

Use power of art for positive change: LG Sinha to youth

‘Artists, thinkers, painters, sculptors conscience of society, they inspire public participation in democracy, nation’s dev journey’

KNO Desk

Jammu, Jan 12: Urging young generation to use the power of art for positive change, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, on Monday described art as mirror and a guide for society. Addressing the Golden Jubilee celebration of Kesar Art Circle at Kala Kendra here, LG Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, “Art is both a mirror and a guide for society. Youth must embrace art as a medium to preserve their cultural identity, ensuring they remain rooted while contributing to the vision of a Viksit Bharat.”

He said, “From spiritual, cultural roots to new creative horizons, it is our collective responsibility to reimagine Jammu Kashmir as an art hub. In this endeavour, I hope to see



the contribution of painters and writers to build the artistic future of the Union Territory of Jammu Kashmir.”

The Lieutenant Governor emphasised that preservation of our sacred heritage is the foundation to create the future. “Transforming Jammu Kashmir’s cultural and spiritual

soul into a global art hub is a shared responsibility. I believe art is a bridge to connect diverse cultures and to revive our ancient spiritual and cultural legacy,” he said.

LG Sinha highlighted the vital role of artists, thinkers, painters, sculptors as the “conscience of society,” inspiring public

participation in democracy and the nation’s development journey.

The Lieutenant Governor stated that art forms like painting and sculpture are not mere entertainment and luxuries but vibrant forces that determine how a society thinks and moves forward. Throughout human civilization, art has given voice to emotions that transcend language, fostering empathy and social cohesion, he said. He called upon the young generation to use the power of art for positive change.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor inaugurated a painting exhibition and also felicitated various artists.

The Lieutenant Governor felicitated Bhushan Kesar, renowned painter and Founder Kesar Art Circle. He lauded Bhushan | [More on P6](#)

Budget 2026-27 to be presented by CM on Feb 6

Two-month long session to begin with LG’s address on Feb 2 House to break for one month recess for Ramdhan

KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, Jan 12: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah will present Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory’s second budget in the Legislative Assembly on February 6.

According to the tentative calendar issued by the Legislative Assembly Secretariat, a copy of which is in possession of news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the annual financial statement for 2026-27 and the supplementary statement of expenditure for 2025-26 will be presented in the House on February 6.

The budget will be presented by the Chief Minister, who is also the Minister in-charge of Finance, almost one month and a day earlier than the last budget presented by him. The budget for 2025-26 was presented by Omar Abdullah on March 7, 2024.

The two-month-and-two-day-long budget session, comprising 22 sittings, will begin



on February 2 with Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha’s address to the House, which will be his third since the formation of the elected government in October 2024.

The LG’s address will be followed by discussion for three days, scheduled for February 3, 4 and 5. The Chief Minister will

wind up the discussion on the Motion of Thanks on February 5.

On the next day, February 6, J&K’s Finance Minister, who happens to be CM Omar Abdullah, will present the annual financial statement for 2026-27 and the supplementary statement of expenditure for 2025-26. | [More on P6](#)

Nearly 10% of adolescents in J&K are pre-diabetic

Reasons: Bad dietary habits, sedentary lifestyle, screen time, low physical activity, obesity

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Jan 12: The burden of diabetes is no longer limited to adults; it is increasingly affecting children and teenagers as well.

According to the ‘Children in India 2025’ report by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, accessed by the news agency - Kashmir News Observer (KNO), 9.7 out of every 10-19-year-old adolescents in Jammu and Kashmir are in a pre-diabetic stage.

Doctors say this is very concerning and requires urgent lifestyle changes and public health measures. They said that about 10 per cent of young

people in this age group are pre-diabetic, which puts them at high risk of developing full-blown diabetes if no action is taken quickly.

Dr Khurshed Ahmad Mir from DHSK said most of these cases are linked to the excessive consumption of sugary drinks, fast food, and processed foods. “The shift towards convenience foods has replaced traditional diets, leading to poor metabolism even at a young age,” he said.

Dr Mir further said that increased screen time and decreased outdoor play have led to a rise in physical inactivity. “This reduces insulin sensitivity, meaning | [More on P6](#)

When Jammu got IIT, IIM no one termed it discrimination with Kashmir: CM Omar

Allow govt to take decision on National Law University’s location Big decisions in Budget, no bias against Jammu

Sajid Raina

Jammu, Jan 12: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday said that when Jammu got IIT and IIM no one termed it as a discrimination with Kashmir but when proposal about establishing National Law University (NLU) in the Valley is being finalized, questions are being raised.

Talking to reporters here, CM Omar, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said, “When IIT and IIM were sanctioned for Jammu, no one talked about equality or raised objections that one should go to Jammu



and one to Kashmir.”

“Now, when it comes to the National Law University, people start talking about discrimination. Let the government take a decision first.”

He said the matter should be left to the government and assured that a decision would be taken after due consideration.

Chief Secretary releases DIPR Calendar-2026 & Official Diary

KT News Desk

Jammu, Jan 12: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Monday released the Calendar-2026 and Official Diary of the Department of Information & Public Relations (DIPR) at a function held here.

