






# Call 112

One Call. Instant Help








Save it Share it  
Save Life

24/7

Department of Information & Public Relations, J&K

@informationprjk Information & PR, J&K @diprjk @dipr\_jk

DIPK-9417/25 Dt: 27.12.25

## LG Sinha lauds HRDS India for rebuilding shattered homes in J&K

» Praises Swami Atma Nambi, other NGO members for selfless service » Lays foundation stone of 320 new houses in Reasi

KNO Desk

Jammu, Dec 27: Asserting that High-range Rural Development Society (HRDS)-India, is helping to ensure that no family affected by natural calamities is left weak or disadvantaged, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday lauded Swami Atma Nambi, President of HRDS India, and the NGO members for their selfless service.

Addressing a gathering after laying the foundation stone to build 320 houses completely damaged during flash-floods and land-slides in Reasi District, LG Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, “Houses for affected families are not just walls and roofs but they are embodiment of dreams and aspirations and foundation for quality living and personal growth for family members.”



The house funded entirely by High-range Rural Development Society (HRDS India) at an estimated cost of Rs 32 crore, the initiative will provide 320 affected families in Reasi with modern, prefabricated “Smart Houses” without any burden on the government exchequer. “I see this movement as a new revolution and a new

model for the country where needy families are being taken care of without involving government money. It gives us a powerful Mantra that all should work together for the common good of the UT of J&K and its people,” the Lieutenant Governor said. The noble initiative features state-of-the-art, efficient,

modern, resilient, and technologically advanced three-bedroom “Smart Houses”. These houses are slated for completion within just six months of foundation work and include dedicated facilities such as cowsheds to support rural livelihoods. HRDS India will also provide extensive | [More on P6](#)

### SMVDU CONVOCATION

## Move away from outdated rote-based education: LG Sinha to students

### Calls for adapting modern, skill-oriented learning

KNO Desk

Jammu, Dec 27: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday stressed on the need to move away from outdated, rote-based education towards modern, skill-oriented learning to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving world.

Addressing the 11th Convocation Ceremony of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University here, LG Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, “The focus must be on reducing curriculum load while developing adaptable skills required for future jobs.”

He observed that if even a single student from a higher education institution remains unemployed or is unable to start an enterprise, it reflects a failure of the institution and its teachers to discharge their responsibility honestly.



Calling upon students to create new paths and explore innovative ideas, LG Sinha urged them to give a new direction to their lives and contribute meaningfully to the nation's prosperity.

He emphasized that achieving the goal of a developed India by 2047 would require every student and educational institution to fulfil its role, as the country's future growth

will be driven by the knowledge economy.

The Lieutenant Governor also outlined five key solutions to help students and institutions keep pace with rapid technological changes and the demands of the 21st-century workforce.

On the occasion, LG Sinha inaugurated a High-End Computing Artificial Intelligence and Deep Learning Lab, along with accommodation facilities for married research scholars, marking a significant step towards strengthening the university's academic and research infrastructure.

The Lieutenant Governor called upon the students to create new paths in life, give new direction to life, explore new aspects and suggest new ways for the prosperity of the nation. “To achieve the goal of a developed | [More on P6](#)

## GMC Sgr issues winter heart health advisory amid rise in cardiac emergencies

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Dec 27: With Kashmir firmly in the grip of an intense winter, the Department of Cardiology at Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar has issued an urgent public health advisory, cautioning people against a noticeable surge in heart-related emergencies during the cold season.

Doctors have warned that delays in seeking medical help can prove fatal, stressing that many winter-related cardiac events are preventable with timely care and precautionary measures.

In the advisory, a copy of which lies with the news agency - Kashmir News Observer (KNO), cardiac specialists at

GMC Srinagar highlighted that extreme cold places additional stress on the human heart, particularly among vulnerable groups.

“Timely medical intervention saves lives. Waiting for symptoms to pass can have irreversible consequences,” the advisory clearly underlined, urging people not to ignore even mild warning signs.

Why winter increases cardiac risk

Medical experts explained that exposure to low temperatures causes blood vessels to constrict, a natural response aimed at conserving body heat. However, this narrowing of blood vessels results in elevated blood pressure and forces the heart to | [More on P6](#)

## Temperatures dip across Kashmir, fog in Jammu plains

IMD forecasts light rain or snowfall from Dec 30

Dry conditions expected after Jan 2

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Dec 27: Minimum temperatures declined across Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh on Saturday, with a wide spread of sub-zero readings recorded compared to the previous day.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) in the Kashmir region, Srinagar recorded a minimum of minus 2.6°C, down from 0.2°C on Friday. Qazigund settled at minus 2.8°C, compared to 0.2°C a day earlier, while Pahalgam recorded minus 4.8°C, down from minus 1.6°C. Kupwara recorded



minus 3.8°C against minus 2.4°C, and Kokernag settled at minus 0.9°C, compared to 0.8°C previously.

Gulmarg recorded minus 4.2°C, marginally higher than minus 4.5°C a day earlier. Pampore recorded minus 4.5°C, down from minus 1.6°C, while Srinagar Airport settled at minus 3.8°C against minus 1.2°C. Sonamarg recorded

minus 5.8°C, compared to minus 4.7°C on Friday.

In the Jammu region, temperatures also declined at most places. Jammu city recorded a minimum of 7.1°C, down from 10.0°C. Banihal recorded 2.8°C, compared to 3.8°C, while Batote settled at 4.6°C, down from 6.1°C.

Bhaderwah recorded 0.2°C, compared to | [More on P6](#)

## Army intensifies winter operations in J&K to flush out Pak terrorists

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 27: Amid freezing temperatures and treacherous terrains, the Indian Army has intensified its counter-terrorism operations across Kishtwar and Doda districts in Jammu and Kashmir to pursue and neutralise Pakistani terrorists attempting to exploit the harsh winter for concealment, sources said on Saturday.

Traditionally, the onset of the 40-day ‘Chillai Kalan’, the harshest phase of winter in the Kashmir Valley from December 21 to January 31, ushers in a ‘temporary lull’ in terrorist activities, as communication routes close and heavy snowfall isolates the mountain regions, they said.

However, this winter has marked a “decisive shift” in the operational approach of the Army and other security forces, a source in the defence establishment said.

Instead of reducing activities, the Army has adopted a “proactive winter posture”, establishing temporary bases and surveillance posts deep within the snow-capped areas to maintain pressure on the possible terrorist hideouts, the sources said.

Operating in sub-zero temperatures with limited visibility, the Army patrols have been regularly traversing the high-altitude ridgelines, valleys, and forested areas to “deny the terrorists any sanctuary”, they added. | [More on P6](#)

## Year-End: Over 1.41 lakh pilgrims visit Mata Kheer Bhawani in 2025

» July saw highest footfall

» Locals hail govt efforts

Residents demand » ‘Tourist Village’ status

Yatri Niwas to » accommodate 1,000 pilgrims at a time

Raja Syed Rather

Ganderbal, Dec 27: A total of 1,41,044 pilgrims paid obeisance at the revered Mata Kheer Bhawani Temple at Tulmulla during January–December 2025, reflecting steady pilgrimage activity throughout the year, official data revealed.

Month-wise figures, as per the data gathered by the news agency - Kashmir News Observer (KNO), show that 4,447 pilgrims visited in January, 4,722 in February, 16,094 in March, 22,446 in April, 3,609 in May, 20,678 in



Pic: Jahangir Shah (KNO/KT)

June, 30,058 in July, 8,462 in August, 5,031 in September, 7,027 in October, 4,608 in November, and 4,265 pilgrims

in December. The highest footfall was recorded during July, followed by April and June, coinciding with

peak pilgrimage and favourable weather conditions.

During the Kheerbawani mela, necessary arrangements related to security, crowd management and basic amenities were ensured during high-density months to facilitate smooth movement of pilgrims and ensure their safety.

Locals lauded the efforts of the administration during major religious events. “During the Mata Kheer Bhawani festival, the District Administration Ganderbal and Ganderbal Police played a commendable role in conducting the mela smoothly | [More on P6](#)



## SMC organises AI-robot-based dental screening camp

KT NEWS DESK

S R I N A G A R , DECEMBER 27: Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) organised a comprehensive AI-Robot-based Dental Screening Camp on Saturday at its Head Office, Karan Nagar, in collaboration with "Safe Hands Dental Center" Baghat, Srinagar, as part of its continued commitment to employee welfare and preventive healthcare.

The camp, as per an official statement, was inaugurated by the Commissioner, SMC, Faz Lul Haseeb, and witnessed enthusiastic participation from officers and staff across various wings of the Corporation.

The initiative aimed to promote oral hygiene awareness, facilitate early detection of dental ailments, and encourage preventive healthcare practices, with special emphasis on sanitation workers and frontline staff.

The Dental Health Camp was organised under the supervision of

Dr. Fauzia Habib, Health Officer, SMC, whose exemplary leadership, professionalism, dedication, and meticulous planning were instrumental in the successful conceptualisation, coordination, and execution of the programme. Working in close collaboration with the medical team from "Safe Hands Dental Centre", Baghat, Srinagar, she ensured the smooth, efficient, and impactful conduct of the camp.

A team of specialist dental doctors and trained paramedical staff from Safe Hands conducted comprehensive dental check-ups and consultations using AI-robot-enabled latest dental screening technology, facilitating precise diagnostics, early identification of oral health issues, and personalised treatment guidance for the participants. The adoption of advanced AI-based tools marked a significant step towards integrating modern, technology-driven healthcare solutions within the Corporation.

## Sakeena Itoo virtually inaugurates Climate Change & Human Health Training Programme



KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, DECEMBER 27: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo virtually inaugurated Training Programme-cum-Workshop on 'Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health' under the National Programme on Climate Change and Human Health (NPCCHH) from Civil Secretariat here on Saturday.

Addressing the participants, Minister Sakeena, as per an official statement, highlighted that climate change is one of the most serious global challenges of the present era, with far-reaching consequences

for human health, particularly in vulnerable regions. She noted that rising temperatures, erratic weather patterns, increasing frequency of extreme climatic events, and deteriorating air and water quality are directly contributing to a surge in climate-sensitive diseases.

The Minister emphasised that climate change is no longer only an environmental issue but a major public health concern, impacting disease patterns, food security, mental health, maternal and child health, and overall well-being. She underlined the need for a proactive, evidence-based and coordinated health response to mitigate and

adapt to these emerging challenges.

She added that programmes like NPCCHH play a crucial role in integrating climate considerations into public health planning and service delivery.

During the event, the Minister also released the Health Calendar-2026, which highlights important national and international health days along with key public health information aimed at strengthening health awareness and promoting preventive healthcare.

Pertinently, the training programme aims to build the capacity of healthcare professionals to understand and respond to the health

implications of climate change, including emerging diseases, extreme weather events, and their impact on public health planning and service delivery.

The speakers during the programme highlighted the importance of sensitizing healthcare professionals about the health impacts of climate change and the need for a coordinated public health response under the NPCCHH framework.

Dr. Fazl ul Qadir Parray, Principal, SKIMS Medical College; Dr. Jehangir Bakshi, Director Health Services, Kashmir; Dr. Anjum Afshan Qadri, State Epidemiologist, DHSK; other senior officers of health department and medical professionals

## Javid Dar inaugurates mega Kisan Mela at Bishnah

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, DECEMBER 27: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, Cooperatives and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar, Saturday inaugurated a mega Kisan Mela at Bishnah.

The event, as per an official statement, was jointly organised by the J&K Kisan Advisory Board and the Directorate of Agriculture, Jammu, with the aim of taking government schemes and services directly to the farming community.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that the government is committed towards ensuring that the farmers receive all facilities at their doorsteps. He stated that such fairs provide a direct interface between the farmers and the departments, helping them understand and avail the benefits of various schemes.

Referring to the challenges posed by climatic change and global warming, the Minister stressed the need to move beyond traditional cropping patterns and adopt cash crops, horticulture and allied activities. He informed that the department is extending skill training to youth along with financial assistance under different schemes, including subsidies of over 50 per cent,



to make agriculture a sustainable and attractive livelihood option.

MLA Bishnah, Dr Rajeev Bhagat, said the mela was organised to create awareness among the farmers about the government programmes. He emphasized that steps are being taken to reduce the role of middlemen in marketing of farm produce so that the farmers receive fair returns. He added that under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), priority is being given to small and marginal farmers. Secretary, J&K Kisan Advisory Board, members of the Board and heads of agriculture and allied departments also addressed the

gathering. They highlighted various initiatives being implemented for the welfare of farmers.

A Nukkad Natak was also presented to educate the farmers about the financial assistance schemes in agriculture and allied sectors and the process of availing these benefits.

