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Dated: 17-12-2025  
DIPK-9085/25

# LG Sinha calls for ending 'insider-outsider' debate

Terrorists in rugged terrains will be eliminated soon

Decisive operations thwart terrorism, corruption, divisive narratives

Under PM Modi, rapid growth; balancing industry and social welfare

Yogesh

Jammu, Dec 17: Calling for putting an end to the "insider-outsider" debate, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday said the terrorists hiding in rugged terrains, mountains and dense forests will be eliminated soon.

Addressing the Strategic Management Forum Conference on Policy Making and Strategic Planning for achieving Viksit Bharat by 2047, at IIM here, LG Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Divisive narratives are creating unnecessary hurdles in the development process and undermining the spirit of unity and collective progress. Andar wala (insider) and bahar wala (outsider) debate—serves no purpose and it must stop."

Referring to the ongoing aggressive operations by security forces and J&K Police against



terrorists, over-ground workers, sympathizers, and drug networks, which are seen as funding sources for terrorism, LG Sinha said, "Remaining terrorists hiding in rugged terrains, mountains, and dense forests will be eliminated soon."

He described terrorism and

corruption as major challenges and expressed concern over educated youth joining terrorist ranks. However, he exuded hope that J&K will soon be made free of both. "Elimination of top terrorist commanders, the end of local recruitment, and failed infiltration attempts

from across the border have defeated the nefarious designs of the adversaries."

Drawing parallels with the Northeast, where terrorism has been eradicated, and Maoism largely contained, he stressed that security forces alone cannot succeed without collective societal efforts.

Lauding PM Modi for his vision, LG Sinha said, "Rapid growth, under the leadership of PM Modi, is unprecedented in Indian history."

He reiterated that the development thrives in an atmosphere of inclusiveness, trust and shared responsibility.

The Lieutenant Governor said the core values, principles, ideals of our forefathers and values of good governance will guide us to navigate the present challenges to build a prosperous future.

LG Sinha said, "The policies must be formulated in accordance with **| More on P6**

## Omar slams Nitish over hijab incident, recalls Mehbooba's 'burqa episode'

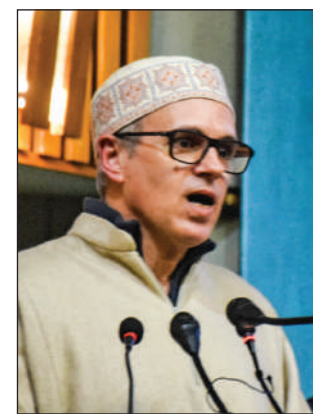
- Says J&K managing finances under pressure
- 'UT financially dependent on Centre'
- PDD asked to minimise power cuts

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Dec 17: Reacting to Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's act of pulling a woman's hijab, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday called it "unacceptable" and "a reflection of a regressive mindset."

He drew parallels with a past incident involving PDP's former chief Mehbooba Mufti, saying such public humiliation of women cannot be justified under any circumstance.

Talking to reporters here, CM Omar as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) while commenting on the Bihar hijab incident, said, "During my election, people may have forgotten how Mehbooba Mufti got a legitimate voter's burqa



removed inside a polling station. This is a continuation of the same mindset. What happened then was unfortunate, and this incident is equally shameful."

He added, "Publicly humiliating another person, especially a woman, cannot be justified. If the Chief Minister did not want to hand over the appointment letter himself, he could have stepped aside. But humiliating someone in front of everyone is completely wrong. Slowly, the reality of Nitish Kumar, who was once considered a secular and sensible leader, seems to be coming out."

Referring to the ongoing the 17th Annual Convention of Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC) in Srinagar, CM Omar said that such meetings provide a significant opportunity to promote adventure tourism. "Activities like trekking, mountaineering and white-water rafting should also be encouraged," the CM said.

He noted that recently, during a function in Jammu, he had distributed certificates to individuals who had completed paragliding courses, enabling them to now provide paragliding services in Jammu and Kashmir. "Our effort is that gradually, by bringing together different adventure activities, we reclaim our pre-eminent position in adventure tourism a position we once held at the top," the Chief Minister said.

Asked about promoting rock climbing and introducing such activities along the lines of foreign countries, CM Omar said there is no objection, but safety must be ensured.

He said, "If someone comes forward to **| More on P6**

## 'J&K relies on 95 percent imported power'

- Local generation amounts to 4.6 percent
- Nearly 800 MWs power deficit across UT

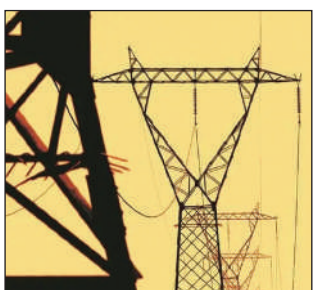
Riyaz Bhat

Srinagar, Dec 17: Jammu and Kashmir imports more than 95 percent of its electricity—a stark dependency that leaves the region vulnerable as it grapples with an 800 MW power deficit.

The officials informed the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that Jammu and Kashmir is importing electricity ranging from 2900 MWs to 3100 MWs during the peak hours.

It also said that during the other hours, the region is importing electricity ranging from 2400 MWs to 2800 MWs.

The official however clarified that the power import includes all the sources including the power allocated from the centre and other Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs).



Another official said that the actual power demand for Kashmir region is around 2400-2500 MWs and in case of Jammu division, it varies from 1400-1500 MWs.

"As of now Jammu and Kashmir has a power deficiency of nearly 800 MWs. The total power availability as of now is 3100-3200 MWs," the official said.

About the power generation from the local power plants, the official said that the department on an average was generating 100-150 MWs of power.

Meanwhile, the officials from KPDCL informed KNO that power deficiency **| More on P6**

## Climate change threatens Kashmir's adventure tourism: CM Omar

Says iconic landscapes must be preserved for future generations



Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Dec 17: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday warned that climate change poses a direct threat to Kashmir's tourism economy and winter sports industry.

Speaking at the 17th Annual Convention of the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC) in Srinagar, the CM urged the

industry to adapt with innovation and sustainable practices to ensure adventure tourism in Jammu and Kashmir remains viable through changing weather realities.

"It feels like homecoming to be part of an event that celebrates the spirit of adventure," Omar said, addressing a gathering.

As per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the gathering included ATOAI President Padmashree Ajit Bajaj, **| More on P6**

### 'Can't sell Gulmarg without snow': CM

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Dec 17: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday said the government is exploring artificial snow generation technology to sustain skiing and winter tourism in Gulmarg, as the impact of climate change has sharply shortened the snow season in Kashmir.

Speaking at the 17th Annual Convention of the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) at SKICC Srinagar, CM Omar, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said, "If I don't have snow, I can't sell Gulmarg. I can't **| More on P6**

5 Years, 0 Meetings

## Former min Taj Mohiuddin skips all meetings of DDC Baramulla

KNO

Srinagar, Dec 17: As District Development Councils (DDCs) in Jammu & Kashmir are set to complete their five-year term, a shocking revelation has come to light: one DDC member did not attend a single meeting of

district development council Baramulla after being administered the oath.

Former Minister Taj Mohiuddin, who was elected as a DDC member from the Parampeela seat of Baramulla, failed to attend any meeting of the council after taking oath on **| More on P6**

## Cold wave prevails, MeT predicts snow, rain on Dec 20

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Dec 17: Even as minimum temperatures across Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh exhibited slight fluctuations on Wednesday, Meteorological Department predicted light to moderate snow over higher Kashmir reaches and light rain in several parts of the region from the night of December 20 to

late afternoon of December 21. Besides freezing temperatures, Kashmir is also experiencing foggy mornings and evenings, making commuting difficult.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) in the Kashmir region, Srinagar city recorded minimum temperature of minus 1.6°C against **| More on P6**

## 100 pc electrification of railway network achieved in J&K: Centre

Raja Syed Rather

New Delhi, Dec 17: The Centre on Wednesday announced that Jammu and Kashmir has achieved 100 per cent electrification of its entire broad gauge railway network, making it a significant milestone in rail infrastructure development in the Union Territory.

In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, the Ministry of Railways said, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), railway electrification across the country has been taken up in mission mode, and **| More on P6**

## Adventure tourism empowering border, remote regions: Suman Billa

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Dec 17: Additional Secretary and Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, Suman Billa on Wednesday said adventures are emerging as vital pillar of India's tourism economy.

Speaking at the 17th Annual Convention of the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) at SKICC here, Billa, according to the news agency Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said, "The adventure



tourism is empowering border and remote regions."

Billa said holding the event in Kashmir was "a strong

statement of confidence and resilience in the destination" after challenging years for the sector.

"It is propitious that we are meeting here in Srinagar. This convention is a reflection of the confidence in the destination, the resilience of its people, and the renewal we are witnessing," he said.

Highlighting the socio-economic significance of adventure tourism, Billa said it generates "high levels of employment, particularly for our youth," and crucially, creates jobs in remote and border regions that otherwise remain outside mainstream development.

"Adventure tourism sustains border economies and allows local youth to lead their lives where they reside, without having to migrate in search of jobs," he said.

Billa added that the sector also helps disperse visitor flows away from overcrowded tourist hubs, reducing environmental pressure while expanding economic opportunities.

Calling safety the most important, non-negotiable pillar of adventure tourism, Billa said, "Safety builds trust and trust is the **| More on P6**

## Army inducts tanks, artillery into Valley via military special train

Umair Gull Ganie

Srinagar, Dec 17: The Indian Army on Wednesday inducted tanks and artillery guns into the Kashmir Valley through a Military Special Train, marking a major logistics milestone and a significant boost to operational readiness along the northern borders.

The Army, in a post on X, said that the induction was carried out as part of a validation exercise, during which tanks, artillery guns and dozers were successfully moved from the **| More on P6**



## DC Srinagar inspects Gangbugh development works, orders faster completion

While interacting with the locals on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner assured them that all their genuine concerns raised shall be addressed at the earliest.

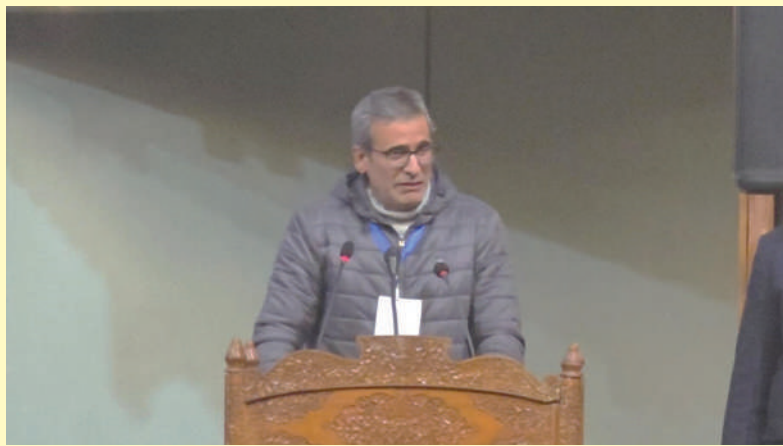
Assistant Commissioner Central was asked to ensure the availability of revenue records of Anchar and Wullar lakes to the I&FC Department.

**Executive Engineer  
Irrigation & Flood Control Division Ganderbal**



## ATOAI convention a 'milestone' for J&K adventure tourism: Director

### ■ Hails CM Omar's 'continuous support'



REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Dec 17: Director Tourism Kashmir, Syed Qamar Sajad on Wednesday described the 17th Annual Convention of the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) as a 'key milestone for the revival and growth' of adventure tourism in Jammu and Kashmir. Addressing the inaugural session at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC), the Director, said events like this play a pivotal role in strengthening tourism infrastructure, promoting sustainability and boosting local economies. "This three-day convention is not just a gathering; it is a platform that will catalyse adventure tourism in the Union Territory," he said.

