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## Indus Water Treaty greatly harmed J&K: CM Omar

Welcomes its suspension, says NC govt has already proposed 2 projects

Says utilising Chenab river water for Jammu would end water scarcity for next 30 years

Reiterates Art 370 abrogation didn't end terrorism, unemployment

'If they want to ruin Jammu, they are free'

Sajid Raina

Amritsar, Jan 09: Welcoming the suspension of the Indus Water Treaty (IWT), Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday said the agreement had caused long-term harm to the region and limited its rightful use of water resources.

Addressing a press conference here, CM Omar, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said he had opposed the IWT



from the very beginning. "The Indus Water Treaty has greatly harmed us. It is good that it has been suspended. Now measures must be taken so that we are able to use that water for ourselves," he said.

Pertinently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi led government suspended the Indus Water Treaty with Pakistan in April 2025 after the Pahalgam terror attack that left 26 persons, mostly tourists dead.

The Chief Minister said the J&K government has already proposed two major projects to the Centre to utilise river waters effectively. One of them is the Tulbul Navigation Barrage, also known as the Jhelum

Navigation Barrage. "With this project, the water level in Wular Lake will increase, which in turn will improve water flow in the Jhelum. This will enhance electricity generation and also make the river navigable," he said.

He added that utilising Chenab river water for Jammu would end water scarcity in the region for the next 30 years. "Suspension of the IWT will also allow us to desilt our rivers, which was not possible earlier," he said.

Omar Abdullah said Jammu and Kashmir had paid a heavy price under the treaty, while Punjab received rights over rivers flowing through its territory. "We faced the brunt of dams constructed in Punjab. Several areas in J&K were submerged, yet we never complained and maintained cordial relations with Punjab," he said.

On the political changes after the abrogation of Article 370, the Chief Minister said while change had taken place, the claims made earlier had not been fulfilled. "We were told that removing Article 370 would end terrorism, unemployment and violence. All these claims proved to be a hoax," he said. | [More on P6](#)



Icicles hanging on trees in Tangmarg area of north Kashmir's Baramulla district. Pic: Jahangir Shah (KNO/KT)

### National IED Data Management System

## NIDMS will become next-gen security shield against terrorism: HM Amit Shah

'Data will be imp for investigating all types of terrorist incidents; 100% police stations connected through CCTNS'

KNO DESK

New Delhi, Jan 09: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said that National IED Data Management System (NIDMS) will prove to be extremely important in the coming days for the investigation of all types of terrorist incidents occurring in the country and for the analysis of their various aspects.

As per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Shah today inaugurated the National IED Data Management System (NIDMS) of the National Security Guard (NSG) in New Delhi through video conferencing. The event was attended by the Union Home Secretary, the Director of the Intelligence Bureau (IB), and the Director General of NSG, the Director Generals of



Central Armed Police Forces, and the Director Generals of Police of various states.

Speaking on the occasion, Shah said that NIDMS will become the next-generation security shield against terrorism.

"The Ministry of Home Affairs has generated various

types of data in the past years, but until now they were in silos, i.e., separate from each other. Now, we are making efforts to connect all these data sources with one another and to develop an advanced Artificial Intelligence-based software for their analysis," he said. | [More on P6](#)

### Srinagar freezes at -6°C, records season's coldest night

- MeT predicts no major weather activity till Jan 21
- Light snowfall possible on Jan 22-23

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Jan 09: A severe cold wave continued to prevail across Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh on Friday, with several places recording a further drop in minimum temperatures compared to the previous day.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Srinagar, J&K's winter capital, recorded a seasonal low of minus 6.0 degrees Celsius, down from minus 5.1 degrees a day earlier, while the minimum temperature at Srinagar airport fell to minus 7.4 degrees from minus 6.8 degrees.

Qazigund, the gateway of Kashmir registered minus 6.2 degrees against Thursday's minus 5.4, and Anantnag saw a dip to minus 7.1 degrees from minus 6.3 degrees.

South Kashmir's Pulwama district recorded | [More on P6](#)

### Hydel power generation falls by 77 pc in J&K

Riyaz Bhat

Srinagar, Jan 09: In Jammu and Kashmir, hydel power generation has reduced by nearly 77 percent.

An official informed the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the Power Development Department is able to generate only 277 Megawatts (MWs) of power out of the total generation capacity of 1197 MW.

The official further said that on Friday, the 900 MWs power projects in Baglihar were able to generate only 129 MWs of power.

It also said that from Jammu PDC, the department was able to generate only 80 MWs of power followed by 10 MWs by Independent | [More on P6](#)

## Winter snowfall crucial for Kashmir's agriculture, water security: Experts

Warn of far-reaching impacts of dry spell  
Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Jan 09: Winter snowfall remains the backbone of Kashmir's agriculture, horticulture and overall water security, experts said, warning that a continued dry spell during the winter months could have far-reaching consequences for irrigation, drinking water supply and farm productivity across the Valley.

Agriculture specialists point out that around 60 to 70 per cent of orchards in Kashmir are rain-fed and

heavily dependent on winter snowfall and subsequent spring rains.

They said that in the absence of adequate snow accumulation or abundant winter precipitation, the region faces a high risk of water scarcity during the crucial summer months, affecting not only farming but also domestic water availability and allied sectors.

Speaking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Dr Mudassir Ahmad Dar, an environmental expert and lecturer in the School Education Department, said winter snowfall plays a decisive role | [More on P6](#)

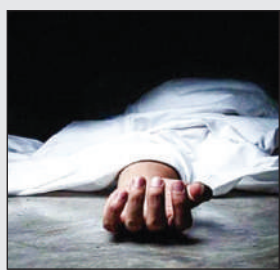
## Two army porters, soldier lose lives in separate falls in Baramulla

Porters slip into Nallah in Gulmarg, soldier falls during night patrol in Sheeri

KNO Correspondent

Baramulla, Jan 09: Two army porters and a soldier lost their lives after falling from a height in separate incidents in north Kashmir's Baramulla district.

Officials told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the bodies of two porters, identified as Layakat Ahmad Deedard and Ishfaq Ahmad Khatana, both residents of Chandoosa, were recovered following an



extensive search operation. The duo, officials said, had slipped into a nallah on Thursday evening while heading towards

the forward Anita Post in Gulmarg heights.

Following the incident, rescue teams launched an overnight operation and retrieved the bodies after sustained efforts.

Meanwhile, in another incident, an Army soldier identified as Hira Lal, a resident of Haryana, posted at the Fathagard Sheeri Camp, died after slipping and falling from a height during night patrol duty in Sheeri area of the district. | [More on P6](#)

### Porter's family appeals to Gov for financial support

KNO Correspondent

The family of Ishfaq Khatana, one of the deceased army porters who lost his life after slipping into Nallah in Gulmarg hills, has appealed to the Government of India (GoI) for financial assistance. Khatana, his family said, | [More on P6](#)

### Baramulla—Uri NHW to remain closed tomorrow

KNO Correspondent

Baramulla, Jan 09: Authorities on Friday ordered temporary closure of Baramulla—Uri National Highway on Sunday in view of the proposed hill cutting works.

The order issued by the district magistrate, a copy of which lies with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) cites the apprehensions of landslides as seen in the past days for the closure of the vital highway.

"The restrictions at Danakha Mode and NS Bridge Uri from 07:00 AM to 05:00 PM on Sunday (11.01.26) are necessary in order to avert | [More on P6](#)

### IGP Kashmir interacts with new batch of probationary DySPs

Calls for upholding integrity, professionalism



KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jan 09: The Inspector General of Police, Kashmir Zone, V.K. Birdi, IPS, held an interaction with 29 Probationary Deputy Superintendents of Police DySPs of the 2024 batch, undergoing practical training across districts of the Kashmir

Zone. The programme was conducted at Police Control Room Kashmir and attended by senior officers, including the DIG Central Kashmir Range, SSP PCR Kashmir, SO to IGP Kashmir, and other senior officers.

According to a statement issued here, at the outset, the IGP welcomed | [More on P6](#)



# CS reviews progress of major health infrastructure projects across J&K

## Stresses timely completion of healthcare infrastructure works

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, JANUARY 09: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, Friday chaired a high-level review meeting to assess the progress of ongoing and proposed health infrastructure projects across the UT, reiterating that strengthening healthcare facilities remains a top public service priority of the government.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by the Additional Chief Secretary, Public Works Department; Secretary, Health & Medical Education; Director, SKIMS; Managing Director, NHM; Principals of Government Medical Colleges; Director, Health Services, Kashmir/Jammu; Managing Director, HSCC; Chief Engineers of R&B, and other senior officers.

The review covered a wide spectrum of projects being executed by the Health & Medical Education Department, including works related to Government Medical Colleges, SKIMS, Dental Colleges, Health Services, SASCI projects and flagship centrally sponsored schemes such as PM-ABHIM and ECRP-II.

Taking a comprehensive project-wise review, the Chief Secretary examined physical and financial progress, utilisation of funds and issues hampering timely execution. He issued clear directions for expediting approvals, resolving inter-departmental bottlenecks, particularly those related to land and utilities, and ensuring strict adherence to timelines and quality standards.

He took this occasion to emphasise that delays in healthcare projects have a



direct bearing on public welfare, he cautioned that such lapses would be reviewed seriously at the highest level and stressed the need to avoid cost overruns through efficient use of resources.

Additional Chief Secretary, PWD, Anil Kumar Singh took note of project-wise deadlines and issued on-the-spot directions to Chief Engineers to resolve site-specific bottlenecks so that works progress without interruption.

Secretary, Health & Medical Education, Dr Syed Abid Rashid Shah presented an overview of the progress achieved since the last review meeting and outlined

the department's mechanism for regular monitoring of works.

During this meeting a detailed review was conducted of major infrastructure projects at GMC Jammu, GMC Srinagar and their associated hospitals, including the construction of the Bone and Joint Hospital, Jammu, and expansion of tertiary care facilities. The progress of works at Indira Gandhi Government Dental College & Hospital, Jammu was also reviewed, with emphasis on augmenting dental education and patient care infrastructure.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed the status

of new Government Medical Colleges at Anantnag, Doda, Kathua, Udhampur and Handwara, directing the executing agencies to strictly adhere to approved timelines.

At GMC Anantnag, the construction of a 249-bedded Mother and Child Care Hospital at MMABM Associated Hospital was discussed. It was informed that the project will now be funded under UT Capex, with a revised DPR incorporating furniture and furnishing requirements too.

At GMC Udhampur, issues related to space constraints for a sanctioned 50-bedded Critical Care Block under ECRP-II were reviewed, and directions were issued for early completion of NOC formalities for transfer of ITI land and buildings to facilitate hospital expansion. Infrastructure works at GMC Rajouri, including parking facilities, retaining walls, strengthening of electrical systems and hostels for resident doctors, were also reviewed. Critical tertiary care infrastructure projects at SKIMS Soura and SKIMS Medical College Bemina were also discussed, with the Chief Secretary directing that these high-value projects be executed seamlessly to support advanced healthcare delivery in the Valley.

Under Health Services, major works including the 100-bedded Mother and Child Care Hospital at Lamberi (Rajouri), upgradation of SDH Billawar to 100 beds, 50-bedded Hospital at Sunderbani, upgradation of the 100-bedded Hospital at Nowshera and the 125-bedded District Hospital at Reshipora, Budgam were reviewed. It was noted that these projects will

significantly strengthen secondary and district-level healthcare services across J&K.

Reviewing projects under the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI), the Chief Secretary was informed that 23 works have received financial approval, of which 13 are under execution. During the current financial year 2025-26, an amount of 34.98 Cr has been released under Capex and SASCI, with works worth over 20 Cr already executed.

He directed the department to rationalise non-starter and slow-moving projects, drop unviable works after due approval and re-propose them under appropriate funding windows to prevent blockage of funds.

A detailed presentation was also made by HSCC on the Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM) and ECRP-II, wherein it was informed that most of these critical care projects are going to be substantially completed by March, 2026 giving physical progress and expected date of completion in each project. Under ECRP-II, works amounting to 178.32 Cr were reviewed, with the Chief Secretary directing that physical progress be accelerated to match financial outlays.

The Chief Secretary concluded the meeting by reiterating that timely completion of health infrastructure projects is crucial for improving service delivery and directed all stakeholders to maintain close coordination to ensure tangible outcomes on the ground meeting deadlines without any delay.

# CEO reviews preparedness for National Voters' Day 2026



KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, JANUARY 09: Chief Electoral Officer, J&K, Sanjeev Verma Friday chaired a meeting to review arrangements for celebration of National Voters Day to be observed on January 25.

Director Information J&K Nitish Rajora, Special Secretary Dr Narupa Rai, Special Secretary Sandesh Kumar Gupta, ADC Jammu Vidhu Shekhar besides senior officers from JKAACL, Higher Education, School Education, Jammu University, All India Radio, district administration and representatives from Muskan Foundation and Jigar Foundation were present in the meeting.

Various points were discussed during the meeting which included NVD Run, participation of students, transportation, National Anthem, fixing of banners at identified places awareness through SVEEP Van, NVD pledge and allied activities. It was also informed in the meeting that the rehearsal of the event shall be held on 16th of January at KL Sehgal Hall.

