lok Sabha that due to recent weather-related disasters, Jammu and Kashmir reported crop damage on 0.78 lakh hectare area. The Ministry clarified that the primary responsibility of providing relief to affected farmers lies with the respective state or Union Territory governments in accordance with the National Policy on Disaster Management. Relief measures are undertaken through the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF), while

in the case of calamities of a severe nature, additional assistance is provided from the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF), following established procedures.

"The financial assistance under SDRF and NDRF comes in the form of relief and not as compensation. The crop losses are also covered under crop insurance schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) and Restructured Weather-Based Crop Insurance Scheme (RWBCIS), which provide risk coverage against non-preventable natural calamities," it said.

The Government further explained that admissible insurance claims are settled directly into the accounts of insured farmers based on yield data provided by the UT administration, conforming to the operational guidelines of the schemes—(KNO)

EDITORIAL

Ensuring Clean Water Bodies For Future Generations

A part from an environmental concern, the alarming report of Kashmir's vital water sources being used as open garbage dumps is a public health emergency and an act of slow-motion societal suicide. From natural springs and streams to major rivers, the indiscriminate dumping of plastic, construction debris, and household waste represents a profound failure in governance and community stewardship. When the very sources feeding hundreds of public water

supply schemes are poisoned, we are not merely littering; we are compromising our survival. The warnings from experts should jolt us into immediate action. Polluted water bodies lose their ability to self-clean, leading to depleted oxygen, dead aquatic life, and the spread of pathogens, causing hepatitis, typhoid, and cholera. The visual blight of floating plastic is just the surface; the more serious threat lies in invisible microbial and chemical contamination, including insidious

microplastics that enter the food chain and human bodies. As public health experts note, the recurring outbreaks of jaundice are a direct symptom of this poisoning. This path could lead to scarcity, disease, and conflict and must be heeded before a crisis becomes a catastrophe. This tragedy stems from a twin failure: inadequate systemic waste management and a crippling lack of public consciousness. The absence of reliable door-to-door collection in many areas, coupled with

weak enforcement of anti-dumping laws, has turned riverbanks into default landfills. The solution, as outlined by experts, requires a rigorous, multi-pronged campaign. Authorities must enforce existing laws with zero tolerance, ensuring fines and penalties for dumping are levied strictly. Municipal bodies must be empowered and held accountable for providing efficient waste segregation and scientific disposal systems. Crucially, this must be paired with sustained community

mobilisation, turning citizens from polluters into protectors through education and participatory clean-up drives. Kashmir's identity and well-being are inextricably linked to its water. Protecting these lifelines is a non-negotiable duty. We must act now with urgency, enforcement, and collective responsibility to ensure that our rivers and springs flow clean, not just for today, but for generations to come. The alternative is a parched, poisoned, and perilous future.

National Energy Conservation Day: Saving Energy, Securing Future

Press Information Bureau

Energy is more than just electricity or fuel; it is the force that enables modern life. It lights our homes, powers our industries, drives transportation, supports digital services, and keeps hospitals, schools, and businesses running.

Energy underpins economic growth, social development, and technological advancement. As India's economy expands, the demand for reliable and affordable energy continues to rise. Addressing this demand requires not only expanding supply but also ensuring efficient and responsible energy use.

Energy efficiency involves achieving the same output with less energy consumption, while conservation focuses on avoiding waste. Together, they form a central pillar of India's energy strategy. Recognising their importance, India observes National Energy Conservation Day on 14 December each year to promote awareness and acknowledge contributions towards efficient energy use.

National Energy Conservation Day

National Energy Conservation Day, or Rashtriya Urja Sanrakshan Diwas, observed annually since 1991, was established to promote awareness of reducing energy use and encouraging efficient practices across various sectors. Following the enactment of the Energy Conservation Act, 2001, the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) began leading nationwide efforts, including outreach programmes, school competitions, and the national awards. Today, the day serves as an important reminder that energy efficiency is central to ensuring affordability, reducing emissions, strengthening grid reliability, and supporting India's broader clean-energy transition in a rapidly growing economy.

India's Current Energy Landscape

India is among the world's top three energy consumers, and electricity demand continues to grow every year. The total electricity generation increased from 1,739.09 Billion Units (BU) in 2023-24 to 1,829.69 BU in 2024-25, a growth of 5.21%. For 2025-26, the generation target has been set at 2,000.4 BU.

At the same time, the power system has become more reliable. In June 2025, the energy-shortage levels were reported to be as low as 0.1%. India's meta peak demand of 241 GW with zero shortage highlights improved system resilience and better demand-supply management.

India's energy mix is rapidly shifting toward cleaner sources. As of 31 October 2025, the country's total installed generation capacity stands at 505 GW, of which non-fossil sources account for over 259 GW. This means that more than 50% of installed electricity capacity now comes from non-fossil sources such as solar, wind, hydro, and nuclear power. This evolving landscape shows that India is not only expanding access to energy but also moving toward a cleaner and more sustainable energy future.

Major Energy Conservation Initiatives

To reduce energy wastage and promote the efficient use of resources, the Ministry of Power and the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) have launched several national programmes across industries, encouraging the adoption of efficient technologies, improved design, and smarter energy management.

Flagship government programs shaping progress are:

Industrial Energy Efficiency: Industry accounts for a major share of India's total energy consumption, making efficiency improvements central to reducing costs and emissions.

The Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS) is India's new market-based framework for industrial decarbonisation. Under CCTS, emission-intensive sectors are assigned Greenhouse Gas Emission Intensity (GEI)



targets, and industries that outperform these targets earn Carbon Credit Certificates that can be traded.

In December 2025, the government transitioned several major energy-intensive sectors, including aluminium, cement, petrochemicals, refineries, pulp & paper, textiles, and chlor-alkali, from the earlier PAT mechanism to the CCTS Compliance Mechanism.

The Perform, Achieve and Trade (PAT) scheme served as India's foundational programme for industrial energy efficiency. PAT assigned energy-reduction targets to designated consumers, and industries that exceeded these targets earned Energy Saving Certificates (ESCs) for trading. PAT laid the groundwork for large-scale efficiency improvements, which CCTS now deepens by directly linking performance to carbon-emission outcomes.

Household Energy Efficiency: A major pillar of India's energy-conservation strategy is improving efficiency at the household and small-business level.

The Standards & Labelling (S&L) Programme, covering 28 appliance categories (17 mandatory), provides consumers with clear information through star labels and encourages manufacturers to adopt higher-efficiency technologies. Recent additions, such as grid-connected solar inverters, reflect the programme's continued expansion.

UJALA LED programme: Launched in January 2015, the Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All (UJALA) scheme aims to provide energy-efficient LED bulbs to domestic consumers at affordable prices. The initiative not only reduces electricity bills but also saves energy and has helped create a large, competitive market for energy-efficient appliances.

The UJALA LED programme has expanded nationwide with 36.87 crore LED bulbs distributed, resulting in 47,883 million kWh of energy savings annually, 19,153 crore in cost savings, 9,586 MW of avoided peak demand, and a yearly reduction of 3.88 million

tonnes of CO₂ emissions.

Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana (2024): Launched in February 2024 with an outlay of ₹75,021 crore, aims to equip one crore households with rooftop solar systems and provide up to 300 units of free electricity each month. As of December 2025, over 23.9 lakh homes have installed rooftop solar.

RDSS: The Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS), launched in 2021, is a flagship programme to strengthen the operational and financial performance of electricity distribution companies (DISCOMs). As of December 2025, India has installed 4.76 crore smart electricity meters under central and DISCOM-driven programmes.

Buildings: India has developed building-energy codes to promote efficient construction and reduce electricity use in new buildings.

The Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC), first introduced in 2007, sets minimum energy-efficiency standards for commercial buildings. It was later strengthened through the Energy Conservation and Sustainable Building Code (ECSBC), which expands requirements to cover sustainability, materials, and overall environmental performance.

Eco Niwas Samhita (ENS) was introduced in 2018 for homes; it focuses on reducing energy use in residential buildings through better design, ventilation, and insulation. Together, these codes improve comfort, lower energy bills, and support India's long-term energy-efficiency goals.

Digital and Institutional Frameworks: Strengthening institutions and data systems is essential for scaling energy efficiency across sectors.

Digital tools such as the Urja Dakshata Information Tool (UDIT) offer nationwide insights into energy consumption patterns, programme performance, and sector-wise savings.

National Mission on Enhanced Energy

Efficiency (NMEEE) provides the overarching policy architecture through initiatives like PAT, Market Transformation for Energy Efficiency (MTEE), Energy Efficiency Financing Platform (EEFP), and Framework for Energy Efficient Economic Development (FEEED).