The Calendar and Diary, brought out annually by the Department of Information & Public Relations, highlight important landmarks, cultural heritage, developmental initiatives and key achievements of the UT besides serving as an important reference and documentation tool for government functioning.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Secretary appreciated the efforts of the Department of



Information & Public Relations in effectively documenting and disseminating information related to government policies, programmes and achievements. He underscored the crucial role played by the department in strengthening transparent communication between the government and the public, and in showcasing the socio-economic

and developmental progress of Jammu and Kashmir.

Commissioner Secretary, Information and General Administration Department, M. Raju, and Director, Information & Public Relations, Nitish Rajora, were also present on the occasion.

Among others present were Special | [More on P6](#)

Intense cold grips Kashmir, fog disrupts life in Jammu

MeT forecasts dry weather till Jan 15, snow likely later

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Jan 12: An intense cold wave continued to affect Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh on Monday, disrupting normal life and business activity, even as minimum temperatures across most parts of the region showed a marginal improvement compared to the previous day.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) Srinagar recorded a minimum temperature of minus 2.4 degrees Celsius, a significant rise from minus 5.2 degrees Celsius a day



earlier. Similar improvement was recorded in other areas, with Qazigund at minus 3.6 degrees compared to minus 5.8 degrees yesterday, and

Pahalgam recording minus 3.4 degrees, up from minus 7.6 degrees.

Pulwama, however, remained one | [More on P6](#)

Army foils multiple drone intrusions along LoC

Sajid Raina

Jammu, Jan 12: The Army intercepted several drones suspected to be from Pakistan along International Border and the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu region on Monday.

An official while talking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, “Late Sunday evening, soldiers detected a drone near the Naushera sector in Rajouri district. Counter-unmanned aerial systems were immediately activated, forcing the drone to retreat across the LoC. No casualties or damage were reported.”

The official said that five separate drone sightings were recorded along the LoC and the International | [More on P6](#)

CM Omar Abdullah reviews Jammu’s development

- Directs early completion of projects
- Calls for permanent flood restoration works
- Inaugurates projects worth ₹19.05 cr
- Lays foundation of works worth ₹13.48 cr
- Flags off sewerage machines, ambulance



KT News Desk

Jammu, Jan 12: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday chaired a high-level meeting to review the overall

development scenario of Jammu district, with a focus on expediting key infrastructure projects, improving irrigation facilities, strengthening flood restoration works

and ensuring optimal utilisation of funds.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, Ministers Sakina Itoo, Javed

Ahmad Rana, Javid Ahmed Dar and Satish Sharma, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Chairman District Development Council Jammu Bharat Bhushan, Member of Parliament Jammu Jugal Kishore Sharma and all Members of the Legislative Assembly from the district.

Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Divisional Commissioner Jammu Ramesh Kumar, Inspector General of Police Jammu B.S. Tuti, Deputy Commissioner Jammu Rakesh Minhas, heads of | [More on P6](#)

Avoid night travel on Jammu–Srinagar highway: Traffic Police

Urge adherence to lane discipline, say advisory issued for passengers’ safety

KNO Correspondent

Srinagar/Jammu, Jan 12: Authorities on Monday advised passengers and Light Motor Vehicle (LMV) operators to avoid travelling during night hours on the Jammu–Srinagar National Highway and to plan their journeys during the daytime.

The Traffic Police, in its advisory, said that night movement of Heavy Motor Vehicles (HMs) between the Nashri Tunnel and Navyug Tunnel often causes inconvenience to commuters, and should be

avoided.

Motorists have been urged to strictly follow lane discipline and warned that overtaking and wrong-lane driving lead to traffic congestion, according to the advisory accessed by the news agency - Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

Subject to fair weather and road conditions, LMVs, passenger vehicles, police said private cars and HMs (goods carriers) will be allowed from both sides on the National Highway, with Traffic Control Units coordinating and monitoring road status. | [More on P6](#)

CS reviews availability, functionality of girls’ toilet facilities in govt schools across J&K

‘Ensure functional girls’ toilets by Feb 15’

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, JANUARY 12: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo Monday reviewed the status of availability and functionality of toilet facilities for girl students in government schools across J&K.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Public Works Department (PWD), Secretary, School Education Department, the Directors of School Education, Chief Engineers, and other senior officers concerned.

During the review, the Chief Secretary, as per an official statement, assessed the infrastructure created under various schemes aimed at ensuring adequate sanitation facilities for girl students, emphasizing that access to clean and functional toilets is a critical factor in promoting attendance, retention and dignity of students in schools.

The Chief Secretary took a detailed assessment of the number of toilets constructed, those under execution and their present functional



status. He stressed that mere creation of infrastructure is not sufficient and underlined the need to ensure that all existing toilets are fully functional, with assured water supply and other allied utilities.

Directing strict adherence to timelines, the Chief Secretary instructed that all ongoing works related to construction and upgradation of girls’ toilets must be completed by 15th February. He further asked the School Education Department to ensure that toilets already constructed are made operational in

every respect well before the stipulated deadline.