Officials from Jammu University, as per an official statement, were instructed to organise NVD

Run on 24th January besides holding sports events and radio talks, discussions to aware general public especially students on election/voting process.

Director Colleges was asked to prepare live National Anthem to be performed at the beginning and culmination of the program. Similarly, Officials from JKAACL were asked to organize theme based street play, group song and painting competition.

Representatives from Muskan and Jigar Foundation were urged to perform one song each on the theme of National Voters' Day 2026.

While reviewing the arrangements, the CEO emphasized timely execution of assigned tasks and ensuring coordinated efforts for successful celebration of National Voters' Day 2026.

He impressed upon all the officers to make necessary arrangements for celebration of the national event to achieve the objective of the National Voter's Day.

The CEO stressed upon the officers to put in their synchronized efforts so that all the necessary arrangements are made well in time for a smooth celebration of National Voters Day.

# DC Bandipora reviews Wullar Walkway phase-I



KT NEWS DESK

BANDIPORA, JANUARY 09: Deputy Commissioner, Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, Friday reviewed the progress of the under-construction non-motorable Wullar Walkway (Phase-I) during a site visit undertaken in view of the slow pace of execution.

The project, being executed by the R&B Department Bandipora, has an allotted cost of Rs 18.76 crore and has achieved about 40 percent physical progress so far.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, assured that all feasible assistance from the District Administration Bandipora would be extended to expedite the project.

Later, the Deputy Commissioner also visited the Nature Eco-Tourism Park (Delta Park) being developed by the Wular Conservation and Management Authority. The progress of works at the park was reviewed, and it was informed that the project is expected to be completed by the end of the next financial year.

The Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by Coordinator, WUCMA, Altaf Hussain; Executive Engineer, R&B; Tehsildar Hajin; and other concerned officers.

# DC Srinagar reviews implementation of UIDIC/CRS, Aadhaar biometric updates



KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR JANUARY 09: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo on Friday reviewed the progress in implementation of Civil Registration System(CRS) and status of Mandatory Biometric Updates for Aadhaar in a meeting of stakeholder Departments held here at Meeting Hall of the DC Office.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, was given a detailed overview of the progress on Mandatory Biometric Updates for Aadhaar, status of the Civil Registration System (CRS) with a focus on the Birth Registration-Based Aadhaar Enrolment (BRBAE) initiative aimed at enrolling newborns for Aadhaar at hospitals aligning with the goal of transforming the CRS for real-time digital registration of births and deaths.

On the occasion, the DC stressed the need to ensure timely completion of mandatory biometric updates, particularly for children who have attained the ages of 5 and 15 years.

Meanwhile, the DC also reviewed the progress regarding the establishment of a Centre of Excellence-CSC in the district.

He also emphasized time-bound clearance of pending Aadhaar cases, especially those involving applicants above 100 years of age. The DC further directed all departments to create and operationalize

official Gov.in email IDs.

While reviewing the progress on the establishment of the Centre of Excellence-CSC, the Deputy Commissioner instructed the concerned departments to complete all pending requirements within the stipulated timeline to ensure that the centre becomes operational in all respect at the earliest. He assessed the current status of infrastructure and preparedness and instructed the concerned to expedite the process.

The DC further stressed the importance of effective coordination between line departments and UIDAI to ensure seamless functioning of Aadhaar centres and timely achievement of set targets in Srinagar district.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mir Imtiaz Ul Aziz; Additional Deputy Commissioner, Aadil Fareed; Joint Commissioner SMC, Nuzhat Khurshid; SP headquarter, Umar Shah; Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar; Programme Officer ICDS, Bureeda Majeed, SDM West, Irfan Bahadur, SDM East, Zubair Ahmad, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Umar Gulzar; District Statistics & Evaluation Officer, Shah Ismail Bangroo; all Tehsildars, All BDOs, Deputy CEO, District Informatics Officer, State Project Manager, Srinagar from UIDAI, District Lead Bank Manager, District Coordinator CSC E-Governance and other concerned.

# GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) DIVISION TANGMARG.

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER (CIVIL WORKS)

NIT No: 123/R&B of 2025-26

Dated:- 08-01-2026

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, UT J&K, e-tenders (In single cover system) are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/ Doc. (In Rupees)	Earnest money (In Rupees)	Time of completion	M.H of Account	Class of Contractor	Project Authority	Tender call
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Construction of Boundary wall around Primary School Mir Mohalla Gullipora.	7.44	300/-	14880/-	35 days	( PAB-2025-26)	D/C	Directorate of SAMAGRA SHIKSHA J&K	1 <sup>st</sup>

Position Of AAA: Accorded

Position of T.S: Accorded

Position of funds: Assured

The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be viewed/downloaded from the departmental website [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) as per schedule of dates given below:-

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	08-01-2026
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	09-01-2026
3	Bid submission Start Date	09-01-2026
4	Bid Submission End Date	27-01-2026 4:00 PM
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	28-01-2026 11:00 AM

Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan (Dated between bid submission start date and bid submission end date) with NIT No. , Serial No. and name of work to be deposited in M.H. 0059 in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Tangmarg (tender inviting authority)

- All the bidders must upload Earnest money /Bid security equal to 2% of advertised cost in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Division Tangmarg (tender receiving authority) (The Date of earnest money/Bid security should be between the Bid Submission start date and Bid submission End date, otherwise bids shall be rejected).
- The Successful bidder will have to provide performance security @ 5% of contract value in the form of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Division Tangmarg (tender receiving authority) as per rule-171 (I) of GFR 2017. The earnest money/ Bid security @2% shall be released to the successful bidder only on receipt of Performance Security @ 5% of Contract value which shall be released after successful completion of DLP /maintenance period.
- The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the Office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Tangmarg (tender receiving authority).
- The earnest money/ Bid security in favour of unsuccessful bidder shall be released only after submission of original Treasury Challan.
- The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 day s from the date of opening of Technical bids.
- The earnest money shall be forfeited, if-
  - Any bidder/ tenderer withdraw his bid/ tender during the period of bid validity or make any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.
  - Failure of Successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within the specified time limit.
  - Failure of Successful bidder to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.
  - Failure of successfully bidder to submit the performance security within the time period (as per JKPWD Engineering Manual 2020) i.e 21 Days from the issuance of latter of acceptance, after that the work will be put to fresh tenders without any notice to the contractor and the EMD will be forfeited.
- All other terms conditions are as per PWD Form 25(Double agreement Form), NIT, GFR 2017 & JK PWD Engineering Manual 2020.
- As per the Circular No. 01 (Adm) FD of 2025 Dated: 08-07-2025 issued by Finance Department of UT J&K "Every participating supplier/contractor to mandatorily disclose the bank account number which is linked with their GSTIN at the time of bid submission. No payments shall be released by the Government Department/Agency to any other bank account except the one linked with the GST registered number of the successful bidder".

No: R&B / Divn./ Tang/7079-91  
Dated: 08-01-2026

Sd/-  
Technical Officer

DIKP-9874/25  
DATED: 09-01-2026

Sd/- Executive Engineer  
R&B Division Tangmarg.



# Eco-tourism blooms at Shallabugh wetland

RAJA SYED RATHER

Ganderbal, Jan 09: Shallabugh Wetland Conservation Reserve here in Central Kashmir is fast emerging as a major eco-tourism hotspot. The wetland spread over 1,675 hectares across Srinagar and Ganderbal districts was designated as a Ramsar site on June 8, 2022. Since then it has gained global recognition for playing a crucial role in preserving biodiversity. Notably, this protected wetland is home to a diverse array of bird species, including the Pintail, Common Teal, Wigeon, Gadwall, Mallard, and the rare Pallas's Fish Eagle. Additionally, Steppe Eagles, Eastern Imperial Eagles, and Yellow-eyed Pigeons, among others, contribute to its status as



an avian paradise. An annual bird census, held on February 23 and 24, provides valuable data to track and monitor these bird populations. Ghulam Rasool, a local while talking to KNO said, "The wetland is one of Asia's largest and home to lakhs of birds. With better support and more staff, it can be managed and protected even more effectively." Wildlife Department officials said that the wetlands are important for migratory birds. "Every year huge number of birds flock to the site. We are committed to safeguarding these birds, especially during peak migration seasons. We urge hunters to respect the wildlife and refrain from any harmful activities," the officials said. They said that February, in

particular, is expected to see an influx of additional migratory birds. Currently, the bird population is estimated to be between 2 to 2.5 lakh. To aid during the winter months, the department provides grains to feed the birds and ensures their well-being amid freezing temperatures. "Compared to last year, the number of birds has notably increased," officials said. Pertinently, the Shallabugh Wetland stands as an exemplary model of community-driven conservation. Local residents, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and government bodies are working hand in hand to preserve the ecological balance. The Ramsar status of the wetland highlights its global importance. It calls for continued efforts to protect it—(KNO)

# Tested egg samples in Srinagar meet FSSAI safety standards

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Jan 09: The first batch of egg samples collected from various parts of Srinagar has been found safe for consumption and compliant with the standards of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), officials said on Friday. Assistant Commissioner of Food Safety, Srinagar, Yameen ul Nabi said that eight samples collected from supermarkets and wholesalers in the city were found to be of standard quality. "The results came late last evening, and all samples have been declared fit for human consumption," he said. The officer said that both loose and packaged eggs were taken during routine surveillance drives aimed at ensuring the safety of food items sold in local markets. "The tests confirm that eggs available in Srinagar meet FSSAI standards," he added. Meanwhile, a senior official from Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Kashmir, told KNO that a total of 49 egg samples were collected from across Jammu and Kashmir. "This is the first batch of reports received, which have come safely," she said, adding that three to four more batches



are still pending. The official further said that the samples were collected as part of a wider quality assurance initiative launched after misleading social media posts claimed that eggs contained cancer-causing substances. KNO had earlier reported that the FSSAI had categorically dismissed claims linking eggs to cancer, stating that eggs available in the country are scientifically safe and compliant with national standards. In its clarification issued last month, the FSSAI had described the viral claims as "misleading, scientifically unsupported and capable of creating unnecessary public alarm". The regulator

reaffirmed that the use of nitrofurans is prohibited in poultry and egg production and that trace residues below detection limits do not pose any health risk. Officials said the ongoing testing and surveillance are aimed at reinforcing public confidence in food safety and preventing the spread of misinformation. "We appeal to the public and media to share only verified updates and avoid amplifying unverified content," Nabi said. "Such drives will continue to safeguard public health and ensure that the food available in markets remains safe and of standard quality."—(KNO)

## Criminal compoundable case Lok-Adalat in Ganderbal on Jan-31



KT NEWS DESK

Ganderbal, Jan 09: As per the Plan of Action/Calendar of Activities for the year 2026, the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Ganderbal, in collaboration with the Tehsil Legal Services Committees (TLSC) Ganderbal and Kangan, shall organize a Special Lok-Adalat on Criminal Compoundable Cases on January 31, 2026. The Special Lok-Adalat will be conducted at the District Court Complex, Ganderbal and the Munsiff Court, Kangan, with the objective of facilitating amicable settlement of criminal compoundable disputes. The general public and litigants, who wish to have their eligible cases settled through the Lok-Adalat process, are informed to approach the concerned courts, District Legal Services Authority, Ganderbal, or TLSC Ganderbal/Kangan for referral of such cases to the said Lok-Adalat on or before January 25, 2026. The initiative aims to provide an effective platform for parties to resolve their disputes amicably in a speedy and cost-effective manner.

## New labour codes, social security camp held in Ramban

KT NEWS DESK

Ramban, 09 Jan: The Labour Department Ramban on Friday organized a mega awareness camp in the Conference Hall Maitra to acquaint workers about the new Labour Codes and Social Security Schemes. The programme, held under the supervision of Assistant Labour Commissioner Amit Kumar, was attended by over 150 workers, including GREF workers, contract labourers, construction workers and other unorganized sector workers. The camp focused on generating awareness about the four New Labour Codes and the Social Security Schemes. Addressing the gathering, the ALC highlighted the key provisions of the Code on Wages- 2019; Industrial Relations Code-2020; Code on Social Security-2020 and Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code- 2020. He emphasized that these codes consolidate 29 central labour laws, thereby enhancing Ease of Living for workers and Ease of Doing Business for employers. The Prime Minister Shram Yogi Maandhan (PMSYM) pension scheme was also elaborated in detail. Officials from J&K Bank imparted awareness on Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) and Atal Pension Yojana (APY). District Employment Officer (DEO) briefed participants about the welfare schemes being implemented in the district under the J&K Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board (JKBOCWWB). As many as 15 on-the-spot registrations were carried out under PMSYM by CSC VLEs. Later, the officials addressed grievances related to labour card registration, renewal and other procedural matters. The event aimed to empower the local workforce and ensure their financial security through social security schemes and the provisions of the New Labour Codes.