Behavioural initiatives under LIFE (Lifestyle for Environment) further strengthen public participation by promoting mindful, responsible consumption.

Public Participation: Public participation is promoted nationwide through awards and painting competitions.

The National Energy Conservation Awards (NECA), held every year since 1991 on 14 December, is among India's leading recognitions for energy efficiency, celebrating industries, organisations, and individuals for exemplary energy-saving achievements. Since 2021, the National Energy Efficiency Innovation Awards (NEEIA) have also been organised to highlight cutting-edge innovations in energy efficiency.

A nationwide National Painting Competition on Energy Conservation is also organised on 14 December, serving as one of the country's largest student outreach initiatives. Conducted at the school, state, and national levels, it encourages children to creatively depict energy-saving themes and fosters early awareness of sustainable practices.

India's Global Leadership & International Partnerships

Do You Know?

UJALA's LED-bulb distribution model is being exported beyond India. The state of Melaka in Malaysia adopted a UJALA-type scheme under an agreement with Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL). Earlier, the government had launched UJALA-UK to promote efficient lighting.

In 2024, India formally joined the International Energy Efficiency Hub, a global platform where governments, international organisations, and private stakeholders collaborate to promote energy-efficient technologies and practices. This step signals India's commitment to aligning its domestic efficiency efforts with global best practices and to sharing its experiences internationally.

Under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), every country is required to chart an energy-transition pathway suited to its national priorities. India has defined a pathway that balances rapid economic growth with long-term climate responsibility. The country has committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2070, and its 2030 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) include reducing the emissions intensity of GDP by 45%, ensuring that 50% of installed power capacity comes from non-fossil sources, creating an additional carbon sink of 2.5-3 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent, promoting sustainable lifestyles through the LIFE movement, and enhancing resilience in climate-vulnerable sectors.

These engagements position India as a leading voice for the Global South, advocating for affordable clean energy, equitable climate finance, and access to technology under the principles of the UNFCCC. During its G20 Presidency, India advanced global cooperation on clean fuels and energy transitions, including the launch of the Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA).

Till date, the GBA has been expanded to 25 countries and 12 international organisations, reflecting global confidence in India's leadership on sustainable fuels. The alliance brings together major biofuel producers, consumers, and multilateral bodies to accelerate the adoption of affordable, low-carbon fuels worldwide.

India also co-founded the International Solar Alliance (ISA), which works to expand affordable solar power across developing countries. ISA has become a key platform for mobilising investment, strengthening

Key Takeaways

- PM Surya Ghar mission has added 7 GW of clean energy and connected nearly 24 lakh households with solar energy by December 2025.
- The transition from Perform, Achieve and Trade (PAT) to Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS) marks a major shift, putting carbon-intensity reduction and tradable credits at the heart of industrial energy policy.
- Digital platforms are modernising energy-efficiency governance by strengthening monitoring, compliance, and transparency.
- India's clean energy capacity now crosses the 50% non-fossil milestone, reflecting the growing success of renewable expansion, efficiency schemes, and grid stability improvements.

cooperation, and accelerating solar deployment in the Global South.

ISA 2025 Key Highlights

India hosted the 8th ISA Assembly in New Delhi, bringing together 125+ Member and Signatory countries, 550 delegates, and 30+ ministers, reinforcing ISA's growing global influence.

ISA launched several new global solar initiatives, including:

- SUNRISE, a programme for solar recycling and circularity;
- OSOWOG (One Sun One World One Grid) to advance cross-border solar grid integration;
- SIDS Solar Procurement Platform, developed with the World Bank for Small Island Developing States;
- Global Capability Centre (GCC) to strengthen innovation, training, and capacity-building.

ISA advanced its "Towards 1000" strategy, which aims to mobilise USD 1 trillion in solar investments by 2030 and support deployment of 1,000 GW of solar capacity across member countries.

Beyond ISA, India engages through international platforms such as the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), Mission Innovation, and partnerships with the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) to support global clean-energy innovation.

According to the IRENA Renewable Energy Statistics 2025, India ranks:

- 3rd in solar energy
- 4th in wind energy, and
- 4th globally in total installed renewable energy capacity

The Road Ahead: Role in NDCs, Net Zero, and Viksit Bharat

Energy conservation remains one of the important goals, and BEE continues to play a central role in the journey. Initiatives such as Standards & Labelling, PAT/CCTS, building energy codes, NECA/NEEIA, energy audits, state partnerships, and large-scale public campaigns, BEE is working to ensure that efficiency becomes a natural part of everyday decision-making. Its awareness programmes, ranging from school painting competitions to mass outreach campaigns and National Awards, help young people, households, and businesses understand that every unit of energy saved contributes to national progress.

As the nation observes National Energy Conservation Day, the road ahead is clear: conserving energy is not only a technical necessity but a civic responsibility. The Government, BEE, industry, and citizens must work together to build an informed, efficiency-driven culture that supports India's vision of a clean, secure, and sustainable energy future. Energy conservation will remain integral to India's growth strategy as the country advances towards its 2030 climate commitments and its long-term vision of Viksit Bharat.

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

NATIONAL IMMUNIZATION DAY-2025

Over 19.85 lakh children to receive Pulse Polio dose in J&K

KT News Desk

JAMMU, DECEMBER 16: A media sensitization meeting regarding the upcoming National Immunization Day (NID) 2025 – Pulse Polio Campaign was Tuesday held here at Government Hospital Gandhi Nagar to mobilize media support and ensure widespread public awareness.

Director Family Welfare MCH & Immunization J&K, Dr Poonam Sethi, as per an official statement addressed the media in the presence of Dr Narinder Bhutiyal, Medical Superintendent GHGN; Dr Shahid Hussain, State Immunization Officer J&K, Dr Azmat Khan, SMO WHO-NPSN Jammu; Rakesh Sharma, State Mass Media & Information Officer J&K and Parshotam Kumar, State Cold Chain Officer J&K.

Speaking to the media persons, Dr Poonam Sethi informed that National Immunization Day (Pulse Polio Campaign) 2025 would be observed on December 21, 2025, followed



by house-to-house activities on Dec 22 and Dec 23 to ensure that no child is missed. She shared key operational details, stating that a total of 19,85,736 children (0-5 years) are targeted across Jammu & Kashmir for immunization against Polio. "For successful implementation, 10,993 booths and 248 transit points have been established across the UT," she informed and added that 518 mobile teams have also been

deployed to conduct the drive.

The Director appealed to the media fraternity to disseminate the message extensively so that every eligible child receives two drops of Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) and the goal of a polio-free J&K is sustained.

State Immunization Officer, Dr Shahid Hussain elaborated on the availability of OPV and assured that cold chain systems are fully functional and strictly monitored to maintain

vaccine potency throughout the campaign.

Dr Azmat Khan, (WHO-NPSN Jammu) briefed media persons about micro-planning, monitoring and supervision mechanisms, highlighting the role of field supervision to ensure quality implementation and zero missed children.

Rakesh Sharma, State Mass Media & Information Officer outlined the IEC/BCC activities planned by the department and acknowledged the proactive support of the Information Department in strengthening public outreach and awareness.

In her concluding remarks, Dr Poonam Sethi appealed to parents and community members to enthusiastically participate in the campaign to ensure a healthy future for children and the Nation.

The Family Welfare MCH & Immunization Department reiterated its commitment to protecting every child from polio and sought continued cooperation from the media to make NID 2025 a resounding success.

Director Agriculture reviews HADP, capex, CSS expenditure in Srinagar



KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 16: Director Agriculture Kashmir, Sartaj Ahmad Shah, on Tuesday reviewed the expenditure and implementation status of key agriculture schemes, including the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), Capex and Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS), in Srinagar district.

During a review meeting held at the Agriculture

Complex, Lalmandi, the Director sought detailed updates on financial and physical progress, applications received, sanctioned and implemented under various schemes.

He reviewed achievements recorded so far, progress under the Daksh Kisan programme, establishment of units on the ground and the pace of credit linkage. Officers were directed to expedite spending, avoid procedural delays and

ensure timely utilization of funds to meet set targets.

The Director emphasized strengthening coordination among the Agriculture Department, farmers and financial institutions to ensure schemes deliver tangible benefits on the ground.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Agriculture Officer, District Agriculture Officer, Sub-Divisional Agriculture Officers and other departmental officials.

Good Governance Week 2025

DC Baramulla reviews 'Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore' preparations

KT News Desk

BARAMULLA, DECEMBER 16: Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, Tuesday chaired a meeting to assess the preparations for the upcoming "Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore" campaign, being organised as part of Good Governance Week from 19th December to 25th December. During the meeting, the DC, as per an official statement, outlined a detailed action plan aimed at ensuring effective grievance redressal and delivery of public services at the grassroots level.