To ensure effective implementation at the ground level, the Chief Secretary ordered the constitution of zone-level committees, comprising officers from both the School Education Department and the Roads & Buildings (R&B) Department. These committees will conduct joint inspections of schools to identify gaps, assess repair and improvement requirements, and oversee execution of necessary works to make the facilities fully functional.

The Chief Secretary

underscored that access to clean and functional sanitation facilities is essential for creating a safe, inclusive and girl-friendly learning environment and called for close inter-departmental coordination and continuous monitoring to ensure timely completion and sustained maintenance of the facilities.

During the meeting, Additional Chief Secretary, PWD, Shri Anil Kumar Singh, informed that the department is committed to completing all assigned works within the prescribed timeframe. He added that in

locations where conventional construction is not feasible within the deadline, prefabricated toilet structures will be installed to ensure availability of facilities well before the stipulated date. Giving a detailed presentation, Secretary, School Education Department, Ram Niwas Sharma, informed that out of a total of 18,724 government schools across the Union Territory, 18,023 schools (99.25%) have toilet facilities. He further stated that 17,403 schools (92.29%) have separate toilets for girls, while just 1,321 schools (7.11%) are presently without such facilities.

It was also informed that construction of 265 girls’ toilets is currently under execution, while the remaining 1,056 schools without separate toilet facilities for girl students are being taken up in a time-bound manner. These works will be completed before the start of the academic session in winter-zone areas and by 15th February in summer-zone schools across the Union Territory.

Deputy CM extends Lohri greetings, meets public delegations



KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, January 12: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, Monday extended warm greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the auspicious occasion of Lohri festival.

Highlighting the cultural significance of the festival, the Deputy Chief Minister, as per an official statement, said that Lohri is a celebration of the bounties of nature and signifies the transition of seasons towards spring.

Wishing people peace, prosperity and happiness, the Deputy Chief Minister expressed hope that the festival would usher in a new era of peace, harmony and prosperity across Jammu and Kashmir.

Earlier in the day, the Deputy Chief Minister met various public and individual delegations at the Civil Secretariat, Jammu. He reiterated that the

government remains fully committed to the inclusive and holistic development of Jammu and Kashmir.

During the interactions, the delegations from different districts including industrialists, business representatives, students, job aspirants, aspiring entrepreneurs, civil society organisations and individuals apprised the Deputy Chief Minister of their concerns, demands and pressing issues.

The Deputy Chief Minister emphasised the importance of prompt service delivery while ensuring maximum coverage of beneficiaries under various welfare and developmental schemes.

He issued on-the-spot directions to the concerned officers for speedy resolution of issues raised during the interactions. He assured the delegations that all their genuine issues would be taken up with the concerned departments for early and effective resolution.

Mission Vatsalya Bandipora celebrates National Youth Day

KT NEWS DESK

BANDIPORA, JANUARY 12: Mission Vatsalya Bandipora Monday celebrated National Youth Day with great enthusiasm and fervour at the Officers Academy of Science and Social Sciences, Bandipora, marking the birth anniversary of the great philosopher and youth icon Swami Vivekananda Ji.

The event, as per an official statement, witnessed the participation of a large gathering

of students, teachers, academicians, intellectuals, media persons, and officials from various child protection institutions.

Officials from District Child Protection Unit, Child Welfare Committee (CWC), Juvenile Justice Board, Child Helpline and Child Helpdesk Bandipora were present, reflecting strong inter-departmental coordination for youth and child welfare.

Chairperson CWC

Bandipora, in her address, emphasized the timeless teachings of Swami Vivekananda, urging youth to adopt values of discipline, self-confidence, and service to society. She stressed that the youth are the strongest pillar of the nation and play a decisive role in shaping its future.

Protection Officer, DCPU Bandipora, spoke on the responsibilities of young people in nation-building and encouraged students

to channelize their energy positively through education, innovation, and social responsibility. He also highlighted the role of Mission Vatsalya in safeguarding the rights and well-being of children and adolescents.

Coodinator CHL addressed the gathering and highlighted Swami Vivekananda Ji’s vision of empowered, educated, and morally strong youth. He underlined that today’s youth must balance

modern education with ethical values to contribute meaningfully to society and the nation.

To actively engage students, several activities were organized, including a quiz programme and a painting competition, which saw enthusiastic participation from students. The activities aimed at promoting awareness about youth empowerment, national values, and the legacy of Swami Vivekananda Ji.

Div Com Kashmir directs fast-tracking of inundation model for Kashmir flood zoning

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 12: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, on Monday directed the concerned agencies to expedite the development of inundation model for flood zoning in Kashmir especially regarding floods with a recurrence interval of once in twenty-five years.

Highlighting the significance of availability of the model, the Divisional Commissioner, as per an official statement emphasised that it is critical for enabling the administration to undertake effective planning and response measures to minimize the impact of major floods occurring in a



25-year cycle.

He instructed the consultant engaged by the Jammu and Kashmir Economic Reconstruction

Agency (JKERA) to define a clear timeline for the completion of the model, ensuring high levels of accuracy and reliability.