## Police seize contraband, arrest one in Shopian

KNO

Srinagar, Jan 09: In its continued crack-down against drug menace, Jammu and Kashmir Police in Shopian recovered a significant quantity of contraband substance from residential house in Barbugh, Imamsahib and arrested the accused person. As per the statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), acting on specific information, Police Station Imamsahib registered a case under FIR No. 02/2026 of NDPS Act and obtained a search warrant from the competent authority. A team from Police Station Imamsahib accompanied by the Tehsildar Barbugh raided the residential premises of Mushtaq Ahmad Khanday, resident of Barbugh. During the search, 20,720 Kgs of cannabis & 130 grams charas-like substance was recovered from residential house. The accused has been arrested and further investigation is underway. J&K Police reiterate its commitment to eradicate the menace of drugs from society and urge the public to extend cooperation. Information regarding drug abuse/peddling can be shared on helpline 9596768831 (PCR Shopian). Identity of informers will be kept strictly confidential, the statement reads—(KNO)

## CM's advisor listens to people's issues at Raabita

KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Jan 09: Advisor to the Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani on Friday visited the Raabita Public Outreach Office, Jammu, where he met several deputations and individuals from across Jammu and Kashmir and listened to their grievances for timely redressal. During the interaction, the Advisor met people from Reasi, Doda, Baramulla, Jammu, RS Pura, Katra, Rajouri, Kathua, Srinagar and other areas, who presented a wide range of personal and area-specific issues. These included matters related to ex-gratia relief, compensation for houses damaged due to natural calamities such as landslides, pension and salary issues, widow pension, old age pension and other welfare-related concerns. A delegation of Seasonal and Casual Labourers of the Estates Department also brought forth their issues. Similarly, a deputation of All



J&K SICOP Employees called on the Advisor and flagged their grievances for early resolution. The Tractor Union J&K raised issues concerning livelihood, while Revenue Drivers highlighted their service-related matters. The All Kashmir Hot Mix Plant Owners Association also met the Advisor and apprised him of their concerns. Advisor Nasir

Aslam Wani gave a patient hearing to all deputations and individuals and assured them that their genuine grievances would be examined on priority. On the occasion, he reaffirmed the government's commitment to responsive and people-centric governance and assured that all genuine issues would be taken up for prompt and effective redressal.

## Srinagar sees development push under CM Omar: Tanvir Sadiq



KT NEWS DESK

Srinagar, 09 Jan: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Chief Spokesperson and MLA Zadibal Tanvir Sadiq Friday said that Srinagar is witnessing a visible and meaningful wave of development under the leadership of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, with focused attention being given to all constituencies of the city, including downtown and peripheral areas. He made these remarks during an extensive tour of several areas of the Zadibal

constituency, including Lal Bazar, Bharar, Alamdard Colony, Soura, Alamgiri Bazar, Dal, Mir Behri and adjoining localities, where he interacted with residents, traders, youth and elders. He said that after years of stagnation and selective development, Srinagar is finally receiving the attention it deserves. "What was left in 2014 was allowed to deteriorate for years due to the lack of a holistic vision. It is only under the National Conference government led by Omar Abdullah that equitable and city-wide

development has once again become a priority," he said. Highlighting the work being undertaken in Zadibal, Tanvir Sadiq said the constituency, which includes some of the most densely populated and historically significant areas of Srinagar, is witnessing focused interventions in road connectivity, drainage systems, public spaces, community infrastructure and urban renewal. He noted that long-pending projects from Lal Bazar to Bharar, Alamgiri Bazar to Soura, Makdoom Sahib, Dargah Hazratbal and Mir Behri Dal are now being executed on the ground. Sadiq said his vision is to develop Zadibal as a model constituency reflecting the larger goal of making Srinagar one of the finest cities in the country. "If Zadibal rises, Srinagar rises with it. Development takes time, but with sustained effort and political will, we are firmly on the right track," he said. Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

## DC Doda finalises arrangements for Republic Day 2026

KT NEWS DESK

Doda, 09 Jan: Deputy Commissioner Doda Harvinder Singh on Friday convened a review meeting in the Conference Hall-DC Office Complex to finalize the necessary arrangements for the smooth celebration of Republic Day 2026. The meeting finalized Sports Stadium as the venue for the District Level Event. The meeting was attended by SSP Sandeep Kumar Mehta; ADDC Roshan Lal; ADC Anil Kumar Thakur, besides other district and sectoral officers. Several officers also participated through virtual mode. Detailed discussions were held on parade arrangements, cultural programmes, seating plans, traffic regulation, sanitation, electricity, drinking water, health services and overall venue management. The Deputy Commissioner asked officers to adhere strictly to timelines and ensure seamless inter-departmental coordination. He instructed departments to ensure cleanliness of the venue, uninterrupted power and water supply, medical preparedness and effective traffic management on the day of the function. The SSP assured foolproof security arrangements with adequate deployment of security personnel for crowd management, traffic control and strict surveillance to ensure a safe and incident-free celebration.

## State TB cell organizes training workshop for District Nodal Officers

KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Jan 09: A State-Level Training Workshop for District Nodal Officers on the TB Mukht Panchayat Initiative was on Friday organized by the State TB Cell here in the Conference Hall Directorate of Health Services. Hosted under the guidance of Director Health Services Jammu Dr. Abdul

Hamid Zargar, the workshop aimed to orient District Nodal Officers on the objectives, guidelines and implementation strategies of the TB Mukht Panchayat Initiative under the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP). The training emphasized strengthening coordination at the district and Panchayat level to accelerate efforts towards the elimination

of tuberculosis. The workshop was inaugurated by State TB Officer (STO) Jammu Dr. Jyoti Jolly. WHO Consultant Dr. Praveen Yadav provided a detailed overview of the initiative and its operational framework. Participants were sensitized on their role and responsibilities, monitoring and reporting mechanisms and the importance of community

participation through Panchayati Raj Institutions. Interactive sessions were held to address operational challenges and share best practices for effective implementation at the grassroots level. Officials highlighted the need for sustained commitment and effective inter-departmental convergence to achieve the goal of making Panchayats TB-free. The

State TB Cell reaffirmed its commitment to supporting districts through continuous guidance and capacity-building initiatives. The workshop was attended by Chief Medical Officers, District TB Officers, District Programme Coordinators, DEOs and the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme team of Jammu Division.



## EDITORIAL

# Time For Govt-Bank-Industry Coordination To Secure J&K's Economy

The Federation of Chambers of Industries Kashmir (FCIK) has sought a moratorium on coercive bank actions under the SARFAESI Act. At a moment when the government is reviewing its industrial policy with the stated aim of revival and rehabilitation, aggressive asset seizure against MSMEs is a contradictory and self-defeating strategy that risks inflicting irreversible damage on the Union Territory's fragile industrial base and shattering the confidence of its youth. The core of the issue is timing and approach. MSMEs in J&K are not willful defaulters but

enterprises that have endured unparalleled shocks, which include decades of instability, floods, prolonged shutdowns, and the pandemic. A purely mechanical enforcement of recovery, especially one that targets residential property, does not protect public funds; it destroys the very capital, both financial and human, required for future repayment and growth. It extinguishes livelihoods, erodes the dignity of families, and sends a chilling message to aspiring entrepreneurs: that the system offers no safety net for failure, only punitive ruin. The government must heed this call

for a pragmatic pause. An immediate, time-bound moratorium on such dispossessive actions is essential until a structured resolution framework is operational. This period must be used to swiftly finalise and implement the proposed One-Time Settlement (OTS) scheme and, more innovatively, to establish an Asset Reconstruction Company (ARC) mechanism. An ARC can professionally manage stressed assets, separating viable units for revival from non-viable ones for orderly closure, thus freeing banks from protracted litigation and offering entrepreneurs a dignified resolution.

This is not about forgiving debt but about intelligent recovery that balances fiscal responsibility with economic revival. The government's vision for a vibrant, job-creating industrial sector cannot be realised by dismantling its existing foundation. Coordination, not confrontation, between the administration, banks, and industry is the only path forward. A compassionate, calibrated response now can preserve livelihoods, restore entrepreneurial faith, and secure the future of J&K's economy. The choice is between salvaging an ecosystem or presiding over its collapse.

# Digitalizing India's Dairy Sector

## Building A Smarter, Transparent, And Farmer-Centric Ecosystem

### Press Information Bureau

India is the world's largest producer of milk, accounting for 25% of global output. As the sector continues to expand, digital tools are playing an increasingly crucial role in improving productivity, transparency, and farmer welfare. The National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) has been at the forefront of this transformation, developing digital platforms that connect farmers, cooperatives, and stakeholders across the dairy value chain. These initiatives aim to modernize operations, reduce inefficiencies, and enhance traceability, ultimately strengthening the world's largest dairy ecosystem.

### National Digital Livestock Mission (NDLM)

The National Digital Livestock Mission (NDLM), implemented by NDDB in collaboration with the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD), represents a major step toward a unified digital livestock ecosystem called "Bharat Pashudhan."

To enhance data-driven livestock management, the Bharat Pashudhan database records field activities such as breeding, artificial insemination, health services, vaccination, and treatment, with over 84 crore transactions logged. Field personnel, including veterinarians and extension workers, assist farmers in accessing this system.

The NDLM uses digital tools such as unique animal identification, data integration, and mobile applications to empower farmers and improve productivity. It aims to ensure every animal in India has a digital identity, linking it to health records and productivity data. NDDB provides both technical and financial support to implement this mission across states.

In line with the international practices a unique 12-digit bar coded Tag ID in the form of ear tag is being issued to all livestock animals. This unique code has been named as "Pashu Aadhaar", and it acts as a primary key for registering all types of transactions done on the animals such as Vaccination, Breeding, Treatment, etc. All these transactions can be viewed at a single place against the Tag ID and shall be visible to the farmer as well as to the field veterinarians and workers for respective animals/area. Till November 2025, over 35.68 Crore Pashu Aadhaar has been generated.

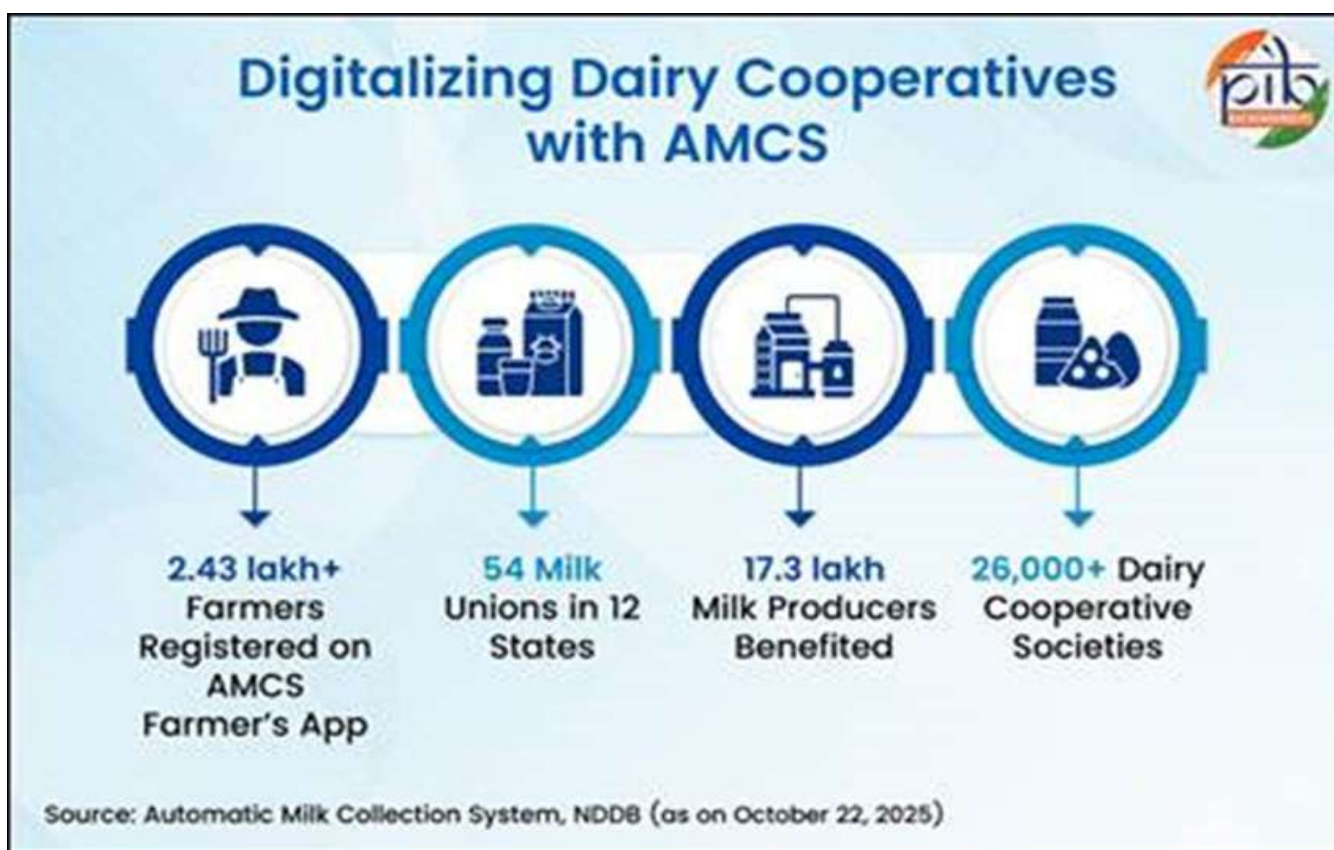
Under the National Digital Livestock Mission, the 1962 App provides authenticated information on best practices and government schemes. Besides, the toll-free number 1962 is available to the farmers to get the veterinary services through Mobile Veterinary Units at their doorstep.