Sajad praised Chief Minister Omar Abdullah for his continuous support

and dedication to tourism, calling him the "grand ambassador of J&K tourism".

He welcomed key dignitaries and highlighted their role in fostering collaboration between government and industry.

The Director said that Jammu and Kashmir's adventure tourism potential spans trekking, skiing, paragliding, rafting and mountaineering and that structured initiatives, skill development and safety frameworks are essential for sustainable growth. "This convention signals renewed confidence and commitment to ensuring that tourism in J&K thrives responsibly and inclusively," he said.

Such initiatives, he said, are vital to creating employment opportunities, dispersing visitors to remote areas and ensuring the Union Territory's adventure offerings remain globally competitive—(KNO)

## Kashmir heart of India's adventure growth story: ATOAI President

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Dec 17: Asserting that Kashmir stands at the heart of India's adventure growth story, president of Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) Ajeet Bajaj on Wednesday said that adventure tourism has become a 683 billion dollar global industry, outpacing even the textile sector.

Speaking at the 17th Annual Convention of ATOAI at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC) in Srinagar, Bajaj said, "Jammu and Kashmir is symbolic of India's adventure resurgence and is heart of India's adventure growth story."

Referring to Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Bajaj said, "It's wonderful to be in a state where the CM himself is an adventurer, a marathon runner, skier, cyclist and rafter."

He said, "J&K is a second home to me. Every winter I have skied in Gulmarg, every summer I have trekked in Kashmir's wilderness."

Bajaj said adventure tourism has emerged as one of the fastest-growing global sectors, valued



at 683 billion dollar, compared to 667 billion dollar for the textile industry.

"According to pre-pandemic projections, adventure tourism was to become a trillion-dollar industry by 2024. Given the rebound, we should reach that milestone within two years," he said.

He noted that India's ranking in the Adventure Tourism Development Index has improved to

38th among 190 countries, but the vision is clear: "We want India to be among the top 10 adventure destinations by 2034 and we are moving steadily in that direction."

Bajaj said the industry's progress is backed by strong collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, through a National Strategy for Adventure Tourism and a National Adventure Tourism Board. "We are addressing

region-specific issues from Darjeeling to Rajasthan, through this inter-ministerial board and working together to build a regulatory and safety framework that can support the industry's growth," he said.

He also announced that a comprehensive Adventure Tourism Safety Framework, is being finalised for rollout across states. "Every operator will be licensed by the state government, use certified equipment, employ trained guides and follow ATOAI's standard safety protocols," he said.

He also spoke of ongoing work to enable use of satellite phones, GPS systems and improved connectivity to remote areas to make adventure activities safer and more accessible.

Unveiling one of ATOAI's most ambitious initiatives, Bajaj announced plans for two Himalayan Mega Trails, vast trans-regional trekking routes designed to redefine India's adventure landscape.

*Continued on  
www.kashmirthunder.in*

## NCH resolve more than 24000 complaints in last 3 years

RAJA SYED RATHER

New Delhi, Dec 17: Jammu and Kashmir recorded more than 24,000 consumer complaints through the National Consumer Helpline (NCH) in the last three years, all of which were settled within the stipulated period, the Centre informed Parliament on Wednesday.

While replying to the Lok Sabha, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs said that 6,874 complaints were registered from Jammu and Kashmir in 2022. This number swelled to 7,967 complaints in 2023 and further increased to 9,178 complaints in 2024. The Ministry emphasised that 100 per cent disposal was achieved in each of the three years.

The government said that the steady rise in complaints from Jammu and Kashmir reflects the fact that the public has become more aware of their rights and their access to the National Consumer Helpline.

The Ministry said NCH has been upgraded to a centralised pre-litigation grievance redressal platform, which offers faster and technology-driven resolution of consumer complaints, including

for consumers from Jammu and Kashmir.

The helpline now makes use of AI-based speech recognition, translation systems and an AI-enabled chatbot under the NCH 2.0 initiative. These steps allow consumers to lodge complaints through voice input and multiple digital platforms.

The complaints can now be registered through the web portal, mobile applications, SMS,



WhatsApp and toll-free number 1915, offering wider outreach even in remote areas of Jammu and Kashmir, said the Ministry.

Under the NCH 'Convergence' programme, the Ministry informed that the average resolution time has also come down significantly as complaints are now being resolved swiftly under a time-bound mechanism involving partner companies—(KNO)

## Public support crucial in fight against drugs, terrorism: DIG NKR



SAJID RAINA

Bandipora, Dec 17: Deputy Inspector General of Police, North Kashmir Range (NKR), Maqsood-ul-Zaman on Wednesday said the police are regularly engaging with people to understand their problems, with a key focus on tackling terrorism, drug trafficking and other crimes in the region.

Talking to reporters in this North Kashmir district, the DIG said, "Interacting with the public and listening to their concerns is a routine part of policing. We are connecting with people and listening to their problems. We talk about issues in society. This is a routine job and nothing new."

Maqsood-ul-Zaman said the police seek cooperation from the public in maintaining peace and security. "Force wants to contribute to the overall development of the country, with particular attention to issues faced by the youth. The youth

face many problems. Often, the way their issues are presented is not correct." On the issue of narcotics, he said the police have adopted an aggressive approach over the past year. "If we talk about drugs, we have been very aggressive since last year. We have carried out seizures and registered FIRs," he said.

The DIG said investigations are being strengthened by establishing both forward and backward linkages to dismantle entire drug networks. "We want to destroy the entire 'nasur' (menace). Our aim is to destroy all the properties that people have created through illegal activities," he said.

He added that operations against drug trafficking and other crimes are ongoing. However, the DIG declined to share details of police strategies. "This is not the appropriate forum to discuss our operational strategy," he said.

*Continued on  
www.kashmirthunder.in*

## Winter supplies secured for remote areas: Minister Sharma

WARIS FAYAZ

Srinagar, Dec 17: Minister Satish Sharma on Wednesday informed 100 per cent winter stocking of essential commodities has been achieved to ensure uninterrupted supplies during the harsh weather season.

While speaking to reporters in Bandipora, Sharma said that the government has successfully completed the 100% winter dumping process in all remote and snow-bound areas. He assured that no household will face shortage of food grains or other essentials during the winter months.

In order to keep the youth away from drug addiction, the Minister said that quality stadiums and playgrounds will be



developed.

"To strengthen the sports infrastructure we will prioritize creating better playgrounds," he said. Sharma also promised to strengthen winter sports activities, particularly snow cricket in Gurez and polo events, which he said deserved greater government support. Government is mulling to improve the solar power coverage in the region.

"Shrines, mosques, temples and gurudwaras will soon be illuminated through solar energy under a new departmental program," he announced.

While acknowledging the fact that several projects have slowed this year due to adverse weather and disturbances, he assured that Bandipora would emerge as one of the best districts in the coming year. Reacting to a recent controversy over alleged bias in sports selections, the minister said, "the administration had already initiated an inquiry through the Director General of Youth Services and Sports."

He appealed for not politicizing the issue and reiterated that merit would not be compromised and involved persons will be held accountable," he said—(KNO)

## 'Wrong But Unintentional': Koul on Hijab pulling incident

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Pulwama, Dec 17: Terminating an incident involving Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar pulling a hijab of a girl "wrong" Jammu and Kashmir BJP General Secretary (Organisation) Ashok Koul on Wednesday said that Kumar's act appeared to be unintentional, considering his age.

Speaking to media persons on the sidelines of a BJP workers' convention held at Patipora Lassipora in Pulwama district, Koul said, "The incident involving the Bihar Chief Minister and the girl wearing a hijab was not right. He should not have asked the girl to remove her hijab. However, keeping in view his age, it seems that the act was not intentional."

He said that its important for everyone to respect individual faith, identity and constitutional values.

During the convention, Ashok Koul, accompanied by BJP State Secretary Mudassir Wani, District President Pulwama Er. Showkat Gayoor, BJP Kisan Morcha leader and programme organiser Arshad Bhat, and senior leader Awataar Singh, interacted



with party workers and local residents, listening to their concerns, aspirations and suggestions. Responding to questions regarding the restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, Koul reiterated the BJP's stand, saying that statehood would be granted at an "appropriate time." "Jammu and Kashmir will get statehood. The commitment of the BJP and the Government of India is clear. It will be restored at the right time, keeping in view peace, stability and the larger interest of the people," he said.

Ashok Koul also addressed the admission-related issues concerning Mata Vaishno Devi College, stating that the matter would be examined by the Sangathan committee of the college and Mata —Continued on

*Continued on  
www.kashmirthunder.in*

## Bilaspur-Leh rail link survey completed: GoI

RAJA SYED RATHER

New Delhi, Dec 17: The Union government on Wednesday said that the survey work for the proposed Bilaspur-Mandi-Manali-Leh railway line, a strategically important project for Ladakh, has been completed and prepared its Detailed Project Report (DPR).

In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, the Ministry of Railways said the Ministry of Defence has identified the project as a strategic railway line as the route will pass through extremely challenging Himalayan terrain and is expected to involve the construction of nearly 270 kilometres of tunnels.

The proposed railway line is estimated to cost around 1.31 lakh crore and will have a total length of 489 kilometres, informed the Ministry.

The government clarified that before the project can be sanctioned, it needs extensive consultations with multiple stakeholders, including the concerned Union Territory administrations, as well as approvals from key bodies like NITI Aayog and the Ministry of Finance.

The Ministry of Railways further stated that railway projects are approved after considering several factors based on strategic importance, connectivity needs, socio-economic effects and the availability of financial resources and as such, a definite timeline for the project cannot be fixed at this stage—(KNO)

## DIG Jammu reviews border security after Udhampur encounter

YOGESH

Jammu, Dec 17: Following a recent encounter in Udhampur's Majalta area, Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG), Jammu-Samba-Kathua range, Shiv Kumar Sharma, on Wednesday reviewed the security situation in border districts of Kathua and Samba.

The DIG accompanied by SSP Kathua Mohita Sharma and SSP Samba Varinder Manhas, visited Billawar area in Kathua district, which shares border with Majalta of Udhampur where a policeman was killed in a gunfight with terrorists in Soan area on Monday evening.

An official said that he also visited Kamla Top in Billawar and reviewed security arrangements. The DIG directed officials to remain extra vigilant and deploy additional forces in sensitive areas.

During the review meeting, the DIG, as



per the officials, emphasised the need to maintain peace and security and underlined

the importance of close coordination among various security agencies to tackle emerging challenges effectively.

DIG Sharma reviewed the deployment of forces and ordered additional forces to be stationed in sensitive and vulnerable areas to prevent any untoward incidents, the officials said, adding that he also stressed strengthening intelligence gathering and timely sharing of information to counter potential security threats.