During the meeting, it was informed that the consultancy is presently working on a hydrological model for major floods with a recurrence interval of once in hundred years.

Meanwhile, the Divisional Commissioner directed the Irrigation and Flood Control (I&FC) Department to obtain digitized maps of Anchar Lake and Wular Lake from the Chief Conservator of Forests to facilitate the identification and delineation of river basins. The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioners, the Chief Executive Officer JKERA, Assistant Commissioner Central, Executive Engineers of I&FC, officers from JKWRRA and representatives from Kashmir University.

Div Com Kashmir reviews digitisation of Jamabandis

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 11: Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Anshul Garg, on Monday chaired a review meeting with all Deputy Commissioners (DCs) of Kashmir division to assess the progress of various important administrative matters across the division.

He reviewed progress of digitization of Jamabandis, migrant inventory, online service delivery, redressal of public and migrant grievances and monitoring of private coaching centres in the districts. Besides, he reviewed status of pending cases under SRO-43 related to families of terror victims and mutation of defence land.

Addressing the meeting, the Div Com, as per an official statement, directed the DCs to expedite the processing of pending SRO-43 cases to ensure timely appointments for eligible family members of terror victims. He also emphasized close coordination with concerned agencies to resolve any clarifications at the earliest.

Regarding land transfer cases to security agencies, Garg

instructed the DCs to complete mutations in a time-bound manner. He further directed them to prioritize the disposal of public and migrant grievances, received through both online and offline modes.

In view of the ongoing drug de-addiction campaign, the Div Com stressed regular monitoring and inspections of coaching centres and called for extensive IEC (Information, Education and Communication) activities. He reiterated that inspections of coaching centres should be conducted regularly by district administrations.

The Div Com also instructed DCs to hold monthly NCORD meetings to review progress on drug de-addiction initiatives.

Also, he directed the Deputy Commissioners to simultaneously process all revenue-related matters, including the digitization of Jamabandis, to ensure efficiency and transparency in service delivery.

On the occasion, Deputy Commissioners briefed the Divisional Commissioner on the status of pending and ongoing cases in their respective jurisdictions.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir UT OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PW(R&B) DIVISION CHRARI-SHARIEF

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
Single cover system

E-NIT No.44 /RNB/CHRR of 2025-26

Dated:10/01/2026

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: -

SN	Nome of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. In Lacs) Incl. GST	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rupees)	Earnest Money (In Rupees)	Time of completion	M.H OF Account	Class Of Contactor
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Construction of Teacher Quarter at Higher Secondary School Hardu Dalwan (Civil part)	34.80	1100/-	69600/-	06 Months	PAB 2025-26	A/B
2	Construction of ACR at Primary School Alimpora (Civil part)	19.93	800/-	39860/-	04 Months	PAB 2025-26	B/C
3	Construction of ACR at Higher Secondary School Hardu Dalwan (Civil part)	17.11	800/-	34220/-	04 Months	PAB 2025-26	B/C

Position of AAA: -

Accorded

Position of TS: -

Sanctioned

Position of funds: -

Committed/Available

Project Authority:

Directorate of SAMAGRA SHIKSHA J&K

1. 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 seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:-

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	10.01.2026
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	12.01.2026
3	Bid submission Start Date	12.01.2026
4	Bid Submission End Date	27.01.2026 upto 11.30 AM.
5	Date & time of opening of Technical Bids	28.01.2026 at 4.00 PM. in the office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Chararisharief

Note: -The Bidders are advised to read all conditions laid down in the NIT carefully before uploading softcopy.

Any short fall found in the soft copy will render the Bid rejected.

As per Circular issued by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir Civil Sectarat Finance department vide No.OM

No.A/24(2017)-651 dtd.07-06-2018 which reads as under: -

a) Furnishing of Hard Copies of bids immediately after submission of e-tenders is dispensed with. The same should be obtained only from the Bidder who's declared 1st Lowest (L-1) after opening of financial bids.

b) The Cost of tender document should be collected by introducing Treasury Challan (Receipt).

2. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan (deposited in MH: 0059) in favour of **Executive Engineer R&B Division Chararisharief** (Tender Inviting Authority) and Earnest money / Bid security in shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to **Executive Engineer R&B Division Chararisharief** (Tender Receiving Authority). The Bank Guarantee should be valid for 45 days beyond bid validity.

19. All other terms conditions are as per PWD Form 25 (Double agreement Form).

DIPK-9962/25

DATED: 12-01-2026

Executive Engineer
PW(R&B) Division Chararisharief

From Iran, a Whisper of Relief

Audio Clip Reassures Kashmiri families amid unrest

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Jan 12: Families across Kashmir are feeling worried and unsure after days of silence from students studying in Iran. Due to civil unrest and internet shutdowns, parents have been unable to contact their children.

However, a short audio message from a Kashmiri girl studying in Iran has briefly eased some fears, as she assured her family she is safe.

The message was shared through a friend travelling to Afghanistan and has become a small hope for many families waiting for updates.

"Don't worry, I am fine. I spoke to brother ji and others as well," she says in the message, which was recorded on her phone and forwarded through a friend who was travelling



to Afghanistan.