Among those present were DDC Bishnah Davinder Kumar, DDC Arnia Surekha Bhagat, MD HADP Sandeep Kumar, Director Agriculture Jammu Anil Gupta, Director Sheep Husbandry Jammu, Director Horticulture Jammu, Director HM&P Jammu, senior officers from allied departments and a large number of farmers from the area.

## DC Budgam presides over revenue camp in Khansahib Urges public to use online revenue services

KT NEWS DESK

BUDGAM, DECEMBER 27: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat, Saturday presided over a Revenue Camp organised at Sub-Division Khansahib with the objective of strengthening grassroots governance and ensuring effective, timely and hassle-free redressal of public grievances.

The camp, as per an official statement, witnessed significant participation from the general public, who raised various issues pertaining to revenue matters, land records, public service delivery and other civic concerns.

During the camp, grievances projected by the public were patiently heard by the DC, and interactions were held in a cordial and reassuring manner. It was observed that such



outreach initiatives are being conducted to take administration to the doorsteps of the people and to ensure that genuine issues are addressed in a transparent, accountable and time-bound manner.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC stated that the district administration remains firmly committed to responsive, efficient

and citizen-friendly governance. He emphasized that all genuine grievances brought before the administration are being examined on merit, with special focus on long-pending and deserving cases.

He also highlighted the pivotal role of public participation in strengthening governance and improving service delivery. The DC impressed upon the revenue officers to adopt a humane, proactive and solution-oriented approach while dealing with public issues, particularly those related to mutations, inheritance cases, demarcation, land disputes and issuance of revenue documents. Directions were issued for expeditious disposal of cases within prescribed timelines to minimize inconvenience to the general public.

The DC emphasized that

transparency, fairness and strict adherence to rules and procedures are being accorded top priority in revenue administration. He stated that accountability at all levels is being strengthened and conveyed that any laxity in service delivery will be viewed seriously.

Officers were directed to remain accessible to the public and to conduct regular field visits for effective grievance redressal.

While highlighting the importance of digital governance, the DC encouraged greater public awareness and utilisation of online revenue service platforms, including Jan Sugam and other digital initiatives of the Government of Jammu and Kashmir, aimed at providing revenue-related services in a seamless, transparent and time-bound manner.

## GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR INDUSTRIES AND COMMERCE DEPARTMENT CIVIL SECRETARIAT, JAMMU/SRINAGAR.

Subject: Proposed amendment in the Jammu & Kashmir Industrial Policy 2021-30 in J&K.

### NOTICE

The Industries and Commerce Department contemplates to revisit the J&K Industrial Policy 2021-30 with the aim of introducing new incentives and benefits, based on best practices prevailing in various States/UTs, while having regard to specific needs of the region. Now, therefore, through the medium of this notice, the Industries and Commerce Department places the new incentives (enclosed as Annexure "A" to this Notice) proposed to be included in the J&K Industrial Policy 2021-30 by way of appropriate amendments, in public domain through the website of the Industries and Commerce Department and Directorates of Industries and Commerce Jammu/ Kashmir for inviting suggestions/inputs/comments from stakeholders.

Accordingly, all stakeholders including industry associations/trade bodies, businesspersons, entrepreneurs, industry experts, academia, civil society, etc. and general public are hereby called upon to review the proposed incentives contained in the enclosed Annexure "A" and furnish their valuable suggestions/comments/inputs thereon within a period of twenty one (21) days from the date of publication of this notice.

The suggestions/inputs/comments, if any, may be sent on the official E mail ID of the Industries and Commerce Department and Directorates of Industries and Commerce Jammu/Kashmir. The subject of the Email should clearly be mentioned: "Suggestions/Inputs/ Comments on new incentiv-2s proposed to be included in the J&K Industrial Policy 2021-30".

Any suggestion/inputs/con- rents received after the last date shall not be taken into consideration.

DIPK-9379/25

Under Secretary to the Government

DATED: 27-12-2025

No: IC-DIC/17/2021-07

Dated: 23-12-2025

Annexure "A" to Notice

Proposed new incentives in Jammu & Kashmir

Subsidy on DIG set

The Government shall promote clean and cost-efficient industrial activity by permitting 1 rooftop solar with net metering and Green Open Access, by providing incentives including a 25% capital subsidy (up to 325 lakhs), and waiver of open-access charges to encourage widespread adoption of renewable energy across Industrial Estates. Exemption of Stamp Duty and Court Fee

"New units and existing units undertaking substantial expansion shall be eligible for 100% exemption of Stamp duty on land transactions in Government Industrial Estates, including lease deed and Mortgage deed." Subsidy on procurement of Quality Certificate (Existing 2 Lakh)

"The Government shall provide 100% reimbursement of the cost of obtaining recognized certifications— including Labour & Ethical Compliance Certifications (such as SA 8000, SMETA), Sustainability & Clean Energy Certifications (such as ISO 50001, GreenPro, GreenCo), and Quality & Management System Certifications (such as ISO 9001/14001/45001 —subject to a maximum ceiling of Rs.10 lakh or enter rise.

Subsidy on Automation/technology \_up gradation

(Existing 2 lakhs)

"For MSME - 50% of the cost subject to maximum of Rs. 25 lakh for adopting

technology from a recognized National Institute"

Subsidy on Pollution Control Devices

(Existing)

"New units; existing units and existing units undertaking substantial expansion shall be eligible for subsidy on the cost of new Pollution Control Devices (PCD), @ 60% of the cost of Pollution Control Devices subject to a maximum of Rs. 50 lakhs."

Green and Environment Protection Initiative

(Existing – No capping)

"50% subsidy (Max Rs 50 lakhs) on the expenditure incurred on installation of new equipment of Green Building, Circular economy, rainwater harvesting, wastewater recycling, zero discharge process/solid waste management or any other green measure certified by JKPCB."

100% subsidy on purchase and installation on of a single new DG set having capacity ranging from 10 KW to 2000 KW, with the capping of Rs. 40 lakhs in Zone A and Rs. 45 lakhs in Zone B

Incentive for Fixed Capital Investment

• Zone A:

MSME units in Zone A shall be eligible for 30% financial assistance, subject to a ceiling of X50 lakh.

• Zone B:

MSME units in Zone B shall be eligible for 50% financial assistance, subject to a ceiling of 1 Cr.

Women-led MSMEs (at least 51% Stake) across all zones may be provided 25% extra financial assistance, as an additional benefit.

Incentives for filing patents

"100% of actual filing costs on awarded patents, subject to a maximum of INR 2 Lakhs for domestic patents and INR 5 Lakhs for international patents as one time Incentive".

Revival of Sick Units

"A special mechanism will identify and rehabilitate sick SME units (as per the RBI definition), and such units under revival will receive the same incentives as new industrial units under the current policy."

Multiplier Effect

"The Government shall provide an additional incentive equivalent to 1.25 times the eligible amount for units operating in the focus sectors as defined in the J&K Industrial Policy 2021-30, over and above the incentives otherwise admissible." Incentive for Stock Exchange Listing

"An incentive of X50 lakh shall be reimbursed to any industrial unit registered in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir that successfully lists its equity on a recognized stock exchange in India, namely the National Stock Exchange (NSE) or the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE). The reimbursement shall be released upon submission of proof of listing and compliance with all applicable norms as specified by the Department." Single Approval Certificate for MSMEs

(Existing – No capping)

New Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to obtain a single "Certificate of In-Principle Approval" based on self-declaration and then provides a three-year grace period to obtain all necessary departmental clearances.

Mega Projects (Already notified through Land allotment policy)

"A Mega Project defined as an Industrial or Service Sector unit with a minimum capital investment of -4,000 crore (excluding laid and working capital), and all applications for such projects shall be submitted through the Single Window Portal's Land Application Module for Preferential Investments, through which the Government may, as per the applicable policy and procedures, extend tailor-made incentives deemed necessary for the project."



# IGP Birdi directs officers to ensure timely justice, public well-being

KNO

Srinagar, Dec 27: Asking the officers to ensure timely justice and the overall well-being of the public, Inspector General of Police, V K Birdi, on Saturday reaffirmed the J&K Police's unwavering commitment to transparency, accountability, and the expeditious disposal of cases.

Chairing the annual crime review meeting at Police Control Room, Kashmir, the IGP Kashmir directed district heads to conduct regular capacity-building workshops for investigation officers. "These workshops should enhance investigative proficiency and strengthen legal acumen through the effective use of information technology," he said.

While reviewing the general crime investigation, the IGP, appreciated the efforts of the district heads in crime prevention.

He stressed the need to further strengthen the quality of investigations and underlined the importance of improving conviction rates through better investigation practices, greater use of scientific tools, and a stronger follow-up (Pairvi)



system, particularly in narcotics and terror-related cases.

He directed the officers to devise a robust system to ensure convictions in NDPS and UAPA cases so as to break the narco-criminal and terror ecosystem.

The status of preventive actions and pending inquest proceedings was also reviewed during the meeting.

IGP Birdi issued clear directions to all participating officers on key agenda points related to crime control, investigation, prosecution, and the timely disposal of cases.

Special emphasis was laid on NDPS cases to address

pendency in drug-related offences. He further urged the district heads to play a proactive role by personally monitoring and chairing periodic crime review meetings within their respective districts. The meeting was attended by all Range DIGs of Kashmir Zone, all District SSPs of Kashmir Zone, JDP ZPHQ, and other senior officers.

The participating officers briefed the IGP Kashmir about the overall crime situation in the Kashmir Zone and highlighted their efforts in preventing crime and improving the quality of investigation. Besides general crime, the meeting revolved around the

investigation of cases falling under the UAPA, the status of property attachment in UAPA cases, terror-related and terror-financing cases, detention under the PSA, NDPS/narco-terror cases, and POCOS cases.

In addition, action taken under preventive measures, pending inquest proceedings, and the arrest of absconders were also discussed.

The District SSPs gave detailed presentations for their respective districts, highlighting their crime prevention efforts, registration of FIRs and e-FIRs, the status of investigations, and the disposal of cases in their jurisdictions—(KNO)

## Police detain 3 OGWs under PSA in Shopian

KNO

Srinagar, Dec 27: As part of its sustained efforts to maintain peace and security, J&K Police has detained 03 Over Ground Workers (OGWs) under the provisions of the Public Safety Act (PSA) in Shopian. The detained individuals have been identified as Owais Ahmad Lone resident of Sedow Shopian, Mashooq Ahmad Shah resident of Shahlatoo Shopian, and Subzar Ahmad Gani resident of Check Choland Shopian.

According to a statement, the detainees were found repeatedly involved in activities prejudicial to the security of the State. Despite preventive actions and proceedings initiated against them under Sections 170/126 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), they continued to indulge in unlawful activities, thereby posing a serious threat to peace and security in the district.

Considering their continued involvement in such activities, detention orders were obtained from the District Magistrate, Shopian, after completion of all legal formalities.

Continued on  
www.kashmirthunder.in

## Key meet on Anaemia Mukta Bharat implementation held



KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Dec 27: A meeting of the UT Task Force for effective implementation of Anaemia Mukta Bharat (AMB) Programme was held on Saturday under the chairmanship of Mission Director, National Health Mission (NHM), J&K, Baseer Ul Haq Choudhary.

The meeting was attended by the members of the UT Task Force with participation both in physical and virtual mode.

The meeting reviewed the status of anaemia in Jammu & Kashmir and discussed a comprehensive,

multi-sectoral strategy to address the high prevalence of anaemia among the children, adolescents, women and pregnant mothers.

During the meeting, it was highlighted that as per NFHS-5, anaemia continues to be a major public health concern in the UT, particularly among the children and women of reproductive age.

Mission Director emphasized the need for strong inter-departmental convergence and coordinated action to achieve the goals of Anaemia Mukta Bharat.

Continued on  
www.kashmirthunder.in

## Trash fills Jhelum's thirsty bed in Sopore

WARIS FAYAZ

Sopore, Dec 27: A dried section of the river Jhelum in Sopore has turned into a massive waste pit, with heaps of plastic crates, polythene and mixed garbage dumped into the riverbed. This has triggered severe outrage among residents who accuse the Municipal Council of looking the other way despite clear orders against such dumping.

Locals said the area, falling in Ward 15, has been gradually converted into a dumping ground as fishermen and others toss their waste directly into the dried portion, leaving the Jhelum's lifeline choked with filth and an unbearable stench.

They alleged that a section of

fishermen routinely throws discarded crates, packaging material and fish waste into the river after sorting their catch, instead of using designated collection points or bins.

Residents recalled that the Municipal Council had in the past issued directions warning of fines and other action against anyone found dumping waste into Jhelum or along its course, but said those orders remain largely unimplemented on the ground.

"The council put out notices and spoke about penalties, yet not a single habitual offender is seen being fined here; these orders exist only on paper while our river suffers," said a local traders' body, demanding visible enforcement drives.