The DIG instructed officers to maintain high visibility in their respective jurisdictions and intensify security checks and patrolling, the officials said, adding, SSP Kathua briefed him on the prevailing security situation and measures taken to maintain peace and law and order in the Billawar area. The DIG also held a joint meeting with Army officials—(KNO)



EDITORIAL

## Drought-Like Situation In Kashmir Is An Alarm Bell

The stark images of Kashmir’s depleted rivers and drying springs this December are a deafening alarm bell for an unfolding climate crisis. Jhelum, the region’s lifeline, hits historic lows, and vital springs in Pulwama, Shopian, and Bandipora shrink. We are witnessing the direct consequences of a profound environmental shift. This is a systemic threat to water security, agriculture, public health, and the very ecological

identity of Kashmir. A severe rainfall deficit, the near-absence of Western Disturbances, and receding glaciers, as recalled by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, point to a disturbing new normal. The implications are immediate and severe: strained drinking water supplies, anxious farmers facing irrigation shortages, heightened forest fire risks, and deteriorating air quality that now rivals polluted plains. As experts from SKUAST-K warn, this is a

direct threat to food security and livelihoods. Expressing concern is no longer enough; it must catalyse urgent, science-based action. A multi-pronged strategy is imperative. First, water conservation must become a state mission. This requires massive investment in micro-irrigation, rainwater harvesting, and the restoration of traditional kuls (water channels) and springs. Second, agriculture must adapt. Promoting drought-resilient crops

and regenerative farming practices is no longer an option but a necessity for survival. Third, we must declare war on pollution. Strict enforcement of waste management laws, a rapid shift to electric public transport, and protecting forests are critical to improving air quality and mitigating climate impacts. Most crucially, this demands a “whole-of-society” approach. The government must lead with policy and investment, but every citizen,

community, and institution must become a water guardian. From fixing leaky taps to adopting sustainable practices, collective responsibility is our only recourse. Kashmir’s glaciers and rivers are the foundation of life and the economy. To prevent today’s drought from becoming tomorrow’s catastrophe, we must act with the urgency this emergency demands. The time for debate is over; the time for decisive action is now.

# DHRUV64: India’s First 1.0 Ghz, 64-Bit Dual-Core Microprocessor

National Programmes like Digital India RISC-V give India the support needed to design, test and prototype indigenous chips

Press Information Bureau

India has achieved a significant milestone in its semiconductor journey with the launch of DHRUV64. It is a fully indigenous microprocessor developed by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) under the Microprocessor Development Programme (MDP). DHRUV64 provides the nation a reliable, homegrown processor technology. It is capable of supporting strategic and commercial applications. It marks a major advancement in India's pursuit of self-reliance in advanced chip design.

Did you know?

Microprocessors are the brains of modern electronic devices such as mobiles, computers, automobiles, medical equipment, defence systems and satellites. For India, building and owning such core technologies is important to reduce reliance on foreign suppliers and support the growing electronics and digital economy. DHRUV64 is built with modern architectural features. It delivers higher efficiency, enhanced multitasking capability and improved reliability. Its advanced design enables seamless integration with a wide range of external hardware systems. The processor's modern fabrication leverages technologies used for high-performance chips. This makes DHRUV64 suitable for sectors such as 5G infrastructure, automotive systems, consumer electronics, industrial automation and the Internet of Things (IoT).

Strategic Significance of DHRUV64 for India

DHRUV64 marks a major milestone in India's efforts to build a secure and self-reliant semiconductor ecosystem. It strengthens the nation's indigenous capability in advanced processor development. It supports the critical digital infrastructure and hence, reduces the long-term dependence on imported microprocessors.

India consumes around 20% of all the microprocessors manufactured globally. The development of DHRUV64 provides India's large talent base with a fully modern processor platform for advancement of semiconductor ecosystem in India.

Before DHRUV64, India had already begun expanding its indigenous microprocessor development ecosystem in recent years. Key examples include:

SHAKTI (2018, IIT Madras): Designed for strategic, space, and defence applications; AJIT (2018, IIT Bombay): A micro-processor for industrial and robotics applications;

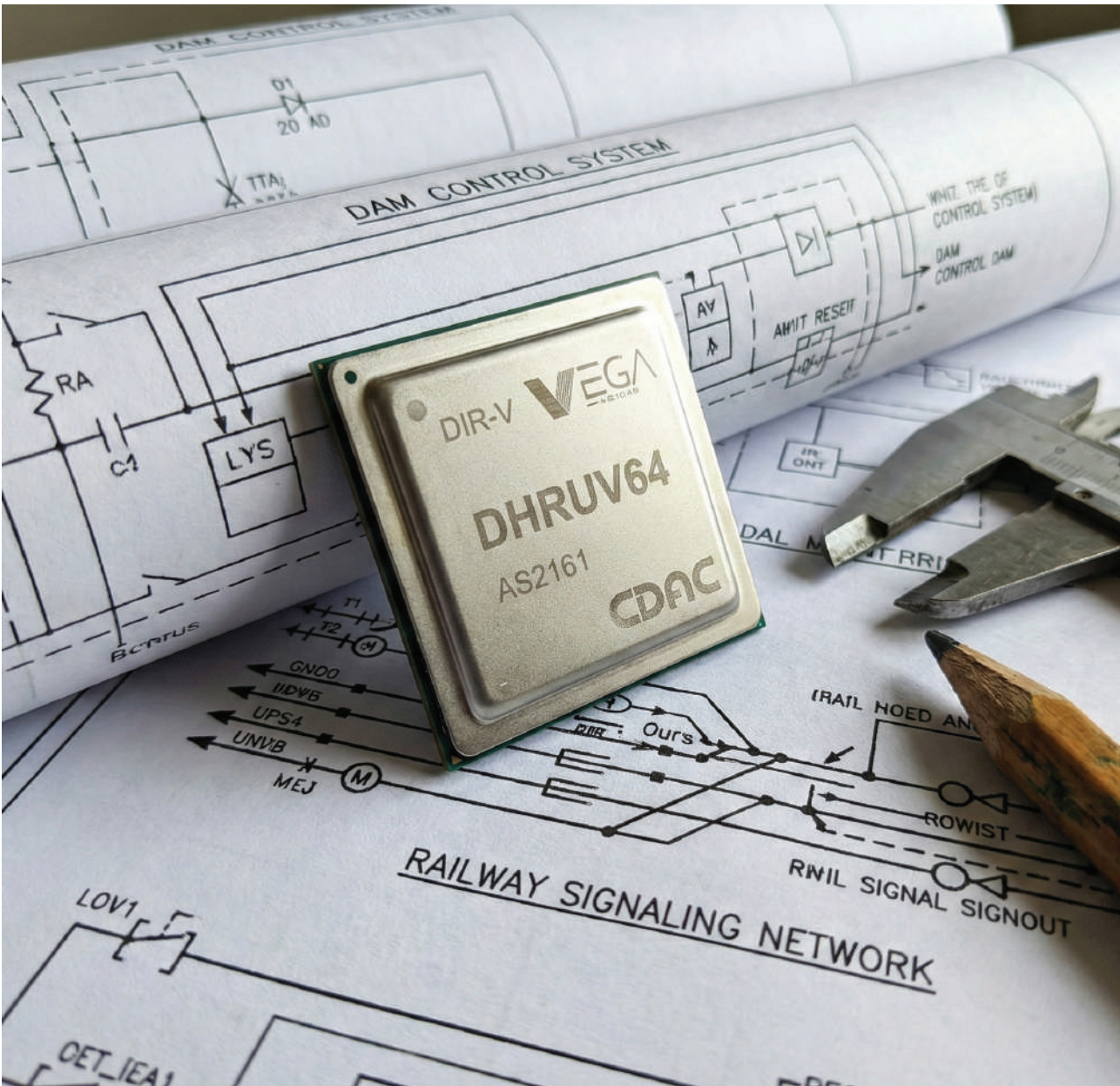
VIKRAM (2025, ISRO-SCL): A processor developed for space applications such as navigation, guidance, and mission operations; engineered to withstand extreme space conditions;

THEJAS64 (2025, C-DAC): Designed for industrial automation.

Developing indigenous processors such as the SHAKTI, AJIT, VIKRAM, THEJAS, and now the DHRUV64 is strategically significant. These processors drive the creation of an Indian processor ecosystem.

DHRUV64’s Impact on India’s R&D and Innovation

DHRUV64 provides a homegrown microprocessor technology designed for startups, academia, and industry to build, test, and scale indigenous computing products without relying on foreign processors. DHRUV64 supports prototype



development for new system architectures at lower cost.

India already has 20% of the world's chip design engineers. DHRUV64 further helps in building a strong pipeline of skilled semiconductor chip professionals.

The success of DHRUV64 accelerates the roadmap for Dhanush and Dhanush+ processors. They are now under development phase.

Rollout of DHRUV64 and India's Digital India RISC-V (DIR-V) Progress

The Government of India launched the Digital India RISC-V (DIR-V) Programme to advance the vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat. It aims to establish India as a global hub for Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM). The initiative develops a complete portfolio of RISC-V-based microprocessors. These processors will power applications across industry, strategic sectors, and consumer technologies.

RISC-V Open Architecture and Its Significance for India

RISC-V is an open architecture that provides a set of instructions for chip design. It involves no licence costs, which allows wider adoption through shared innovation by industry, start-ups and research institutions.

It helps build a complete portfolio of indigenous microprocessors under the DIR-V Programme for use in various sectors.

It encourages shared innovation by providing common tools and standards

for developers, improving collaboration across research organisations and companies.

DHRUV64 Driving India's Indigenous Chip Roadmap

The launch of DHRUV64 marks an important step in strengthening India's self-reliant microprocessor ecosystem. By utilising open-source architecture, DHRUV64 eliminates licence costs. This supports long-term deployment across platforms.

DHRUV64 is the third chip fabricated under the DIR-V Programme with an overall aim to enable creation of Microprocessors for the future in India. The first chip, THEJAS32, fabricated at the Silterra facility in Malaysia.

The second chip, THEJAS64, manufactured domestically at Semiconductor Lab (SCL) Mohali.

In addition, the design, implementation, and fabrication of DHANUSH64 and DHANUSH64+ System on a Chip (SoC) variants are currently under development.

The rollout of DHRUV64 demonstrates India's growing capability in developing indigenous microprocessor technologies. The continued progress of the DIR-V initiative reinforces the nation's commitment to building a strong microprocessor ecosystem.

Institutional Ecosystem Driving Processor Development

India's efforts to build a strong

semiconductor ecosystem are supported by a coordinated institutional framework led by key national agencies. These institutions provide policy direction and programme support that enable the design, and development of indigenous processors.

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY): MeitY plays a central role in advancing India's processor and semiconductor initiatives. It guides national programmes through policy support, funding and long-term planning under schemes; such as the Microprocessor Development Programme, DIR-V, C2S and the India Semiconductor Mission. These measures have strengthened the country's design ecosystem and enabled steady progress in indigenous processor development.

C-DAC: C-DAC leads the design of India's indigenous processors. It creates processor Intellectual Properties (IPs), System-on-Chips (SoCs), development boards and related tools under MeitY's flagship programmes, supporting the growth of a complete domestic processor ecosystem. The organisation is now advancing work on the next processors in the RISC-V roadmap, Dhanush and Dhanush+. These upcoming processors are expected to strengthen India's homegrown RISC-V ecosystem. It expands the range of indigenous options available for strategic, and commercial use.

Key National Programmes Supporting Indigenous Chip Design

The Government of India has launched flagship programmes that strengthen design capability, expand research infrastructure and encourage innovation across academia, startups and industry.

India Semiconductor Mission (ISM): The India Semiconductor Mission (ISM), launched in December 2021 under MeitY, provides structured support and works with global companies to bring large semiconductor investments into the country. As of 2025, the mission has approved ten projects across six states, with a total investment commitment of 1.60 lakh crore. Through ISM, India is positioning itself as a competitive player in the global semiconductor ecosystem.

Digital India RISC-V (DIR-V) Programme: The Digital India RISC-V (DIR-V) Programme, launched in April, 2022 has played a central role in advancing India's indigenous chip design efforts. It enabled the development of advanced RISC-V processors in India. The programme aims to bring researchers, startups and industry into a shared design ecosystem, improving collaboration and innovation.

Chips to Startup (C2S) Programme: The C2S Programme, launched by MeitY in 2022, is a capacity-building initiative implemented across 113 institutions, including 100 academic and R&D organisations and 13 startups and MSMEs. The programme has an outlay of 250 crore for a five-year period. The C2S Programme aims to generate 85,000 industry-ready manpower and create vibrant fabless chip design ecosystem in the country.