The audio reached the girl's family after her

friend arrived there.

The clip, circulating quietly among parents'

groups, has become the only lifeline of hope for dozens of families unable to reach their children. Many said phone lines and messaging apps have remained down for nearly four days amid the unrest.

Amid rising panic, the Jammu and Kashmir Students Association (JKSA) has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar, urging them to ensure the safety, security, and welfare of Indian students stranded in Iran.

"Parents are extremely distressed and unable to connect with their children. We have been receiving continuous distress calls from families across the Valley," said Nasir Khuehami, National Convenor of JKSA. "Nearly 2,000 Kashmiri students are pursuing medical education across provinces, including Tehran, Urumiyeh, Arak, Mazandaran,

Kish, Ahvaz, Esfahan, Shiraz, Golestan and Kerman."

He said the Association has sought round-the-clock communication lines between the Indian Embassy in Tehran and students, as well as an emergency evacuation plan if the security situation deteriorates.

The JKSA said it has urged the government to act swiftly if conditions worsen.

Meanwhile, Dr Mohammad Momin Khan, Vice President of the All India Medical Students Association (AIMSA) and FAIMA Doctors Association, said all Indian students in Iran are safe.

He said all exams and classes have been suspended till January 24.

Khan said he was unable to respond to every call and message, but assured that all students are safe.

CS reviews 'Vande Mataram' Phase-II preparations

KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Jan 12: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Monday reviewed the preparations for Phase-II of the Commemoration of 150 Years of 'Vande Mataram', the National Song of India, scheduled to be observed across the J&K from January 19 to January 26, 2026, coinciding with the Republic Day celebrations together with the national celebrations held on this occasion.

The review meeting was attended by Principal Secretary, Culture Department; Commissioner Secretary, Tourism; Secretary, School Education; Director, School Education, and other senior officers of the concerned departments. Deputy Commissioners from all districts participated in the meeting through video conferencing.

During the review, the Chief Secretary highly appreciated the exemplary performance of all districts during Phase-I, which enabled Jammu & Kashmir to emerge as the top-performing region in the country, surpassing even the largest States in terms of scale, participation and overall impact of the celebrations.

He lauded the coordinated efforts of district administrations, along with the School and Higher Education Departments, for successfully organizing large-scale patriotic and cultural



programmes that effectively showcased the historical, cultural and emotional significance of VandeMataram as a powerful symbol of India's freedom struggle and national unity.

Encouraging the Deputy Commissioners to sustain the momentum, the Chief Secretary urged them to ensure equally stellar performance during Phase-II, beginning January 19.

He emphasized that the second phase should further deepen public engagement, particularly among youth, students and community groups, and strengthen the spirit of national pride, unity and patriotism across the Union Territory.

While reviewing the Action

Plan for Phase-II, the Chief Secretary underscored the importance of effective publicity, documentation and outreach.

He directed that a robust and structured publicity campaign be undertaken through the Directorate of Information & Public Relations (DIPR).

Special emphasis was laid on uploading maximum photographs and videos on the dedicated Government of India portal www.vandemataram150.in, along with enhanced outreach through official social media platforms using a common hashtag to maximize visibility at the national level.

Earlier, Principal Secretary, Culture Department, Brij Mohan

extensive youth participation.

He further informed that the key activities planned during Phase-II include Vande Mataram Torch Relays across all districts to symbolize unity and national pride; mass singing of Vande Mataram at educational institutions, government offices, Panchayat Ghars and community centres; and integration of the Vande Mataram theme in all Republic Day programmes at the UT, district, tehsil and institutional levels.

Additionally, a range of special programmes such as essay writing, poster-making and debate competitions, Vande Mataram exhibitions, and youth marathons will be organized to ensure maximum public participation and awareness, especially among young citizens.

Reiterating his directions to all district administrations and concerned stakeholders, the Chief Secretary stressed that the commemoration of 150 years of Vande Mataram should be observed not merely as a series of events but as a people's movement to reconnect citizens with the ideals of freedom, unity and national pride.

He called upon all departments to work with dedication and commitment to make Phase-II celebrations impactful, inclusive and memorable.

Govt appoints G H Sheikh as interim JKBOSE Chairman

DSEJ to hold additional charge of Director JKSCERT

KNO

Srinagar, Jan 12: The government Monday assigned Gulam Hassan Sheikh, Secretary, J&K Board of School Education (JKBOSE) with the additional charge to act as interim chairman for the Board.

A government order reads: "In exercise of the powers conferred by sub- section (1) of section 12 of Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education Act, 1975 (Act No. XXVIII of 1975), the Government orders that Gulam Hassan Sheikh, JKAS, Secretary, J&K Board of School Education, shall discharge the functions of Chairman, J&K Board of School Education, in addition to his own duties, as an interim arrangement, till further orders."

In another separate order, the government has ordered that the Director, School Education Jammu (DSEJ) shall hold the charge of the post of Director, Jammu and Kashmir, State Council of Educational Research and Training (JKSCERT).