It said the constant stink from the

"waste site" is driving customers away and eating into their daily earnings. "Customers barely stand for a few minutes outside our shops; the foul odour from the garbage filled river stretch forces them to leave without buying anything," said Mohammad Shafi, a shopkeeper facing the site.

Chief Executive Officer, MC Sopore, Wali Mohammad, acknowledged the issue, saying the council would take corrective steps.

"We will look into the matter on priority, identify the violators and launch a special sanitation drive to clear the waste along this stretch of the Jhelum," the CEO told KNO. He assured that directions would be issued to the sanitation wing for immediate action—(KNO)

## Traffic Police launch awareness, enforcement drive



REHAN QAYOUM MIR

Srinagar, Dec 27: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Traffic Srinagar City, Ajaz Ahmad Bhat, on Saturday led a special drive here to intensify the awareness and enforcement campaigns.

The SSP, along with DSP Traffic and other officers, held the drive at Khanyar Chowk. He said the drives have been continuing over the past several weeks to streamline vehicular movement and ensure compliance with traffic rules across the city.

"We have been carrying out drives continuously for the last three to four weeks in Srinagar. All our officers are working on both awareness and enforcement," Bhat said.

The officer said the department's primary focus remains on enforcement, as several vehicles plying in Srinagar lack complete documentation or proper ownership transfer. "We have observed that vehicle documents are often incomplete. Many sellers bring vehicles from outside and fail to transfer ownership, which creates confusion and adds to traffic chaos," he said.

The SSP added that the department's efforts are not limited to penalising violators but also extend to recognising and appreciating law-abiding citizens.

"Today's event is not about acting against violators but about encouraging those who follow traffic rules. We have brought together such motorists to felicitate them and send a message that the Traffic Police not only enforce laws but also appreciate discipline," he said.

During the drive, several motorists with complete vehicle documents and clean records were honoured with medals and appreciation certificates by the Traffic Police and members of the Civil Society Khanyar.

Bhat urged people, particularly the youth, to extend their cooperation in improving Srinagar's traffic system. "Our message is that such initiatives should inspire the rest of the youth. We should help the Traffic Police, because we can't do it alone without the support of the public and the younger generation," he said—(KNO)

## Govt medicines dumped near Sopore-Kupwara highway

WARIS FAYAZ

Sopore, Dec 27: In a shocking display of negligence, a large quantity of government-supplied medicines was found dumped alongside the road in Sidiq Colony stretch near the Sopore-Kupwara highway, just meters away from the Sub-District Hospital (SDH) here in North Kashmir.

The unexpired medicines were scattered in an area close to residential neighbourhoods and coaching institutions.

Block Medical Officer (BMO) Sopore, Dr. Zulfikar told KNO that a probe has been ordered to ascertain the source and responsibility.

He said the dumped medicines match the batch supplied to the hospital, though some do

not, prompting scrutiny of the district store keeper and block store keeper. "Investigation has been initiated, action to follow", he added.

The incident sparked widespread outrage on social media after a viral post by local influencer "Junaid Bhat Photographer" showed the dumped medicines, drawing sharp reactions from netizens.

Many labelled it "grave negligence" by health authorities, with several accusing SDH Sopore officials of wasting valuable supplies that could have been distributed to the poor and needy. Others demanded immediate strict action against those responsible, calling for accountability and better oversight in the government's medicine distribution chain—(KNO)

## CBK chargesheets Uri resident in livestock fraud case

KNO

Srinagar, Dec 27: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Crime Branch Kashmir has filed a chargesheet against a resident of Uri in livestock fraud case, accusing him of cheating a cattle trader through fake agreements and bounced cheques issued under the guise of a government scheme. Investigations have also revealed that the accused lured the trader into supplying livestock worth lakhs of rupees by promising payment under a government quota scheme.

"The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Crime Branch Kashmir has submitted a chargesheet before the Court of Chief Judicial Magistrate, Srinagar, in case FIR No. 17/2023 registered under Sections 420, 467, 468 and 471 of the Ranbir Penal Code (RPC) against accused Muneer Ahmad Kataria S/o Noor-ud-Din Kataria R/o Uri Salamabad, A/P Shutloo Rohama, District Baramulla," reads a statement

issued.

It reads, the case originated from a written complaint alleging cheating and misappropriation of a huge amount of money in connection with the sale of livestock. The complainant alleged that he was induced to supply cows and sheep on the assurance of payment under a Government ST Quota Scheme. Acting on the complaint, a detailed probe was initiated by the Economic Offences Wing Kashmir and during investigation, it surfaced that the complainant, who is engaged in the business of purchase and sale of cattle and sheep, supplied livestock including cows and sheep worth lakhs.

The statement also reads, partial payments were made initially to gain his confidence. Subsequently, the accused issued several cheques amounting to Rs. 30 lakh, all of which were dishonoured due to insufficient balance.

Continued on  
www.kashmirthunder.in

# Salman Khan's 'Battle of Galwan' teaser strikes internet

REHAN QAYOUM MIR

Srinagar, Dec 27: Superstar Salman Khan has set the internet on fire with the release of the much-awaited teaser of his upcoming patriotic film, 'Battle of Galwan.'

The teaser, unveiled on his 60th birthday, features the powerful line 'Maut se kya darna, use hi toh aana hai' delivered by Salman Khan in a pivotal moment, with encapsulating the courage and sacrifice of Indian soldiers in the 2020 Galwan Valley clash.

As per the details, the short but gripping teaser showcases Salman in the role of an Indian Army officer, shot in mountain terrains and high-altitude battle zones highlights intense action sequences and a stirring background score that mirrors the spirit of the nation's defenders.

The teaser's release will



evoke strong emotions across Jammu and Kashmir, where the Galwan Valley stands as a symbol of India's bravery. It is worth mentioning, KNO has earlier reported, that Salman Khan began shooting for Battle of

Galwan in Ladakh earlier this year.

The actor then arrived in the region to film key sequences for the war drama directed by Apoorva Lakhia, while the project was discussed as heartfelt

tribute to the soldiers who laid down their lives in June 2020.

As per details, in the film, Salman Khan portrays Colonel Bikkumalla Santosh Babu, who led his troops with exemplary

valour during the clash and was posthumously awarded the Maha Vir Chakra, India's second-highest wartime gallantry honour.

The film's musical side also carries a strong emotional thread.

It's in place to mention here that KNO had reported earlier that celebrated lyricist Sameer Anjaan has penned a "new youth anthem" for Galwan, a song that celebrates the courage and unity of India's young generation.

Anjaan, while speaking in Kashmiri, said the anthem reflects the same humanistic ideals of bravery and belonging that define the film's spirit.

Moreover, produced under the Salman Khan Films banner, Battle of Galwan also stars Chitrangada Singh in a pivotal role and is slated for a theatrical release on April 17, 2026—(KNO)

# آہ! محمد حفیظ بخشتی

## چہارم 29 دسمبر سوموار صبح 10 بجے انجام دیا جائے گا



زندگی سے پچھیں یہ کیا چاہتی ہے  
اُف! کتنی معصوم اور نادان ہے یہ زندگی  
یہ خیر انتہائی دکھ کے ساتھ جاتی ہے کہ محمد حفیظ بخشتی ولد مرحوم ولی محمد بخشتی  
ساکن باران پتھر بندہ مالوسر بیگنہ گل عبدل آباد ناکرہ نزدیک پٹر یارڈ سر بیگنہ  
مورخہ 25 دسمبر 2025ء بروز جمعرات کو طویل علالت کے بعد اس دار فانی  
سے رحلت کر گئے۔ انا اللہ وانا الیہ راجعون۔ مرحوم خوش اخلاق، شریف انشس  
بااخلاق، غریب پرور اور صوم و صلوات کے پابند تھے۔ اللہ سبحانہ و تعالیٰ مرحوم کو جنت الفردوس میں اعلیٰ مقام عطا  
کرے۔ آمین۔ اس سلسلے میں مرحوم کی اجتماعی فاتحہ خوانی 29 دسمبر 2025ء بروز سوموار صبح 10 بجے آن کے بابائی  
مقبرہ واقع دودھ گنگا بندہ مالوسر میں انجام دی جائے گی۔ فاتحہ خوانی کے بعد تعزیت پڑھی گھر پر دن بھر جاری رہے گی۔  
سواگواران: عمران بخشتی (فرزند) وافراد خانہ

فون نمبر: 9596464485, 7889821530

(خوتین سے گزارش کی جاتی ہے کہ وہ کسی بھی قسم کا میوہ جات و مشروبات اپنے ساتھ نہ لائیں)



# Powering India's Next Tech Leap Through Rare Earth Permanent Magnet Manufacturing Ecosystem

## Press Information Bureau

The Government has approved the 'Scheme to Promote Manufacturing of Sintered Rare Earth Permanent Magnet' with a financial outlay of 7,280 crore. The scheme aims to establish 6,000 metric tonnes per annum (MTPA) of integrated REPM manufacturing capacity in India, covering the full chain from rare-earth oxides to finished magnets.

By building a domestic integrated ecosystem, the initiative is intended to enhance self-reliance in a critical input for electric vehicles, renewable energy systems, electronics, aerospace and defence, and to position India as a key player in the global REPM market. It also supports broader national objectives, including Atmanirbhar Bharat, resilient supply chains for strategic sectors, and the country's long-term Net Zero 2070 vision.

What is Rare Earth Permanent Magnet (REPM)?

REPMs are amongst the strongest types of permanent magnets and are used extensively in technologies requiring compact and high-performance magnetic components. Their high magnetic strength and stability make them integral to:

- Electric vehicle motors
- Wind turbine generators
- Consumer and industrial electronics
- Aerospace and defence systems
- Precision sensors and actuators

The ability of REPMs to deliver strong magnetic performance at small sizes makes them essential for advanced engineering applications. As India expands manufacturing across priority sectors such as clean energy, advanced mobility and defence, establishing a reliable domestic supply of high-performance magnets becomes increasingly important for long-term competitiveness and supply-chain resilience.

India's Current Landscape and Need for the Scheme

India has a substantial base of rare-earth minerals, particularly monazite deposits located across several coastal and inland regions. These deposits contain about 13.15 million tonnes of monazite, holding an estimated 7.23 million tonnes of rare-earth oxides (REO), and occur in coastal beach sands, teri/red sands and inland alluvium in Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Gujarat and Maharashtra. These oxides serve as the primary raw material for downstream rare-earth industries, including permanent magnet manufacturing.

In addition, 1.29 million tonnes of in-situ REO resources have been identified in hard-rock areas of Gujarat and Rajasthan, while the Geological Survey of India has further augmented 482.6 million tonnes of rare-earth ore resources through extensive exploration initiatives. Together, these assessments demonstrate the availability of substantial raw material resources to support downstream rare-earth-based industries, including REPM manufacturing.

While India has a strong rare-earth resource base, domestic production of permanent magnets is still developing, and imports continue to meet a large part of current requirements. Official trade data indicates that India sourced a major share of its permanent



magnet imports from China during 2022-23 to 2024-25, with import dependence ranging between 59.6% and 81.3% value-wise and 84.8% and 90.4% quantity-wise.

Meanwhile, forward demand projections highlight the need for enhanced domestic capability. India's REPM consumption is expected to double by 2030, driven by growth in electric mobility, renewable energy deployment, electronics manufacturing and strategic applications. Developing integrated REPM manufacturing capacity is therefore essential to support rising domestic requirements and strengthen supply-chain resilience.

Core Elements of the Scheme

The scheme establishes a comprehensive framework for end-to-end REPM manufacturing in India, supporting both initial capacity creation and long-term competitiveness.

It aims to build a fully integrated production ecosystem for high-performance magnetic materials, creating 6,000 MTPA of domestic manufacturing capacity, from oxide feedstock to final product.

The total capacity will be distributed among up to five beneficiaries through a global competitive bidding process, with each beneficiary eligible for up to 1,200 MTPA, ensuring diversification along with adequate scale.

The scheme includes a strong incentive structure, with 6,450 crore earmarked as sales-linked incentives for REPM production over five years.

A 750 crore capital subsidy will support the establishment of advanced, integrated REPM manufacturing facilities.

The scheme will be implemented over

seven years, comprising a two-year gestation period for setting up the integrated REPM facilities followed by five years of incentive disbursement linked to REPM sales. This structured timeline is intended to support timely capacity creation and provide stability during the initial production and market-development phase.

National Priorities and Alignment with Broader Government Initiatives

The establishment of domestic REPM manufacturing capacity supports several national priorities, as these magnets are essential for strategic and high-technology sectors that are central to India's industrial and technological advancement. The Governments' initiative aims to strengthen domestic production, enhance supply-chain resilience for rapidly expanding industries while also contributing to India's long-term sustainability goals.

Rare-earth magnets are widely used in energy-efficient motors, wind-power systems and other green technologies, and the initiative therefore aligns closely with the country's broader clean-energy transition and its Net Zero 2070 vision.