The DC directed that public grievances received during the campaign period be resolved on a priority basis, and a daily report on grievance redressal be submitted to the Deputy Commissioner's office without fail.

Meanwhile, the Revenue Department was directed to conduct revenue grievance redressal camps in every revenue village, with special focus on resolving matters related to 'Mutation by Inheritance' (Virasat Intikal) and other revenue issues.

Similarly, the Police Department was instructed to



organise 'Thana Diwas' programmes across the district to address public grievances related to law and order.

The DC also directed the Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Baramulla, to ensure the organisation of health camps in every tehsil during the campaign period to provide basic healthcare services and medical consultations to the public. Further, all departments were instructed to hold special camps and seminars on good governance, aimed at creating awareness among citizens about government initiatives, service delivery mechanisms, and best practices in good governance. The meeting was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner, Baramulla, Syed Altaf Hussain Musvi; ADC Sopore, S.A.Raina; SDM Uri, Shubhankar Pratyush; ACD Baramulla, Chaudhary Mudassir Hussain, and other officers and officials.

NC MPs call upon Home Minister Amit Shah, submit memorandum

KT News Desk

New Delhi, 16 Dec: Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Members of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) Chowdhry Mohammad Ramzan, Sajjad Ahmad Kitchloo and Gurwinder Singh Oberoi Tuesday met Union Home Minister, Amit Shah, and submitted a detailed memorandum highlighting key constitutional, democratic and humanitarian concerns of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.

During the meeting, the MPs, as per a statement issued, drew the attention of the Hon'ble Home Minister to the humanitarian issues faced by prisoners from Jammu & Kashmir who are lodged in jails outside the Union Territory. They highlighted the severe hardships faced by families due to long distances, financial constraints, and limited access to legal and social support. The MPs urged that prisoners who do not face serious criminal charges should be released at the earliest on humanitarian grounds. They further urged that prisoners facing serious charges should be transferred back



to the Valley. Such a transfer would ensure timely access to legal counsel, court proceedings and would also enable their families to access them without the burden of long-distance travel and heavy financial expenses.

The MPs also strongly urged the early restoration of full Statehood to Jammu & Kashmir, underscoring that this demand is in line with repeated assurances given by the Government of India as well as the observations of the Hon'ble Supreme Court. They stressed that restoration of Statehood is vital for upholding constitutional values, strengthening democratic

institutions and fulfilling the political and administrative aspirations of the people of the region.

The MPs also sought the immediate notification of the Business Rules for the Union Territory, stating that the absence of clearly defined rules is hampering effective administration and democratic functioning. They emphasized that timely notification of the Business Rules would bring clarity in governance, enhance accountability, and ensure smoother coordination between elected representatives and the administration in the larger public interest of Jammu & Kashmir.

DC Bandipora holds 2nd 'Kahani Jeet Ki' Interaction with Scheme Beneficiaries

KT News Desk

BANDIPORA, DECEMBER 16: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, on Tuesday chaired the second monthly interaction under the 'Kahani Jeet Ki' initiative with beneficiaries of various government-sponsored schemes and livelihood programmes at the Mini Secretariat, Bandipora.

The interaction, as per an official statement, brought together beneficiaries from multiple departments, including Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Sheep Husbandry, Handloom, Handicrafts, District Industries Centre (DIC) and allied sectors, who shared their progress, experiences and challenges.

During the interaction, a beneficiary from the Sheep Husbandry Department informed the DC about receiving a 50-ewe unit under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) with a subsidy of 2.5 lakh, which has significantly improved her livelihood. Another beneficiary showcased a finely crafted Pashmina shawl and narrated how financial assistance of 50,000 received through the Handicrafts Department enabled her to start Sozni work (Pashmina embroidery), generating a sustainable source of income. Other beneficiaries who received similar units also shared how these interventions have enhanced their earning



capacity.

A progressive farmer from Watapora, Mohammad Azad Bhat, shared his success story of starting farming on three kanals of land and achieving an annual income of 5 lakh through seedling sales. With continued support from the Agriculture Department and SKUAST-K, he has established six low-tech polyhouses and two mini hi-tech polyhouses. Now recognised as a "Champion Farmer" in Bandipora, he runs his own enterprise, "Bhat Vegetable Nursery," and has received several awards for his progressive work.

Speaking on the occasion, Javed Ahmad Bhat, a 32-year-old entrepreneur from Ajas, Bandipora, representing JCP Enterprises, manufacturers of hollow blocks and tiles, shared his entrepreneurial journey. He stated that starting with a 7-lakh loan from EDI Bandipora in 2014, his enterprise has grown into a successful unit with an annual turnover of 6-7 crore, providing employment to around 120 people.

Addressing the gathering, the

DC said that such monthly interactions would continue as a platform to review ground-level implementation of schemes, promote transparency, and strengthen inter-departmental convergence to further boost livelihood generation across the district. She appreciated the efforts of the beneficiaries and encouraged them to adopt innovative practices while motivating others in their communities to avail benefits under government schemes.

Other beneficiaries also shared their individual journeys, challenges and future expansion plans under various components of HADP and allied livelihood schemes, highlighting the role of training, subsidies and departmental support.

The interaction was attended by the Chief Agriculture Officer Bandipora, Chief Animal Husbandry Officer Bandipora, District Sheep Husbandry Officer Bandipora, Chief Horticulture Officer Bandipora, representatives of concerned departments and a large number of beneficiaries.

Judicial Officers meet held at DLSA Budgam



KT News Desk

BUDGAM, DECEMBER 16: Under the aegis of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) and the Jammu & Kashmir Legal Services Authority (JKLSA), the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Budgam convened a meeting of Judicial Officers under the initiative "Mediation for the Nation 2.0" at the Chamber of the Principal District & Sessions Judge (Chairman, DLSA), Budgam.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was chaired by the Principal District & Sessions Judge, Budgam and was attended by Judicial Officers of District Budgam and the Judicial Officers of TLSCs Budgam, attend the meeting Virtually.

The meeting was organised to deliberate upon and identify suitable cases for Mediation with the objective of promoting amicable settlement of disputes and Strengthening the alternative dispute resolution mechanism within the district.

The Secretary, DLSA Budgam, briefed the officers about the objectives of Mediation for the Nation 2.0 and emphasized the need for proactive identification and referral of appropriate cases to mediation.

During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on the categories of cases suitable for mediation, including matrimonial, family, civil, and other compoundable disputes. Judicial Officers were encouraged to actively screen pending matters and refer eligible cases to mediation centres for early and effective resolution.

The Chairman, DLSA Budgam, stressed the importance of mediation in reducing pendency, saving litigant's time and resources, and ensuring speedy and consensual justice.

The meeting concluded with a collective commitment by the Judicial Officers to actively support and implement the objectives of Mediation for the Nation 2.0 in District Budgam.

DC Udhampur reviews arrangements for Republic Day-2026 celebrations



KT News Desk

UDHAMPUR, DECEMBER 16: To discuss arrangements for the celebration of Republic Day function-2026, Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, Saloni Rai on Tuesday chaired a meeting with district officers from the line departments here at Conference Hall DC Office Complex.

Additional Deputy Commissioner, Prem Singh; PO Poshan, Subash Chander Dogra; Chief Planning Officer, Uttam Singh; GM DIC, Kishore Singh Katoch; Assistant Commissioner Development, Om Parkash, DFO and other district heads attended the meeting.

Threadbare discussions were held on the arrangements including seating arrangements, barricading, security measures, traffic regulation, drinking water and power supply, sanitation, first aid, public address system and deployment of fire-tenders.

It was decided in the meeting that the main function would be held at Government Degree College Boys. The event will commence with the Shehnai Vadan in the morning, organized by the Information department. The

these workers under the PM-SYM scheme by utilising the services of Common Service Centres (CSCs).

Emphasis was also laid on enrolling MNREGA workers, along with those associated with the handloom and handicrafts sectors. The DC stressed the need for focused outreach and awareness campaigns to ensure that all eligible workers from these sectors are brought under the ambit of the scheme.

The DC further directed the departments concerned to closely monitor the enrollment process, ensure proper documentation, and submit regular progress reports to the district administration.

Meanwhile, the DC reiterated that the PM-SYM scheme is a significant step towards providing social security and financial stability to unorganised sector workers in their old age.

The meeting was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner, Baramulla, Syed Altaf Hussain Musvi; ADC Sopore, S.A.Raina; SDM Uri, Shubhankar Pratyush, SDM Pattan, Gulzar Ahmad, CPO Baramulla, Nisar Ahmad, ACD Baramulla, Chaudhary Mudassir Hussain, and other officers and officials.