"In the interest of

administration, it is ordered that Naseem Javid Chowdhary, JKAS, Director, School Education, Jammu, shall hold the charge of the post of Director JKSCERT in addition to his own duties, till further orders," it reads.

Pertinently, JKBOSE has had no proper chairman for the past more than a year and is functioning with an interim arrangement.

The post of JKBOSE chairman has been lying vacant since the date tenure of Parikshat Singh Manhas expired more than a year back.

Dr Manhas was appointed as Chairman in February 2023 and his tenure was expiring on January 24, 2025. However, the government had extended his term as JKBOSE Chairman and Director SCERT for a period of one month from the date of expiry of his previous term.

Since then, the board was functioning with an interim arrangement and the officer who was holding the charge of JKBOSE attained superannuation on December-31-2025—(KNO)

J&K girls shine at Khelo India Asmita

WARIS FAYAZ

Srinagar, Jan 12: In a debut at the Khelo India Asmita Cycling League, Jammu and Kashmir's women cycling team from Baramulla district lit up the national stage with their remarkable performances. Ulfat Mushtaq of Rafiabab Sopore led the charge, with her 10th place in the gruelling 30 km time trial and followed it with an 11th place finish in the 60 km mass start. Similarly, Mehak Mushtaq of Palhallan Pattan, while showing incredible grit, secured 12th in the 30 km time trial. Energetic Mehak battled back from a crash to claim 13th in a 60 km mass start.

Among the junior athletes, Sofia Hilal and Sobiya Manzoor — both hailing from Sopore with their impressive performance, clinched 7th and 8th positions respectively, while Hoor-i-Ein Lone of Tujjer Sopore rounded out the proud contingent with a solid 16th place.

The maiden participation of the young athletes from Jammu and Kashmir in the league held at Kurukshetra, Haryana, was historic, filling the entire region with pride.

Jammu and Kashmir Sports Council (JKSC) congratulated the athletes, wishing them continued success and more history-making moments ahead—(KNO)

Categorize bills by paying capacity: MP Ruhullah to CM Omar

RAJA SYED RATHER

Kangan, Jan 12: Calling upon Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to categorize the electricity bills according to the paying capacities of the people, Member Parliament and senior National Conference leader, Aga Ruhullah, on Monday expressed concern over hike in the power tariff.

Talking to reporters here, Ruhullah said, "Most of the people here belong to the BPL category and live below the poverty line. The electricity fee is increased and increased equally for each category. The rates applied to the normal category are also applied to the BPL category and the fee is increased repeatedly."



"The power tariff has increased from Rs 1800 to Rs 2200 and now it has been raised to Rs 2700. Wherever there is scope for increase, it should be increased." However, he was quick to add, "The BPL category faces lot of difficulties in running their families. It is the responsibility of the government, the Chief Minister is

also responsible, as he is also the minister of this department, it is his responsibility to categorize and bill the fees etc. according to the category."

He said, "I also want to tell the government through you that we many promises through our manifesto, including that we will provide relief to the people. We can at

least provide relief to the BPL category with regard to electricity."

MP Ruhullah said he had come to Kangan to inspect some road projects that were given under PMGSY and were approved by the Government of India. "Funding has come and we are inaugurating four roads under PMGSY in Kangan. I would like to thank our officers who worked for their DPR etc. for these projects, helped us and we were able to make this funding possible. Hopefully, the work on these roads will be completed within the deadline and through this, the work will be completed and facilities will be provided to these populations—(KNO)



YOGESH

Jammu, Jan 12: National Conference (NC) president and former Chief Minister, Dr Farooq Abdullah on Monday strongly rejected the idea of dividing Jammu and Kashmir.

"These regions are one and cannot be separated. Any split would be like cutting off the head from the body, with Jammu as the head and Kashmir as the torso," Dr Abdullah said during a visit to the Narwal Fruit Mandi here on Monday.

His remarks directly countered a "controversial" demand by BJP MLA Sham Lal Sharma for separate statehood to the Jammu region, citing alleged discrimination.

However, the BJP's Jammu and Kashmir president, Sat Sharma, has distanced himself from the proposal, clarifying that it does not reflect the party's official stand.

Dr Abdullah went further, claiming that even the people of Ladakh — carved out as a separate Union Territory following

the 2019 revocation of Article 370 by the BJP-led central government — now wish to rejoin the fold of Jammu and Kashmir.

Accompanied by senior NC leaders, including Jammu provincial president Rattan Lal Gupta and chairman of the Scheduled Caste Cell Vijay Lochan, the former CM engaged with office-bearers of the Narwal Fruit Mandi Association.

He listened attentively to their concerns, ranging from infrastructure upgrades to better facilities, and assured them that the NC-led government in the UT is committed to addressing these issues promptly.

Highlighting the administration's efforts over the past year, Abdullah emphasised initiatives aimed at the betterment of all people in Jammu and Kashmir.

"There is no need to worry... all the promises made to the people will be fulfilled," he said, reaffirming the party's focus on equitable development and unity across regions—(KNO)

Suspected human remains reopen wounds of Gandbal boat tragedy

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Jan 12: Two years after the Gandbal Srinagar boat tragedy that claimed eight lives and left an entire locality in mourning, grief returned to the banks of the Jhelum on Sunday.