Promoting domestic manufacturing of REPMs is equally relevant for national security and self-reliance. As these magnets are used in defence and aerospace systems, developing integrated production capability within the country contributes to secure access for critical applications and supports ongoing indigenization efforts.

This also complements India's broader focus on strengthening its critical minerals value chain through the National Critical Minerals Mission (NCMM), which aims to

## Key Takeaways

- Government approves 7,280 crore scheme to establish domestic integrated REPM manufacturing ecosystem.
- Creates 6,000 MTPA domestic capacity covering the full value chain, from rare-earth oxides to finished magnets.
- Strengthens self-reliance for critical sectors such as electric mobility, renewable energy, electronics, aerospace and defence.
- Supported by strong rare-earth resource availability and policy initiatives including NCMM and MMDR Act reforms.
- Enhances India's participation in global advanced-materials value chains while reducing import dependence and enabling long-term industrial growth.

improve availability and processing capabilities for key minerals, including rare-earth elements utilised across advanced sectors.

India's End-to-End Value Chain Strategy

Critical minerals are a set of naturally occurring elements and compounds that have diverse irreplaceable industrial applications.

Given their central role in contemporary industrial economies, enabling technological advancements and boosting economies, access to critical minerals has become a strategic priority for India.

Approved in January 2025, the NCMM aims to secure a long-term sustainable supply of critical minerals and strengthen India's critical mineral value chains encompassing all stages from mineral exploration and mining to beneficiation, processing, and recovery from end-of-life products.

These linkages demonstrate that developing domestic REPM manufacturing capability is not only a technological imperative but also a key component of India's strategy to advance self-reliance, accelerate clean-energy adoption, support advanced mobility, and strengthen defence and strategic manufacturing ecosystems.

The REPM scheme further aligns with a wide set of ongoing government initiatives aimed at strengthening India's critical mineral and advanced manufacturing ecosystem.

Policy reforms, particularly the amendments to the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, introduced a dedicated list of critical and strategic minerals and empowered the Government to auction mining leases and composite licences, enhancing opportunities for both private and public-sector participation.

Mining Reforms for Critical Minerals

Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act) was enacted for regulation of mines and development of minerals. It has been reformed under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2023 to strengthen India's critical minerals ecosystem (for critical and deep-seated minerals) by opening private participation in all spheres

of mineral exploration, empowering the Government to auction mineral concessions, and introducing a new exploration license regime.

Together, these initiatives, including the NCMM, regulatory reforms, and the REPM manufacturing scheme, create a strong domestic foundation for expanding REPM capacity and integrating it into India's broader industrial, clean-energy and strategic priorities.

Global Context and India's Opportunity

Global supply chains for rare-earth materials and permanent magnets have experienced periods of disruption, highlighting the importance of secure and diversified access to these resources. India has also undertaken several measures to support long-term supply security, including policy reforms and targeted domestic capability-building efforts.

The Ministry of Mines has entered into bilateral agreements with mineral-rich countries including Australia, Argentina, Zambia, Peru, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi and Côte d'Ivoire. India also participates in multilateral platforms such as the Minerals Security Partnership (MSP), the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) and the initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET), which collectively support efforts to build resilient critical minerals supply chains.

Complementing these efforts, Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL) is engaged in overseas exploration and acquisition of strategic mineral assets, including lithium and cobalt, through partnerships in countries such as Argentina. These initiatives form a key component of India's strategy to secure critical minerals required for electric mobility, renewable energy systems, electronics and defence applications.

Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL) is a joint venture of National Aluminium Company Ltd. (NALCO), Hindustan Copper Limited (HCL) and Mineral Exploration & Consultancy Limited (MECL) under the Ministry of Mines, established to secure India's supply of critical and strategic minerals by identifying, exploring, acquiring and developing mineral assets overseas. Its mandate is to strengthen the domestic value chain for emerging technologies and clean-energy industries, giving a strong push to the Make in India initiative.

Against this backdrop, the development of domestic REPM manufacturing capacity offers India a timely opportunity to strengthen its position in global value chains for advanced materials while supporting industrial growth at home.

Conclusion

The Scheme to promote manufacturing of Sintered Rare Earth Permanent Magnets (REPM) is designed to enhance competitiveness, attract technology-driven investment and support long-term scalability. It also contributes to India's energy-transition goals, given the role of these materials in high-efficiency systems. By establishing domestic capability and strengthening downstream linkages, this Government's initiative will help generate employment, deepen industrial capacity and support the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat and Viksit Bharat @2047.

# Possibilities Under Viksit Bharat Guarantee For Rozgar And Ajeevika Mission (Gramin)

## Experience and Learnings from MGNREGS

### Saroj Mahapatra

India's livelihood landscape is highly diverse and complex, shaped by varied agro-climatic conditions and unequal access to natural, human, and economic resources, knowledge, technology, and markets. Nearly 70 percent of rural households depend on agriculture, with 83 percent being small and marginal farmers. There is a huge scope of improvements in productivity enhancement, access to resources, irrigation and rural infrastructure, and market access constrain incomes, calling for targeted investments and participatory approaches to build resilient livelihoods.

Launched in 2005, MGNREGS guaranteed the right to work by providing at least 100 days of assured wage employment per household annually, while creating durable assets for livelihood security. Through Gram Panchayat-centred participatory planning, it has demonstrated the model of "Today's Wages – Tomorrow's Livelihoods".

Large-scale asset creation under MGNREGS, particularly through landscape-based, community-led natural resource management, has

strengthened productive assets, livelihood and income security, and household capabilities. The High Impact Mega Watershed Project in Chhattisgarh demonstrated sustainable pathways to enhance smallholder incomes while conserving land and water resources. In Western Odisha, the Migration Project reduced distress migration by providing an additional 200 days of wage employment (from the state's budget) and strengthening local livelihoods through land and water development. Jharkhand's Birsra Harit Gram Yojana transformed landscapes through plantation-based interventions led by Gram Panchayats and women's collectives. More recently, Madhya Pradesh created over 85,000 farm ponds under the Jal Ganga Samvardhan Abhiyan, improving water security for smallholder farmers.

The major learnings of these initiatives are:

lives and livelihoods of people transform when community is involved in scientific and participatory planning processes;

with enhanced technical capacities;

integrating GIS tools and water budgeting;

for large-scale creation of land and water conservation assets which would lead to livelihood intensification and diversification;

targeted investments with strong convergence with line departments to realize Gram Panchayat-led plans.

Community-led planning strengthens ownership, natural resources, skills, and aspirations of small and marginal farmers, enabling diversified and sustainable livelihoods.

Over the past two decades, MGNREGS has provided assured wage employment to rural households while demonstrating pathways to convert short-term wages into sustainable livelihoods. As rural youth increasingly aspire to annual incomes of 2.5 lakhs or more, the way forward lies in strengthening resilient livelihoods, promoting climate-resilience and water security, developing rural growth centres, and fostering entrepreneurship.

Possibilities under Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin)

This proposed programme aims to strengthen the rural economy by securing household income, increasing employment days, and building durable livelihood assets. There are

possibilities to improve water availability, strengthening livelihoods, and creating rural infrastructure that can withstand climate vagaries and extreme weather. A key feature of this initiative is the convergence of several government flagship programmes to ensure a unified and inclusive approach to rural development, aligned with the vision of Viksit Bharat @ 2047.

Water security is the key component of the programme. With a need-based approach, the programme promotes community-centric planning that addresses the needs of the smallholder farmers. The Viksit Gram Panchayat Plan, will serve as a bottom-up planning unit under the principle of 'One Gram Panchayat, One Plan', leveraging the provision of 125 working days as per this programme, and helping identify local needs, use available skills, unlock livelihood opportunities, and cater to the aspirations of rural people. CSOs and experts can play an important role in developing the capacities of the Gram Panchayat functionaries leading to a more transparent planning process. Ensuring water security at the Gram Panchayat level is essential for strengthening the rural economy, protecting local ecosystems, and fostering

community ownership through participatory planning, especially with the involvement of women-led community institutions and schemes under Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission.

Livelihood security will be ensured when the assets will be effectively utilised to generate sustained income opportunities. Gram Panchayat and women collectives will play a crucial role in livelihood strengthening through sustainable production systems, climate resilient practices, improved technologies, cluster based livelihoods, local entrepreneurship and robust convergence. Moreover, as a statutory guarantee, it allows up to 25 additional days of wage employment beyond the existing 100 days, with a provision of weekly payment, providing a financial safety net. The Ministry of Rural development, Government of India has already launched Samaveshi Ajeevika Yojana to support the livelihoods of extremely vulnerable households.

The mission also supports the development of livelihood-related rural infrastructure such as storage godowns, small cold storage, solar processing units etc. to reduce production

risks and improve resilience to climate variability. At the same time, a strong focus on digitising systems and processes is expected to improve transparency, efficiency, and service delivery.

The emphasis on women, water, and wealth is designed to strengthen the rural economy while promoting social equity and ecological balance. The women-led SHGs, Cluster-Level Federations, and Gram Panchayats can play a critical role in identifying and including the vulnerable households, particularly the women members, in the planning processes for transforming their lives and livelihoods and strengthening the local economy.

This saturation and convergence-based, technology-enabled, inclusive and progressive bill, providing 125 days of wage employment, focuses on strengthening resilience, and expanding livelihood opportunities in rural India. It seeks to make rural areas places of dignity, opportunity, and aspiration, in line with the vision of Viksit Bharat @ 2047.

The author is Executive Director, PRADAN

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



## 2 day orientation programme on POCSO Act begins in Jammu

KT News Desk

JAMMU, DECEMBER 27: Under the patronage of Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh (Patron-in-Chief, J&K Judicial Academy), Justice Arun Palli and guidance of Chairperson and members of the Governing Committee for J&K Judicial Academy, the Jammu & Kashmir Judicial Academy on Saturday began a 2 day orientation programme on Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, with reference to SAMVAD's Training Manual on "Essential Interventions and Skills for Working with Child Sexual Abuse - Introducing Mental Health and Legal Dimensions of Forensics" and the National Judicial Academy's Training Module for Fast Track Special Courts, at Convention Centre, Canal Road, here.

Justice Rajnesh Oswal, Judge, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh (Chairperson, Governing Committee for J&K Judicial Academy) inaugurated the orientation programme.

In his inaugural address, Justice Oswal, as per an official statement, underscored that children are the most vulnerable participants in the judicial system and must be dealt with utmost empathy and sensitivity. Addressing the judicial



officers and other stakeholders, Justice Oswal observed that offences against children leave deep and lasting scars. "Child trauma is not a static event; it creates ripples that affect the child's entire future, family and society at large," he remarked.

While stressing the importance of expeditious disposal of POCSO cases, Justice Oswal cautioned that "fast-track injustice is not justice at all", reiterating that speed must never compromise fairness, due process or sensitivity towards the child victims. Justice Oswal called upon all stakeholders to act as guardians of child rights, ensuring that the courts remain safe, reassuring and child-friendly

spaces for children seeking justice.

Justice Rahul Bharti, Judge, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh (Member, Governing Committee for J&K Judicial Academy), in his special address, underscored the responsibility of courts and allied stakeholders in protecting the dignity and best interests of the child.

Justice Rahul Bharti observed that we live in a society where our children need protection and the responsibility cast upon the stakeholders reflects their commitment towards this cause.

Referring to landmark judicial pronouncements, he

emphasised a child-centric and sensitive approach in dealing with POCSO cases.

Citing real-life courtroom experiences, Justice Bharti highlighted that insensitive handling can aggravate a child's trauma. He stressed the need for empathy, child-friendly courts and adherence to due process to truly safeguard child rights.

The first technical session on day one commenced with an overview of the POCSO Act, 2012, delivered by Dr. Humayun Rasheed Khan, Senior Judicial Officer and Professor, National Judicial Academy, Bhopal. He explained the main objectives of the Act, which aims to protect the children from sexual abuse,

exploitation and harassment.

He highlighted the key provisions including definitions of offences, procedures for age determination, standards of consent and mandatory reporting obligations.

Subsequent sessions were conducted by Saurabh Shashi Ashok, Resource Person Health (Policy & Law), Initiative for Child Protection and Mental Health, Azim Premji Foundation. He provided a comprehensive understanding of child sexual abuse through a psychosocial lens, forensic dimensions of child sexual abuse cases and essential interventions and skills for working with child victims.

The sessions sensitized the participants to trauma-informed interviewing, rapport building, avoidance of secondary victimisation, evidence preservation, inter-agency collaboration and victim compensation mechanisms.

Naseer Ahmad Dar, Director, J&K Judicial Academy formally gave the introduction of the programme. He said that the POCSO Act embodies a solemn commitment of the legal system to protect the children from sexual abuse and exploitation, ensuring a process that is not only legally sound but also sensitive, child-friendly and trauma-informed.