Design Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme: The DLI Scheme, launched in 2021, aims to offer financial incentives as well as design infrastructure support across various stages of development and deployment of semiconductor design for Integrated Circuits (ICs), Chipsets, System on Chips (SoCs), Systems & IP Cores and semiconductor linked design over a period of 5 years.

Indian Nanoelectronics Users Programme- idea to innovation (INUP-i2i): This programme, launched by MeitY, gives researchers, students and startups access to national nanofabrication facilities at leading institutions. It provides hands-on training in chip and device fabrication, helping innovators understand how semiconductor components are built. A total of 49 familiarization workshops, 42 Hands-on-training workshops, 36 Industrial trainings and 10 Hackathons have been conducted. More than 8000 skilled manpower has been trained and around 348 short term and 220 mid-term R&D projects are being supported under the project.

Conclusion

India's progress in indigenous processor development reflects a strong commitment to Aatmanirbhar Bharat in the semiconductor sector. DHRUV64 powered and supported by national programmes such as DIR-V, C2S, ISM, DLI and INUP-i2i, the processor showcases the country's growing capability to design, develop and prototype advanced processors. With coordinated efforts across MeitY, C-DAC, academic institutions and industry, India is building the talent, research strength and infrastructure needed for long-term leadership in advanced technologies. The progress from THEJAS32 to DHRUV64, and the ongoing development of Dhanush and Dhanush+, illustrates a confident national pathway toward indigenous processor innovation and technological self-reliance.



## Deputy Chief Minister inaugurates Rs 10.27 cr road projects in Bhalwal

KT News Desk

JAMMU, DECEMBER 17: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, Wednesday inaugurated multiple road projects worth Rs. 10.27 crore in various areas of Bhalwal in Jammu district.

The Deputy Chief Minister, as per an official statement was accompanied by Chairman DDC Jammu, Bharat Bhushan and MLA Nagrota, Devyani Rana.

During the tour, the Deputy Chief Minister inaugurated the newly constructed 2.50-km road at New Bridge Julee Simbliwala. He also inaugurated a 1.10-km road at Dharam Khoo connecting Phagwari, Kamyara, Magotra and Mohalla Nallah Wallah in Lower Gharota, Jammu.

Similarly, the Deputy Chief Minister inaugurated a 1.25-km link road from Bhera to Sobka via Mohalla Khajuria, Lower Gharota, Jammu. He also inaugurated a 2.50-km road project from Lift Irrigation Batera to Behra Panchayat Ghar, Lower Gharota, Bhalwal.



Later, the Deputy Chief Minister visited Lower Amb, Bhalwal, where he inaugurated a 22-metre span double-lane through-type plate girder bridge over the Ranbir Canal.

Terming these projects crucial for hassle-free connectivity, the Deputy Chief Minister said the construction of these roads would significantly enhance the

accessibility and help upgrade the livelihoods of the people in the area. He added that the completion of these projects has fulfilled long-pending demands of the local population.

The Deputy Chief Minister directed the concerned departments to expedite the completion of all other ongoing developmental works in Bhalwal.

He reiterated that the Government is fully committed to ensuring seamless connectivity for the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

During the tour, various public deputations met the Deputy Chief Minister and expressed gratitude for his close monitoring of developmental works and timely completion of projects in the area. The locals also raised several issues and demands.

The Deputy Chief Minister gave them a patient hearing and assured that all genuine issues would be taken up for speedy redressal. He said the Government remains committed to timely completion of all ongoing projects, including those pending for years across Jammu and Kashmir.

Engineer in Chief, R&B Rajesh Gupta, Executive Engineer R&B Division, Nagrota, Dardar Khan and other senior officers of the concerned department also accompanied the Deputy Chief Minister during the tour.

## Centre strengthens citizen outreach, focus on J&K, rural areas

KT News Desk

New Delhi, December 17: The Development Communication and Information Dissemination (DCID) Scheme is a Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting aimed at supporting information dissemination and citizen outreach of Government programmes, schemes and initiatives across the country, including Maharashtra and Jammu & Kashmir. This was stated by the Union Minister of State for Information & Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs, Dr. L. Murugan, in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha Wednesday.

The Minister, as per a PIB statement, informed that the DCID Scheme places special emphasis on reaching rural, tribal, remote and urban populations and is implemented through the media units of the Ministry, namely the Central Bureau of Communication (CBC), Press Information Bureau (PIB) and the New Media Wing (NMW).

Under the scheme, the Central Bureau of Communication



carries out multiple multimedia publicity campaigns to disseminate information about key Government initiatives such as the Swachh Bharat Mission, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Rural and Urban), Jal Jeevan Mission and Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi. Activity-wise details of expenditure incurred under the DCID Scheme are available on the official website of the Central Bureau of Communication.

Dr. Murugan stated that during the current financial year, the Government has significantly enhanced the effectiveness of the scheme by adopting a modern, multi-platform communication strategy with a

strong focus on digital outreach and local-level engagement. Targeted communication campaigns are being undertaken across various digital platforms to increase outreach among youth and other target audiences, in line with the Government of India's Digital Advertisement Policy, 2023.

The Minister further informed that the Central Bureau of Communication plans and executes all media campaigns, including those conducted in specific districts and constituencies such as Jalgaoon, by aligning communication strategies with the requirements of client Ministries and the identified target audience of respective programmes.

## DC Doda flags off emergency ambulances for remote Ghat, Gandoh areas



KT News Desk

DODA, DECEMBER 17: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Doda, Harvinder Singh Wednesday flagged off two emergency health care ambulance services for the remote areas of Ghat and Gandoh from DC Office Complex Doda, marking a significant step towards strengthening emergency medical services in the district.

The initiative aims to ensure timely medical assistance, particularly for patients in far-flung and hilly areas where access to healthcare facilities has remained a challenge.

The flag-off ceremony, as per an official statement, was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner; Anil Kumar Thakur; Chief Planning Officer; Manesh Kumar Manhas; Chief Medical Officer; Dr. Tanvir Ahmed, Block Medical Officer Gandoh; Dr. Farooq Salim, BMO Ghat; Dr. Abdul Gaffur Ahmed besides other officers and officials of the district

administration and Health Department.

The newly inducted ambulances are equipped with essential emergency medical facilities and are expected to significantly reduce response time during critical situations.

The Deputy Commissioner said that the demand for ambulances in Ghat and Gandoh was pending for a long time and keeping public welfare as the top priority, the district administration took the initiative to provide these services.

The DC further informed that the district administration is fully geared up to implement the Government of India's flagship outreach initiative "Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore," aimed at resolving genuine public issues, demands and grievances at the grassroots level.

The week-long campaign would commence from December 19, 2025 and continue till Dec 25. Listing the government pension and welfare schemes, he said these are meant to provide social security to eligible beneficiaries.

## DLSA Budgam holds awareness programme on NALSA Scheme, Dowry Prohibition Act

KT News Desk

BUDGAM, DECEMBER 17: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Budgam, under the aegis of the Jammu & Kashmir Legal Services Authority (JKLSA), organized an Awareness Programme on NALSA (Effective implementation of poverty Alleviation Schemes 2015 and legal Provisions of Dowry Prohibition Act) in collaboration Social Welfare Department Budgam.

The primary goal of the program was to inform and empower beneficiaries about available welfare schemes, ensuring they can access benefits, and also address legal aspects of the Dowry Prohibition Act, creating broad awareness against social evils.

To mark the occasion, DLSA Budgam, as per an official statement, deputed Deputy LADC and Assistant LADC as resource persons. In their addresses, they delivered insightful presentations aimed at enhancing understanding and awareness among the participants. Deputy LADC, elaborated on the NALSA Scheme, 2015, a comprehensive framework formulated by the National Legal Services Authority to ensure that persons living in poverty effectively access government anti-poverty and welfare schemes. He highlighted that the scheme focuses on the identification of eligible beneficiaries, provision of legal aid and support, and establishment of a robust monitoring and review mechanism. Emphasis was laid on addressing multidimensional poverty through access to healthcare,



housing, education, and social inclusion.

He further underscored the importance of outreach and awareness programmes to educate marginalized communities about available welfare schemes and legal remedies, along with close coordination with concerned Government Departments to ensure smooth and timely delivery of benefits, with adequate flexibility to address local and region-specific needs. He also elaborated on the legal provisions of the Dowry Prohibition Act, emphasizing its objectives, scope, and

statutory safeguards.

Awareness programmes are organized to educate the public about the provisions of the Dowry Prohibition Act and the rights of women concerning maintenance. Additionally, legal advice and free legal aid are extended to individuals facing dowry-related harassment or seeking maintenance through appropriate legal remedies.

The programme concluded successfully, witnessing active and enthusiastic participation from individuals belonging to marginalized communities.

## J&K Samagra Shiksha signs MoU with BISAG-N



KT News Desk

JAMMU, DECEMBER 17: In a significant step towards strengthening the digital and technology enabled education, the Department of School Education, Samagra Shiksha, Jammu and Kashmir has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geo-Informatics (BISAG-N), Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India.

The document, as per an official statement issued on Wednesday, has been signed under the guidance of Ram Niwas Sharma, Secretary, School Education Department, J&K and Bhawani Rakwal, Project Director, Samagra Shiksha, J&K. It is aimed at to facilitate the telecast of educational content through a dedicated DTH Educational TV Channel titled "JK e-Pathshala", using the GSAT-15 satellite and Doordarshan DTH platform. The initiative has been designed to enhance access to quality educational content for students across Jammu &

Kashmir, particularly in remote and underserved areas.

Under the agreement, BISAG-N will provide comprehensive technical support for the launch, operation and uninterrupted transmission of the channel including infrastructure setup, licensing, skilled manpower, maintenance and satellite transmission. The channel will broadcast both recorded and live educational programmes using advanced MPEG-4 technology.

The Department of School Education, Samagra Shiksha, Jammu and Kashmir, will be responsible for content development, academic planning, quality assurance and curricular alignment, ensuring meaningful and engaging learning experiences for the students. The content will also be streamed simultaneously on digital and social media platforms to widen outreach.

This collaboration is expected to play transformative role in strengthening the digital education ecosystem of Jammu & Kashmir besides empowering the learners through innovative and accessible educational delivery mechanisms.

## Amrit Bharat Station Scheme targets redevelopment of 1,337 stations, 4 in J&K

KT News Desk

New Delhi, December 17: The Ministry of Railways has launched the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS) with a long-term vision for redevelopment and modernization of railway stations across the country through phased implementation of comprehensive master plans. This was stated by the Union Minister of Railways, Information & Broadcasting and Electronics & Information Technology, Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, in a reply to a question in the Lok Sabha.

Under the scheme, as per a PIB statement, a total of 1,337 railway stations have been identified so far for redevelopment. Of these, four stations are located in Jammu & Kashmir, namely Budgam, Jammu Tawi, Martyr Captain Tushar Mahajan and Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra. In Jharkhand, 57 stations have been selected, while 80 stations have been identified in Madhya Pradesh, including stations falling

under Shahdol and Sidhi Lok Sabha Constituencies.

The Amrit Bharat Station Scheme focuses on preparing station-specific master plans and executing them in phases to improve passenger amenities and overall station infrastructure.

Union Minister informed that the planned interventions include improvement of station access and circulating areas, integration of stations with both sides of cities, enhancement of station buildings, waiting halls, toilets, seating arrangements and drinking water facilities, provision of wider foot overbridges or air concourses based on passenger traffic, installation of lifts, escalators and ramps, improved platform surfaces and shelters, kiosks for local products under initiatives such as 'One Station One Product', parking and multimodal integration, amenities for Divyangjans, improved passenger information systems, executive lounges and landscaping.

The scheme also envisages sustainable and environment-friendly solutions and development of stations as city centres in the long term to promote economic activities around station areas.