Locals stumbled upon what appeared to be "a human foot emerging from the sand" near the same stretch of river, a chilling discovery that has once again reignited memories of the 2024 tragedy.

The "human foot" spotted by residents engaged in sand collection

triggered shock and sorrow in Gandbal Srinagar, a riverside settlement still haunted by the April 2024 disaster. Authorities were immediately alerted, and by Monday morning, the Indian Navy's elite MARCOS (Marine Commandos) joined a renewed search operation along the Jhelum to trace the source of the remains.

"We were clearing sand when one of us noticed something that looked like a human foot," a sand collector, one of the first to spot the remains said. "It was half-buried, pale and stiff. For a moment,

everything around us froze. All we could think of was that night."

Officials said the suspected human remains have been sent for forensic examination to confirm their origin and its identification.

"The MARCOS and SDRF are jointly scanning the river stretch and adjoining banks," an official said, adding that the search continued through Monday evening while visibility remained good and would resume Tuesday morning.

For many in Gandbal, the find has

reopened old wounds, particularly for the family of Showkat Ahmad Sheikh, the 40-year-old mason who went missing when the overloaded boat ferrying children and women capsized midstream on April 16, 2024.

"We never saw his body," said Rafiq Begum, a resident of Gandbal, her voice trembling. "We performed his funeral without a grave. When we heard about the foot, we prayed it might finally give us an answer."

Continued on
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EDITORIAL

Why Empowering Youth Is Key To A Viksit Bharat

The vibrant discussions at the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue signal a vital national shift in recognising the youth not merely as beneficiaries of development but as its primary architects. The focus on innovation, entrepreneurship, and skill development is the correct strategic lens through which to view India's journey to a developed nation by 2047. Empowering young leaders is an essential economic and social imperative. For regions like

Jammu & Kashmir, this focus holds transformative potential. The alignment of local strengths, including handicrafts, tourism, agri-based industries, and IT, with national missions such as 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' and 'Vocal for Local', can unlock unprecedented growth. However, ideas and passion alone are insufficient. They require a supportive ecosystem that translates dialogue into tangible outcomes. This means moving beyond inspiration to implementation:

simplifying regulatory processes for MSMEs, enhancing access to venture capital and mentorship, and creating market linkages for startups. The government's role is to act as an enabler, building the infrastructure, both digital and physical, that allows young innovators to thrive. The parallel emphasis on sports infrastructure, as seen in the discussions on new cricket stadia, is equally astute. Sports are a powerful tool for youth engagement, discipline, and national pride.

Developing world-class facilities does more than nurture athletic talent; it promotes a culture of excellence, provides constructive avenues for energy, and can position regions as hubs for sporting tourism and events. The true success of such dialogues will be measured by their on-ground impact. The ideas generated must be systematically incubated and scaled. This requires sustained collaboration between central and state authorities, the private sector, and educational

institutions to create a seamless pipeline from innovation to enterprise. By investing decisively in the capabilities and creativity of its young population, India is investing in its most dynamic asset. For J&K and the nation, the path to a Viksit Bharat will be paved by the energy of its youth, provided they are given the tools, trust, and terrain to build. The dialogue has set the vision; the relentless work of empowerment must now begin.

=== YEAR ENDER ===

Justice Reimagined: 2025 Sees Digital Push, Wider Access, And Faster Courts

With 157 judges appointed, 3.6 lakh cases cleared, 92 lakh cases e-filed, 579 crore pages digitised, and legal advice to over 1.12 crore citizens, technology reshapes India's justice delivery landscape

1. Appointment and transfer of Judges: 157 Judges were appointed in the High Courts - Allahabad (40), Andhra Pradesh (03), Bombay (21), Calcutta (04), Delhi (09), Gauhati (06), Gujarat (07), Himachal Pradesh (02), J&K and Ladakh (02), Karnataka (04), Madhya Pradesh (15), Patna (04), Punjab & Haryana (14), Rajasthan (15), Telangana (08), and Uttarakhand (03). 47 Additional Judges made Permanent Judges in High Courts- Andhra Pradesh (04), Bombay (09), Calcutta (03), Chhattisgarh (02), Gauhati (04), J&K and Ladakh (03), Karnataka (02), Kerala (03), Madras (08), Meghalaya (01), P&H (04), Telangana (03), Tripura (01). Tenure of 13 Additional Judges of High Courts was extended-

Bombay (02), Calcutta (07), Chhattisgarh (03), Gauhati (01).

12 Chief Justices in various High Courts were appointed - Bombay, Gauhati, Jharkhand, J&K and Ladakh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Orissa, Patna.

44 High Court Judges were transferred from one High Court to another.

2. Tele-Law: Reaching the Unreached During the FY 2025-2026 the Tele-Law has been expanded to cover 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats across 776 districts (including 112 aspirational districts and 500 aspirational blocks) in 36 states and UTs. About 275 lawyers have been engaged to provide pre litigation advice. As on 31st December 2025, 1.12 crore + beneficiaries have been provided with Pre litigation advice and consultation.