## DC Kathua reviews measures to curb drug menace at NCORD meeting



KT News Desk

KATHUA, NOVEMBER 27: Deputy Commissioner Kathua, Rajesh Sharma Saturday chaired a meeting of the District Level NCORD Committee to review the measures taken by stakeholder departments to curb the drug menace in the district.

The departments, as per an official statement, briefed the chair on the preventive and enforcement measures in place. The State Taxes Department informed that tracking of courier consignments are being conducted in coordination with other enforcement agencies. The Excise and Taxation Officer apprised that mapping of vulnerable areas is underway and awareness activities have been intensified. It was also informed that counselling sessions are being hosted in Colleges through psychology subject specialists for early identification and behavioural guidance.

The Health, Rural Development and School Education departments, along with the Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, reported continued implementation of anti-drug awareness

campaigns at institutional and community levels. The ADCs and SDMs shared inputs regarding education, tracking and enforcement efforts in their respective jurisdictions. The Departments also shared information related to suspected drug activities in identified areas and ongoing coordination with enforcement agencies.

After reviewing the measures, the Deputy Commissioner stressed the need for sustained and coordinated efforts to effectively curb the drug menace. He directed all departments to strengthen coordination and ensure real-time information sharing with the Police and other stakeholders. The DC further instructed ADCs and SDMs to consolidate awareness, surveillance and enforcement activities and ensure regular inspections by concerned departments.

SSP, Mohita Sharma; DC State Taxes, Joginder Singh Jasrotia; ADC, Vishavjeet Singh; SDM Hiranagar, Phulail Singh; ACP and officers from concerned departments attended the meeting. The ADCs of Billawar and Basohli, besides SDM Bani, joined the meeting virtually.

## ADDC Shopian reviews implementation of POSH Act, stresses mandatory ICCs



KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, DECEMBER 27: A review meeting regarding the implementation of the provisions of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 was on Saturday chaired by the Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone, at the Conference Hall of Mini Secretariat, Shopian.

During the meeting, the ADDC undertook a comprehensive review of all agenda points related to the constitution, functioning and compliance of Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs) in various government offices and establishments of the district.

He stressed the mandatory constitution of ICCs in every office/establishment employing ten or more employees, strictly in accordance with Section 4 of the POSH Act, 2013.

The ADDC emphasized the

responsibility of Heads of Offices to ensure full compliance with the Act, including the display of ICC details at prominent places, proper maintenance of records as prescribed under POSH Rules, 2013, and timely submission of mandatory reports.

He also reviewed the status of offices where ICCs have been constituted and directed immediate action in cases where committees are yet to be formed.

District Social Welfare Officer (DSWO), Shopian, briefed the participants about the official POSH portal, highlighting that all ICC details, reports and related information must be uploaded on the portal within the stipulated timelines to ensure transparency and compliance.

The meeting was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner Shopian Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz; Assistant Commissioner (Revenue), Shakoar Ahmad Dar, ACD, CEO, CAO, DSEO, DLO, District Programme Manager NRLM, besides other concerned officers.

## DC Kupwara chairs Block Diwas at Tarathpora, reviews developmental works

KT News Desk

KUPWARA, DECEMBER 27: District Development Commissioner (DDC) Kupwara, Shrikant Suse Saturday visited Tarathpora block of district Kupwara and chaired block diwas to hear and redress the grievances of the citizens, besides, inspecting different Health, Educational Institutions and Developmental works.

On arrival, the DDC, as per an official statement, chaired a Grievance Redressal camp at block headquarter Tarathpora. ADC Handwara, Javed Naseem Masoodi, CPO, BDO, Tehsildar, Officers from line departments, and large number of people attended the public darbar.

Addressing the public darbar, the District Development Commissioner said that the government is committed for upliftment and welfare of the people especially living in far flung areas. He enjoined upon the officers of line departments to work with concerted efforts and enthusiasm to project the developmental issues of the general public for timely redressal.

He urged upon the people to maintain cleanliness and hygiene in the surroundings and support the RDD in ensuring success of SBM.

The DDC took review of all the departments including PDD, Jal Shakti, R&B, Health and Education and



assessed their performance in Tarathpora block. He impressed upon the concerned officers to gear up their men and machinery to tackle any challenges in the ensuing winter season especially snow clearance and uninterrupted power and water supply.

He directed the officers not to leave their headquarter without proper permission so that people do not face any inconvenience in getting essential services in this winter.

Regarding self-employment opportunities, the DDC appealed the youth to come forward and take benefit under the Mission YUVA scheme.

Earlier, senior and prominent citizens of block Tarathpora put forth their developmental issues and grievances pertaining to different departments.

Meanwhile, the DDC

inaugurated a CSC Touch Point in the Block Headquarter premises to ensure availability of digital services at doorstep of the people.

Later, the DDC took a tour of block Tarathpora during which he took inspection of various health and educational institutions besides, inspecting developmental works.

The DDC inspected Health & Wellness Centre Tarathpora and interacted with the Health staff and patients and got feedback about the facilities available in the Health Centre. On the demand of locals, the DDC directed the BMO for submitting a plan for procurement and installation of required medical equipments in the hospital.

The DDC also paid a visit to KGBV at Haftrada and took stock of the facilities available in the hostel.

## DC Ganderbal calls for stringent action against drug abuse at NCORD meeting

KT News Desk

GANDERBAL, DECEMBER 27: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore Saturday emphasized the need for a coordinated and proactive approach by all concerned departments to effectively curb drug abuse and narcotics peddling, and stringent enforcement to dismantle the drug supply chain, besides booking of offenders under relevant laws.

The DC, as per a statement, was chairing the monthly meeting of the District-Level Narco Coordination (NCORD) Committee, during which a detailed review of action taken on decisions of the previous meeting was conducted.

DC sought comprehensive feedback on key agenda points including ongoing Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaigns, implementation of CCTV surveillance and computerized billing systems



by medical sale establishments, identification and monitoring of drug hotspot areas, progress towards declaration of Nasha Mukta Panchayats, and rehabilitation measures for affected individuals.

The meeting also reviewed cases registered under the NDPS Act, seizures involving commercial quantities of contraband substances, identification of drug-use hotspots, and

the status of wall paintings and other measures aimed at generating public awareness against drug abuse.

Expressing concern over the possible misuse of courier services for drug trafficking, the DC directed the Excise and Sales Tax department to conduct intensified joint drives to intercept illicit substances being transported through such channels.

The Education and Social

Welfare departments were instructed to actively carry out awareness programmes.

Tehsildars and Block Development Officers, in coordination with concerned SHOs, were directed to regularly monitor identified drug hotspot areas and work towards declaration of Nasha Mukta Panchayats.

The DC reiterated the need for an aggressive and coordinated strategy focusing on prevention, surveillance, enforcement, and community engagement to effectively combat the drug menace in the district.

The meeting was attended by the Additional Superintendent of Police, Sub-Divisional Magistrate Kangan, Deputy Director Prosecution, Assistant Commissioner Panchayat/Development, Chief Education Officer, Chief Agriculture Officer, Assistant Controller Drugs Control Department, officers of the District Administration, and representatives of other concerned departments.

## LADCs Shopian conduct visit to special jail Pulwama

KT News Desk

Shopian, December 27: A team of Legal Aid Defence Counsels (LADC), Shopian, on Saturday conducted a jail visit to the Special Jail, Pulwama, under the leadership of Chief LADC, Rafie Ahmad Ganie.

The team was accompanied by Deputy Chief LADC, Shah Nawaz Raina, Panel Lawyer, Fazail Iqbal, and PLV Shahzad Ahmad.

During the visit, the team, as per an official statement, interacted with inmates lodged in different barracks to directly assess their living conditions and to hear their grievances and concerns.

The visit primarily focused on examining access to legal remedies, availability of basic facilities, and ensuring respect for human dignity within the prison premises.

The team reviewed individual cases to identify inmates in need of legal representation,



follow-up in pending legal matters, and assistance under various legal aid schemes. Special emphasis was laid on verifying the level of awareness among inmates regarding their legal rights and the support mechanisms available to them

through the legal aid system. Various cases were found to be in need of medical examination and treatment outside the jail, which were accordingly taken up with the concerned authorities for necessary action.



# Given equal opportunity, women perform as well as or better than men: Rajnath

**PTI**

Valsad (Gujarat), Dec 27: Women have proved that whenever they get equal opportunities, they perform as well as or even better than men, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Saturday.

After inaugurating the Shrimad Rajchandra Sarvamangal Centre of Excellence for Women at Dharampur in Gujarat's Valsad district, Singh said the legacy left behind by Jain spiritual leader Shrimad Rajchandraji in his short life will continue to guide people for centuries.

In 2022, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had virtually

laid the foundation stone for the Centre, which is spread over 11 acres and assists women in skill development and improving livelihood.

Shrimad Rajchandra was a Jain saint, poet, mystic, philosopher, and a major reformer of the late 19th century. His devotee Gurudev Shri Rakeshji founded Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur, a spiritual organisation.

"I believe that the women who will work here will not only be empowered but also become self-reliant and get the opportunity and time to engage in spiritual contemplation in their own way," Singh said.

"Women have proved that whenever they have been given equal opportunities, they have performed as well as or even better than men," Slngb said, citing the examples of Ela Bhatt of SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association) and Shri Mahila Griha Udyog's founder Jaswantiben Popat.

Singh said that the centre of excellence, which will be completely managed by rural women, will further strengthen women's entrepreneurship and will set an excellent example of women's empowerment and women-led development.

"This campus is promoting both

the economic and social aspects of women's empowerment. Once products from this place reach the global market, it will encourage the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative of our Prime Minister Narendra Modi," he said.

Singh said the path to "liberation", shown again by Shrimad Rajchandraji about 150 years ago, centuries after it was first shown by Lord Mahavir nearly 2,500 years ago, has laid the foundation of spirituality for a new era.

"The legacy left behind by Shrimad Rajchandraji in his short life will continue to guide us for centuries. Time has not diminished his relevance; rather,

I would say that his relevance is continuously increasing," he said.

Singh called it a happy coincidence that this year marked the completion of 125 years of the arrival of the Jain spiritual leader in Dharampur. This year, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) also completes 100 years of its establishment, he said.

"Both traditions embody the eternal culture of India. Both traditions promote values like spirituality, discipline, and philanthropy. And this coincidence reminds us that true nation-building is possible only through the confluence of cultural awakening, service, and character development," he said.

The Union minister said that under the leadership of PM Modi, the Indian government has strived to preserve the Jain tradition and heritage.

"In the past few years, more than 20 revered Tirthankara idols that had been stolen have been brought back to India from abroad. Last year, we granted the 'Prakrit' language the status of a classical language," he said.

He said that the philosophy of 'Anekantavada' (non-absolutism) of Jainism is the path to mutual coexistence and harmony.

"Regardless of our country, caste, religion, or ideology, peace, like food and water, is a

fundamental necessity for us. Do not be restless. For inner peace, it is essential that the ego does not enter our hearts, and that we remain grounded," he said.

Talking about the spiritual leader, Singh said that the bigger a person's heart becomes, the greater the spiritual height they will attain.

"The size of the heart is directly proportional to the magnitude of happiness. We should strive and practise so that our hearts continue to grow. Greed, envy, and other negative emotions will naturally arise in the mind. Controlling them is the essence of spiritual practice. One day, ultimate bliss will be attained," he added.

## CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### LG Sinha lauds

social security package for beneficiary families. This holistic support includes 15 years of free life insurance and annual health check-ups for all family members. To ensure long-term sustainability, HRDS India will also provide maintenance of the houses for the next five years.

Earlier, the Lieutenant Governor had laid the foundation stones for 1,869 houses for families affected due to Pakistani Shelling during Operation Sindoor and recent natural calamities in eight districts including Kishtwar, Rajouri, Poonch, Udhampur, Ramban, Jammu, Kathua, and Samba.

The Lieutenant Governor reiterated that it has been his sincere effort that entire J&K UT achieves speedy and all-round development.

"In the past five years, we had integrated physical, social, and digital components to create best infrastructure while prioritizing a people-first approach to provide dynamism to the development of UT of Jammu Kashmir," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor also highlighted numerous infrastructure projects initiated over the last few years aimed at enhancing connectivity and improving the ease of living of the people of Reasi District.

Addressing the long pending demands, the Lieutenant Governor assured that work on underground Sewerage System for Katra town will commence within the next six months. Master Plan for Katra is currently in its final stages and is slated for approval. Efforts are also being intensified for establishment of the Inter-modal Station, he said.

The Lieutenant Governor lauded the CEO of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board and the entire team for their dedicated service and effective response during rescue and relief operations.

He shared the series of key initiatives undertaken by the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board.

"The construction of the Shankaracharya Temple in Katra, a Rs 30 crore project is designed to enhance the spiritual landscape while boosting local economic opportunities. This follows the Board's successful completion of five temples in Reasi last year, with another five temples.