PM Modi conferred with Ethiopia's highest honour

First world leader to receive it

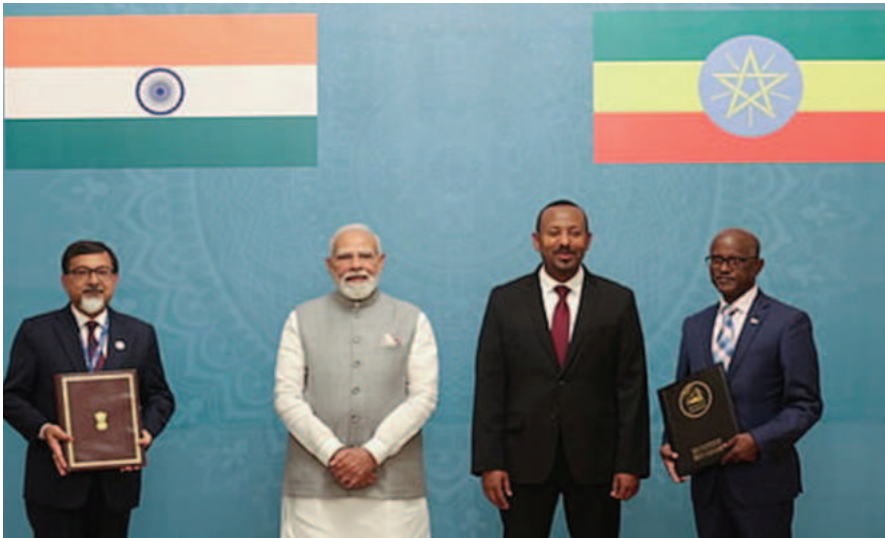
PTI

Addis Ababa: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday was conferred with Ethiopia's highest award 'The Great Honour Nishan of Ethiopia' by his Ethiopian counterpart Abiy Ahmed Ali.

The award was conferred upon Prime Minister Modi in a special ceremony hosted at the Addis International Convention Centre on Tuesday.

Prime Minister Modi was conferred with the award for his exceptional contribution towards strengthening India-Ethiopia partnership and for his visionary leadership as a global statesman, the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement in New Delhi.

Prime Minister Modi is the first global head of state/head of government to receive this award.



India, Ethiopia elevate ties to strategic partnership as PM Modi holds talks with his counterpart

PTI

Addis Ababa, Dec 16: India and Ethiopia on Tuesday elevated their ties to a strategic partnership, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi held wide-ranging talks with his Ethiopian counterpart Abiy Ahmed Ali during which they discussed issues of bilateral and mutual interest.

Modi, who arrived here from

Jordan on his maiden bilateral visit, was accorded a ceremonial welcome at the National Palace ahead of the bilateral talks, reflecting the vibrant India-Ethiopia relations rooted in shared history and a promising future.

"We are elevating India and Ethiopia relations to a strategic partnership. This step will provide new energy, new momentum and new depth to our ties,"

Prime Minister Modi said during the delegation-level talks.

He thanked PM Ali for his support in India's fight against terrorism. "The support of friendly countries in this struggle against terrorism holds great significance," Modi said.

"Today, we got the opportunity to deliberate on the key aspects of our cooperation, such as economy, innovation, technology, defence, health,

capacity-building and multilateral cooperation. I am pleased that today, we have decided to double the student scholarship for Ethiopia in India," Modi said.

Modi said that India and Ethiopia have shared contact, dialogue, and exchange for thousands of years. The two countries, which are rich in languages and traditions, are symbols of unity in diversity, he added.

CM Omar pays tributes to Late Masud Choudhary on 3rd death anniversary

Calls for dedicated research centre at GDCT for tribal studies

KT News Desk

Jammu, Dec 16: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday attended the commemoration of the third death anniversary of Late Dr. Masud Ahmed Choudhary, former IPS officer, eminent educationist and founder of the Gurjar Desh Charitable Trust (GDCT), at Jammu, and paid glowing tributes to his life and legacy.

Recalling Dr. Choudhary's distinguished service to the nation and society, the Chief Minister described him as a visionary public servant who embodied integrity, institution-building and selfless dedication.

He highlighted Dr. Choudhary's pivotal role as the founding Vice-Chancellor of Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah (BGSB) University, Rajouri, and his lifelong commitment to empowering the Gujjar-Bakerwal community and other marginalized sections of Jammu and Kashmir.

He noted that through GDCT, Dr. Choudhary had laid a strong institutional foundation, establishing schools and nurturing spaces such as a reading room, library, museum and cultural centre. However, the Chief Minister emphasized that the true tribute to the late visionary would be to ensure that these institutions actively benefit the community for whom these facilities have been established.

Highlighting the growing challenges posed by climate



change, especially to nomadic and semi-nomadic communities like the Gujjar-Bakerwals, the Chief Minister called for setting up a dedicated research centre under GDCT. He stressed the need for in-depth research on issues such as effects of climate change, migration patterns, livelihood vulnerabilities and long-term preservation of tribal culture & traditions..

"The government has schemes for all, but communities facing unique challenges need focused research and tailored solutions. Research papers prepared by knowledgeable people can guide policy and help us understand how best to safeguard their future," he said.

The Chief Minister also suggested undertaking research on the concept and functioning of tribal universities, to assess their impact elsewhere and to prepare a roadmap for making such institutions successful in Jammu and Kashmir, ensuring that tribal communities derive maximum benefit.

Acknowledging the presence of retired and serving officers, lawyers, scholars,

teachers and intellectuals within the community, the Chief Minister urged the Trust to harness this collective wisdom to carry forward Dr. Choudhary's mission.

"The best tribute to Dr. Masud Ahmed Choudhary would be to fulfill, with our own hands, the purpose for which he established this institution—so that his community benefits and people's lives change," he said, while thanking the organizers for inviting him to the commemoration.

Former Chief Minister Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Minister Javed Ahmed Rana, MLA Vikram Randhawa, several Members of the Legislative Assembly, former Minister Raman Bhalla, Aslam Qureshi (retired IAS), Sheikh Shakeel, Senior Advocate, J&K High Court, Abdul Hamid Choudhary, Patron-in-Chief, GDCT, Arshad Ali Choudhary, Chairman, GDCT, representatives of various political parties, and prominent civil society members and Gujjar community representatives were also present on the occasion.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

India's decisive

Calling upon the people to draw inspiration from the sacrifices of the armed forces, the Lieutenant Governor urged citizens to work together to realise the vision of a Viksit Bharat. "Together, we should march forward to achieve the lofty vision of making India a Developed Nation," he said.

Satish Sharma, Minister for Youth Services & Sports, Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Science & Technology, Information Technology, ARI & Trainings; Lieutenant General Pratik Sharma, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C), Northern Command; Lt Gen P K Mishra, GOC White Knight Corps (16 Corps) ; Maj Gen HS Brar GOC 10 RAPID; Brigadier Dayanand Sharma, Commander Pallanwala Brigade, Maj. Gen. Ashim Kohli (Retd), Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Flag Foundation of India; senior officials; War Veterans, Veer naris and students were present. (KNO)

Kashmir rivers,

depletion of rivers and springs.

Forecasts indicate continued dry weather into late December, potentially worsening the situation unless significant rain or snow arrives.

Authorities warned that dry vegetation and prolonged moisture deficits are increasing the risk of forest fires in the Valley.

"The combination of low river levels and dry weather is alarming for both agriculture and water security," said an official from the Department of Disaster Management, Srinagar.

Experts at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) stressed the need for urgent, science-driven interventions.

Vice-Chancellor Prof Nazir Ahmad Ganai said, "Rising climate variability and water scarcity are major threats to agriculture. We need drought-resilient crops and better water management strategies immediately."

Scientists recommended research on regenerative agriculture, efficient water-use technologies, and climate adaptation to mitigate the impact of changing weather patterns.

J&K RECORDING POOR AUR QUALITY

Meanwhile, the air quality in J&K is currently rated as poor, with a live AQI of 129 according to the US standard. PM10 levels are recorded at 91 µg/m³ and PM2.5 at 65 µg/m³, indicating that pollution may pose health concerns for sensitive groups.

In a fresh podcast, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah expressed concern over climate change, saying he finds it hard to understand those who do not believe it is real.

Recalling his childhood, he said that during trips to Sonamarg, large glaciers were visible, but today they have receded, and only small patches remain in the higher hills.

"Gulmarg used to witness snow ski courses shortly after winter vacations. It was impossible for the area to be snowless during Christmas. But now, even in December, there is no snow," he said.

The Chief Minister also warned that while people often talk about pollution in Delhi, air quality in Kashmir is rapidly declining and approaching similar levels.