So far, works have been completed at 160 stations across Indian Railways, while substantial progress has been achieved at several others. In Jammu & Kashmir, significant works have been completed at Budgam, Jammu Tawi and Martyr Captain Tushar Mahajan stations, with additional facilities currently under execution. In Jharkhand, stations such as Muri Junction, Orga, Bano and Gangaghat have seen completion of major components, with finishing and allied works underway. In the Shahdol Lok Sabha Constituency, stations including Anuppur, Bijuri, Shahdol and Umaria have recorded notable progress, while works have also commenced at Bargawan station in Sidhi Lok Sabha Constituency,

he added.

The Minister informed that further development, redevelopment, upgradation and modernization of railway stations is a continuous process and is undertaken based on inter-se priorities, category of stations and availability of funds. Master planning under the scheme is an iterative process, and timelines for completion cannot be indicated at this stage due to the complexity of works, statutory clearances and operational challenges associated with brownfield projects.

Redevelopment of stations under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme is generally funded under Plan Head-53 'Customer Amenities'. For the financial year 2025-26, a fund allocation of 12,118 crore has been made under this plan head, against which an expenditure of 7,253 crore has been incurred up to October 2025, the Union Minister concluded.

## DC Udhampur conducts public outreach, grievance redressal camp

KT News Desk

UDHAMPUR, DECEMBER 17: To strengthen the grievance redressal mechanism at the grassroots level, Deputy Commissioner Udhampur Saloni Rai Wednesday conducted a public outreach cum grievance redressal camp at Panchayat Sira-A - a far-flung area in Block Latti-Marothi.

En-route, the Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement inaugurated a honey processing unit of Sudhmahadev Honey Producer Cooperative Ltd at village Chourt, established under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme. The scheme offers 50 per cent subsidy to promote local entrepreneurship and enhancing farmers' income.

At the Camp, local residents and former PRI members from the adjoining Panchayats highlighted a range of demands including construction of a Community Marriage Hall, motorable road to the Health and Awareness Centre at Sira, footbridge at Ward No. 3, establishment of a Patwar Khana at the Panchayat level and creation of a Medical Block at Latti.

Other key demands included establishment of an ITI at Latti, availability of adequate staff, introduction of Commerce faculty at Higher Secondary School Latti, posting of a Veterinary Doctor at Latti, upgradation of PHC Latti to CHC, construction of a playground, introduction of SRTC bus services from Dudu to Jammu and Ramnagar to Udhampur, establishment of an SBI branch, maintenance of various roads, installation of electricity poles for newly constructed PMAY houses, and upgradation of High School Sira to Higher Secondary level.

After patiently hearing the issues and demands, the Deputy Commissioner assured early redressal of all genuine grievances of the public. She also directed officers of line departments to organize awareness camps in the area to educate and encourage people to avail the benefits of government schemes.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasized that the core aim of the public outreach is to bring the administration closer to the rural population and ensure inclusive development.

## Satish Sharma inspects RTO Office Srinagar

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 17: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA), Transport, Information Technology, Youth Services and Sports, Satish Sharma, Wednesday conducted an extensive inspection of the Regional Transport Office (RTO), Srinagar to review its functioning and assess the quality of public service delivery.

During the visit, the Minister, as per an official statement, took stock of various services being provided to the general public including issuance of driving licences, vehicle registrations and other transport-related facilities. He interacted with the officers and staff of the department and sought feedback on operational challenges and public grievances.

Emphasizing transparent, efficient and citizen-centric governance, the Minister directed the officers to ensure time-bound delivery of services and maintain a hassle-free environment for the public. He stressed the need for strengthening the digital systems to minimise delays and enhance accountability in transport services.

The Minister also underlined the importance of courteous behavior towards the citizens. He instructed the officials to address the public grievances promptly while adhering strictly to the set rules and procedures.

RTO Kashmir Qazi Irfan, ARTOs and other senior officers of the Transport Department were present at the time of visit.



# Health Secy reviews winter preparedness; calls for seamless patient-care

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Dec 17: Secretary Health & Medical Education Department, Dr. Syed Abid Rasheed Shah, on Wednesday conducted a comprehensive review of department's winter preparedness plan to ensure uninterrupted healthcare delivery across Jammu & Kashmir, particularly in snow-bound and hard-to-reach areas.

Emphasising that healthcare delivery in difficult terrains during

winter remains a top priority, Dr. Abid Rasheed issued a series of clear and time-bound directives aimed at safeguarding the public health during the forthcoming winter months.

The Secretary directed the Managing Director, Jammu & Kashmir Medical Supplies Corporation Limited (JKMSCL), to continuously monitor the DVDMS portal. He asked them to ensure adequate stocking and timely distribution of the Essential Drug List (EDL), with special focus on high-altitude and snow-bound areas. He

stressed that all possibilities of drug shortages during winter must be completely ruled out and a proactive approach is maintained to ensure an uninterrupted medicine supply chain.

Calling for immediate measures to strengthen the healthcare manpower, Dr. Abid directed for augmentation of staff through NHM in these districts. The Managing Director, National Health Mission (NHM) was instructed to rationalise the staff to critical locations, ensuring 24\*7 functioning of all health institutions.

The Secretary further underscored the need for a robust and well-coordinated patient evacuation plan, with special attention to pregnant women and other high-risk patients. He directed to ensure that ASHA workers and Female Multipurpose Health Workers (FMPHWs) of the Family Welfare Department undertake Expected Date of Delivery (EDD)-based priority line listing of expecting mothers to facilitate timely referrals and evacuations.

## ABVP delegation calls on LG Sinha



KT News Desk

Jammu, Dec 17: A delegation of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad led by Tilak Thakur,

Organising Secretary ABVP J&K called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday. A delegation of residents

of Village Lalyal, Marh led by Sukhnandan Choudhary, former Minister and senior BJP Leader also called on LG Manoj Sinha.

## CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### LG Sinha calls

the needs of the people, industry, trade, and business, and it must be ensured that their voices are heard. There is also a need to maintain the balance between industrial growth and social welfare initiatives.”

He underlined the challenges and opportunities before India in a rapidly evolving global landscape and the critical role of policy makers and business leaders in steering the nation towards sustained and inclusive growth.

“India stands at a crucial juncture where visionary leadership, sound policy frameworks and strategic planning are essential to realise the goal of becoming a developed nation by the centenary of Independence,” LG Sinha said.

He stressed that macroeconomic stability must remain a top priority, coupled with high and sustained investment in education and health to build a skilled, productive and resilient population.

Highlighting the importance of governance reforms, LG Sinha said, “Digital tools, participatory governance, transparency and accountability will play a decisive role in ensuring efficient delivery of public services.”

He said that speedy project implementation and outcome-oriented administration are vital to meet the aspirations of a growing population and to ensure balanced and all-round development.

The Lieutenant Governor said, “Technological advancements offer immense opportunities to improve governance, enhance citizen engagement and optimise resource utilisation.”

He called upon policy makers and business leaders to work in close coordination, leveraging innovation and strategic management practices to drive economic growth, improve competitiveness and generate employment.

The Lieutenant Governor reiterated that achieving Viksit Bharat by 2047 would require long-term vision, policy consistency and strong institutional capacity.

He urged stakeholders to focus on evidence-based policymaking, strategic foresight and continuous capacity building to address emerging global and domestic challenges.

“Wherever I go, I see that our great nation is on the move towards progress and prosperity. Our manufacturing and services sectors are showing impressive growth and there is a renewed confidence among industry leaders to take on the challenge of the rest of the world. I also see our village industries, Handloom and Handicraft sector competing with the best. PM Modi's clarion call for Swadeshi has given fresh impetus to this sector,” LG Sinha added.

“Inclusive and equitable growth lies at the core of the Prime Minister's vision. The government policies have focused on job creation, support for small businesses, increased public investment, and financial empowerment of the middle class and entrepreneurs, ensuring that the economic progress benefits every citizen,” the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor reaffirmed his resolve to ensure that the benefits of programs like Modern India and Digital India reach the citizens on the last ladder of development.

“Decentralized governance has brought about significant positive change, and continuous efforts are being made to ensure that policies are not merely on paper but are responsive, morally sound, and action-oriented, thereby shaping the commitment to a people-first approach,” the Lieutenant Governor said.

He underlined the need to boost revenue by tapping into Jammu Kashmir UT's vast but underutilized mining sector. “J&K holds immense potential in Limestone, Sapphire, Lithium and other minerals. With strategic planning, in the next 5-7 years, we can generate an additional annual revenue of Rs 15,000 crore to Rs 20,000 crore,” the Lieutenant Governor said.

He also called for maximizing the Hydro Power sector, and suggested necessary amendments to the Holistic Agriculture Development Program (HADP) to ensure it meets evolving economic needs.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor unveiled the Basohli Painting Exhibition. The event also marked the valedictory session of Basohli Painting workshop and felicitation of Basohli Painting artists by the Lieutenant Governor.

“Basohli Painting is our priceless artistic heritage which holds immense value for present and future generations. I commend IIM Jammu and the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) for the unique initiative,” the Lieutenant Governor said.

The conference provided a platform for thought leaders, policy experts and industry representatives to deliberate on strategies for sustainable development, good governance and economic transformation, in alignment with the national vision of a developed and self-reliant India by 2047.

Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu; R K Chaudhary, Chairman, Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission, J&K and Ladakh; Subash Chandra Meena, Economic Advisor NITI Aayog; Prof. Arunaditya Sahay, Founding

Chairman, Strategic Management Forum (SMF); Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Shruti Awasthi, Regional Director, IGNCIA; academicians, policymakers, researchers, industry leaders, artists and students attended the inaugural session. (KNO)

### Omar slams Nitish

organise these activities, we have no problem. However, it must be done safely. What often happens is that people without proper knowledge or experience bring equipment and start conducting rock climbing. As you may have seen recently in Uttarakhand, during a bungee-jumping incident, the rope was not properly secured and the person fell to the ground. We do not want such incidents here, where lives are at risk. Therefore, we will introduce such activities only with proper safety and security measures.”

‘OPEN EXISTING AND VISIBLE TOURIST DESTINATIONS’

On opening hidden tourist destinations, CM Omar said existing and visible destinations should be prioritized first.

“First, open the destinations that are right in front of us. Many places are still closed. On one hand, we talk about promoting tourism, and on the other hand, these areas remain inaccessible. For example, in Gulmarg, the left side of the Gondola is closed; Doodhpatri is completely closed; Drang is not accessible; Ferozpora Nallah was also closed earlier. These places should be opened first,” he said.

‘J&K INHERITED FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS’

Responding to Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's remarks on fiscal discipline, CM Omar said Jammu and Kashmir continues to function under inherited financial constraints.

“We are running the system with what we have inherited. J&K is not financially self-reliant and remains heavily dependent on the Government of India. Earlier, as a state, we received a share of central taxes, but after becoming a Union Territory, that share stopped, increasing pressure on our budget,” he said.

However, CM Omar asserted that his government has maintained “financial discipline.” “Despite these challenges, over the past 15–16 months, there has been no financial negligence. If anyone can point out even a single instance where public money has been misused, I am ready to be held accountable,” he added.

PDD DIRECTED TO MINIMIZE POWER CUTS

On electricity shortages in far-flung areas, CM Omar said it would be incorrect to claim that there is no electricity.

“You cannot say there is no electricity, no water, no snow, no rain, or no water in rivers. There have been slightly more power cuts, but the department has been instructed to minimise unscheduled cuts as much as possible. I also make a humble appeal to the people to use electricity judiciously,” he said. (KNO)

### Former min

December 28, 2020.

Taj, who previously served as a cabinet minister in the PDP-Congress government and the NC-Congress government, was elected as a DDC member after defeating the Peoples Conference candidate.