### Automatic Milk Collection System

At the heart of India's cooperative dairy model is the daily milk collection from millions of farmers. To make this process transparent, efficient, and farmer-friendly, the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) has developed the Automatic Milk Collection System (AMCS), a robust, integrated software platform for managing every aspect of operations at Dairy Cooperative Societies (DCS).

AMCS automates milk collection by digitally recording each transaction, including quantity, quality, and fat content, and instantly transferring payments to farmers' bank accounts. Using open-source technology, the system ensures traceability, eliminates manual errors, and promotes transparency at every level. Farmers receive real-time SMS updates on their daily sales and payments, while cooperatives gain access to data-driven insights for better procurement and production planning.

The system is integrated at Union,



Federation, and National levels, connecting with financial institutions and providing mobile-based key informatics for all stakeholders. Currently operational in 12 states/UTs, AMCS covers over 26,000 Dairy Cooperative Societies and benefits over 17.3 lakh milk producers across 54 milk unions (as on October 22, 2025), reflecting NDDB's commitment to building a digitally empowered and inclusive dairy ecosystem.

The integrated AMCS solution has the following major Applications / components. DCS Application: Common, multilingual AMCS Application at DCS Level which works on Windows / Linux and Android Platform.

Portal Application: Common Centralized AMCS Portals at Union, Federation and National Level.

Android Apps: Common, multilingual Mobile Applications one each for Society Secretary, Dairy Supervisor and Farmer.

This Android-based application serves as a Digital Passbook for farmers and a real-time information and alert platform for Dairy Secretaries and Supervisors. So far, over 2.43 lakh farmers, 1,374 supervisors, and 13,644 secretaries have registered (as on October 22, 2025) on the AMCS mobile app.

### NDDB Dairy ERP (NDERP)

The NDDB Dairy ERP (NDERP) is a comprehensive, web-based enterprise resource planning system developed and customized specifically for the dairy and edible oil industries. Built on an open-source platform (Frappe ERPNext), it eliminates the need for any software installation and can be accessed seamlessly through a computer or mobile device. It is also available on Android and iOS (mNDERP) for distributors, offering a complete and cost-effective solution without proprietary or recurring licensing fees.

The iNDERP portal (<https://inderp.nddb.coop>) is an online platform for distributors integrated with NDERP. It enables them to manage orders, delivery challans, invoices, and payments efficiently. Distributors can track deliveries, view outstanding balances, and download invoices directly from the portal, ensuring smooth coordination with milk unions and federations.

The mNDERP mobile app, available on Android and iOS, offers the same functionalities as iNDERP for distributors on the go. It allows them to place orders, check deliveries, access invoices, and monitor

payments easily through their smartphones, promoting transparency and convenience in dairy business operations.

NDERP includes all major functional modules such as Finance and Accounts, Purchase, Inventory, Sales and Marketing, Manufacturing, HR and Payroll, each integrated with advanced workflows and maker-checker features to ensure greater transparency and control. The system also features dashboards and analytical tools that support data-driven decision-making across management levels.

Crucially, NDERP is integrated with the Automatic Milk Collection System (AMCS) to create an end-to-end digital solution, from cow to consumer, covering milk collection, processing, and distribution. To enhance efficiency, the platform incorporates a mass-balancing technique in the production module, helping dairies minimize processing losses.

### Semen Station Management System (SSMS)

The Semen Station Management System (SSMS) is a comprehensive digital platform designed to streamline the production of Frozen Semen Doses (FSD) and ensure adherence to the Minimum Standard Protocols (MSP) and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) set by the Government of India. The system covers all core operations of semen stations, including bull lifecycle management, semen production, quality control, biosecurity, farm and fodder management, and sales tracking. It integrates with laboratory equipment and RFID bull tags for accurate, efficient, and traceable operations, ensuring every stage, from production to distribution, is digitally monitored.

SSMS is connected to the Information Network for Semen Production and Resource Management (INSPRM), a national portal that enables real-time data sharing between semen stations and field-level systems like INAPH (Information Network for Animal Productivity and Health). This integration allows complete traceability of semen doses supplied across the country and supports coordinated monitoring through a central database. Developed under the National Dairy Plan I (NDP I), a World Bank-funded initiative implemented by NDDB, the system has modernized semen stations nationwide, strengthening India's artificial

insemination network and contributing to enhanced dairy productivity. Currently, 38 graded semen stations across India are using SSMS to ensure quality, transparency, and standardization in semen production.

### INAPH

Information Network for Animal Productivity & Health (INAPH) is an application that facilitates capturing of real time reliable data on Breeding, Nutrition and Health Services delivered at Farmer's Doorstep. It helps to assess and monitor progress of the projects.

### Internet-based Dairy Information System

Efficient data management is central to evidence-based planning and informed decision-making in the dairy sector. The Internet-based Dairy Information System (i-DIS) developed by the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) provides a unified digital platform for dairy cooperatives, milk unions, federations, and other allied units to systematically collect, share, and analyse data. The system enables participants to track performance indicators such as milk procurement and sales, product manufacturing and distribution, and the supply of technical inputs, while allowing each organisation to benchmark its performance against others.

Currently, around 198 milk unions, 29 marketing dairies, 54 cattle-feed plants, and 15 federations across the country are part of i-DIS, contributing to the creation of a reliable and comprehensive National Cooperative Dairy Industry Database. This data-driven ecosystem supports strategic decision-making and policy formulation within the dairy sector. NDDB also conducts regular refresher workshops for Management Information System (MIS) officials from participating unions to strengthen their ability to use i-DIS effectively and ensure its optimal utilisation for planning and operations.

### Milk Route Optimisation

Efficient milk collection and distribution are vital for the success of India's dairy supply chain. To make this process more cost-effective and systematic, the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) has introduced milk route optimisation using

### Key Takeaways

- More than 35.68 crore animals have been issued "Pashu Aadhaar" under the National Digital Livestock Mission (NDLM), enabling traceable livestock management.
- Over 17.3 lakh milk producers across 54 milk unions benefit from the Automatic Milk Collection System (AMCS), ensuring transparent payments and efficient operations.
- Around 198 milk unions and 15 federations use the Internet-based Dairy Information System (i-DIS) for data-driven decision-making and performance benchmarking.
- Milk route optimisation using GIS technology has helped cooperatives in several states save significantly on transportation costs and improve

GIS (Geographical Information System) technology. This digital approach replaces manual planning by mapping milk procurement and distribution routes on digitised maps, allowing easy visualisation of multiple route options and supporting data-driven decision-making.

Using GIS-based route planning helps reduce transportation distance, fuel costs, and time, improving overall efficiency in milk procurement and delivery. NDDB launched a milk route optimisation exercise in August 2022 under the Vidarbha Marathwada Dairy Development Project, where routes for four milk chilling centres were redesigned, leading to notable savings in transportation costs. Similar exercises in Varanasi Milk Union, West Assam Milk Union, Jharkhand Milk Federation, and Indore Milk Union have also produced encouraging results, showcasing the potential for significant cost reduction in dairy logistics.

To help cooperatives adopt this technology widely, NDDB has developed a web-based dynamic route planning software that enables fleet and route optimisation in a structured, scientific, and user-friendly manner. Available free of cost to dairy cooperatives, this tool allows real-time route planning and supports better operational control. By integrating technology with cooperative efficiency, NDDB's route optimisation initiative is setting a benchmark for sustainable and cost-effective milk transport in India's dairy sector.

### Conclusion

India's dairy sector, which contributes a quarter of the world's milk output, is undergoing a remarkable digital transformation led by the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB). Through integrated platforms such as NDLM, AMCS, NDERP, SSMS, i-DIS, and route optimisation tools, the sector is moving toward greater efficiency, transparency, and inclusiveness. These systems are not just enhancing operational productivity but also ensuring that millions of small and marginal dairy farmers are directly linked to a modern, tech-driven ecosystem.

By combining cooperative strength with digital innovation, India is setting new standards in sustainable dairy development, one where every litre of milk and every animal is part of a connected, traceable, and efficient value chain. The ongoing efforts reflect NDDB's vision of creating a digitally empowered dairy sector that serves both producers and consumers, driving India closer to its goal of being the global leader in safe, sustainable, and technology-driven milk production.



## Streamline appointments, cancel attachments to tackle doctor shortage: Sakeena Itoo

### Reviews progress on referral of posts in GMCs, Health Department across J&K

KT News Desk

Jammu, Jan 9 Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo Friday emphasised on the need for timely referral of vacant posts to address shortages of doctors, paramedics and other support staff in healthcare institutions across Jammu and Kashmir.

The Health Minister, as per a statement, made these remarks while chairing a meeting at Civil Secretariat here to review the status of vacancies of different categories of posts at various levels and progress on referral of posts in Government Medical Colleges (GMCs) and Health and Medical Department across Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Secretary Health and Medical Education, Dr Syed Abid Rasheed Shah; Principals of all GMCs (Srinagar, Jammu, Anantnag, Baramulla, Rajouri, Kathua, Doda, Udhampur and Handwara), Principal SKIMS Medical College, Director Health Services Jammu/Kashmir and other senior officers of the department, either in person or through video conferencing.

The meeting was held with an objective of review assessing the existing manpower gaps and expediting recruitment process to strengthen healthcare delivery at all levels. During the meeting, the



Minister emphasized on the need for timely referral of vacant posts to address shortages of doctors, paramedics and support staff in hospitals and medical institutions. She sought detailed updates on sanctioned posts, vacancies and the status of selections being processed through recruiting agencies.

Stressing that efficient human resource forms the backbone of the healthcare system, Sakeena Itoo directed officials to streamline procedures and remove bottlenecks delaying appointments as well as posting of specialists in deserving areas. "Cancel attachments of all doctors and paramedics and post them in areas facing acute shortage of staff",

Minister Sakeena directed the officers.

She further asked all Principals of GMCs and Directors to ascertain the requirement of doctors and specialists in their respective medical institutions and make a proper plan for posting of required staff at these places. She also stressed on both Directors for rationalisation of staff in order to fill necessary manpower gaps of specialists in far flung areas.

The Minister also directed the Principals for timely finalisation of Recruitment rules for all categories of posts so that the process of recruitment is expedited and the vacant posts are filled timely.

While reviewing

different aspects of health sector, Minister Sakeena also laid special emphasis on adopting a proactive and compassionate approach towards victims of drug abuse. She highlighted the need to strengthen de-addiction and rehabilitation services, ensure early identification of substance abuse cases and provide comprehensive medical, psychological and social support to affected individuals.

The Minister stressed that drug abuse need to be addressed as a serious public health as well as societal issue. She directed the officers to enhance awareness programmes, expand counselling services and improve infrastructure at de-addiction centres to facilitate effective treatment and

rehabilitation of victims.

Reiterating the government's commitment to a people-centric healthcare system, the Minister said that timely recruitment, robust institutional support and a humane approach towards vulnerable sections, including drug abuse victims, remain top priorities of the Government.

The Minister reaffirmed the Government's commitment to improving patient care and ensuring equitable health services, particularly in peripheral and underserved areas. She underscored that strengthening GMCs and health institutions with adequate staff would enhance health care service delivery across Jammu and Kashmir.

## DC Srinagar reviews PM-SYM scheme implementation, stresses wider coverage



KT News Desk

SRINAGAR JANUARY 09: With an aim to ensure financial security for unorganised workforce in District, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, Friday convened a meeting with officers from various departments to review the implementation and progress of the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PM-SYM) scheme in the district.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mir Imtiyaz Ul Aziz; Joint Commissioner SMC, Nuzhat Khurshid; Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar; District Programme Officer ICDS, Bureeda Majeed; Assistant Commissioner Development, Tariq Ahmad; Assistant Labour Commissioner, Chief Agriculture Officer, Deputy CEO, District Coordinator CSC and other concerned.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner emphasised the need to maximise coverage of workers in the unorganised sector to bring them under the ambit of social security benefits. He highlighted that the PM-SYM scheme is

aimed at securing the future of unorganised workers by providing them access to a structured social security mechanism.

The DC directed all stakeholder departments to intensify grassroots-level mobilisation and awareness efforts to ensure that all eligible workers are enrolled under the scheme in a time-bound manner. Line departments were instructed to identify eligible beneficiaries within their respective jurisdictions and facilitate their enrolment through focused field-level activities.

The DC directed the concerned departments, particularly the Srinagar Municipal Corporation, ICDS, Labour department to work in close coordination with field staff, CSCs, and concerned agencies to conduct on-the-spot registration and awareness drives across the district.

Highlighting the benefits of the scheme, the DC said that PM-SYM provides old-age protection and social security to unorganised workers through a voluntary and contributory pension framework, wherein the Government contributes an equal matching amount to the subscriber's pension fund.

## DLSA Srinagar, Budgam inspect Central Jail to strengthen legal aid mechanisms

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 09: District Legal Services Authority, Srinagar and Budgam, Friday conducted an inspection of Central Jail, Srinagar as part of the ongoing efforts to ensure effective implementation of legal aid mechanisms.