"We need to take concrete steps, not only by the government but also by the people. Everyone must make an effort to ensure a greener environment," he said. (KNO)

CIK busts terror

was undertaken after obtaining due authorization through search warrants issued by the Hon'ble Court of Special Judge, Designated under the NIA Act, Srinagar."

He said, "The case stems from credible intelligence inputs indicating that certain individuals in Jammu & Kashmir were exploiting platforms linked to mass media, social media, human rights advocacy, environmental causes and women empowerment as a cover to carry out activities gravely prejudicial to the sovereignty, integrity and security of India.

Discreet verification further revealed their suspected links with secessionist groups and proscribed terrorist organisations."

"Investigations have also brought to light that some of these individuals were allegedly in contact with Pakistan-based terror handlers using encrypted communication applications.

They are suspected to have been actively involved in peddling false narratives, glorifying terrorists and terrorism, radicalising impressionable youth, and systematically attempting to disrupt public order and peace in Jammu & Kashmir," the spokesman said.

He said, "Acting on these inputs, 12 locations across Srinagar, Baramulla, Anantnag, Pulwama, Kupwara, Budgam and Shopian were identified and searched. During the operation, 12 suspects were detained for questioning. A substantial cache of incriminating digital material was seized, including 10 mobile phones, 01 laptop and 14 SIM cards, all of which are now under detailed forensic examination."

"The operation has successfully dismantled a dangerous covert network that sought to exploit the credibility of social causes to advance terror agendas.

The seized digital evidence is expected to unravel deeper layers of the conspiracy, and further arrests cannot be ruled out as the investigation progresses. Investigation is on to unearth the full scale of the conspiracy, identify other conspirators & associates and expose their chain of communication with terrorist-secessionist handlers sitting across the border," he said, adding, "The CIK reiterates its firm resolve to act against all elements inimical to national security and warns that no misuse of democratic spaces or social platforms to promote terrorism will be tolerated.

The public is urged to remain vigilant and cooperate with law enforcement agencies in maintaining peace and security in the Union Territory." (KNO)

India fences over

also made progress on other borders, including Bangladesh and Myanmar, though the focus on the Pakistan border underscores the government's emphasis on national security in the west.

The government has strengthened intelligence gathering, inter-agency coordination and border management over the past two years, leading to improved detection of infiltration attempts and neutralisation of terror networks, Nityanand Rai told the LS in an answer to another question, as per KNO.

He said capacities of central and state law enforcement agencies have been enhanced to mitigate terror risks.

He said closer coordination between central agencies and state police has enabled joint operations against terror modules involved in recruitment, financing and other activities.

Border guarding forces have been

equipped with drones, thermal imagers, night-vision devices and radar systems under the Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System.

These measures, Rai said, have resulted in reduced infiltration attempts, increased drone interceptions and recovery of arms, ammunition and narcotics.

Pertinently, India-Pakistan border stretches across Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Gujarat, and includes the Line of Control in J&K. (KNO)

India slams Pakistan

and Ladakh are an integral and inalienable part of India. They were, are, and will always remain so. Pakistan's unwarranted reference to Jammu & Kashmir in today's open debate attests to its obsessive focus on harming India and its people," the Ambassador said.

"A serving non-permanent Security Council Member that chooses to further this obsession in all meetings and platforms of the UN in pursuit of its divisive agenda cannot be expected to fulfil its designated responsibilities and obligations," he added.

Highlighting Pakistan's long record of sponsoring terrorism, the Indian envoy strongly defended New Delhi's decision to place the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance.

He said that although India entered the Treaty 65 years ago in good faith, Pakistan has repeatedly violated its spirit by waging three wars and orchestrating thousands of terror attacks against India.

Citing the April 2025 Pahalgam terror attack, in which 26 innocent civilians were killed in a religion-based targeted attack, he said this incident clearly underscores Pakistan's continued support for terrorism.

In this context, he stated that India has decided to hold the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance until Pakistan credibly and irrevocably ends its support for cross-border terrorism and all other forms of terror.

"India had entered into the Indus Waters Treaty, 65 years ago, in good faith, in a spirit of goodwill and friendship. Throughout these six and a half decades, Pakistan has violated the spirit of the Treaty by inflicting three wars and thousands of terror attacks on India. In the last four decades, tens of thousands of Indian lives have been lost in Pakistan-sponsored terror attacks, the most recent of which was the Pahalgam terror attack in April 2025, which involved religion-based targeted killings of 26 innocent civilians by Pakistan-sponsored terrorists. It is in this backdrop that India has finally announced that the Treaty will be held in abeyance until Pakistan, which is a global epicentre of terror, credibly and irrevocably ends its support for cross-border and all other forms of terrorism," the Ambassador said.

Parvathaneni also criticised Pakistan's internal political situation of suppressing democratic will, referencing the jailing of a former Prime Minister, Imran Khan, banning the ruling party, and engineering a "constitutional coup" through the 27th amendment to grant lifetime immunity to its Chief of Defence Forces, Asim Munir.

"Pakistan, of course, has a unique way of respecting the will of its people - by jailing a Prime Minister, by banning the ruling political party and by letting its armed forces engineer a constitutional coup through the 27th amendment and giving lifetime immunity to its Chief of Defence Forces," Parvathaneni said.

"Let me be clear - India will counter Pakistan-sponsored terrorism in all its forms and manifestations with all its might," he added.

The sharp response came after Pakistan's representative reiterated claims of "unresolved dispute" in Jammu and Kashmir while criticising the suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty.

LG Sinha pays tribute

Khan Gali in the Trehgam area of Kupwara district.

"The nation is forever indebted to the selfless service and supreme sacrifice of Havildar Zubair Ahmad. He served with exemplary courage and commitment towards the nation. I convey my heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family in this hour of grief," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Army intensifies

could be used to make safe hideouts in the hinterland.

The Army, sources said, is monitoring key routes and traditional infiltration corridors to ensure that no terrorist group is able to set up hideouts. "Patrolling has been stepped up in dense forests and regions around the Line of Control as well as overreaches of Hinterland," they added.

"Soldiers equipped with snow gear and modern surveillance tools are conducting round-the-clock patrols. The Army has already stocked up on essential winter supplies and enhanced surveillance through drones and sensors. Joint operations are being carried out in coordination with the Police," sources added. (KNO)

At ₹8.40 crore,

war among IPL franchises.

Apart from his bowling prowess, Auqib has also proved his utility with the bat down the order, enhancing his credentials as a genuine all-round option, which further boosted his demand at the auction table.

This achievement sparked jubilation across Kashmir's cricketer circles.

Former players, coaches, and fans hailed the achievement as a testament to the Valley's untapped talent and growing presence in mainstream Indian cricket. Many described Auqib's journey as a source of inspiration for young aspirants in the region, reinforcing the belief that consistent performances at the domestic level can open doors to the biggest stage, regardless of geographical challenges.

The north Kashmir town erupted in joy, with dhols, firecrackers, and congratulatory processions in Auqib's native Sheeri village, where family, friends, and villagers gathered to celebrate with cake-cuttings and festivities.

Prominent local cricketer Jahengir Lone said, "We always knew Auqib had the potential. His dedication, discipline, and willpower made the selectors take notice. This is not just his achievement—it's a proud day for Baramulla and the entire Valley."

The Baramulla Cricket Forum called Auqib's selection "a moment of collective triumph," expressing hope that he will soon don the Indian jersey and bring further pride to the region.

Cricketing circles across Kashmir hailed the achievement as an inspiration for aspiring players across the Union Territory.

Earlier, several players from Jammu and Kashmir—including Parvez Rasool, Umrani Malik, Abdul Samad, Rasikh Salam, Yudhvir Singh, Mohammad Mudhasir and Manzoor

Pandav—have featured in the IPL. While some enjoyed extended game time and stardom, others benefitted from world-class training environments and exposure.

The announcement of Auqib Nabi Dar's record-breaking deal now stands as the most significant IPL milestone for Jammu and Kashmir cricket, raising hopes that many more talents from the region will follow. (KNO)

Cold wave

minus 2.6 degrees Celsius, down from 2.2 degrees Celsius.

Kupwara registered a minimum of minus 1.8 degrees Celsius, compared to 1.6 degrees Celsius previously, while Kokernag dropped to minus 0.6 degrees Celsius from 2.4 degrees Celsius.

Pampore and Pulwama were among the coldest places in the Valley, each recording minus 4.0 degrees Celsius. Shopian recorded minus 3.8 degrees Celsius. Anantnag minus 3.3 degrees Celsius and Baramulla minus 2.9 degrees Celsius.