“Yes, I didn't attend any meeting,” Taj confirmed to news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO). When asked why, he said: “I didn't have any specific reason to do so.”

Although he skipped all council meetings, Taj did turn up to cast his vote in the election for DDC chairperson and vice-chairperson on February 13, 2021.

Taj, a two-term MLA from Uri, served as a cabinet minister in the PDP-Congress government from 2002 to 2008 and in the NC-Congress regime from 2009 to 2014. He lost the 2024 Assembly election from Uri to NC's Sajad Shafi Uri when he contested as an independent backed by Altaf Bukhari's Apni Party. Recently, Taj returned to the Congress.

His absence from all council meetings for the past four years and ten months has raised serious questions about the rationale and wisdom behind his decision to contest the election.

“Why should anyone contest an election if he or she is not willing to shoulder the responsibility that follows? It is baffling that a sitting DDC member has not attended any meeting of the council for nearly five years. The council is the only appropriate forum where a DDC member can represent his constituents,” said a politician, wishing not to be named.

As per the Jammu & Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act, the chairperson is required to convene at least four meetings of the DDC in a financial year, one in each quarter. The Act also provides that failure to attend three consecutive meetings of the council by the chairperson or vice-chairperson can be grounds for moving a no-confidence motion against them.

While the Act specifies action against the chairperson or vice-chairperson for failing to attend meetings, it does not explicitly mention removal of ordinary members for absenteeism. (KNO)

### Cold wave prevails,

minus 1.8°C yesterday.

In Qazigund temperature fell to minus 3.0°C from minus 2.2°C, in Pahalgam it dropped to minus 2.8°C from minus 2.6°C, in Kupwara temperature decreased to minus 2.2°C from minus 1.8°C, in Kokernag it rose to minus 0.1°C from minus 0.6°C, in Gulmarg it rose to 1.6°C from 0.5°C.

Pampore recorded the temperature at minus 4.0°C, at Srinagar Airport temperature plummeted to minus 2.6°C from minus 2.0°C, in Awantipora it fell to minus 3.2°C from minus 2.6°C, in Budgam it improved to minus 2.6°C from minus 2.8°C.

In Anantnag temperature dropped to minus 4.2°C from minus 3.3°C, in Baramulla it fell to minus 3.5°C from minus 2.9°C, in Bandipora it remained at minus 2.2°C, in Pulwama it fell to minus 4.4°C from minus 4.0°C, in Shopian temperature decreased to minus 4.4°C from minus 3.8°C, in Kulgam it rose to 0.1°C from minus 0.5°C.

In Ganderbal temperature fell to minus 1.4°C from minus 1.2°C, in Sonamarg it rose to 0.6°C from minus 1.3°C, and Zojila Pass recorded temperature of minus 16.0°C against minus 17.0°C yesterday.

In the Jammu region, Jammu recorded 9.0°C today compared with 8.4°C yesterday, Banihal 3.4°C against 1.7°C, Batote 7.6°C against 7.1°C, Katra 11.1°C against 10.4°C, Bhaderwah 3.4°C against 2.9°C, Kathua 8.2°C against 8.8°C.

Jammu Airport 9.4°C against 6.9°C, Udhampur 3.3°C against 4.0°C, Ramban 5.6°C against 4.6°C, Samba 4.1°C against 3.5°C, Rajouri 1.8°C against 1.0°C, Kishtwar 7.6°C against 8.3°C, Reasi 7.4°C against 6.5°C, and Doda data was not available today.

In Ladakh, Leh recorded minus 6.3°C against minus 4.8°C yesterday, Kargil minus 5.8°C against minus 4.2°C, and Nubra Valley minus 5.0°C against minus 1.9°C.

Meanwhile, the Meteorological Department predicted light to moderate snow over higher reaches of the Kashmir division and light rain at several places in Jammu and Kashmir from the night of December 20 to late afternoon or evening of December 21.

Light snow is expected at isolated higher reaches on December 22, followed by partly cloudy weather from December 23 to 29.

It issued an advisory warning that light to moderate snow and sub-zero temperatures over higher reaches and important passes may make roads slippery during the night of December 20 and on December 21.

Travelers and transporters have been advised to follow traffic and administrative instructions. (KNO)

### Climate change

J&K Tourism Department officials, Union Tourism Ministry's Suman Billah, among others.

The Chief Minister began his address on a personal note, recalling the rock piece from Mount Everest presented to him at the event and said it would remain one of the most memorable gifts he had ever received. “I touched the summit of Mount Everest sitting comfortably in this hall,” he quipped, drawing laughter from the audience.

Omar thanked ATOAI President, Ajit Bajaj, for his persistence and passion in bringing the ATOAI convention to Jammu and Kashmir. “Files in government sometimes stop moving entirely,” he said, “but Bajaj's determination ensured we made it here. I'd say 95% of the credit goes to him and his team.”

Pivoting to his core message, the Chief Minister underscored the urgent threat of climate change to Kashmir's adventure tourism. “Jammu and Kashmir is ideally placed as a destination for adventure tourism. We were skiing in Gulmarg before independence, when the British installed our first ski lift. But today, the reality of climate change can no longer be ignored,” he said.

While snow remains central to Kashmir's allure, Omar said the state must diversify adventure offerings, from paragliding and trekking to whitewater rafting, mountaineering and ballooning, to make Jammu and Kashmir a “year-round adventure destination.”

“We recently trained a batch of paragliding instructors and pilots. Hot air ballooning has started modestly, but we hope to expand. Adventure tourism can take people into areas that wouldn't otherwise see regular tourist traffic,” he added.

The CM said that while leisure and MICE tourism remain important, “adventure tourism opens doors to unexplored geographies, creating local livelihoods and connecting communities.”

Stressing the balance between thrill and safety, Abdullah said, “Adventure tourism is not another word for organised suicide. It's about excitement done responsibly, sustainably and repeatedly. There must be adrenaline, yes, but not recklessness.”

He lauded ATOAI's efforts in developing national safety guidelines for adventure tourism,

promising the government's full cooperation. “Those who entrust their lives to us must be returned safely to their families, maybe with a little more heartbeat, but nothing more harmful than that,” he shared, drawing laughter from the audience.

The CM reiterated the government's commitment to supporting operators, improving safety protocols and ensuring that Kashmir remains a trusted, innovative destination for adventure seekers.

Omar said the future of tourism in Jammu and Kashmir depends on sustainable action, not slogans. “We must protect the very landscapes that people come to experience. If we don't act now, the adventure tourism we enjoy today might vanish before our children get to see it. Let's ensure we pass on not just memories but mountains, snow, and rivers still alive.” (KNO)

### ‘Can't sell Gulmarg

sell glaciers for ice climbing if those glaciers melt. We see them receding before our eyes.”

He recalled how the Thajwas glacier near Sonamarg has dramatically retreated within his lifetime, underscoring that climate change is no longer a distant concern but a visible crisis for the region's tourism economy.

“If Gulmarg were a private ski destination rather than government-supported, it might have ceased to exist today,” Omar said. “We barely get snow for a month or a month and a half now, whereas we used to ski from December till March.”

To counter this, the CM said the government is actively considering the use of “artificial snow-making systems” to extend ski seasons. “We have sub-zero temperatures but lack precipitation. That's where new technology can help,” he added, urging industry stakeholders to innovate for survival.

Abdullah said the shrinking snow cover poses a challenge to J&K's traditional winter calendar and called for diversifying adventure offerings beyond skiing, including paragliding, whitewater rafting, mountaineering, trekking and hot air ballooning to position Jammu and Kashmir as a year-round adventure destination.

He said the government has already trained a new batch of paragliding pilots and instructors and plans to expand aerial adventure activities in the near future. “Adventure tourism opens doors to unexplored geographies, creating livelihoods and connecting communities,” he said.

The Chief Minister further stressed the need for responsible and safe adventure tourism, remarking that “adventure tourism is not another word for organised suicide. It's about excitement done responsibly, sustainably, and repeatedly.”

Lauding ATOAI for framing national safety guidelines, Omar said the J&K government will work closely with the association to ensure that all adventure activities meet global safety standards.

“This year has tested us in ways not of our making, from Pahalgam to unseasonal rains and the Delhi blast, yet our tourism industry has shown remarkable resilience,” he said, praising operators and stakeholders for “keeping the wheels turning in uncertain times.”

Reiterating his government's commitment to sustainability, the CM said, “We must protect the very landscapes people come to experience. If we don't act now, the adventure tourism we enjoy today might vanish before our children get to see it. Let's ensure we pass on not just memories but mountains, snow and rivers still alive.” (KNO)

### ‘J&K relies on

will reduce drastically once smart meters are installed across the UT. “Currently, we are facing major losses because of the consumer pilferage and flat rates in 60 percent of the areas.”

“J&K has inadequate infrastructure as of now,” he said.

Earlier this week KNO reported that Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh is likely to witness a power deficit of more than 34 percent in the month of December.

The official documents in this regard showing the anticipated power supply position in the northern region for December-2025 said that Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh is likely to have a power shortage of 34.2 percent.

The official figures reveal that there is an availability of just 2460 Megawatts (MWs) against a requirement of 3737 MWs in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. It also reveals that there is a shortage of 1277 MWs. (KNO)

### Army inducts

Jammu region to Anantnag, demonstrating enhanced mobility and logistics capability.

The Army, per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the move was achieved in close coordination with the Ministry of Railways, highlighting the transformative impact of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail link in enabling rapid logistics build-up.

“Enhancing Capabilities Along the Borders. The Indian Army achieved a major logistics

milestone on 16 December 2025 with the induction of tanks and artillery guns into the Kashmir Valley by a Military Special Train. As part of the validation exercise, tanks, artillery guns and dozers were successfully moved from the Jammu Region to Anantnag. Kashmir demonstrating enhanced mobility and logistical capability,” it said.

It added; “This milestone was achieved in close coordination with Railway ministry, underscoring the transformative impact of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project in enabling rapid logistics build-up and strengthening operational readiness along the Northern Borders”. (KNO)

### Adventure tourism

foundation of our competitiveness.”

He stressed that all operators must strictly follow standard operating procedures, ensure certified guides, use approved equipment and adopt continuous learning from incidents and near-misses.

He also called for the establishment of destination management systems where government, operators and service providers coordinate to manage carrying capacity, seasonality and emergency response planning effectively.

Outlining his vision, Billa proposed developing ‘structured Himalayan trekking trails’ with graded difficulty levels, designated campsites, and proper exit points.

“This doesn't require large funds but better planning and coordination,” he said, stressing that custodianship of such trails must rest with local communities to ensure long-term sustainability.

He further suggested expanding into soft adventure tourism, such as light treks, cycling and moderate outdoor activities to attract larger markets and reduce dependence on seasonal, high-end segments.

“Not everyone wants to scale Everest. Many want to experience nature through accessible adventure that's where the commercial opportunity lies,” he said.

Billa also called for creating a national registry of trained adventure professionals to make talent easily accessible to operators across the country and for introducing structured certification programs that allow guides to work across states.

He also urged governments to streamline approvals. “We need clear-cut rules and a framework-based system where permissions within identified adventure zones are automatic, as long as conditions are met,” he said.

Billa proposed setting up predictable rescue protocols, local response teams and working closely with the insurance industry to ensure full coverage for both domestic and international adventurers.

Calling for stronger government-industry partnerships, Billa said both must share responsibility, the government to provide infrastructure and frameworks and the industry to ensure professionalism and self-regulation.

“All adventure tourism must be rooted in sustainability. Communities must be seen as partners, not bystanders. Waste management, net-zero practices and responsible tourism should define the way forward,” he said.