The objective of the inspection, as per an official statement, was safeguarding the legal and constitutional rights of prisoners, particularly undertrial inmates.

During the visit, the Secretary DLSA along with officials of both the districts inspected various sections of the jail with special emphasis on women jail inmates and foreigners jail inmates and reviewed the functioning of the Prison Legal Aid Clinic.

Emphasis was laid on ensuring unhindered access to legal aid for inmates, timely production of undertrials before courts, and identification of prisoners eligible for legal assistance, remission, parole, furlough, or premature release under the applicable rules and policies.

Secretary DLSA, interacted with jail authorities and legal aid functionaries to assess the effectiveness of the legal services being provided within the prison premises.

The inspection also involved a thorough review of statutory and logistical arrangements, including maintenance of prisoner's records, coordination with courts, availability of legal aid counsel, and the role of Para Legal Volunteers in facilitating communication between inmates and legal institutions.

The Secretary DLSA, stressed the need for strict adherence to the Model Prison Inspection Format and reiterated that any systemic or procedural gaps affecting prisoner's rights must be promptly addressed.

Jail authorities were directed to ensure that complete and updated data of eligible convicts and undertrial prisoners, is maintained in the prescribed format to facilitate effective verification and timely legal intervention.

The visit reaffirmed the commitment of the District Legal Services Authority to uphold access to justice for all prisoners and to strengthen institutional mechanisms within correctional facilities.

The inspection concluded with an assurance of continued coordination between the jail administration and the District Legal Services Authority to ensure compliance with legal mandates and protection of prisoner's rights in letter and spirit.

## DC Pulwama reviews NRLM performance Stresses timely credit linkages for SHGs

KT News Desk

PULWAMA, JANUARY 09: Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, Dr Basharat Qayoom, Friday chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the implementation and overall progress of the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) in the district.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, reviewed NRLM interventions across various Community Development (CD) Blocks, with particular emphasis on institutional strengthening of Self Help Groups (SHGs), livelihood promotion, credit linkages, capacity building, and convergence with allied departments.

The District Programme Manager (DPM), NRLM, presented a detailed performance overview through detailed presentation, highlighting the profile, coverage and overall scenario of NRLM implementation in the district.

The chair was apprised that the mission has covered 37,973 rural households across 11 CD Blocks, with an institutional framework comprising 4,474 Self Help Groups (SHGs), 298 Village Organisations (VOs) and 24 Cluster Level Federations (CLFs).

Dr. Qayoom sought a detailed block-wise assessment of bank linkage progress, status of credit flow to SHGs, physical achievements, identification of potential Lakhpati Didis, establishment of Agri-Nutri Gardens, and formation of Producer Groups. He



directed the concerned officers to bridge gaps in capitalisation and ensure timely and adequate credit flow to all eligible SHGs.

While reviewing progress achieved under non-farm livelihood enterprises, including service-oriented ventures promoted through SHGs, the Deputy Commissioner stressed the need for sustained handholding, mentoring and market linkage support to emerging entrepreneurs to ensure viability and scalability of enterprises.

The DC also reviewed pendency issues at various banks and directed bank authorities to resolve the same on priority. He instructed the concerned Cluster Head of the bank to nominate an officer to address these pendencies and monitor NRLM-related cases fortnightly while NRLM functionaries were directed to intensify coordination with financial institutions to facilitate smooth credit access for SHGs and entrepreneurs, reiterating that seamless credit flow is essential for strengthening

rural enterprises.

Highlighting the importance of sustainable livelihood generation in both farm and non-farm sectors, Dr. Qayoom emphasised scaling up income-generating activities undertaken by SHG members stating that livelihood diversification is essential for enhancing household incomes and ensuring long-term economic resilience of rural communities.

While reviewing capacity building and training initiatives, the DC stressed aligning skill development programmes with local resource potential and market demand to maximise outcomes.

The Deputy Commissioner also reviewed convergence initiatives with line departments including Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Horticulture and Rural Development, and called for a more coordinated and integrated approach to maximise benefits for NRLM beneficiaries.

Concluding the meeting, Dr. Qayoom directed NRLM functionaries to ensure timely achievement of deliverables and targets in close liaison with banks and line departments to ensure socio-economic empowerment of rural households in Pulwama district.

Among others, the meeting was attended by the Chief Planning Officer, Pulwama; Chief Agriculture Officer, Pulwama; Chief Animal Husbandry Officer, Pulwama; Lead District Manager (LDM) Pulwama; and Block Programme Managers (BPMs) of NRLM Pulwama.

## DC Bandipora reviews progress of HADP implementation

KT News Desk

BANDIPORA, JANUARY 09: Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, Friday chaired a review meeting to assess the progress of the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) in the district.

During the meeting, the Chief Agriculture Officer Bandipora presented a comprehensive overview of departmental performance, covering Daksh Kisan implementation, establishment and output tracking, financial utilisation, KKG registrations, credit flow under HADP including applications and sanctions, and the status of JKIP applications with respect to coverage and approvals.

During the meeting, It was noted that there has been substantial improvement in data capturing across departments, reflecting better reporting, monitoring, and implementation of HADP-related activities.

The review also covered the status of applications received, approved by the District Level Committee (DLC), under process, rejected and those ready for DLC across Agriculture, Horticulture, Sericulture, Animal Husbandry (HADP and IDDS), Fisheries, Sheep Husbandry and Horticulture (P&M).

On the occasion, detailed discussions were held on the number of units established, units tracked on the OTA platform



and those pending tracking under various sectors. The status of Daksh Kisan was reviewed sector-wise, including farmers registered, enrolled in courses and those who completed training, along with data on farms and farmers registered on the KKG App.

The Deputy Commissioner stressed the need for timely completion of e-KYC, accuracy in data reporting and close monitoring of expenditure across all allied sectors to ensure effective implementation of HADP and achievement of intended outcomes.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Agriculture Officer Bandipora; Chief Horticulture Officer Bandipora; Chief Animal Husbandry Officer Bandipora; District Sheep Husbandry Officer Bandipora; District Sericulture Officer Bandipora; Assistant Director Fisheries Bandipora; Area Marketing Officer (P&M) Bandipora; Lead District Manager J&K Bank Bandipora; and other concerned officers.

## DC Udhampur reviews drug control measures at NCORD meeting

KT News Desk

UDHAMPUR, JANUARY 09: Deputy Commissioner Udhampur Saloni Rai Friday chaired a meeting of the District Narco-Coordination Centre (NCORD) Committee to review the measures in place to eradicate illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and to reinforce measures aimed at curbing drug abuse in the district.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Prem Singh and the officers from the stakeholder departments.

Taking a comprehensive review, the DC assessed the progress made in identification and rehabilitation of addicts, status of PIT-NDPS cases, drug seizures during 2025, action taken against erring pharmacies, enforcement of mandatory



installation of CCTV cameras, adherence to computerized billing by Medical stores, measures against illicit crop cultivation, rehabilitation of substance abuse victims, inspection of de-addiction centres, block-wise data on drug abusers, identification of hotspots, surveillance of educational institutions, IEC campaigns, mass awareness programmes, Nashaukti abhiyan, Nashaukti panchayats and cases registered under the

NDPS Act.

The meeting also focused on strengthening inter-departmental coordination to effectively track and apprehend individuals involved in drug trafficking, identify abuse hotspots and promote community-based rehabilitation and awareness initiatives.

The DC directed the stakeholder departments to intensify counselling services and enhance IEC activities to sensitise

the public about the harmful effects of drug abuse. She instructed college heads to organise regular awareness programmes within their institutions.

The Chief Medical Officer was asked to conduct sensitisation and counselling sessions for healthcare staff across all health institutions. The Police Department was directed to upload police-station-wise details of NDPS cases on the designated portal.

Emphasising strict enforcement, the Deputy Commissioner stressed the need for effectively tracking down illicit substances peddlers to safeguard the youth from falling prey to drug addiction.

Meanwhile, SDMs were directed to organise awareness drives within their respective jurisdictions to sensitise the public about the ill effects of drugs.

## Bhaderwah gears up for two-day Winter Festival 2026

KT News Desk

DODA, JANUARY 09: Deputy Commissioner Doda Harvinder Singh Friday said that the District administration has made best possible arrangements for the success of Bhaderwah Winter Festival scheduled to be held on 17th and 18th January 2026 at Gul Danda and New Bus Stand Bhaderwah.

Speaking to media persons here, the DC stated that the festival aims to promote winter tourism, showcase the rich cultural heritage of the region and boost local economic activities by attracting tourists from across the country. "Tourism Department has planned the festival as a mega event, featuring colourful cultural programmes and a special performance by renowned singer G Khan to entertain tourists and locals alike. Local artists, folk

performers and singers will also be encouraged to participate and showcase their talent on a common platform," the DC informed. Interested participants have been invited to approach or contact the Bhaderwah Development Authority (BDA) Bhaderwah for registration and participation, he added.

"The maintenance and improvement works on roads leading to Bhaderwah and nearby tourist destinations have already been initiated to ensure smooth and safe travel during the festival." He assured that comprehensive security arrangements would be put in place at all tourist destinations and religious sites to ensure the safety of tourists and residents.

Sharing further, he informed that the Archaeology Department has initiated funding for the renovation and

conservation of ancient religious structures in Bhaderwah. He also announced that the district administration would organize a passport registration camp on 20th, 21st and 22nd January 2026 at the DC Office Complex, while preparations are underway to organize a rafting competition in the coming months to further promote adventure tourism and establish Bhaderwah as a year-round tourism destination.

Chief Executive Officer Bhaderwah Development Authority (BDA) Sanjeev Sharma briefed the media about the preparations, planning, event schedule and other important aspects of the Winter Carnival. He informed that all logistical and administrative arrangements are being finalized to ensure a vibrant and well-organized festival for visitors and participants.



## Senior DCM Jammu Udit Singhal honoured with ‘Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar’ 2025 (AVRSP)

KT News Desk

Jammu, Jan 09: Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Jammu Division, Northern Railway, Udit Singhal was on Friday (January 09, 2026) honoured with the prestigious “Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar” 2025 (AVRSP) by Union Minister for Railways, Ashwini Vaishnaw, in recognition of his outstanding work and dedicated service during the year 2025.

The Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar award ceremony was organised at Yashobhoomi Convention Centre, Delhi. The ceremony was graced by the Minister of State for Railways, V. Somanna, the present Chairman, Railway Board (CRB), Shri Satish Kumar, along with other Members of the Railway Board.

This honour recognises the exceptional contribution of Udit Singhal and his selfless service to Indian Railways. His selection for this prestigious award is based on his sense of duty and remarkable performance during the year 2025 in the Jammu Division.

Adding another feather to his cap, Udit Singhal assumed charge as Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Jammu Division, along with the additional charge of Senior Divisional Operations Manager, on 23 March 2025. Soon after assuming charge, he achieved unprecedented success in railway operations and infrastructure development in the Jammu Division. During this period, he



introduced several improvements in passenger services, launched new initiatives, and made a significant contribution towards revenue enhancement.

Under his leadership, premium trains such as Vande Bharat Express were operated successfully. During Operation Sindoor, in the emergency situation that arose, he ensured effective coordination with civil and military authorities and facilitated stranded passengers to reach their destinations. During the heavy rains and floods in 2025, special trains were operated for stranded passengers. Under his guidance, goods train operations were initiated in the Kashmir Valley, and new goods sheds such as the Anantnag Goods Terminal were also

commissioned.

During the Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar ceremony, more than 100 railway employees from various zones and divisions were honoured by the Hon'ble Union Railway Minister.

Expressing his happiness on receiving the Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar 2025 (AVRSP), Udit Singhal said, “This achievement is not mine alone, but the result of the honesty and hard work of all the employees of the division. It reflects significant improvement in passenger amenities, operational efficiency, and growth in revenue. In the year 2026, with a fresh beginning, several notable works will be undertaken in the interest of passenger convenience, safety, and revenue.”

## Water pipe leakage turns Tral’s Lurow Jagir playground into marsh

Locals, athletes accuse Jal Shakti Dept of apathy

Jahangeer Ganaie

Pulwama, Jan 09: The continuous water pipeline leakage at the only playground in Lurow Jagir area of Tral in south Kashmir’s Pulwama district has created serious difficulties for local athletes and residents, who have strongly criticised the Jal Shakti Department for failing to address the issue despite repeated appeals.

Local youth, who regularly gather at the ground for football and cricket practice, told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that for several weeks, a damaged water supply pipe running through the playground has been leaking continuously, flooding large portions of the ground.

They said the constant flow of water has turned the playing surface into slush, making it impossible for children and young athletes to use the facility for sports and physical activities.

“The situation has brought sporting activities in the village to a complete halt. This playground is the only space available to us for sports, but due to the leakage, it has become unusable,” said Nazir Ahmad, a cricketer.

“We have approached the concerned officials many times, yet no concrete action has been taken. Such negligence is discouraging young players and damaging the sports environment in our area,” Ahmad added.

Residents have also raised serious concerns over the massive wastage of drinking water

caused by the unattended leakage. They said thousands of litres of clean water are being lost daily, even as several areas in Tral continue to face intermittent water supply.