The Board has made the promotion of Sanskrit and Vedic education a top priority. This is highlighted by a Rs 1.5 crore funding grant to Kathua's Chudamani Sanskrit Santhan Nyas and ongoing support for various Sanskrit and Ved Pathshallas and Gurukuls.

The Board's Gurukul has achieved national distinction. The sustained efforts have also earned the Shrine Board numerous national level awards for environmental excellence.

The Board has procured Rs 22 crore worth of products from local Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in Reasi and surrounding areas, with plans to scale this partnership to Rs 50 crore.

The Shrine Board remains dedicated to community service, undertaking the reconstruction of 15 schools damaged by recent floods and spending Rs 12 crore over the past seven years into the development of villages neighboring the Holy Shrine.

The construction of helipads at Katra and Shiv Khori, at Rs 27 crore, is in its final stages. These facilities, alongside the recently completed redevelopment of Shiv Khori, will soon be dedicated to the pilgrims to ensure a seamless pilgrimage experience. International Museum of the Goddess is also coming up in Katra," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor highlighted several pilgrim-centric measures taken by the Shrine Board. The insurance cover for pilgrims has been increased from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 10 lakh. Furthermore, the Shrine Board continues to prioritize the health of devotees, spending approximately Rs 4 crore annually toward medical treatment of pilgrims, he said.

The Lieutenant Governor also underscored the Shrine Board's commitment to the welfare of Baridar families.

Around 777 families received assistance for the marriage of their daughters. Under Kanjak Samiddhi Yojana, 565 young girls were provided with long-term financial security totaling Rs 9.49 crore. Under Girl Child Adoption Scheme, 154 girls from Baridar families benefited from an outlay of Rs 3.2 crore, he further said.

Saraf Singh Nag, Chairman, District Development Council Reasi; Baldev Raj Sharma, Member of Legislative Assembly, Mata Vaishno Devi; Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Bhim Sen Tuti, IGP Jammu; Sachin Kumar Vaishya, CEO Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board; Sarah Rizvi, DIG Udhampur-Reasi Range; Nidhi Malik, Deputy Commissioner Reasi; Vandana Pal, Associate Administrator, HRDS India, senior officers of civil and police administration and representatives of various social and political organisations attended the foundation stone laying ceremony. (KNO)

### Move away from

India by 2047, every student, every educational institution will have to fulfil its responsibility because the future and its development will be based on the knowledge economy," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor highlighted the responsibility of the teaching community to study and analyse the impact of rapid advancements in science, humanities, and technology on human civilization. He stressed that classroom methodologies must evolve to synchronize with these shifts, ensuring they drive both economic development and social progress.

"Classroom and our teachings must equip students to build better lives, foster inclusive development and create more enlightened society," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor lauded Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University for its distinguished contributions to India's educational landscape and its steadfast commitment to public welfare.

He also extended his felicitations to the women students for their exceptional academic achievements and for setting new benchmarks of excellence.

The Lieutenant Governor entrusted upon Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University to provide scientific solutions for the challenges being faced by the UT of Jammu Kashmir.

In light of recent devastating natural calamities, the Lieutenant Governor urged the university to prioritize research into advanced early-warning systems for cloudbursts, landslides, and floods. He further emphasized the importance of sustainable infrastructure, and called for dedicated research on the recycling and reuse of road and construction materials.

The Lieutenant Governor asked the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University to redesign the courses for Dogri and Vedic studies to make these subjects more engaging and contemporary to attract more students. He also directed for formulating a comprehensive strategy for the swift completion of the languishing indoor stadium.

The Lieutenant Governor also highlighted the pivotal role of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board in the relief and rehabilitation of families affected by recent natural calamities. He praised the Board's ongoing commitment to cultural preservation through its support to institutions dedicated to Sanskrit and Vedic education.

He informed that the Shrine Board has procured products worth Rs 22 crore from local Self-Help Groups in Reasi and adjoining areas. The Lieutenant Governor stated that he has directed the CEO of the Shrine Board to maximize procurement from local residents to support their livelihoods.

The Lieutenant Governor further informed that the Shrine Board has undertaken the construction of the Shankaracharya Temple along with five other temples in the district, while an International Museum of the Goddess is set to be established in Katra.

"The construction of helipads at Katra and Shiv Khori is entering its final phase. I am hopeful that the devotees will be able to avail heli-services from Katra to the Shiv Khori Shrine during the upcoming Maha Shivratri", the Lieutenant Governor said.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor inaugurated 'High-End Computing AI and Deep Learning Lab' and 'Accommodation for Married Scholars'.

During the convocation, 821 degrees were awarded including 228 Masters, 26 Doctorates, and 567 Undergraduate degrees. Medals were also conferred to 25 (07 Male and 18 Female) meritorious students. A total of 10 students (04 Male and 06 Female) received Infosys Foundation Prize for Excellence, while Certificate of Distinction were awarded to 11 students.

Prof. (Dr.) Pragati Kumar, Vice-Chancellor, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University presented the University report on the occasion.

Prof. T.G.Sitharam, former Chairman, All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE); Dr. Ashok Bhan and Smt. Gunjan Rana, Members, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board; Shri Shantmanu, Additional Chief Secretary, Higher Education Department, Vice Chancellors of various universities, Heads of Departments, faculty and students attended the convocation ceremony.

Saraf Singh Nag, Chairman, District Development Council Reasi; Baldev Raj Sharma, Member of Legislative Assembly, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi; Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Bhim Sen Tuti, IGP Jammu; Sachin Kumar Vaishya, CEO Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board; Nidhi Malik, Deputy Commissioner Reasi and senior officials were also present. (KNO)

### Temperatures dip

2.6°C a day earlier, and Rajouri settled at 1.6°C, down from 4.5°C.

Ladakh continued to record low night temperatures. Leh recorded minus 9.9°C, nearly unchanged from minus 9.8°C a day earlier,

while Kargil recorded minus 9.2°C against minus 9.3°C. Nubra Valley recorded minus 8.8°C, compared to minus 6.7°C on Friday. Drass recorded minus 18.1°C.

The IMD said dense to moderate fog was observed at isolated places over the plains of Jammu division, with visibility reducing to 1200 metres at Jammu and 8000 metres at Udhampur during the morning hours.

The weather department has also forecast a change in weather conditions across J&K from December 30, with the possibility of light rain or snowfall at scattered places.

"Light rain or snow is likely at many places between December 31 and January 1, while a few higher reaches of north and central Kashmir may receive moderate snowfall during this period," it said, adding that on January 2, light rain or snowfall is expected at a few places, followed by generally dry weather across the region from January 3 to January 9. (KNO)

### Major pol,

"We have put forward all key concerns, and the response from the Home Ministry has been positive and assuring," he said.

Reaffirming his party's political stand, Ramzan said the NC's fight for the restoration of Article 370 remains "alive and active." He maintained that its revival requires a "Kashmir-friendly" government at the Centre. "We haven't given up our commitment to Article 370. The BJP's agenda was to abrogate it, and they will not restore it. But situations change, and governments change, so will the fate of Article 370 when the right government is in place," he said.

The NC MP urged that Kashmiris should not be unfairly targeted or stereotyped in the name of terrorism. "Terrorism is a global menace, not confined to Jammu and Kashmir. Kashmiris should not be branded as terrorists—they are peace-loving people who have suffered enough," he said.

He recalled the atmosphere of unity across the region after the recent Pahalgam attack, saying it reflected the collective condemnation of violence by ordinary citizens.

Ramzan said the Home Ministry has already instructed Chief Ministers across India to ensure that Kashmiris studying or working outside the Valley are not harassed. "It's a welcome move and sign of positive change," he said.

The Member Parliament said that his party remains committed to ensuring the development and dignity of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. "We will not leave any stone unturned in fulfilling our promises, both on governance and on larger political issues tied to the identity of our people," he said.

Meanwhile, reacting to Mirwaiz Umar Farooq dropping the title of "Hurriyat Chairman" from his X (Twitter) bio, the MP said that the Mirwaiz had the right to live freely and express his will, though his choices appeared to be shaped by prevailing circumstances. "He, too has a right to live, though that right is being curbed in many ways. The decision is his own, but perhaps he has reviewed every aspect before taking it," Ramzan said.

Commenting on the present status of the Hurriyat, he stated that the organisation "virtually does not exist anymore," as most of its senior leaders have passed away, while those once associated at lower levels are now joining the mainstream. "There is no Hurriyat anywhere now. Many of those who once held guns or were part of Hurriyat are the same people now running major parties like the RSS and BJP. The change is visible—people are returning to mainstream politics," Ramzan added. (KNO)

### Year-End: Over 1.41 lakh

and peacefully," Mohammad Naveed, a resident of Tulumulla, told KNO, adding that effective coordination helped devotees perform rituals without inconvenience.

Civil Society Tullamulla has taken the lead in raising these issues in a constructive and responsible manner.

General Secretary Manzoor Wani said the rising pilgrim numbers are a blessing but must be matched with facilities on the ground. He strongly demanded that Tullamulla be declared a "Tourist Village", saying that would be a key step to ensure planned development, improved infrastructure, and economic opportunities for local residents.

Wani urged the Union and UT governments to speed up road widening and connectivity projects, saying such works would give a big boost to spiritual tourism and benefit the entire region.

The government has already shown positive intent. The construction of a G+2 Yatri Niwas at the shrine site is underway and is expected to accommodate around 1,000 pilgrims at a time. This project is being seen as a major relief and the first step toward addressing accommodation shortages.

Zahoor Ahmad Bhat, Chief Patron of Civil

Society Tullamulla, said they remain committed to the values of patriotism, peace, brotherhood and the welfare of pilgrims.

With record pilgrim footfall, active community support, and visible government response, Tullamulla is emerging as a strong example of how faith, development, and cooperation can move forward together, Bhat said.

"The surge of 2025 is now being viewed not as a challenge, but as an opportunity to transform the area into a well-managed and respected spiritual destination of national importance," he added. (KNO)

### GMC Sgr issues

pump harder to maintain adequate blood flow. Such physiological changes significantly increase the risk of heart attacks, strokes, and other cardiovascular emergencies during the winter months.

Globally, studies have shown a higher incidence of cardiac events in colder climates, and Kashmir is no exception. Doctors at GMC Srinagar said that every winter, hospitals witness a sharp rise in emergency cardiac admissions, many of which are linked to delayed reporting and lack of awareness.

Who is most at risk?

The advisory identified several high-risk groups who need to be extra cautious during winter:

Individuals with a known history of heart disease or those who have previously suffered a heart attack or stroke

Patients living with chronic conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, or kidney disease

Elderly individuals and habitual smokers

People who suddenly increase physical activity, especially during early cold mornings, such as brisk walks or strenuous labor without proper warm-up

Doctors said that for such individuals, even minor negligence can trigger serious cardiac complications.

Key preventive measures

To reduce the risk of heart-related emergencies, the Department of Cardiology recommended several practical preventive steps:

Dress warmly at all times, with special attention to protecting the chest, head, hands, and feet

Avoid unnecessary exposure to extreme cold, particularly during early morning hours

Continue all prescribed heart and blood pressure medications strictly, without skipping doses

Monitor blood pressure regularly, as readings often rise during winter

Engage in moderate physical activity and avoid sudden or strenuous exertion in cold conditions

Seek prompt medical treatment for respiratory infections such as cough, flu, or pneumonia, which can precipitate cardiac events

Warning signs that demand immediate medical attention

The advisory strongly urged the public not to dismiss symptoms that may indicate a serious cardiac or neurological emergency. Immediate medical help should be sought if any of the following occur:

Chest pain, pressure, or discomfort

Sudden shortness of breath

Excessive sweating, dizziness, or unexplained fatigue

Palpitations, fainting, or near-fainting episodes

Sudden weakness, slurred speech, or drooping of the face, which may signal a stroke

Doctors stressed that ignoring these symptoms or waiting for them to subside on their own can lead to permanent damage or loss of life.

Public advisory and preparedness

People with known heart conditions have been advised to keep emergency contact numbers readily accessible and ensure quick transportation to the nearest cardiac care facility if needed. Family members and caregivers were also urged to remain vigilant, especially for elderly patients living alone.

"Most winter-related cardiac emergencies are preventable with awareness, strict adherence to medication, lifestyle precautions, and early medical attention," the advisory noted, adding that community awareness plays a crucial role in saving lives during the harsh winter months.

The advisory has been issued in the larger public interest by the Department of Cardiology, GMC Srinagar, as part of ongoing efforts to reduce preventable winter-related deaths and ensure timely medical response across the Valley. (KNO)

### Army intensifies winter

The shift, according to experts, signifies an evolution in counter-terrorism tactics, underlining both the Army's adaptability and its resolve to maintain operational momentum, irrespective of the weather or terrain.