Billa also said the Indian model of adventure tourism must rest on three essential pillars, ‘safety, sustainability and resilience’. “Meeting here in Srinagar, under the leadership of our Honourable Chief Minister, sends a strong national and international message that tourism in India is alive, thriving and growing stronger despite challenges. If tourism has to grow, adventure tourism must be one of its most vital pillars,” he said. (KNO)

### 100 pc electrification

Jammu and Kashmir is listed among the States and Union Territories that have successfully reached the full electrification of existing BG routes.

The Ministry clarified that near-total electrification is aimed at improving operational efficiency, reducing dependence on diesel traction, and supporting environment-friendly rail transport, including in difficult and hilly terrains such as Jammu and Kashmir.

It further said that all new railway lines and multi-tracking projects are being sanctioned and executed with electrification provisions, ensuring that future rail expansion in Jammu and Kashmir remains fully electric.

The government added, “The railway electrification has brought down fuel consumption considerably at the national level, besides improving train performance and reliability. All this is expected to benefit passenger and freight movement in Jammu and Kashmir.”

The speed and completion of electrification projects depend on factors like terrain, weather conditions and statutory clearances, said the Ministry. It further stresses that the electrified network will play a pivotal role in making connectivity and mobility in Jammu and Kashmir better. (KNO)



# India, Ethiopia natural partners in regional peace, security, connectivity: PM Modi

PTI

Addis Ababa, Dec 17: India and Ethiopia are "natural partners" in regional peace, security and connectivity, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Wednesday in his address to the Ethiopian Parliament.

Modi, who arrived in Ethiopia on Tuesday on his maiden bilateral visit, addressed a joint session of the East African nation's parliament.

This was the 18th parliament in the world that Prime Minister Modi has addressed.

"Ethiopia sits at a crossroads of Africa. India stands at the heart of the Indian Ocean. We are natural partners in regional peace, security and connectivity," the prime minister said.

"Our commitment to mutual security became stronger with the signing of a defence cooperation agreement earlier this year. This arrangement focuses on closer military cooperation," he said.

Asserting that India and Ethiopia share "warmth in climate as well as in spirit", Modi said that the ancestors of the two nations exchanged ideas and way of life, and not just goods.

He said that both nations understand that democracy is a way of life and a journey. "It is shaped sometimes by debate, sometimes by disagreement, but always by belief in the rule of law." The prime minister said that when the wheel of the state moves in harmony with the people, the wheel of progress moves forward with hope and purpose.

Speaking about the Global South, Modi said the region is writing its own destiny, and India and Ethiopia share a vision for it. "Our vision is of



a world where the Global South rises not against anyone, but for everyone," he said.

We stand together and work for a world which is more just, equal and peaceful, he said, adding that the world cannot move forward if its systems remain locked in the past.

He also thanked Ethiopia for its solidarity in strengthening the global fight against terrorism.

Underscoring the civilisational ties between India and Ethiopia, Modi said that both the countries combine ancient wisdom with modern ambition.

"Our emotions for our motherland also reflect our shared perspectives. India's national song, 'Vande Mataram', and the Ethiopian national anthem both refer to our land as the mother." They inspire us to take pride in the heritage, culture, beauty, and protect the motherland, he said.

As developing countries, India and Ethiopia have a lot to learn from and

offer to each other, Modi said.

"Indian companies are among the largest investors in Ethiopia. They have invested more than USD 5 billion across diverse sectors and generated more than 75,000 jobs. We have decided to elevate India-Ethiopia bilateral relationship to a strategic partnership."

The two countries elevated their historical ties to the level of 'Strategic Partnership' on Tuesday, and several MoUs were also exchanged after Modi's wide-ranging talks with his Ethiopian counterpart, Abiy Ahmed Ali.

In his address, Modi said that India's Digital Public Infrastructure has "transformed the way we deliver services and how people access them." He said that India sent medicines and vaccines to more than 150 countries during the COVID-19 pandemic, and it was India's "proud privilege" to supply Ethiopia with over 4 million vaccine doses. Calling

Ethiopia one of the oldest civilisations in human history, Modi said, "Ethiopia stands tall because its roots are deep... the past is honoured, the present is full of purpose, and the future is welcomed with open heart."

At the conclusion of his speech, Modi received a long standing ovation from the members of Parliament.

In an X post, Modi said it was a "great honour and privilege" to address the Ethiopian Parliament.

"Ethiopia's rich history, culture and spirit inspire deep respect and admiration. I conveyed India's commitment to further strengthening our partnership, guided by shared values, mutual trust and a common vision for peace, development and cooperation," he said.

In his speech, Modi said that it was "wonderful" to be in Ethiopia, the land of lions, he said, adding, "I feel very much at home because my home state, Gujarat in India, is also home to lions."

"Yesterday, I was also honoured to receive 'Great Honour Nishan of Ethiopia'. I accept this award with folded hands and humility on behalf of the people of India," he said.

Modi is the first global head of state to receive Ethiopia's highest award.

Earlier in the day, Modi laid a wreath at the Adwa Victory Monument.

"The monument stands as a powerful symbol of Ethiopia's courage, unity and unwavering spirit. It reminds the world of a proud nation that protected itself with determination and resolve," he said in an X post.

Modi is on a four-day, three-nation visit. He arrived here on Tuesday from Jordan and will depart for Oman from here.

## PM being conferred Ethiopia's highest award reflects Bharat's growing stature: Shah



PTI

New Delhi, Dec 17: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi being conferred Ethiopia's highest civilian award reflects "Bharat's rising stature" in global diplomacy under his leadership and said it is a moment of pride for every Indian.

Congratulating Modi, Shah said the honour -- The Great Honour Nishan of Ethiopia -- is the 28th international accolade bestowed on the prime minister by a foreign nation. This underscores the growing global recognition of his statesmanship, he said.

"A moment of pride for every Indian. Congratulations to PM Shri Narendra Modi Ji on being bestowed with Ethiopia's highest award. It signifies Bharat's

rising stature in global diplomacy under his leadership," Shah said in a post on X.

He said the honour would remain a milestone in the friendship between India and Ethiopia.

Modi was conferred the award on Tuesday by Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali at a special ceremony held at the Addis International Convention Centre.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the award was presented in recognition of Modi's exceptional contribution to strengthening the India-Ethiopia partnership and his visionary leadership as a global statesman.

The MEA said Modi is the first global head of state or government to receive the Great Honour Nishan of Ethiopia, highlighting the deepening ties between the two countries.

## SC asks Centre, SCBA to suggest measures to prevent incidents like shoe hurl at CJI

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 17: The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked the Centre and the Supreme Court Bar Association to suggest measures to prevent recurrence of incidents like the shoe-hurl attempt targeting former CJI B R Gavai in the courtroom.

The court also asked for a standard operating procedure for the media to report on such incidents.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, and senior advocate and SCBA President Vikas Singh, to submit suggestions to it for issuing the guidelines to deal with the issue.

"The solicitor general, Tushar Mehta, and senior advocate and SCBA president jointly state that they will put up joint suggestions recommending preventive measures for these kinds of occurrences, and the protocol to be observed for reporting and publicising such incidents in future," the CJI said.

The top court waived off the procedural formality of issuing a notice to the Centre and said that the issue was non-adversarial in nature and hence, a common suggestion may be submitted.

Earlier, the bench expressed its reluctance in initiating criminal contempt proceedings against 71-year-old lawyer Rakesh Kishore, who attempted to throw a shoe at the then CJI and said the court



would look into whatever needs to be done.

It asked the SCBA to give their suggestions as the court would look to formulate pan-India preventive guidelines.

"Just think of giving three-four suggestions on how to prevent such incidents in places like court premises and bar rooms, etc. All of you, please give suggestions.

"Whatever requires to be done, we will see on the next date. We will request the attorney general also to give his suggestions in this regard," Justice Kant said on November 12. The bench was hearing a plea of the SCBA seeking contempt action

against advocate Kishore, who attempted to hurl a shoe towards ex-CJI Gavai on October 6 during court proceedings.

Kishore's act prompted the Bar Council of India (BCI) to suspend his licence with immediate effect. Gavai, who remained unfazed during and after the unprecedented incident, asked the court officials and the security personnel present inside the courtroom to "just ignore" it and to let off the errant lawyer with a warning.

The incident sparked widespread condemnation, including from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who also spoke to Gavai.

## India aspires for 25 pc contribution in global trade: FM

UNI

New Delhi, Dec 17: India is working towards securing 25 per cent of global trade in the coming years by building on its strong macroeconomic foundations, resilient growth trajectory and rapidly expanding entrepreneurial ecosystem, said Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

The Finance Minister was addressing the India Economic Conclave in Delhi on Wednesday.

She said the global economic landscape is undergoing a major shift, with trade increasingly getting weaponised through tariff restrictions and strategic barriers. These developments, she noted, pose fresh geo-economic challenges for emerging and developed economies alike. However, the Finance Minister said that India remains prepared to engage with the changing global trade environment through dialogue and negotiation.

India will negotiate firmly but constructively to protect its interests while ensuring that global trade remains fair and rules-based, Sitharaman said. She underlined that India believes in engagement rather than



isolation and will continue to work with global partners to address distortions in trade. Despite these challenges, Sitharaman said India is confident of converting global uncertainties into opportunities by leveraging its domestic strengths. She emphasised that India's growth has been steady and people-driven, and not dependent on short-term policy measures.

"The resilience of India is the real story," she said, adding that this resilience has been built consistently over decades. From the post-Independence period to the present, India has repeatedly adapted to changing global and domestic conditions while responding to the

aspirations of its people. Referring to the past ten years, the Finance Minister said India has entered a decisive phase of transformation. She pointed to the rapid expansion of financial inclusion, which has brought millions of citizens into the formal banking system and improved access to savings, credit and insurance.

She said sustained efforts have also been made in social development, including childcare support, policies aimed at increasing women's participation in the workforce, and large-scale delivery of affordable housing. These measures, she said, have strengthened economic participation and social security.

### National Herald case

## Congress misleading public, matter still in court: BJP

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 17: The BJP on Wednesday accused the Congress of running misleading propaganda over the trial court's decision in the National Herald case and said the court refused to take cognisance of the complaint but did not set aside the case.

The case is still pending trial in the Delhi High Court, and the trial court in its order on Tuesday said that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) can continue its investigation, BJP national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia asserted.

"The court yesterday (Tuesday) said that since it is a private complaint and no FIR has been lodged, it will not take cognizance of it. It's a technical matter. The court also said that ED can continue its investigation further. The court did not set it aside," Bhatia told a press conference at the BJP headquarters here

"Its trial is still going on. Sonia Gandhi is still Accused Number-1 and Rahul Gandhi Accused Number-2," the BJP spokesperson said, alleging, "The Gandhi family thrives on deceit, deception, and propaganda."

## How dementia quietly takes shape in the brain: Doctor explains changes we don't see

TOI HEALTH

New Delhi, Dec 17: A new Lancet study has sparked a lot of conversation and concern around dementia, one of the most talked-about health issues today. According to the study, certain depressive symptoms that begin in midlife may increase the risk of developing dementia later on.

The researchers identified six specific symptoms: losing confidence, feeling unable to face problems, not experiencing warmth or affection, feeling nervous, persistent dissatisfaction, and difficulty concentrating. On their own, these feelings can seem very relatable — something many people experience during stressful phases of life. But the study suggests that when these symptoms



linger or intensify during midlife, they could be more than just emotional ups and downs.

That's what makes the findings unsettling. Emotions we often brush aside as "normal stress" or "just a bad phase" may be

quietly linked to long-term brain health. It doesn't mean everyone who feels this way will develop dementia, but it does highlight the importance of paying attention to mental well-being early.

To understand what this

really means and how worried we should be, we spoke to Dr. Aditya Gupta, Director – Neurosurgery & Cyberknife at Artemis Hospital, Gurugram. He explains what dementia actually is, how mental health and brain health are connected, and why recognising these signs early can make a meaningful difference in the long run.