“It is heartbreaking to see potable water being wasted like this when many villages are struggling to get a regular supply,” said Mohammad Abdullah, a senior resident of Lurow Jagir. “The authorities must be held responsible. Allowing such a major leakage to continue for weeks reflects poor governance and a lack of accountability.”

Locals further alleged that officials from the Jal Shakti Department had visited the site on earlier occasions but left without repairing the damaged pipeline, reportedly citing technical issues. The residents said they fail to understand the delay, especially given the importance of the playground for the physical and mental well-being of the youth.

“We are not asking for any special favour,” said Mohammad Yaseen, another resident. “Our only demand is that the damaged pipe be repaired at the earliest so that children and youngsters can resume playing. If the leakage continues, the ground will be permanently ruined.”

The residents and athletes have once again urged the concerned department to intervene immediately and restore the playground before further damage is caused. (KNO)

## VC SKUAST-J calls on LG Sinha

Highlights university’s achievements



KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Jan 09: Prof. B. N. Tripathi, Vice Chancellor, SKUAST–Jammu and other delegations called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha at Lok Bhavan on Friday.

The VC SKUAST-J briefed the Lieutenant Governor on the progress achieved by the University in the areas of education, research, and extension, including major initiatives undertaken under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) and the J&K Climate Innovation Programme (JKCIP).

Prof. Tripathi informed that SKUAST–Jammu has been designated as a Centre/Regional Outreach Unit of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) for Jammu. The Centre will facilitate the collection of region-specific data on crop costs, prices, and farmers’ issues, thereby strengthening evidence-based Minimum Support Price (MSP) recommendations and farmer-centric policy planning.

The Vice Chancellor also apprised about the sanction of an ANRF-PAIR IIT Bombay Hub project under the Partnership for Accelerated Innovation and Research (PAIR) for the development of an AI-driven agriculture system aimed at

enhancing farmer market linkages and operational efficiency, with a focus on traditional products, involving an outlay of over Rs 6 crore.

In addition, an ICAR-NASF project for genome analysis amounting to Rs 2 crore has been sanctioned. He further informed that the establishment of an AICRP Centre for Poultry Breeding at SKUAST–Jammu is at an advanced stage of approval, while regular centres for beekeeping and mushroom cultivation are under active consideration by ICAR. At present, the University is implementing externally funded projects worth approximately Rs 100 crore.

Meanwhile, Anayat Ullah Rather, Member, District Development Council, Frisal Kulgam, called on LG Sinha.

Rahul Sahai, Chairman, Indian Chamber of Commerce, Jammu Chapter, also called on the Lieutenant Governor and put forth several key issues pertaining to the trade, commerce and industry sector.

Members of Civil Society Group, headed by Mohd. Iqbal Ahanger, Chairman, OBC Welfare Association J&K UT, also called on LG Manoj Sinha.

Subsequently, a delegation of Jewellers Association Jammu also called on the Lieutenant Governor.

## CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### Indus Water

Referring to the security situation, Omar Abdullah said last year began with the Pahalgam tourist attack and ended with blasts in Delhi. “This clearly shows the difference between what was promised and what is actually happening,” he said.

He said the government made sincere efforts to revive tourism after the Pahalgam attack but ensured that the tragedy was not measured in financial terms. “Precious human lives were lost. Tourism figures should not be exaggerated, as it can turn tourists into targets,” he added, while noting that recent snowfall has improved tourist footfall.

#### RENAMING MGNREGA WRONG MOVE

Criticising the Centre, Omar Abdullah said renaming MGNREGA was wrong as Mahatma Gandhi’s name was removed, and accused the Centre of shifting the financial burden of the scheme onto states.

On the Chattisinghpura killings of Sikhs, he said the CBI probe had identified the perpetrators, some of whom have died, while efforts are ongoing to bring the remaining accused to justice.

#### IF THEY WANT TO RUIN JAMMU, THEY ARE FREE TO GIVE IT STATEHOOD STATUS

Asked about speculations that Jammu may be granted separate statehood, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said that Ladakh had already been “ruined” after being given Union Territory status and warned against repeating the same experiment. “If they want to ruin Jammu, they are free to do so,” he said.

He remarked that even the establishment of a single medical college was not tolerated. “If this is the approach, what will they do with Jammu?” he asked.

CM Omar said Jammu’s economy had largely depended on the Darbar Move and it too was also done away with but the regime led by him restored it.

“In other parts of the country, people struggle to get medical colleges, but here sweets are distributed as if something extraordinary has been achieved,” he said, adding that if the intention is to create a separate state, “they should go ahead and ruin it completely.”

He also acknowledged the drug problem in J&K, saying it exists and the government is fighting it firmly. “We share borders with the neighbouring country and every possible effort is being put to ensure that drugs don’t enter J&K. The government is also working hard to end drug abuse in the region.”

Asked about minorities being targeted in Bangladesh, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said that it is the responsibility of every nation to protect its minorities. “While lessons are being offered to Bangladesh, the same principles must be implemented at home as well. Here, if minorities get admission in a medical college, the college itself is shut down,” he said. (KNO)

### NIDMS will become

He said that today’s launch of NIDMS will accelerate this process and prove to be an important milestone in the direction of making the country safe from terrorism.

Shah said that with the NIDMS being launched today, a two-way comprehensive, integrated and online data platform will become available to NIA, Anti-Terrorism Squads (ATS) across the country, state police forces and all Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs). He said that data related to any explosion or IED incident occurring at any location can be included

in this system.

“By utilising this data, necessary guidance can be obtained during investigations in every state. He said that NIDMS will prove extremely important in investigating terrorist activities, understanding trends in explosions, and formulating effective strategies against them,” he said.

Union Home Minister said that the database available with NSG contains data related to all bomb explosions from 1999 till now.

He said that through NIDMS, this data will now be made available to police forces across the country and relevant agencies.

“NIDMS will become a robust platform for accurately analysing the patterns of bomb explosions that have occurred in the country so far, the modus operandi (MO), and the explosives used,” he said.

He said that it will provide significant help in establishing inter-linkages between incidents-based on MO and circuit methods-as well as in understanding overall trends and insights.

The Home Minister said that through ‘One Nation, One Data Repository’, the data scattered across different departments will now become available to every police unit as a national asset.

Shah said that NSG is a strong pillar of our country’s internal security. Due to the valour, unique skills and unwavering dedication of NSG personnel, our citizens are able to sleep peacefully.

Union Home Minister said that the NSG is a world-class and zero-error force of India. The NSG was established in 1984, and since then, irrespective of the nature of any incident, it has continuously analyzed terrorist incidents across the world and has kept itself fully prepared to deal with every type of situation. He said that counter-terrorism operations, anti-aircraft hijacking missions, advanced systems for bomb disposal, and now the creation of a platform to share its data with all agencies are all important responsibilities being carried out by the NSG. The Home Minister said that for their valour, NSG officers and commandos have been honoured many times at various levels. These include three Ashok Chakras, two Kirti Chakras, three Shaurya Chakras, 10 Police Medals, and 44 Sena Medals.

Union Home Minister said that nearly 100 per cent of the country’s police stations—around 17,741—are connected to CCTNS, making their online data available. ICJS-2 is emerging as a next-generation data-sharing system based on the concept of ‘One Data–One Entry’. He said that, in addition to data from about 22,000 courts, records of approximately 2 crore 20 lakh prisoners through e-Prisons, data of 2 crore prosecutions through e-Prosecution, results of 31 lakh samples through e-Forensics, and records of 1 crore 21 lakh fingerprints through NAFIS are now available at the click of a button. NIDMS will also be added to this system. The Home Minister said that with the help of AI, NIDMS will connect with other data sources to create a strong security grid in the country. (KNO)

### Srinagar freezes at

minus 7.5 degrees compared to minus 6.8 degrees a day earlier, while Kupwara settled at minus 5.8 degrees, down from minus 5.1 degrees.

North Kashmir’s famous winter tourism spot and ski destination Gulmarg, however, recorded a relatively higher minimum temperature of

minus 7.2 degrees Celsius compared to minus 9.2 degrees the previous night.

In the Jammu region, night temperatures also dropped at several places. Jammu city recorded a minimum of 5.6 degrees Celsius, down from 7.1 degrees, while Banihal slipped below freezing at minus 0.9 degrees against 3.7 degrees on Thursday.

Udhampur recorded minus 1.0 degree compared to 2.0 degrees a day earlier, and Rajouri saw a slight fall to minus 1.7 degrees from minus 1.0 degree.

Ladakh continued to reel under extreme cold conditions.

Drass, the coldest place in the region, recorded minus 24.6 degrees Celsius, nearly unchanged from minus 24.7 degrees a day earlier.

Leh settled at minus 14.4 degrees compared to minus 14.6 degrees, while Nyoma saw a sharper dip to minus 21.6 degrees from minus 20.1 degrees.

Padum recorded minus 20.3 degrees against minus 17.2 degrees on Thursday.

Meanwhile, the Meteorological Department said there is no significant weather activity expected across the region till January 21.

It forecast the possibility of light snowfall at isolated higher reaches on January 22 and 23.

Officials said minimum temperatures are likely to fall further till January 10 and then rise gradually by one to two degrees Celsius thereafter.

“Dense fog is also expected at a few places in the Jammu division over the next five days,” the Met added. (KNO)

### Winter snowfall

in sustaining agriculture and horticulture in Kashmir.

“Snowfall acts as a natural reservoir. When it melts gradually during spring and summer, it ensures steady water availability for crops, orchards and drinking purposes,” he explained.

Dr Dar expressed concern over the below-normal or no snowfall witnessed so far this winter, warning that it could translate into acute water stress later in the year. “If snowfall remains deficient, water-intensive crops like paddy will be the worst hit. Paddy cultivation depends heavily on assured irrigation, and any disruption in water supply can severely impact both yield and livelihoods,” he said.

While noting that it is still early to draw firm conclusions, Dr Dar added that February, March and April are traditionally wet months in Kashmir. “We are hopeful that these months may compensate for the current deficit. Adequate rainfall or snowfall during this period can still help replenish water sources,” he added.

Dr Suhaib A Bandh, Assistant Professor of Environmental Science at S P College Srinagar, said prolonged dry weather poses a serious threat to orchards and fruit crops, which form the economic backbone of Kashmir. “Dry spells disturb natural irrigation cycles, reduce soil moisture and weaken trees, making them more vulnerable to pests and diseases,” he said.

He explained that insufficient winter moisture adversely affects root development and flowering in fruit trees, which can ultimately impact fruit size, quality and overall production. “Apple, pear and other fruit crops are particularly sensitive to moisture stress during critical growth stages,” he said.

Dr Bandh called for long-term adaptation measures, saying: “Strategic water management practices, promotion of drought-resistant

crop varieties, efficient irrigation systems and climate-resilient agricultural techniques are essential to mitigate the impact of prolonged dry spells on Kashmir’s horticulture sector.”

Meanwhile, Dr Umar Mushtaq, a scientist at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKAUST), highlighted the uncertainty surrounding the impact of the current winter on the next farming season. “At this stage, it is difficult to precisely predict how the present dry conditions will affect next year’s crops,” he said.

Dr Mushtaq said that if sufficient precipitation occurs in the remaining winter days, the situation may still improve. However, he cautioned that a largely dry winter could have implications for fruit quality in the coming year. “If the entire winter remains dry, there are chances of fruit quality issues next season, depending on other climatic and agronomic factors,” he said.

Experts warn that the consequences of a snow-deficient winter go beyond agriculture. Reduced snowfall, they said, can lead to declining spring discharge in rivers, streams and springs, affecting drinking water schemes, hydropower generation and overall ecological balance in the Valley. (KNO)

### Hydel power

Power Producers (IPP) of Jammu.

The official figures also reveal that PDD was generating only 58 MWs of power from the Kashmir based power plants.

As already reported by KNO, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh is likely to witness power deficiency of more than 34 percent during the peak demand in the month of January.

According to the official figures, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh during the peak demand will likely have a power deficit of 34.2 percent against the available power position.

The updated anticipated power supply position for January-2026 for both the Union Territories reveals that there will be a peak availability of 2460 Megawatts (MWs) against the requirement of 3737 MWs—keeping a loophole of 1277 MWs.

However, the official documents also said that representatives of HP SLDC, Punjab SLDC and J&K SLDC informed that the shortfall would be met through real-time exchanges and Banking arrangements.

Earlier KNO reported that in Jammu and Kashmir, hydel power generation has reduced by nearly 70 percent from the local generation plants.

An official had informed that the power generation from all the power plants owned by Jammu and Kashmir has decreased by nearly 800-900 Megawatts (MWs).

The official had also said, “The power generation from across local power plants is currently ranging from 330 MWs to 400 MWs.”

It also said, “From one of the plants from Baglihar, the power generation is ranging from 250-380 MWs and in case of another power plant of Baglihar, Kishenpur and New Wanpoh, we are generating a maximum of one MW.”

The official further informed that the department is able to generate only 71 MWs from Kashmir based power plants. (KNO)

### IGP Kashmir interacts

the probationers and congratulated them on joining the police service, emphasizing that integrity, fairness, impartiality, accountability, and discipline must guide all police actions.