According to assessments by various intelligence agencies, there are "approximately

30-35 Pakistani terrorists" in the Jammu region currently, defence sources said.

Inputs gathered over the past few months suggest that these Pakistani terrorist groups, finding themselves cornered by successful counter-terror operations, have shifted deeper into the higher and middle-mountain reaches of the region, areas now devoid of habitation, they said.

These terrorists are believed to be seeking temporary winter hideouts to evade detection and avoid a direct confrontation with the security forces.

Reports indicate that these remnants of terror groups are attempting to coerce or threaten the local villagers for shelter and food supplies, even though their support among the locals and overground workers has sharply declined.

The drying local support and continuous security vigilance in the lower altitudes have forced them into isolation, further restricting their ability to regroup or plan coordinated attacks, the sources said.

According to the sources, the Army has intensified its counter-terrorism operations across Kishtwar and Doda districts.

Undeterred by freezing temperatures, treacherous terrains, and heavy snowfall, Army units have expanded their operational reach into the higher and snowbound areas to pursue and "neutralise Pakistani terrorists attempting to exploit the harsh season for concealment", the sources said.

A defining feature of this year's counter-terror strategy has been the integrated approach to operations.

The Army is leading a synchronised effort involving multiple security and law enforcement agencies, including the civil administration, J-K Police, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Special Operations Group (SOG), forest guards, and village defence guards (VDGs), another source said.

This inter-agency cooperation ensures seamless sharing of intelligence, resource optimisation, and sharper operational execution, the source added.

Intelligence from multiple agencies is carefully synthesised to draw "precise situational pictures" of terrorist movement and hideout patterns.

Once intelligence is verified, coordinated joint operations are planned and launched, minimising overlaps and ensuring maximum impact with tactical precision, defence sources said.

The synergy among ground units and intelligence frameworks has enhanced the response time, enabling security forces to act the moment actionable information surfaces, they added.

The principal focus of the Army and other forces this winter is twofold: to eliminate the remaining terrorist pockets within the known areas and to ensure that terrorists remain confined to the inhospitable higher reaches, a source said.

This containment strategy not only prevents terrorists from infiltrating or regrouping in the populated belts but also significantly disrupts their logistics and communication channels, reducing any operational capability, the source added.

Security forces have launched concurrent operations along the valleys, mid-altitude regions and high ridges to maintain overlapping control and deny any potential movement corridor.

Each operation is followed by sustained surveillance, ensuring that areas once cleared remain under watch, they said.

This "surveillance-sweep-surveillance" cycle forms the cornerstone of the Army's "new winter doctrine", balancing aggressive field operations with steady technological oversight.

The Army has also deployed specially trained winter warfare sub-units across several key sectors.

These troops, adept in high-altitude survival, snow navigation, avalanche response and snow combat, have been instrumental in maintaining operational effectiveness during the winter surge, the sources said.

Modern technology has become a force multiplier in these operations.

From drone-based reconnaissance to ground sensors and surveillance radars, a wide array of tools is being leveraged to detect movement, track heat signatures, and pinpoint the possible movement routes, they said.

These systems, integrated into the Army's overall information network, enable continuous monitoring and rapid decision-making even under adverse conditions.

Also, operational strategies are continuously refined based on real-time intelligence, weather dynamics and terrain assessments, the sources said.

Even in the middle of Chillai Kalan, when most activities in the mountains come to a standstill, India's defenders stand resolute, turning the season of stillness into one of unwavering vigilance and action, they said.



# Digvijaya creates flutter by sharing Modi's picture, BJP terms it 'open dissent' against Rahul's leadership

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 27: Causing a flutter ahead of the CWC meeting, senior Congress leader Digvijaya Singh on Saturday lauded the organisational power of RSS-BJP as he shared Narendra Modi's old picture and said how a grassroots worker went on to become the chief minister and prime minister by sitting at the feet of their leaders.

The BJP was quick to latch on to Singh's remarks to hit out at the Congress, saying his praise was an "open dissent" against Rahul Gandhi's leadership.

Singh's remarks came ahead of the crucial Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting that decided on its agitational plan against the scrapping of MGNREGA from January 5.

Sources said Singh also raised the issue of strengthening the Congress organisation at the grassroots level, asserting it was much needed in the fight against the ruling BJP and to oust it from power.

The former Madhya Pradesh chief minister was, however, stopped by some other senior leaders during the meeting from raising matters other than MGNREGA on which the CWC was convened, the sources said.

As Singh continued to raise his issue of strengthening the



organisation pressing for decentralisation, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge also told him to stop as he wanted to hear out the other leaders at the meeting too and take their suggestions and views, the sources pointed out.

Singh, however, later backtracked saying he only talked about the organisation and its strength and not the BJP or the RSS as he was staunchly against the two.

"Quora site. It is very impressive. In what way did the grassroots 'swayamsevak' of RSS and the worker of Jan Sangh @ BJP4India sat on the floor at the feet of leaders and became the Chief Minister of the state and the Prime Minister of the country. This is the power of the organization. Jai Siya Ram," Singh said in a post in Hindi on X.

Congress leaders did not take

any questions from the media at the press briefing after the CWC.

"In fact, I praised the party organisation. You people have misunderstood things. I am a staunch opponent of the BJP and the RSS," Singh clarified on his post after the meeting.

As media persons swarmed Singh and prodded him to speak further, he said, "You have misunderstood. I have only praised the organisation. I have and will always be opposed to the RSS, and prime minister's policies."

Asked further, he said, "Whatever I had to say, I have stated in the CWC."

"We have to strengthen the organisation. Praising the organisation is not bad. In this vast country, if you see my tenure as chief minister and party president, I have functioned with decentralisation," Singh also said.

# SC delivered key verdicts on presidential reference, Waqf law in 2025

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 27: Landmark verdicts on the powers of governors and the president on bills, staying few provisions of the Waqf law and a series of path-breaking judgements defined 2025 for the Supreme Court, a year which saw an unprecedented shoe attack on CJI B R Gavai and the discovery of huge cash at high court judge Yashwant Varma's bungalow here.

The apex judiciary saw a rare transition through three Chief Justices of India (CJIs) within a single year -- Sanjiv Khanna, Gavai, and the incumbent, Surya Kant.

In a move aimed at bolstering judicial independence, justices Khanna and Gavai publicly announced their decisions to not to take any post-retiral assignments, an issue which has been keenly debated.

This set the stage for further institutional transparency, as the court finally began uploading the asset statements of its judges to the public domain and introduced a first-of-its-kind reservation policy for SC/ST categories in its administrative staffing.

The judiciary was rocked after burnt wads of huge currency notes were found at the official residence of Justice Varma, the then sitting Delhi High Court judge, on March 14. This led to a series of decisions including administrative ones by the then CJI Khanna.

After an in-house inquiry



panel indicted Justice Varma, he refused to resign even after being nudged by CJI Khanna, who was then compelled to write to President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his impeachment.

Currently, a parliamentary panel is conducting its inquiry against Varma, a condition precedent before the impeachment.

On October 6, advocate Rakesh Kishore, now suspended, hurled a shoe towards then CJI Gavai during proceedings. He was apparently miffed over Gavai's alleged remarks on Hindu gods in an earlier proceeding.

As the incident sparked widespread condemnation, Modi spoke to the then CJI and said the attack was "reprehensible" and angered every Indian.

The year saw many path-breaking judgements on a range of issues related to public interest, politics, environment,

business, crime and complex civil disputes, especially the challenges to the new Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 and the presidential reference.

In a boost to the Centre, the apex court said its deletion of the "waqf by user" provision in the waqf law was prima facie not arbitrary and the argument that waqf lands would be grabbed by governments held "no water".

It, however, put on hold a few provisions, including a clause that only those practising Islam for the last five years could create waqf.

The tug of war between governors and opposition-ruled states over delayed or non-grant of assent to bills passed by state assemblies culminated when President Murmu moved the SC seeking its opinion on a range of issues including whether a timeline of three months, as envisaged by a verdict penned

by Justice J B Pardiwala, can be fixed for governors and the president.

Answering the reference, a five-judge bench on November 20 delivered unanimous opinion holding that the court cannot impose any timelines on governors and the president to grant assent to bills.

It, however, said governors do not have "unfettered" powers to sit on the bills for "perpetuity".

The stray dogs menace caught the apex court's attention as its two-judge bench took suo motu cognisance of a media report on canine bites leading to rabies, particularly among children, in Delhi.

A slew of directions, including permanent relocation of stray dogs from streets to shelters, created an uproar with several animal rights activists and organisations hitting the streets in protest leading to setting up of a three-judge bench to deal it afresh.

The larger bench modified on August 22 the direction prohibiting the release of vaccinated stray dogs from pounds in Delhi-NCR calling it "too harsh" and ordered the canines to be released post sterilisation and de-worming.

The spurt of cyber crime cases came under the top court's scanner as it took cognisance of the matter on December 1 asked the CBI to carry out a pan-India probe into digital arrest scam cases, especially where elderly people are duped of their hard earned monies.

# Plea filed in SC raises issues concerning law on advertisements of drugs



PTI

New Delhi, Dec 27: A plea has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking a direction to the Centre to constitute an expert committee to review and update the schedule of a 1954 law, which is aimed at controlling the advertisement of drugs in certain cases, in accordance with present-day scientific developments.

The plea has sought a direction to declare that AYUSH doctors are also covered under section 2(cc) of the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954, as 'registered medical practitioners'.

The 1954 Act is aimed at controlling the advertisement of drugs in certain cases, to prohibit the advertisement for certain purposes of remedies alleged to possess magic qualities.

Section 2 (cc) of the Act deals with definition of 'registered medical practitioner'.

"The Act was enacted to protect the public from false and misleading medical advertisements. However, Section 3(d) places a complete ban on advertisements relating to certain diseases and conditions," the plea, filed by petitioner Nitin Upadhyay, said.

Section 3 of the Act deals with prohibition of advertisement of certain drugs for treatment of certain diseases and disorders.

It said as AYUSH doctors and other genuine non-allopathic registered medical practitioners are not covered under the exception of section 14 of the

Act, "this blanket ban effectively stops the advertisement by them of the existence of medication for serious ailments, leading to widespread public ignorance of the drugs".

The plea, filed through advocate Ashwani Kumar Dubey, said section 3(d) of the Act imposes a "complete and blanket ban" on advertisements relating to certain diseases and conditions without distinguishing between misleading advertisements and truthful, scientific and lawful information.

It said the right to information to be cognisant of the diagnosis, prevention, mitigation, cure and treatment of life-threatening chronic diseases has been overridden by a grossly disproportionate prohibition of advertisements through an "archaic law".

"It is humbly submitted that the initial aim of the Act to put an immediate ban over harmful advertisements has devolved into a blanket ban on all genuine medical advertisements by non-allopathic (AYUSH) doctors," it said.

The plea said advertisements relating to drugs and remedies, when truthful, scientifically backed, and non-deceptive, constitute legitimate dissemination of information to consumers and patients.

It has sought a direction to the Centre to "constitute an 'expert committee' to review, revise and update the schedule of the DMR Act in accordance with present-day scientific developments and evidence-based medical knowledge".

# 'Common hair loss drug consumption by mothers may pose risks to infants'



This study aims to investigate global reports of infantile hypertrichosis related to maternal minoxidil exposure and assess serious and non-serious eye disorder cases reported in India, with the goal of raising awareness about the risks of early-life or accidental exposure," the authors wrote.

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 27: Mothers using minoxidil, a common hair loss drug, could pose a risk of infantile hypertrichosis -- abnormal hair growth over the body, including in areas not typically hairy, a global analysis suggests. Researchers from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, analysed 2,664 cases of minoxidil-suspected infantile hypertrichosis from around the world, 45 of which involved children aged up to 23 months.

Twenty two per cent of the 45 cases were linked to maternal exposure to minoxidil, 44.4 per cent to accidental exposure and 33.3 per cent to unknown causes, according to findings published in the Archives of Dermatological Research journal.

Further, 1,669 global cases in

the general population involved eye disorders -- 25 from India. Common symptoms included eyelid oedema (swelling), blurred vision, and central serous chorioretinopathy, in which fluid builds up under the retina and impacts vision.

Originally developed as a hypertension medication, minoxidil was later reformulated as treatment for male and female baldness -- it could be directly applied to the affected portion of skin -- due to its hair growth promoting side effect, the researchers said.

However, widespread over-the-counter availability and a lack of regulation raises safety concerns around the use of the hair loss drug, despite proven benefits, they added.

Further, despite being recommended against use by pregnant and breastfeeding women, the researchers found cases of infantile hypertrichosis linked to

maternal exposure.

Use of minoxidil has also been linked with eye-related adverse effects in the general population, which have brought its safety profile into question, the team said.