Srinagar Airport recorded a minimum of minus 2.0 degrees Celsius, down from 1.4 degrees Celsius a day earlier, while Awantipora recorded minus 2.6 degrees Celsius. Gulmarg, which had recorded 1.0 degrees Celsius on Monday, settled at 0.5 degrees Celsius. Zojila Pass recorded an extreme low of minus 17.0 degrees Celsius.

In the Jammu region, temperatures also dipped, though remaining above freezing in most areas. Jammu city recorded a minimum of 8.4 degrees Celsius, down from 11.4 degrees Celsius the previous day.

Banihal recorded 1.7 degrees Celsius, while Baderwah dropped to 2.9 degrees Celsius. Rajouri recorded a minimum of 1.0 degrees Celsius, Udhampur 4.0 degrees Celsius and Ramban 4.6 degrees Celsius. Doda recorded 6.2 degrees Celsius.

Ladakh continued to experience severe cold, with Leh recording minus 4.8 degrees Celsius, compared to minus 1.8 degrees Celsius a day earlier. Kargil recorded minus 4.2 degrees Celsius, while Nubra Valley recorded minus 1.9 degrees Celsius.

Drass recorded minus 8.2 degrees Celsius, Padum minus 9.1 degrees Celsius and Nyoma recorded the lowest temperature in the region at minus 14.3 degrees Celsius.

Meanwhile, the IMD forecast said weather is likely to remain mainly dry over Jammu and Kashmir during the next 24 hours and the subsequent two days.

From December 18 to 20, isolated light snowfall is likely at higher reaches of north and central Kashmir, while plains are expected to remain largely dry.

It said the weather is likely to remain partly to generally cloudy on December 20 and 21, with the possibility of light snowfall over the higher reaches of Kashmir division and light rain over scattered plain areas of Jammu, mainly from the late night of December 20 to the afternoon of December 21.

The weather department has advised that shallow to moderate fog is likely to continue at many places in Kashmir division and at isolated places in Jammu division.

It also cautioned that light snowfall combined with sub-freezing temperatures over higher reaches may lead to slippery road conditions during the late night of December 20 and the morning hours of December 21, advising travellers and transporters to follow traffic and administrative advisories. (KNO)

India needs to strengthen tech, values to become developed nation by 2047: Prez Murmu

PTI

Mandya (Karnataka), Dec 16: President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday said as India moves towards the vision of a developed nation by 2047, the country needs both the power of technology and the strength of values.

She was speaking at the inauguration of the 1066th Jayanthi celebrations of Adi Jagadguru Sri Shivarathreeshwara Shivayogi Mahaswamiji at Malavalli in this district.

Addressing the gathering here, she said, "As we move towards the vision of developed India by 2047, we need both the power of technology and the strength of values. A developed India requires the integration of modern education with moral wisdom, innovation with environmental responsibility, economic growth with social inclusion, and progress with compassion." The union government is working with this holistic vision, she said.

She reaffirmed that the Centre remains committed to building a future guided by inclusion, service and human dignity.

Emphasising the role of youth, Murmu said India's greatest strength lies in its young population, whose destiny will be shaped not only by their skills and knowledge but also by their integrity and a sense of purpose.

"Our greatest strength lies in our youth — their energy, creativity, values and character. The destiny



of India will be saved not only by their skill and knowledge but by their integrity and sense of purpose," she said. The President said the life and teachings of Mahaswamiji continue to inspire and guide countless people even after more than a thousand years.

Saints across ages, she said, have enlightened humanity through wisdom and compassion, reminding society that true greatness lies not in authority or wealth, but in sacrifice, service and spiritual strength.

Recalling the establishment of the Jagadguru Sri Veerasimhasana Mahasamsthana Math at Suttur in the 10th century, the President said what began as a sacred spiritual centre gradually emerged as a powerful force for social transformation.

The math evolved into a centre of wisdom that nurtured generations with values of discipline, devotion and compassion, she added.

The unbroken guru lineage of Suttur has been the sustaining soul of this great tradition, preserving and strengthening spiritual values across generations. Adi Jagadguru Mahaswamiji exemplified intense spiritual discipline and deep inner wisdom, she noted.

Murmu also highlighted the contributions of Jagadguru Dr Shivaratri Deshikendra Mahaswamiji, saying his legacy of visionary and compassionate public service has benefited millions, particularly in the fields of religion, education, healthcare and culture. Describing Karnataka as the sacred land of saints like 12th century

social reformer Basaveshwara, the President said his message of "work is worship" continues to inspire humanity. She expressed happiness that this philosophy is reflected in the ideals and activities of the Suttur Math, where spiritual pursuit and social service go hand in hand.

The President said that under the guidance and patronage of the Math, the JSS Mahavidyapeetha has emerged as one of India's distinguished institutions dedicated to education and social development.

"With institutions across the world, it is engaged in shaping young minds, delivering healthcare, empowering women, uplifting rural communities, preserving culture and strengthening an inclusive society," she said.

Noting that Suttur Math is a pillar of social development, Murmu said spiritual guidance is essential in an age of rapid change and uncertainty for nurturing social harmony, ethical leadership, youth empowerment and inner resilience.

Institutions like Suttur Math play a substantial role in this national endeavour, the President said, adding that spiritual institutions uphold values of compassion, tolerance, mutual respect and collective responsibility, which are essential for a harmonious modern world.

She urged institutions like Suttur Math to continue inspiring young minds and nurturing responsible citizens and guiding the architect of tomorrow's India.

NIA to have dedicated court in each state, UT; Delhi to have 16 special courts: Centre to SC

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 16: The Centre on Tuesday told the Supreme Court that to ensure speedy trial, it has decided to set up a dedicated NIA court in each state and Union territory and more than one court at places where there are over 10 cases under anti-terrorism law.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joydalya Bagchi was also told by the Delhi government that 16 special courts are being created in the national capital to deal with organised crime and terror cases.

The top court asked the Centre and the Delhi government to explore the possibility of enacting a stringent anti-organised crime law like MCOCA for the entire National Capital Region, to avoid any jurisdictional conflict between different law enforcement agencies.

Taking note of gangster Mahesh Khatri, who has multiple cases registered against him in different areas of the NCR and is before the court seeking bail on the ground of delayed trial, CJI Kant said hardened criminals involved in organised crime take undue advantage of the jurisdictional issues in NCR and evade



the law.

"Sometimes the offence is generated in say A state, and the offender moves to B state. But which court or agency should take cognisance of the matter for prompt investigation, or which courts shall have the competent jurisdiction itself becomes an issue in the criminal trial," the bench said.

The top court was hearing bail pleas of Khatri and of Kailash Ramchandani, a Naxal sympathiser from Gadchiroli in Maharashtra, who was booked after 15 policemen of a quick response team were killed in an IED blast in 2019.

The CJI said the eventual benefit goes to the hardened criminals, which may not be in the interest of society or the nation.

"It seems that the issue requires consideration, including the desirability of formulation of effective laws for the effective utilisation of existing legal

architecture in the NCR region," he said.

While pointing to the multiple FIR in the case of Khatri, Justice Bagchi told Additional Solicitor Generals Aishwarya Bhati (Centre) and SD Sanjay (Delhi government) that they can explore the possibility of invoking of NIA Act in such cases, where there are multiple FIRs in different states.

He said NIA has the supervening power of taking over all the investigation, particularly in respect of these organised crime brackets.

Bhati pointed to the status report of the Centre and said that a virtual meeting of the union home secretary was held with his counterparts of different states and it was agreed that additional infrastructure and post of judicial officers will be created to deal with NIA cases and for this funds will be allocated.

SC grants 6 weeks to Centre to finalise scheme for rehabilitation of cadets

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 16: The Supreme Court on Tuesday granted six weeks to the Centre to finalise the recommendations for rehabilitating officer cadets who were medically discharged from military institutes on account of disabilities suffered during training programmes.

A bench of justices B V Nagarathna and R Mahadevan noted the submission of Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati that the Army, Navy and Air Force had given positive recommendations.

"ASG appearing for the Union of India submitted that pursuant to order dated October 7, 2025, recommendations are made by all the three Services which are under consideration of the Ministry of Defence in the first instance and thereafter, the matter would also be subject to the approval of the Ministry of Finance.

"ASG also submitted that recommendations of the three services are also positive and therefore, the consideration by the two Ministries is required. Therefore, for this procedure to be completed, some time may be granted. Hence, we adjourn this matter to January 20, 2026," the bench said.

The top court was hearing a suo motu case on difficulties faced by cadets who were medically discharged from military institutes on account of disabilities suffered during training programmes.

Senior advocate Rekha Palli, who was appointed as an amicus curiae to assist the court in the matter, had earlier given her written submissions indicating certain suggestions regarding medical assistance, financial support, educational and resettlement options and insurance coverage for the out-boarded officer cadets.