V.K. Birdi highlighted the roles and responsibilities of DySPs in operations, investigations, law and order, and administrative supervision, stressing sound decision-making, leadership, and learning during the initial years of service. He underscored the importance of professional, thorough, and outcome-oriented investigations, with adherence to procedural requirements under special laws such as the UAPA and NDPS Act.

The IGP advised the officers to acquire investigative and operational skills, maintain comprehensive knowledge of criminal laws and procedures, and utilize information technology effectively. He emphasized adherence to police rules, standing orders, and proper documentation, including FIR drafting, petitions, case laws, police station management, and register maintenance.

Professional conduct, discipline, supervision of subordinates, proper uniform turnout, and ethical behaviour were stressed. Officers were encouraged to develop interpersonal skills, humility, moral values, and consult Bare Acts, manuals, and official instructions to enhance competence.

V.K. Birdi highlighted the importance of public engagement, advising officers to adopt a problem-solving approach, balance compassion with firmness, and exercise responsible use of social media.

The programme concluded with the probationary officers reaffirming their commitment to serve with dedication, integrity, and responsibility, upholding the values and traditions of the Jammu and Kashmir Police. (KNO)

### Baramulla–Uri

loss of life and property”, reads the order.

Pertinently, the highway had witnessed multiple landslides in the recent past, causing severe inconvenience to commuters.

The incidents compelled authorities to halt traffic movement and divert traffic flow through the dilapidated Khadnyar–Gantamulla road. (KNO)

### Two army porters

He was immediately rushed to GMC Baramulla, where doctors declared him brought dead, an official said. (KNO)

### Porter’s family

was their sole breadwinner. He is survived by his wife, two young children and elderly parents.

“We have lost our only source of livelihood. I am old and unable to work. We have been left at the mercy of God,” the deceased’s father, Jamal-Ud-Din, told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO). He urged the government to support them.

Neighbours, narrating the family concerns, described the Khatana’s death as a tragedy not just for his family, but for the entire village.

“It was the family’s poor financial condition that compelled Ishfaq to work in such tough terrain where life is full of risks,” one of the neighbours said. “We hope the Government of India takes note of the family’s situation.”

On Thursday evening, two army porters slipped into Nallah while enroute to Anita Post in the Gulmarg hills, the cut-off area due to snowfall.

The duo was identified as Ishfaq Ahmed Khatana and Layakat Ahmed Deedard, both natives of Chandoosa village. (KNO)



# India's many languages never divided but helped preserve shared civilisational ethos: VP

PTI

New Delhi, Jan 09: Vice President C P Radhakrishnan on Friday asserted that India's many languages have never divided the nation but have instead preserved and strengthened a shared civilisational ethos and a common 'dharma.'

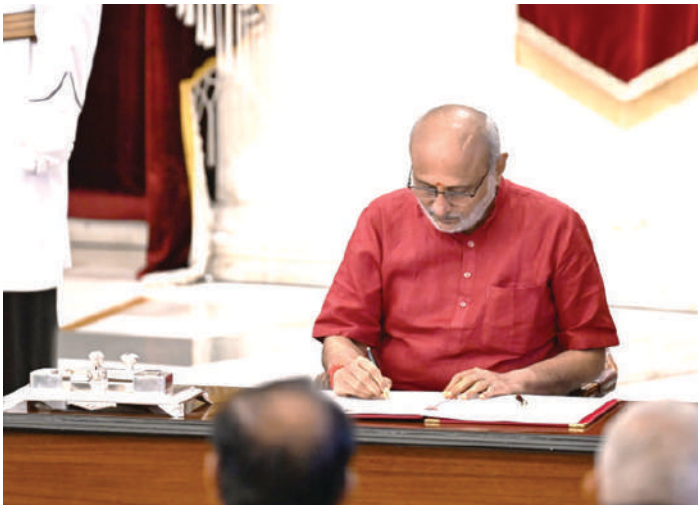
He also said that the Constitution and its Eighth Schedule reflect India's ancient wisdom by recognising and celebrating linguistic diversity, affirming that national unity rests not on uniformity but on mutual respect.

Democracy, he said, flourishes when every citizen can express themselves in their own language.

Radhakrishnan made these remarks in his inaugural address of the third International Conference on Indian Languages in New Delhi.

Sharing his experience from his first session of Parliament as Chair of the Rajya Sabha, the vice president noted that an increasing number of Members of Parliament are now speaking in their respective mother tongues.

He also recalled that the copy of the translation of Constitution was recently released in the



Santhali language by President Droupadi Murmu, describing it as a significant step towards linguistic inclusion and democratic respect for all speech communities.

Highlighting contemporary challenges, he cautioned that many indigenous languages across the world are endangered.

Language conferences, he said, play a vital role in strengthening research, international academic collaboration and the preservation of ancient scripts

and manuscripts, particularly of endangered languages. He underlined that every Indian language has contributed profoundly to philosophy, medicine, science, governance and spirituality. Calling for technology to become an ally in language preservation, the vice president advocated the use of digital archives, AI-based translation tools and multi-lingual platforms to ensure that Indian languages thrive in the present and shape the future.

# Army chief's visits to UAE, SL significantly advanced defence ties with both nations

PTI

New Delhi, Jan 09: Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi's visit to the UAE and Sri Lanka this month has "significantly advanced" defence and military-to-military cooperation with both countries through enhanced strategic dialogues and tangible capacity-building initiatives, officials said on Friday.

General Dwivedi visited the Gulf nation from January 5-6 and Sri Lanka from January 7-8.

The visits reinforced India's commitment to deepening defence cooperation, enhancing military-to-military engagement and strengthening strategic partnerships with the friendly nations in West Asia and the Indian Ocean Region, the defence ministry said in a statement.

The Army chief's two-nation tour also "bolstered mutual trust, strengthened interoperability and underscored India's role as a reliable and trusted defence partner", it said.

The successful engagements reaffirmed India's commitment to fostering peace, stability and cooperative security in the Indian Ocean Region and West Asia, while deepening long-standing



defence partnerships with the friendly nations, the officials said. During his visit to the UAE, Gen Dwivedi held wide-ranging discussions with the senior leadership of the UAE Armed Forces, including the commander of the UAE Land Forces, focusing on strengthening defence cooperation, enhancing interoperability and expanding avenues for joint training and professional military exchanges. The Army chief's trip to the UAE took place weeks after the Gulf nation's Commander of the Presidential Guard, Major General Ali Saif Humaid Alkaabi, visited India.

Gen Dwivedi's visit also followed fast-paced developments

in the Gulf region, including escalating tensions between the UAE and Saudi Arabia over the situation in Yemen.

"General Upendra Dwivedi, as part of his ongoing visit to the UAE, interacted with Major General Staff Yousef Maayouf Saeed Al Hallami, Commander, UAE Land Forces.

The discussions focused on enhancing positive military engagement, training convergence and advancing bilateral defence cooperation between India and the UAE," the Army posted on X on January 5.

During his visit, the general received detailed briefings on the organisational structure, roles and operational

capabilities of the UAE Land Forces and visited key military establishments, where he interacted with officers and troops.

"These engagements provided an opportunity to exchange best practices and explore collaboration in areas of mutual interest," a senior official said.

Gen Dwivedi also addressed officers at the UAE National Defence College, underscoring the importance of strategic dialogue, leadership development and shared perspectives on regional and global security challenges.

The visit also included an interaction with the Indian Ambassador to the UAE, Deepak Mittal, during which issues of defence diplomacy and cooperation were discussed, the officials said.

On the Sri Lanka leg of his two-nation visit, Gen Dwivedi held substantive discussions with the senior military and civil leadership, including the commander of the Sri Lanka Army, the deputy minister of defence and the defence secretary, focusing on training cooperation, capacity building, defence education and regional security dynamics, the defence ministry said.

# Two more held in Turkman Gate stone-pelting incident 13 arrests so far

PTI

New Delhi, Jan 09: The Delhi Police on Friday arrested two more persons accused in the Turkman Gate stone-pelting incident, taking the total number of arrests in the case to 13, while security personnel deployed in the area remained on high alert in view of Friday prayers, officials said.

"On Friday, we have arrested two people. So far, we have arrested 13 people. Further investigation is underway. Tight security measures will be maintained in the area," Additional Commissioner of Police (Central) Nidhin Valsan told PTI.

The Delhi Police have so far arrested 13 people, identified as, Mohd Arib (25), Mohd Kashif (25), Mohd Kaif (23), Mohd Adnan (37), Sameer Husain (40), Mohd Athar (20), Shahnawaz Alam (55), Mohd Imran (28), Mohd Imran alias Raju (36), Mohd Affan (20), Mohd Adil (20), Mohd Aamir Hamza (22) and Mohd Ubaidullah (26).

Police sources said at least 30 people offered Friday prayers at the same mosque. A large number of police and paramilitary personnel have been deployed in sensitive pockets to maintain law and order, while senior officers are supervising arrangements on the ground.

According to police, additional forces have been stationed near mosques and adjoining lanes, with pickets set up at strategic points to regulate movement and prevent any untoward incident.

Police are also conducting drone surveillance and extensive CCTV monitoring to keep a tight vigil in the area, officials



said, adding that the situation is peaceful and under control.

Clarifying concerns related to Friday prayers, the ACP said no restrictions were imposed on any mosque.

"We have not put any restrictions on Friday prayers in any mosque. We have also checked the structural safety of the demolition site," he said, adding that prohibitory restrictions imposed earlier would be removed soon after normalcy is restored.

Another senior police officer said the security measures were purely precautionary.

"We have made adequate arrangements in view of Friday prayers. Our teams are maintaining strict vigil and are in constant touch with local community members to ensure peace. We have not even restricted the number of visitors to the mosque," the officer said.

As part of the investigation, police have identified 10 social media influencers for allegedly circulating misleading or unverified information related to the incident. Officials said one social media influencer, Aimen Rizvi, is yet to join the investigation despite being summoned.

## Stray dogs case

# SC refuses to go into allegation of harassment of women dog feeders

PTI

New Delhi, Jan 09: The Supreme Court on Friday said it would not go into the allegations of harassment of women dog feeders and caregivers by purported anti-feeder vigilantes since it was a law and order issue and the aggrieved persons could lodge FIRs about it.

Hearing arguments in the stray dogs case, the apex court also refused to go into the claims about certain derogatory remarks being made about women in the issue.

A three-judge special bench comprising Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta and N V Anjaria observed that some of the arguments made before it were "far from reality" and there were a number of videos of stray dogs attacking children and the elderly.

The top court was hearing arguments on pleas, including the ones filed by dog lovers, seeking modification of its earlier orders and those for stringent compliance with the directives.

Senior advocate Mahalakshmi Pavani highlighted the plight of women dog feeders and caregivers and said anti-feeder vigilantes have assumed the role of enforcing the apex court's order passed earlier in the matter. "Under the garb of this, they are harassing women, they are molesting women, and they are beating women," she said.

Justice Nath observed, "Lodge



an FIR against them. Who stops you?" The bench said that if anyone was harassing or molesting women, it was a crime, and the aggrieved person could set the criminal law in motion by lodging an FIR.

When Pavani referred to an incident where a dog feeder was attacked in her house, the bench said, "All this is a criminal offence. You lodge an FIR against that".

"We can't take up these individual cases where something is going wrong somewhere. This court is not going to monitor that. That is a law-and-order problem," Justice Nath observed.

Pavani said that in Haryana, certain societies hired bouncers to remove dog feeders, and a woman was slapped in Ghaziabad, but no FIR was lodged.

"We are not going to accept this. If a criminal offence is

committed, an FIR will be registered. There are procedures available to you, remedies available, and how to get it registered," the bench said.

The senior advocate flagged the issue of unregulated breeding and exotic imports.

"Again, this has nothing to do with the stray dogs issue. There are remedies in the Act and the rules. Don't make this a platform for other objects. You address us on the issues which we are dealing with in this matter," the bench said.

It said the import of the top court's order was very clear, and it was restricted to stray dogs only. "Tomorrow, you will say why Cheetahs have been imported to Kuno (national park). Why not take care of the local breeds? This is too much. Sorry," Justice Mehta said.

# Stock markets take downtrend for 5th day; Sensex, Nifty tank nearly 1 pc

PTI

Mumbai, Jan 09: Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty buckled under selling pressure for the fifth straight session on Friday, falling nearly 1 per cent, as investors turned cautious due to growing concerns over potential US tariff hikes amid lingering geopolitical worries.

The relentless foreign capital flight from Indian equities also affected the market sentiment, traders said.

After a brief rebound in early trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex failed to carry forward the momentum and tumbled 604.72 points, or 0.72 per cent, to sink below the 84,000-level and settle at 83,576.24. During the day, it dropped 778.68 points, or 0.92 per cent, to 83,402.28.

A total of 3,104 stocks declined, while 1,062 advanced and 176 remained unchanged on the BSE.

The 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 193.55 points or 0.75 per cent to 25,683.30.

In the past five trading days, the BSE benchmark declined 2,185.77 points, or 2.54 per cent, and the Nifty tumbled 645.25 points, or 2.45 per cent.