"This study aims to investigate global reports of infantile hypertrichosis related to maternal minoxidil exposure and assess serious and non-serious eye disorder cases reported in India, with the goal of raising awareness about the risks of early-life or accidental exposure," the authors wrote.

"Among 2,664 global cases of minoxidil-suspected infantile hypertrichosis, 45 involved children aged 0-23 months: 22.2 per cent due to maternal exposure, 44.4 per cent accidental, and 33.3 per cent unknown," they said.

Data collected up to March 2025 from the 'VigiBase' dataset was analysed for the study.

# India gets its first standard for bomb disposal systems to boost security infra



PTI

New Delhi, Dec 27: The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has notified a dedicated standard for bomb disposal systems to address a critical gap in the country's security preparedness framework and provide manufacturers with clear performance benchmarks.

The new standard, IS 19445:2025, was developed at the request of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs and the Terminal Ballistic Research Laboratory. It establishes comprehensive guidelines for evaluating bomb disposal systems against blast loads and splinter effects.

Consumer Affairs Secretary Nidhi Khare said the standard is intended for "voluntary adoption" by procurement agencies, manufacturers, and testing bodies. "Its implementation is expected to bring uniformity in evaluation practices, promote quality-driven manufacturing, and enhance confidence in bomb disposal systems deployed in critical security operations," she said in a statement.

The standard specifies requirements for test equipment, test range conditions, and evaluation procedures to objectively assess system effectiveness, according to the Consumer Affairs Ministry. The need for an Indian standard arose because existing international standards are either restricted in access or not fully aligned with the threat profiles and operational conditions faced by Indian forces, the ministry said.

Indian armed forces, central armed police forces, state police, and civilian agencies increasingly encounter threats from unexploded bombs, improvised explosive devices, and hand grenades in conflict zones, cantonment areas, and public places. Three categories of bomb disposal systems, bomb blankets, bomb baskets, and bomb inhibitors, are commonly deployed to mitigate these risks. While several public and private agencies manufacture such systems in India, their safe deployment requires rigorous and standardised performance evaluation.

The standard serves as a reference for test sponsors, manufacturers, and accredited testing agencies by defining test methodologies, apparatus, test specimens, and acceptance criteria to verify compliance with performance benchmarks. While developing IS 19445:2025, consideration was given to international best practices and globally accepted performance concepts, suitably adapted to Indian threat scenarios and operating environments. This approach promotes global alignment while maintaining national relevance and supports Indian manufacturers in achieving international competitiveness, the ministry said.



## Somalia condemns Israel's recognition of Somaliland as 'state aggression'

ANI

Mogadishu, Dec 27: Somalia has sharply criticised Israel's decision to recognise the breakaway region of Somaliland, demanding that the move be reversed and describing it as an act of "aggression that will never be tolerated".

Ali Omar, Somalia's state minister for foreign affairs, said the government would pursue all available diplomatic avenues to challenge what it termed an act of "state aggression" and interference in Somalia's internal affairs.

He said the decision directly undermined Somalia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, telling Al Jazeera that Mogadishu viewed the move as unacceptable.

The strong reaction came a day after Israel became the first country to formally recognise Somaliland, triggering swift condemnation from African and Arab states.

The development also raised concerns over whether the move was linked to alleged Israeli plans to forcibly displace Palestinians.

Somaliland unilaterally broke away from Somalia in 1991 following years of civil war but has never been recognised by any United Nations member state.

While it has established its own currency, parliament and flag, Somalia continues to assert that the region remains an inseparable part of its territory.

"This will never be acceptable or tolerable to our government and people who are united in defending our territorial integrity," Omar said.

"Our government strongly



advises the State of Israel to rescind its divisive actions and abide by international law," he added.

In the weeks leading up to the announcement, Somaliland President Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi, popularly known as Cirro, had signalled that international recognition was imminent, without identifying the country involved.

Hargeisa had also seen billboards announcing that recognition was forthcoming.

Omar said the strategic importance of the Horn of Africa continued to draw foreign interest and interference.

"The importance of this region isn't new. It is still important for international trade today," he said, according to Al Jazeera.

He further accused Israel of pursuing recognition of Somaliland to advance its agenda related to Gaza.

"One of the motivating factors is the displacement of Palestinians from Gaza," Omar told Al Jazeera.

"It has been widely known - Israel's goal on that issue," he added.

Palestine's foreign ministry backed Somalia's position, recalling that Israel had previously identified Somaliland as a potential destination for forcibly displacing Palestinians from Gaza.

The ministry described the proposal as a "red line".

Somaliland authorities, however, defended Israel's decision.

Cirro said the recognition was "not directed against any state, nor does it pose a threat to regional peace".

Following Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's announcement, Somalia's prime minister's office issued a statement calling on Somalia's sovereignty and an unlawful act.

The statement reiterated that Somaliland remains an "inseparable" part of Somali territory.

### Al-Shabab vows to fight any Israeli use of Somaliland

AFP

Mogadishu, Dec 27: Somalia's Al-Qaeda-linked militant group Al-Shabab vowed Saturday to fight any attempt by Israel "to claim or use parts of Somaliland" following its recognition of the breakaway territory.

"We will not accept it, and we will fight against it," Al-Shabab said in a statement.

It said Israel's recognition of Somaliland as a sovereign state showed it "has decided to expand into parts of the Somali territories" to support "the apostate administration in the northwest regions."

Netanyahu framed the recognition as being in the spirit of the Abraham Accords and said he would advocate for Somaliland during his meeting with US President Donald Trump.

He also invited Cirro to visit Israel, an invitation that was accepted. Trump later distanced himself from the move, telling The New York Post that he would not follow Israel's lead.

Somalia's Public Works Minister Ayub Ismail Yusuf welcomed Trump's stance, writing on social media. "Thank you for your support, Mr. President."

## BNP's Rahman registers as Bangladeshi voter after 17 years abroad in self-exile



PTI

Dhaka/New Delhi, Dec 27: BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman on Saturday completed the formalities to enlist himself on Bangladesh's voter list and obtain a national identity (NID) card, two days after his return from over 17 years of self-exile in London.

The 60-year-old leader of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) visited the Election Commission (EC) office in Dhaka under tight security, where he provided fingerprints and iris scans for biometric enrollment, news portal tbsnews.net reported.

He earlier submitted his voter registration application online, officials said.

"Tarique Rahman has already filled out the online form and has come to complete the registration by providing his fingerprints and iris scan," ASM Humayun Kabir, director general of the National Identity Registration Wing of the Election Commission, told reporters.

He is expected to receive his NID card within 24 hours, the official said.

Rahman's daughter Zaima also

completed her registration formalities for the NID card.

Foolproof security arrangements were in place around the EC office premises, with members of the Bangladesh Army, Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), Ansar and police deployed in and around the area.

According to a report in Bengali daily Prothom Alo, Bangladesh first introduced a voter list with photographs and biometric data in 2008 during the military-backed caretaker government led by Fakhruddin Ahmed that followed the 2007-2008 political crisis.

Rahman, son of former prime minister Khaleda Zia, was a political prisoner at that time. After his release from prison, he left for London on September 11, 2008.

As the BNP leader was abroad at the time, he was not included in the voter list, and he did not return to Bangladesh during the subsequent Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League rule to register as a voter.

After the new voter list with photographs was introduced, the EC cancelled the previous voter list.

## Army chief says Switzerland can't defend itself from full-scale attack

REUTERS

Zurich, Dec 27: Switzerland cannot defend itself against a full-scale attack and must boost military spending given rising risks from Russia, the head of its armed forces said.

The country is prepared for attacks by "non-state actors" on critical infrastructure and for cyberattacks, but its military still faces major equipment gaps, Thomas Suessli told the NZZ newspaper.

"What we cannot do is defend against threats from a distance or even a full-scale attack on our country," said Suessli, who is stepping down at the end of the year.

"It's burdensome to know that in a real emergency, only a third of all soldiers would be fully equipped," he said in an interview published on Saturday. Switzerland is increasing defense spending,



modernizing artillery and ground systems and replacing aging fighter jets with Lockheed Martin F-35As.

But the plan faces cost overruns, while critics

question spending on artillery and munitions amid tight federal finances.

Suessli said attitudes toward the military had not shifted despite the war in Ukraine and Russian efforts to destabilize Europe.

He blamed Switzerland's distance from the conflict, its lack of recent war experience and the false belief that neutrality offered protection.

"But that's historically inaccurate. There are several neutral countries that were unarmed and were drawn into war. Neutrality only has value if it can be defended with weapons," he said.

Switzerland has pledged to gradually raise defense spending to about 1 percent of GDP by around 2032, up from roughly 0.7 percent now - far below the 5 percent level agreed by NATO countries.

At that pace, the Swiss military would only be fully ready by around 2050.

### MCG pitch fiasco

## Pietersen, Kartik point to selective criticism; CA rates it 'bad for business'

PTI

Melbourne, Dec 27: The overwhelmingly bowler-friendly Melbourne pitch on which 20 wickets fell on Day 1 of the Boxing Day Test has prompted Kevin Pietersen and Dinesh Kartik to point out the selective criticism of Indian tracks when spinners get wickets in a heap.

The Australian and England bowlers combined to take 20 wickets here on Friday, while the hosts were bundled out for 132 in their second innings in 34.3 overs in a little over one session.

"India ALWAYS gets hammered when wickets fall like crazy on day 1 of a Test and so I hope that Australia gets the same scrutiny! Fair is fair!," wrote former England skipper Pietersen on his 'X' account.

The decision to leave 10mm grass on the MCG deck generated massive sideways movement, making batting here a lottery.

In all, 36 wickets tumbled in six sessions at Melbourne as the fourth Test ended inside two days with England winning by four wickets. But the entire Ashes series so far has seen action only on 13 days out of the total 20 match days.

Earlier, the first Test at Perth too ended inside two days with the Aussies clinching it by eight wickets.

"MCG have produced an ordinary pitch here. Can't believe 2 out of the 4



ashes tests could end in 2 days. For all the hype, 4 ashes tests have happened in just 13 days," voiced former India batter Karthik.

Their observations were based on the heavy criticism Indian spinners and pitches often have to encounter when such things happen in the sub-continent.

To trace an instance, the pundits were up in arms when England failed to counter Indian spinners on turners in Ahmedabad during the 2020-21 series.

The visiting side won the first Test at Chennai, but crumbled against Ravichandran Ashwin and Axar Patel in the next three Tests across Chepauk and Ahmedabad when pitches offered

increased assistance to spinners.

But such outpouring of anger was less visible when pitches were skewed to help pacers Down Under during the ongoing Ashes.

"This pitch is a joke...This is selling the game short...The players / Broadcasters and more importantly the fans...26 wickets in 98 overs," fumed former England skipper Michael Vaughan.

Former India opener Aakash Chopra was more forthcoming in his views. "Not a single over of spin in 1.5 days of a Test match. 27 wickets have fallen already. Imagine the meltdown if not a single over of pace was bowled for that long in the subcontinent," wrote Chopra in social media accounts.

## Indian mission establishes one stop help centre for distressed women in Canada

PTI

Toronto, Dec 27: The Consulate General of India in Toronto has established a 'One Stop Centre for Women,' a dedicated support centre exclusively to assist women Indian nationals in distress.

The Consulate has also set up a 24x7 helpline and said, the new Centre aims to provide critical and timely support to Indian passport holder women who could be facing domestic violence, abuse, family conflict,

abandonment, exploitation and legal challenges, among others.

The One Stop Centre for Women (OSCW) will provide coordinated, beneficiary-centred assistance by connecting aggrieved women to timely and appropriate pathways of support, including immediate counselling, facilitation of psycho-social support, and coordination of legal assistance and advice, the Indian mission said in a post on X on Friday.

This would be done

while helping women access relevant community and social-service resources in Canada, it said, adding, "Entire intervention by the OSCW will be within the purview of Local Laws in Canada."

The Centre would be run by a woman Centre Administrator, who will ensure the "delivery of safe, dignified, and comprehensive assistance" to women in need (on means tested basis) through prompt handling of distress calls via 24x7 helpline.

**INOX CINEMA**  
**SHIVPORA SRINAGAR**

*Movies*  
*Watch List*

**SUNDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER**

**DHURANDHAR (A)**  
HINDI - 10:40 AM, 01:40 PM, 03:00 PM, 06:30 PM

**TU MERI MAIN TERA MAIN TERA TU MERI**  
(U/A 16+) HINDI - 10:45 AM, 12:05 PM, 07:00 PM

**AVATAR : FIRE AND ASH (UA 16+)**  
ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES - 05:40 PM  
3D HINDI - 02:40 PM

**CALL 95416 13868**  
FOR ASSISTANCE WITH TICKETS

TICKETS AT: [www.bookmyshow.com](http://www.bookmyshow.com) | [www.inoxmovies.com](http://www.inoxmovies.com)  
Paytm, Inox App, or directly from the booking counter at the cinema.