On September 4, the Centre assured the top court that medical facilities



under the "Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme" will be provided to cadets who were discharged from military institutes owing to disabilities suffered during training.

The bench was informed that starting August 29, all such cadets were included in the ECHS scheme, and the one-time subscription fee was also waived for them.

On the issue of monetary benefit, the court had noted the ex-gratia amount with effect from 2017 and called for its enhancement, particularly bearing in mind the current state of inflation and price rise.

With regard to the insurance scheme currently in existence, the court had observed it may not be adequate and said efforts could be made to enhance the insurance cover for the out-boarded cadets.

On August 12, the top court took suo motu cognisance of a media report, which flagged the issue of these cadets.

They were stated to be a part of training at the nation's top military institutes, such as the National Defence Academy and the Indian Military Academy

. According to the media report, there are around 500 officer cadets who were medically discharged from these military institutes since 1985, due to varying degrees of disability incurred during training, and are now staring at mounting medical bills with an ex-gratia monthly payment that's far short of what they need.

In NDA alone, it was reported, there were around 20 such cadets, who were medically discharged in just five years, between 2021 and July 2025.

The report further highlighted the plight of these cadets because, according to the rules, they were not entitled to the status of ex-servicemen, which would have made them eligible under the ECHS for free treatment at military facilities and empanelled hospitals, since their disabilities took place during training before they were commissioned as officers.

Unlike soldiers in this category, entitled to ESM status, all that these officer cadets got was an ex-gratia payment of up to 40,000 per month depending on the extent of disability an amount that fell far short of basic needs.

Gold declines Rs 1,700 to Rs 1.35 lakh/10g; snaps 4-day record rally

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 16: Snapping the four-day record rally, gold prices declined by Rs 1,700 to Rs 1,35,900 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday as investors booked profits amid weak global cues, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had surged by Rs 4,000 to touch an all-time high of Rs 1,37,600 per 10 grams on Monday. The metal rose by Rs 6,000 over the previous four days, trading at record highs.

"Gold prices witnessed profit booking and remained volatile, with the yellow metal slipping towards the USD 4,275 level in global markets and staying under pressure," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, said.

Echoing sentiments, Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities, said, "Domestic gold prices also softened, curtailing a four-day advance. These losses were, however, notably mitigated by the persistent weakness in the Indian Rupee which quoted at a record low level".

In the local bullion markets, silver prices also depreciated by Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,98,500 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes). The white metal had ended flat at Rs 1,99,500 per kg, also its all-time high level, as per the association.

Parmar added that physical jewellery demand is expected to be subdued commensurate with the onset of the inauspicious period,



investment demand is forecast to remain robust, a tendency driven by prevailing risk-averse market sentiments.

In the international markets, spot gold snapped a five-day winning streak, declining by USD 27.80, or 0.65 per cent, to USD 4,277.42 per ounce.

"Gold prices experienced a modest decline, easing following five consecutive sessions of appreciation, as market participants strategically positioned themselves ahead of a critical suite of US economic data releases this week," Dilip Parmar said.

These incoming reports are poised to offer significant clarity regarding the Federal Reserve's predilection for implementing further interest-rate cuts, a key macroeconomic catalyst for the non-yielding asset, he added.

Spot silver also dropped by USD 1.07, or 1.67 per cent, to USD 63.02 per ounce in the overseas markets.

Bullion prices are trading lower as caution prevails ahead of US nonfarm payroll (NFP) data to be released later in the day, which will show NFP figures of both October and November, Praveen Singh, Research Analyst, Mirae Asset ShareKhan, said.

India to achieve all economic goals to become a powerful economy: IIT Dhanbad Director

IANS

New Delhi, Dec 16: India will be able to achieve the economic goals that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government are striving for, and the nation will definitely become a powerful economy, IIT (ISM) Dhanbad Director, Sukumar Mishra, said on Tuesday.

Speaking to reporters at the inauguration of the National Industrial Exhibition cum seminar in Bokaro, he described the manufacturing sector and the new concepts in agriculture as initiatives that will change the destiny of the country.

Mishra said that 2045 will be a major milestone for a developed India, and the way India is progressing, keeping this in mind, is full of promise. "Just as the US dollar reigns supreme in the world, the day is not far when India too will become a strong economic power and the Indian rupee will dominate the global stage," he noted.

He further noted that the concepts of an integrated manufacturing sector, new agricultural concepts, AI control, and quantum computing will make India a strong economic power, and the Indian rupee will rule the world.

The IIT (ISM) Dhanbad Director highlighted that instead of focusing on issues like declining GDP and the rising dollar, we need to focus on long-term planning to achieve a developed India. He said that when the country gained independence, the concept was "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan". Later, "Jai Vigyan" was added, and then, considering the need of the hour, Jai Anusandhan was added to "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan, Jai Vigyan".

Considering the role that the emerging technologies can play in the all-round growth of the nation, he emphasised that the need of the hour is to transform knowledge into science and science into technology.

Low confidence, inability to cope with problems among six signs of later dementia risk: Study

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 16: Six depressive symptoms in midlife such as not being able to cope with problems and losing confidence in oneself might predict risk of dementia two decades later, according to a new study.

Feeling nervous and tensed most of the time, not feeling warmth and affection for others and difficulties concentrating were among the six symptoms contributing towards dementia, according to the findings published in The Lancet Psychiatry journal.

Researchers led by those at the University College London said the cluster of specific symptoms, rather than depression overall, could indicate the relationship between midlife depression and dementia risk in later life.

Lead author Philipp Frank from University College London's division of psychiatry, said,



"Our findings show that dementia risk is linked to a handful of depressive symptoms rather

than depression as a whole. This symptom-level approach gives us a much clearer picture of

who may be more vulnerable decades before dementia develops."

"Everyday symptoms that many people experience in midlife appear to carry important information about long-term brain health. Paying attention to these patterns could open new opportunities for early prevention," Frank said.

Data from 5,811 middle-aged adults who participated in the UK's Whitehall II study, a long-term research that started in 1985 looking into social inequalities in health, was analysed.

Midlife depressive symptoms were assessed during 1997-1999, when the participants were dementia-free and middle-aged (45-69 years) through questionnaires covering 30 common depressive symptoms. The participants were followed up for 25 years through national health registries, 10.1 per cent of whom

developed dementia.

Those reporting five or more depressive symptoms in the questionnaire were found to have a 27 per cent higher risk of developing dementia.

However, the increased risk of dementia was driven entirely by the six specific symptoms in adults under 60 -- loss of self-confidence and difficulty coping with problems were each associated with a roughly 50 per cent increased risk of dementia, the researchers found.

"A distinct set of midlife depressive symptoms was associated with an increased risk of dementia, suggesting that these symptoms might be early markers of underlying neurodegenerative processes," the authors wrote.

"These findings could inform earlier identification and more targeted interventions for individuals with depression who are at risk of dementia," they said.

Talks with King Abdullah II strengthened India-Jordan partnership across key areas: PM Modi

PTI

Amman, Dec 16: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said his talks with King Abdullah II have strengthened India-Jordan partnership across key areas, including renewable energy, water management, digital transformation, cultural exchanges, and heritage cooperation.

"My visit to Jordan has been immensely productive," Modi said at the end of his two-day visit as he thanked King Abdullah II and the people of Jordan for their "exceptional" friendship.

"Our discussions have strengthened the India-Jordan partnership across key areas such as renewable energy, water management, digital transformation, cultural exchanges and heritage cooperation. The outcomes we have achieved together will open new avenues for progress and prosperity for our citizens," he posted on social media. Modi held a one-on-one meeting with King Abdullah II at the Husseinia Palace on Monday before the delegation-level talks.

According to a joint statement issued on Tuesday, the two leaders appreciated the long-standing relationship between their countries, which is characterised by



mutual trust, warmth and goodwill.

"They positively assessed the multi-faceted India-Jordan relations that span across various areas of cooperation, including political, economic, defence, security, culture, and education, among others," it said. The two leaders also appreciated the "excellent cooperation" between the two sides at the bilateral level and in multilateral forums.

During their talks, the two leaders agreed to expand cooperation between the two countries in areas of mutual interest and to stand together as trusted partners in pursuing their respective development aspirations.

"Looking forward, the leaders reaffirmed their determination to sustain the positive trajectory of relations between the

two countries, to promote high-level interactions, and continue to cooperate and collaborate with each other," the joint statement said.

They appreciated the strong bilateral trade, currently valued at USD 2.3 billion, making India the third largest trading partner for Jordan.