"Market sentiment stayed subdued amid elevated geopolitical and global trade-related concerns, particularly renewed uncertainty around potential US tariff actions and related Supreme Court developments. Persistent foreign institutional selling and weakness across broader risk assets further compounded the negative bias, while heavyweights also added to the downside pressure," Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

From the Sensex pack, NTPC, ICICI Bank, Adani Ports, Bharti Airtel, Sun Pharma and Bajaj Finance were among the biggest laggards.

In contrast, Asian Paints, HCL Tech, Bharat Electronics and Reliance Industries were among the gainers.

"On the macro front, market participants remained cautious ahead of the domestic inflation data for December, scheduled to be released on Monday.

"On the global front, market participants stayed on the sidelines amid caution ahead of a US Supreme Court decision on the validity of American tariffs. Sentiment was further dented after US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick indicated on Friday that the India-US trade agreement had been delayed," Ashika Institutional Equities said in a note.

The BSE smallcap gauge tanked 1.74 per cent, and the midcap index dropped 0.90 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, realty tumbled 2.22 per cent, services (1.84 per cent), utilities (1.82 per cent), power (1.79 per cent), telecommunication (1.41 per cent), auto (1.22 per cent), consumer discretionary (1.14 per cent) and financial services (1.09 per cent).

BSE Energy, IT, PSU bank, oil & gas, and BSE Focused IT were the winners.

On Thursday, the Sensex fell 780.18 points or 0.92 per cent to settle at 84,180.96. The Nifty tumbled 263.90 points or 1.01 per cent to 25,876.85.

Domestic markets remained in a risk-off mode amid persistent uncertainty over US-India tariff talks and escalating geopolitical tensions, especially concerns over potential US trade measures linked to Russia-related sanctions, according to Bajaj Broking Research.

# Don't eat meat, yet want to increase B12 levels naturally?

## Here are 5 Indian vegetarian foods that help

TOI HEALTH

New Delhi, Jan 09: Vitamin B12 deficiency is a widespread health issue affecting millions of Indian vegetarians because their diet heavily consists of plants, yet their body needs animal-derived B12 sources. The body requires this vital nutrient to maintain nerve function, produce red blood cells and generate energy, but vegetarians often fail to obtain enough. However, apart from supplements, a couple of vegetarian Indian foods can help in improving your B12 levels. Take a look...

Milk  
A standard glass of cow's milk contains 1.1 micrograms of vitamin B12, which fulfills 45% of the needed 2.4 micrograms for daily adult vitamin B12 intake. Milk serves as the foundation for Indian household beverages which include chai, milkshakes and warm glasses that families can consume every day, thus providing an easy method to increase their milk consumption. Research shows that



B12 in milk exists in a form which the body can easily absorb at high rates, regardless of age or stomach acid levels. The spice combination with turmeric (haldi), will provide additional anti-inflammatory properties, while you can also use it to make your breakfast porridge. Milk is especially beneficial for children and pregnant women, because it enables their development through natural means without requiring additional supplements.

Yogurt

One serving of plain low-fat yogurt contains 0.6-1.0 micrograms of B12, and the live cultures in the product help with better

gut health which improves B12 absorption. Every Indian meal includes dahi which serves as a digestive aid, that also helps combat B12 deficiency symptoms which manifest as mouth ulcers and constipation. The fermentation process leads to a minimal increase in B12 content because bacteria create small amounts of this nutrient during the process, which results in better B12 content in homemade curd than in store-bought curd. Studies link regular yogurt intake to higher serum B12 levels in South Indian vegetarians. The supplement contains probiotics which help

decrease body inflammation that results from B12 deficiency, and causes nerve tingling symptoms. The iron-B12 combination in menstruation provides women with a protective mechanism against anemia.

Cheese

The B12 content in 100 grams of homemade paneer made from fresh ingredients, amounts to 0.7-0.8 micrograms, which fulfills one-third of your daily needs, and contains 18-20 grams of protein. The product serves lacto-vegetarians, who need to address both B12 deficiencies and muscle strength requirements. Research indicates that paneer's curdled texture maintains B12 levels during cooking processes, which other processed cheeses do not achieve. Opt for low-fat versions to balance calories, and include it 3-4 times weekly. The Indian population benefits from paneer because it solves the dual problem of protein deficiency and B12 deficiency which exists in this country. The bone-strengthening properties of calcium in this

food help protect against osteoporosis, which occurs when people depend on dairy products for their nutrition. Grill or steam to retain nutrients fully.

Fortified Cereals (sugar-free)

The B12 vitamins found in breakfast cereals contain 1.0-2.5 micrograms of this nutrient per serving. Research shows that food fortification provides people with B12 that matches the amount which can be found in animal products. The manufacturing process of processed foods keeps its ingredients at stable levels throughout its complete production cycle. The selected option provides suitable results for individuals who select their meals carefully, and for senior citizens who have difficulty processing dairy substances. In deficiency-prone India, fortified grains cut anemia rates by 15-20% in trials. Select low-sugar varieties to avoid blood sugar spikes.

Disclaimer: This article is informational only and not a substitute for medical advice



## Iran supreme leader signals crackdown coming as protesters are 'ruining their own streets' for Trump

AP

Dubai, Jan 09: Iran's supreme leader signalled Friday that security forces would crack down on protesters, directly challenging US President Donald Trump's pledge to support those peacefully demonstrating.

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei dismissed Trump as having hands "stained with the blood of Iranians" as supporters shouted "Death to America!" in footage aired by Iranian state television.

State media later repeatedly referred to demonstrators as "terrorists," setting the stage for a violent crackdown like those that have followed other nationwide protests in recent years.

Protesters are "ruining their own streets ... in order to please the president of the United States," Khamenei said to a crowd at his compound in Tehran. "Because he said that he would come to their aid. He should pay attention to the state of his own country instead."

Iran's judiciary chief Gholamhossein Mohseni-Ejei separately vowed that punishment for protesters "will be decisive, maximum and without any legal leniency." There was



no immediate response from Washington, though Trump has repeated his pledge to strike Iran if protesters are killed, a threat that's taken on greater significance after the US military raid that seized Venezuela's Nicolás Maduro.

Internet cut off

Despite Iran's theocracy cutting off the nation from the internet and international telephone calls, short online videos shared by activists purported to show protesters chanting against Iran's government around bonfires as debris littered the streets in the capital, Tehran, and other

areas into Friday morning.

Iranian state media alleged "terrorist agents" of the US and Israel set fires and sparked violence. It also said there were "casualties," without elaborating.

The full scope of the demonstrations couldn't be immediately determined due to the communications blackout, though it represented yet another escalation in protests that began over Iran's ailing economy and that has morphed into the most significant challenge to the government in several years. The protests have intensified steadily

since beginning December 28.

The protests also represented the first test of whether the Iranian public could be swayed by Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi, whose fatally ill father fled Iran just before the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution. Pahlavi, who called for the protests Thursday night, similarly has called for demonstrations at 8 pm Friday.

Demonstrations have included cries in support of the shah, something that could bring a death sentence in the past but now underlines the anger fuelling the protests that began over Iran's ailing economy.

So far, violence around the demonstrations has killed at least 42 people while more than 2,270 others have been detained, said the US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency.

"What turned the tide of the protests was former Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi's calls for Iranians to take to the streets at 8 pm on Thursday and Friday," said Holly Dagres, a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. "Per social media posts, it became clear that Iranians had delivered and were taking the call seriously to protest in order to oust the Islamic Republic."

## South Korea's ex-Prez Yoon faces potential death sentence request in trial

REUTERS

Seoul, Jan 09: South Korea's special prosecutor is expected to make a sentencing request for former president Yoon Suk Yeol on charges of insurrection over his brief imposition of martial law in 2024, as a lower court trial convened on Friday for its final session. Yoon, who is accused of masterminding an insurrection, could face the death penalty or life in prison under South Korean law if found guilty. South Korea has followed an unofficial moratorium for nearly 30 years and has not executed a death-row inmate since 1997.

In hearings at the Seoul Central District Court, prosecutors have alleged Yoon and then-defense minister, Kim Yong-hyun, began devising a scheme as far back as October 2023 to suspend parliament and take over legislative powers.

Prosecutors allege Yoon



sought to brand political opponents — including then-opposition leader Lee Jae Myung — as "anti-state forces" and detain them. The then president and Kim also tried to manufacture a pretext for martial law by escalating tensions with North Korea through a covert drone operation, prosecutors have said.

While the botched bid to impose martial law lasted only about six hours, it sent

shockwaves through Asia's fourth-largest economy, a key US security ally and long considered one of Asia's most resilient democracies.

Yoon, 65, has denied the charges. The conservative has argued it was within his powers as president to declare martial law and that the action was aimed at sounding the alarm over opposition parties' obstruction of government.

## Pope Leo warns of 'shrinking' freedom of expression in Western countries

REUTERS

Vatican City, Jan 09: Pope Leo warned on Friday that freedom of expression is "rapidly shrinking" in Western countries, and urged the right to conscientious objection for people who refuse military service or for doctors who refuse to perform abortions or euthanasia.

"It is painful to see how, especially in the West, the space for genuine freedom of expression is rapidly shrinking," the pope said in an address to diplomats accredited to the Vatican.

"A new Orwellian-style language is developing which, in an attempt to be increasingly inclusive, ends up excluding those who do not conform to the ideologies that are fueling it," said Leo, the first US pope.

## 'China, Russia, South Africa to hold naval exercise'

REUTERS

Beijing, Jan 09: China will hold naval and air exercises with Russia, South Africa and other BRICS countries off South Africa's coast in early to mid January, China's defense ministry said in a statement released on Friday.

The ministry called the exercises "joint operations to safeguard vital shipping lanes and economic activities." Strikes on maritime targets and counter-terrorism rescues will be part of the drills, it said.

Originally formed by Brazil, Russia, India and China, the BRICS group later added South Africa



and recently expanded to include other developing nations including Indonesia, Iran and Saudi Arabia.

The Chinese defense ministry did not specify how many BRICS nations will participate in the exercises.

## BCB official calling Tamim 'an Indian agent' invites wrath of Bangladesh players



PTI

Dhaka, Jan 09: A senior Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) official calling former captain Tamim Iqbal "an Indian agent" has not gone down well with the players in the country. Tamim, one of the finest openers to have come out of Bangladesh, had advised the BCB to not be driven by emotion while deciding

the way forward on the national team's participation in the T20 World Cup in India. Nazmul, chairman of BCB finance committee, called the left-hander opener "an Indian agent" in a Facebook post.

"This time, the people of Bangladesh witnessed, with their own eyes, the emergence of yet another proven Indian agent," he wrote. The post

received immediate backlash from former and current cricketers, including Taskin Ahmed, Momimul Haque and Taijul Islam. Even the Cricketers' Welfare Association of Bangladesh (CWAB) expressed shock at Nazmul's comments.

"A comment made by BCB director M Nazmul Islam regarding former national captain Tamim Iqbal

has come to the attention of the Cricketers' Welfare Association of Bangladesh. We are stunned, shocked, and outraged by it.

"Such a remark by a board official about the most successful opener in Bangladesh's history, who represented the country for 16 years, is utterly condemnable.

"Not only because it concerns a player like Tamim, but such comments about any cricketer of the country are unacceptable and insulting to the entire cricketing community," the players' body said in a statement.

The 36-year-old Tamim played 70 Tests, 243 ODIs and 78 T20 Internationals for his country in a fairly accomplished career.

## Sindhu advances to Malaysia Open semifinals; Satwik-Chirag bow out



PTI

Kuala Lumpur, Jan 09: Two-time Olympic medalist P V Sindhu advanced to the semifinals of Malaysia Open after her opponent Akane Yamaguchi of Japan retired due to injury, while India's ace men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankiredy and Chirag Shetty bowed out of the Super 1000 badminton tournament in the quarterfinals here on Friday. Pitted against third-seed Yamaguchi in the quarterfinals, Sindhu took the opening game 21-11 before the three-time world champion from Japan, who was wearing a knee brace, decided to pull out of the match.

The win took world No. 18 Sindhu's head-to-head record to 15-12 against Yamaguchi.

Sindhu, who is competing in her first tournament after returning from a prolonged injury lay-off, will face second seed Wang Zhiyi of China in the semifinals.

Wang defeated sixth seeded Indonesian Putri Kusuma Wardani 21-17, 21-18, Satwik-Chirag lose. Later in the day,

India's two-time world championships bronze-medallist men's doubles pair of Satwik and Chirag lost to lower-ranked Fajar Alfian and Muhammad Fikri of Indonesia 10-21, 21-23 in the quarterfinals in 47 minutes.

The third-seeded Indians, finalists in the Hong Kong Open and China Masters last year, were no match in the opening game with the Indonesians dominating with their powerful smashes. After the Indonesian pair reeled off five straight points, the Indian duo finally opened their account. At 12-4, things looked dismal for Satwik-Chirag with Alfian and Fikri taking the last five points with ease to win the opening game.

The second game saw a more committed Indian pair slugging it out and managing to take a substantial lead on a few occasions.

Leading 18-14, Satwik-Chirag could not hold the advantage, allowing the opponents to draw level at 19-all. At 21-all, the Indonesians took the decisive last two points to win the contest.

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