When you say dementia can start decades earlier, what's actually happening inside the brain during those "silent" years?

Dr. Aditya Gupta: Harmful changes happen over the years after someone has lost their ability to speak. During this time, proteins build up in their brains without any indication that something is wrong, such as beta-amyloid or tau proteins, as well as damage done to nerve

connections. Chronic inflammation occurs, as does a decrease in blood flow to certain areas of the brain. The body's compensatory mechanisms hide the symptoms of brain problems for many years, until the damage to the brain becomes too severe to live with.

Which everyday habits damage brain health the most over time, even if they seem harmless in the short term?

Dr. Aditya Gupta: The brain is affected negatively by chronic poor sleep, prolonged stress, lack of physical activity, poor dietary habits (i.e., a high intake of processed foods and sugars), smoking, and excess alcohol. Being sedentary for long periods (especially in front of a computer) and being socially isolated will reduce cognitive stimulation.



# Millions pledged to Syrian Australian man who stopped gunman, became national hero

AP

Wellington, Dec 17: Like many Australians strolling at Bondi Beach on long, warm summer evenings, Ahmed al Ahmed just wanted a cup of coffee with a friend. Around him, a bloody massacre erupted as two gunmen targeted Jews during Hanukkah festivities at a park close to the shore.

Soon al Ahmed was creeping, bent over, between two parked cars, before barreling directly toward one of the unsuspecting shooters. In footage that has been viewed millions of times around the world, the 44-year-old father can be seen tackling one of the gunmen, wrestling the man's shotgun from his grip and turning it on the attacker.

The story of the Syrian-Australian Muslim shop owner who put an end to the rampage of one of the shooters on Sunday has been seized upon by a country desperately seeking comfort after one of its darkest hours: the slaying of 15 people as they celebrated their Jewish faith.

Millions have been raised for Bondi hero "At a moment where we have seen evil perpetrated, he shines out as an example of the strength of humanity," Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said Tuesday, as he left a Sydney hospital where al Ahmed is being treated for gunshot wounds. "We are a brave country. Ahmed al Ahmed represents the best of our country." A fundraising page established by Australians who had never met al Ahmed had attracted by Tuesday night donations by some 40,000 people,



who gave 2.3 million Australian dollars (\$1.5 million). Among the supporters was the billionaire hedge fund manager William Ackman, who pledged A\$99,000.

Father of two faces a long recovery Al Ahmed, who is married with two young daughters, faces a long struggle ahead, those who have spoken to him since Sunday's massacre say. He was shot multiple times in the left arm, apparently by the second gunman in the attack as the man fired indiscriminately from a footbridge. He has already

undergone surgery and more operations are scheduled, said Lubaba alhmidhi Alkahil, a spokesperson for the Australians for Syria Association, who visited al Ahmed in a hospital late Monday. The "quiet and humble" man was conscious but frail and faced at least six months of recovery, Alkahil said.

A prime minister and a president are fans In the days since the attack, a pile of floral tributes and notes of thanks has grown outside the small tobacco store al Ahmed owns opposite a train station in suburban Sydney.

Meanwhile, he has received visits at the hospital from Australia's leaders, apparently telling Chris Minns, the premier of New South Wales state, that he'd take the same action again. He has been hailed as a hero by world leaders including US President Donald Trump and Australia's Governor General, who is the representative of Britain's King Charles in the country. Minns said al Ahmed saved "countless" lives in what the premier said was "the most unbelievable scene I've ever seen."

Al Ahmed was once a police officer Al Ahmed lived in the town of Nayrab in Syria's Idlib region before he arrived in Australia, his cousin Mohammad al Ahmed told The Associated Press. He left Syria in 2006 after finishing his studies, before the 2011 mass protests against the government of then-President Bashar Assad that were met with a brutal crackdown and spiraled into a nearly 14-year civil war.

Nayrab was heavily bombed by Assad's forces with most of the town's houses flattened and reduced to rubble. On Tuesday, al Ahmed was the talk of the town.

"Ahmed did really a heroic job," his cousin, Mohammad al Ahmed told The Associated Press. "Without any hesitation, he tackled the terrorist and disarmed him just to save innocent people." Ahmed al Ahmed's parents, who came to Sydney this year to reunite with their son, told Australian Broadcasting Corp. that their son had served with the police and in the central security forces in Syria. Father Mohamed Fateh al

Ahmed said his son's "conscience and soul" compelled him to act on Sunday.

"I feel pride and honor because my son is a hero of Australia," the father said.

Tale of heroism gives hope amid tragedy In the aftermath of the mass killing, a country reeling from one of the worst hate-fueled attacks ever on its soil — allegedly committed by an Australian resident who arrived from India in 1998 and his Australian-born son — looked for hope amid their grief. Stories of heroism have started to emerge. They included the tale of a married couple, Boris and Sofia Gurman, who were both killed while trying to stop one of the shooters as he climbed from his car and began the massacre, their family has told Australian news outlets.

Reuven Morrison, 62, was also killed while trying to stop the horror, according to his daughter, Sheina Gutnick. After al Ahmed wrestled the gun from one shooter, a person Gutnick identified as Morrison is seen throwing objects at the gunman — before he was shot by the second man.

Acts of courage like these were cited by many on social media and in news outlets as examples of what being Australian should mean. "When he did what he did, he wasn't thinking at all about the background of the people he's saving, the people dying in the street," Mohamed Fateh al Ahmed said of his son. "He doesn't discriminate between one nationality and another, especially here in Australia there's no difference between one citizen and another."

## Australian police charge alleged Bondi killer with terrorism, 15 murder counts



AFP

Sydney, Dec 17: Police charged alleged Bondi gunman Naveed Akram with terrorism, 15 counts of murder and a litany of other crimes on Wednesday after Australia's deadliest mass shooting in decades. "Police will allege in court the man engaged in conduct that caused death, serious injury and endangered life to advance a religious cause and cause fear in the community," New South Wales state police said.

"Early indications point to a terrorist attack inspired by Daesh, a listed terrorist

organization in Australia," they said in a statement, using another name for the Daesh group. Authorities say Naveed and his father Sajid Akram opened fire on a Jewish festival at Sydney's famed Bondi Beach on Sunday evening, killing 15 people and wounding dozens more. Among the victims were a 10-year-old girl, two Holocaust survivors and a married couple shot dead as they tried to thwart the attack.

Naveed was critically wounded by police during the shooting, and local media reported he woke from a coma on Tuesday night. Sajid Akram was killed in a shootout with police.

Police said Naveed had also been charged with 40 counts of causing grievous bodily harm to a person with intent to murder, as well as public display of the symbol of a prohibited terrorist organization.

## Ancient cures and AI: WHO seeks evidence for traditional medicine

AFP

New Delhi, Dec 17: The World Health Organization opens a major conference on traditional medicine on Wednesday, arguing that new technologies, including artificial intelligence, can bring scientific scrutiny to centuries-old healing practices.

The meeting in New Delhi will examine how governments can regulate traditional medicine while using emerging scientific tools to validate safe and effective treatments.

The UN body hopes this push will help make ancestral practices more compatible with modern health care systems.

"Traditional medicine is not a thing of the past," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a video released ahead of the three-day conference.

"There is a growing demand for traditional medicine across countries, communities, and cultures."

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his own message, said the summit would "intensify efforts to harness" the



potential of traditional medicine.

Modi is a longtime advocate of yoga and traditional health practices and has backed the WHO Global Center for Traditional Medicine, launched in 2022 in his home state of Gujarat.

Shyama Kurvillla, the head of the center, said reliance on traditional remedies was "a global reality," noting that 40-90 percent of populations in 90 percent of WHO member states used them.

"With half the world's population lacking access to essential health services,

traditional medicine is often the closest — or only care — available for many people," she told AFP in New Delhi.

'Evidence-informed' The UN agency defines traditional medicines as the accumulated knowledge, skills and practices used over time to maintain health and prevent, diagnose and treat physical and mental illness.

But many lack proven scientific value, while conservationists warn that demand for certain products drives trafficking in endangered wildlife, including tigers, rhinos and pangolins.

"WHO's role, therefore, is to help countries ensure that, as with any other medicine, traditional medicine is safe, evidence-informed, and equitably integrated in systems," Kurvillla added.

Kurvillla, who studied at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and taught global health policy at Boston University, said that "40 percent or more of biomedical Western medicine, pharmaceuticals, derive from natural products."

## Kartik Sharma: I couldn't stop crying even when bidding ended

PTI

Mumbai, Dec 17: Overwhelmed with emotion, 19-year-old Kartik Sharma was left in tears after five-time champions Chennai Super Kings secured him for a record Rs 14.20 crore at the IPL 2026 mini auction, making him the joint-highest paid uncapped player in the league's history.

Coming into the auction at a base price of Rs 30 lakh, Kartik and Uttar Pradesh's Prashant Veer set the record when CSK splurged Rs 14.20 crore on each of them, in the auction at Abu Dhabi on Tuesday.

"When the bidding started, I was scared I might miss out. But as the bid kept going up, I started crying," Kartik was quoted as saying in a JioHotstar release.

"Even after it ended, I couldn't stop. I was overwhelmed with emotion and happiness, I honestly don't know how to put it into words," the teenage keeper-batter from Rajasthan added. The bidding for Kartik was started by Mumbai Indians and Lucknow Super Giants before Kolkata Knight Riders joined in. While MI exited the bidding, KKR and LSG took the price to Rs 2.80 crore before CSK entered the fray.

## I hope football has bright future in India: Messi after 'amazing' tour

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 17: Lionel Messi hoped that football has a "bright future" in India and expressed gratitude for the "generous hospitality" that he got here during a whirlwind three-day tour, which had thousands of fans jostling to catch a glimpse of the Argentine genius in four different cities.

Messi, after extending his stay by a day to visit the Anant Ambani-founded Vantara wildlife rescue, rehabilitation and conservation centre in Jamnagar, left for his base in Miami on Wednesday.

Taking to Instagram, the 38-year-old posted a one-minute highlights clip of the tour, featuring his interactions with Indian cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar, Bollywood actor Kareena Kapoor Khan and several young footballers.

"What amazing visits to Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, and Kolkata. Thank you for the warm reception, generous hospitality, and all the feelings of love with which you surrounded me throughout my tour. "I hope that football has a bright future in India," he



wrote underneath the video. His good wishes come at a time when Indian football finds itself at its lowest ebb. The domestic season has been brought to a halt for the want of a commercial partner and the national team's fortunes have been in a free-fall following a string of poor results.

An ongoing court case over administrative issues has further deepened policy paralysis.

The superstar striker, who is among the most recognisable and adored sportspersons in the world, did not play

any competitive football during the trip. He was accompanied by Uruguay great and close friend Luis Suarez and Argentina teammate Rodrigo de Paul during the tour.

Messi made stadium appearances for ticketed events in all the four cities starting with Kolkata, where things turned ugly after politicians and officials surrounded him, denying fans, who had paid thousands for a seat, a clear view of the icon.

Agitated by this, the gathered spectators indulged in vandalism at the Salt Lake Stadium,

prompting Messi to be whisked away sooner than the originally planned time. However, his visits to Hyderabad, Mumbai and Delhi passed off smoothly as he charmed fans by posing for pictures and showcasing some of his warm-up routines besides playing briefly with young players.

"...we carry all this love with us, and we will definitely return, hopefully one day to play a match or on another occasion, but we will definitely return to visit India," he said after the final leg of the tour in Delhi.

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HINDI ATMOS - 10:30 AM, 06:25 PM

HINDI - 12:55 PM, 05:05 PM

SHOLAY: THE FINAL CUT (U)

HINDI - 02:45 PM

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