"They agreed on the need to diversify the trade basket to further enhance bilateral trade. The leaders also agreed on the early convening of the 11th Trade and Economic Joint Committee in the first half of 2026, to monitor progress in economic and trade relations," the joint statement said.

A high-level business delegation from the two countries discussed ways to further strengthen and expand trade and economic cooperation between the two countries.

PM Modi arrives in Ethiopia on second leg of three-nation tour

PTI

Addis Ababa, Dec 16: Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Ethiopia on Tuesday on the second leg of his three-nation tour, aimed at strengthening ties between the two countries.

Prime Minister Dr Abiy Ahmed Ali received PM Modi at the Addis Ababa International Airport. In a unique gesture, he also drove Modi to the hotel. On the way, he took a special initiative of taking PM Modi to the Science Museum and Friendship Park, which was not in the itinerary. PM Ali informed his Indian counterpart about the varieties of Ethiopian coffee during informal talks. The Nobel Peace Prize-winning Ethiopian PM's special gestures show remarkable respect for Modi, sources said. "Celebrating age-old India-Ethiopia ties! Prime Minister @narendramodi arrives in Addis Ababa on his maiden bilateral visit to Ethiopia. In a special gesture, PM @AbiyAhmedAli came to personally receive him at the airport. Prime Minister was accorded a warm and colourful welcome," Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal posted on social media. "Ethiopia is a key partner for India in the Global South and a fellow BRICS Member," he added.

Modi will be holding wide-ranging discussions with his counterpart on all aspects of India-Ethiopia bilateral ties. "As partners in the Global South, the visit will be a reiteration of the shared commitment of the two nations to advance close ties of friendship and bilateral cooperation," a statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs said before his departure from India.

Trump says Russia, Ukraine closer to peace after Berlin talks



IANS

Washington, Dec 16: Expressing cautious optimism that months of fighting could be brought to an end, US President Donald Trump said that negotiations aimed at ending the Russia-Ukraine war were moving closer to a breakthrough following extensive talks with European leaders and Ukrainian officials in Berlin.

Trump told reporters that he had held "very long and very good talks" with a broad group of European leaders, with the war in Ukraine a central focus of the discussions.

"We had a very good conversation one hour ago with the European leaders, many of them involving the war with Russia and Ukraine," Trump said. "We were — we had a long discussion, and things are seemingly going well."

Trump said he had spoken directly with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and with leaders of Germany, Italy, NATO, Finland, France, the United Kingdom, Poland, Norway, Denmark, and the Netherlands, describing the talks as coordinated and substantive.

"We had very long and very good talks and, again, I think things are going along pretty well," he said.

The President underscored the human cost of the conflict, citing recent casualty figures. "It shouldn't happen. It shouldn't have happened. Should have never started."

Trump said he had also held multiple conversations with Russian President Vladimir Putin and suggested Moscow may now be more inclined toward a settlement. "We've had numerous conversations with President Putin of Russia, and I think we're closer now than we have ever been," he said.

"We want to save a lot of lives," Trump added.

At the same time, Trump cautioned that progress remained fragile. "Russia wants to get it ended, and the problem is

they'll want to get it ended and then all of a sudden they won't," he said. "And Ukraine will want to get it ended, and all of a sudden they won't."

Trump said the challenge was to bring both sides "on the same page," adding, "I think that's working along."

He described the scale of destruction as unprecedented in modern Europe. "When you're losing 25,000 to 30,000 soldiers, mostly soldiers, other people too from towns and places like Kyiv and various other places throughout Ukraine, it's pretty bad," Trump said. "Nobody's seen anything like it, actually, since World War Two."

Trump said European leaders were united in their desire to end the war. "They want to get it ended also," he said, adding that cooperation with NATO partners remained strong.

Responding to questions later, Trump said he believed Putin wanted the conflict to end. "I actually think that President Putin wants to see it end," he said. "I think they'd like to get back to a more normal way of life."

He also said discussions were underway on security guarantees to prevent renewed fighting. "We're working with Europe on it," Trump said. "Europe would be a big part of that."

The war in Ukraine, now in its fourth year, has become the largest conflict in Europe since World War II, reshaping global energy markets, food supply chains, and security alliances. The United States and NATO allies have provided extensive military and financial support to Kyiv, while diplomatic efforts to halt the fighting have intensified amid mounting battlefield losses.

India has consistently called for dialogue and diplomacy, maintaining engagement with both Moscow and Kyiv while stressing respect for sovereignty and the need for an immediate cessation of hostilities — a position New Delhi has reiterated in multiple international forums.

India, Israel share 'policy of zero tolerance' against terrorism: Jaishankar

PTI

Jerusalem, Dec 16: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Tuesday condemned the terror attack during a Hanukkah celebration at Sydney's Bondi Beach, saying that India and Israel both have a policy of "zero tolerance" against terrorism.

Jaishankar, who arrived in Israel on Tuesday on a two-day visit, made the remarks while addressing the press alongside Israeli counterpart Gideon Moshe Sa'ar here.

"Let me first of all convey our very, very sincere, deep condolences at the loss of



life due to the terror attack at Hanukkah celebrations in Bondi Beach. I want to say that we condemn it in the strongest possible terms,"

Jaishankar said. He thanked Israel for its support of India in its fight against terrorism.

At least 15 people were

killed, and 40 were injured in an attack by two gunmen on a gathering during the Jewish festival Hanukkah by the Sea celebration on Sunday.

"Where India and Israel are concerned, we are both countries that have a policy of zero tolerance towards terrorism. We appreciate your consistent support in our fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations," Jaishankar said.

He said that they will be discussing a strategic partnership between the two countries, which has "really developed very significantly in the last decade."

IPL 2026 Auction

Cameron Green becomes most expensive overseas player ever, goes to KKR for Rs 25.20 crores

ANI

Dubai, Dec 16: The Indian Premier League (IPL) auction was off to a fantastic start as Australian all-rounder Cameron Green was sold to Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) for Rs 25.20 crores, becoming the third-most expensive player in the league's history and most expensive overseas player in the competition's history at Abu Dhabi on Tuesday.

Initially, it was Rajasthan Royals and the KKR that entered an intense bidding war, with the Royals opting out at around Rs 13 crores and Chennai Super Kings (CSK), which entered the bidding, taking the price way beyond Rs 20 crores.

Suryakumar can win you 5 out 5 games alone: Shivam Dube

PTI

Lucknow, Dec 16: All-rounder Shivam Dube on Tuesday threw his weight behind the out-of-form Suryakumar Yadav, saying the India T20 captain can single-handedly win matches, and will regain his touch at the right time.

Runs have dried up for Suryakumar, with his last T20I fifty coming back in October 2024. With the World Cup less than two months away, the pressure has begun to mount. "He's the kind of player who can make you win five out of five matches on his own. If he is not in form, it doesn't mean he's not a good player," Dube said, backing his captain on the eve of the fourth T20I against South Africa here.

"He is one of the best players. No one can do what he can. Yes, he is short of runs, but his form will return at the right time. He can blast at any moment," he added.

Dube stressed that Suryakumar's mindset and impact go beyond numbers. "He is a fighter. Whether he's scoring runs or not, he remains the same. He always wants to do something for the team. He is an innovative and threatening player. I think he is a 360-degree player," Dube added.

Suryakumar's deputy Shubman Gill is also enduring a lean patch in the shortest format, but Dube expressed confidence in the



vice-captain as well.

"I think Shubman Gill is such a player that even when his form is up or down, his average and strike rate are still very good. He has been performing for India for many years," Dube said. "Ups and downs are part and parcel of the game, but I think he is one of the best batters in India."

The 32-year-old all-rounder believes defending champions India are largely settled heading into the T20 World Cup at home.

"I think the team is settled. I don't think much will change, but of course that decision rests with the captain, coach and selectors. According to me, this is one of the best teams."

Dube also spoke about his own preparation, saying he is focused on fitness during the off-season.

"I worked a lot on my fitness in the off-season. When I'm with the Indian team, I have a lot of conversations with Morne (Morkel). That has helped me a lot," he said.

Movies Schedule

Wednesday, 17th December

KIS KISKO PYAAR KAROON 2 (U/A16+)
HINDI - 06:45 PM

SHOLAY: THE FINAL CUT (U)
HINDI - 02:45 PM

DHURANDHAR (A)
HINDI ATMOS WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES - 02:25 PM
HINDI ATMOS - 10:30 AM, 06:25 PM
HINDI - 12:55 PM, 05:05 PM

TERE ISHK MEIN (U/A 16+)
HINDI - 11:00 AM

CALL 95416 13868
FOR ASSISTANCE WITH TICKETS

TICKETS AT:

www.bookmyshow.com | www.inoxmovies.com
Paytm, Inox App, or directly from the booking counter at the cinema.