District Level Workshop and Training - From January to December 2025 638 District Level workshops and training were organized. During the period these workshops were attended by 37,514 participants including Village Level Entrepreneur (VLEs), government officials and other ground level functionaries of the other Ministries/Departments; During the period 280 awareness sessions were conducted on the implementation of Tele-Law through CSCs, Tele-Law Citizens' Mobile App, Tele-Law help line number 14454, and human assistance from the VLEs and 500 Nyaya Sahayaks across aspirational blocks.

Awareness drives by VLEs: Initiatives were undertaken by Tele-Law VLEs to conduct special awareness camps in pockets of their region where awareness on Tele-Law is limited or zero awareness. VLEs made special efforts by using various mode of transport such as e-rickshaw, Mobile vans, Auto-rickshaw, Motorcycle, Bicycle etc. to spread awareness on Tele-Law.

Strengthen data analytics- Intensive data inputs and data drivers have been analyzed to strengthen and capture the advice delivered through Tele-Law e-platform.

Hamara Samvidhan Hamara Samman, national campaign to inculcate constitutional values and spirit among the citizens was bolstered through various indigenous sub campaigns-Sabko Nyaya Har Ghar Nyaya, Nav Bharat Nav Sankalp and Vidhi Jagriti Abhiyaan. Episodes highlighting information on socio-legal issues were broadcasted through Doordarshan and aired through Akashwani. Campaign reached out to 70.70 lakh people in the country. Various competition cum awareness generation activity were undertaken with support from MeITY for example reading of panch paran pledge, DISHA awareness activities by Law Schools in villages adopted by them etc. The campaign was concluded in January 2025.

3. LAP (Legal Aid to Poor): Celebration of Legal Services Day on 8th and 9th November 2025

On November 8, 2025, Honourable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the 20th National Conference on "Strengthening Legal Aid Delivery Mechanisms" to commemorate 30 years of NALSA and advance the concept of "Ease of Justice." Key initiatives highlighted include the launch of a Community Mediation Training Module to resolve local disputes, the translation of over 80,000 Supreme Court judgments into 18 regional languages to ensure linguistic accessibility, and emphasis on the ongoing repeal of obsolete colonial laws in favor of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. With the Legal Aid Defence Council System already resolving 8 lakh criminal cases in three years, the Prime Minister called upon young legal professionals to act as "community anchors" in ensuring that free, simplified, and accessible justice reaches every citizen regardless of their

background.

ii). National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) launched the "Veer Parivar Sahayata Yojana" Scheme to strengthen Legal Aid to Defence Personnel and families

On July 26, 2025, the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) launched the "Veer Parivar Sahayata Yojana" in Srinagar, an initiative introduced by Justice Surya Kant to provide dedicated legal aid to military and paramilitary personnel and their families. Operating under the theme of reaffirming justice for defense personnel and tribals, the scheme integrates legal service clinics directly into District, State and Central Sainik Boards to ensure that legal guidance is accessible at the same locations where personnel seek welfare services. This strategic mission aims to protect the rights of those who protect the nation's borders, leveraging Sainik Boards as nodal centers to provide seamless support and simplify the process for soldiers and their families to resolve legal grievances at home.

iii). Schemes on Human-Wildlife Conflict and Support for Dependents of Prisoners & Victims of Crime along with e-book on Compendium on Human Wildlife Conflict launched at Southern Regional Conference in Kerala

On August 30th 2025, National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), in collaboration with the Kerala State Legal Services Authority (KeLSA), inaugurated the Southern Regional Conference on "Human-Wildlife Conflict & Co-existence: Legal and Policy Perspectives" at the Kerala Legislative Assembly Hall, Thiruvananthapuram.

The two-day conference has brought together Hon'ble Judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts, senior officials from forest and disaster management departments, legal services institutions, and experts to deliberate on legal, policy, and community-based responses to the growing challenge of human-wildlife conflict. As part of the inaugural programme, NALSA launched below major initiatives, along with dedicated videos to enhance public outreach.

(A) NALSA Scheme for Victims of Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC), 2025

NALSA Scheme for Victims of Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC), 2025 focuses on addressing the legal and economic vulnerabilities of communities in forest-fringe areas by providing free legal aid, awareness, and assistance in securing timely compensation for victims of human-wildlife encounters. Rooted in the constitutional principles of Article 21 (Right to Life) and Article 48A (Protection of Environment), the scheme treats ecological preservation as a necessity for human sustenance. A major highlight of the program is the launch of a first-of-its-kind digital compendium—an e-book that centralizes national and state-level guidelines, judicial pronouncements, and policy frameworks—to serve as a comprehensive resource for navigating the legal complexities of human-wildlife coexistence. An e-book on Compendium on Human Wildlife Conflict, a first-of-its-kind digital resource compiling national and state-level schemes, guidelines, circulars, advisories, directives, judicial pronouncements and policy frameworks was also launched.

(B) NALSA's Supporting Potential and Resilience of the Unseen, Held-back and Affected (SPRUHA) Scheme, 2025:

NALSA's SPRUHA Scheme establishes a "cradle-to-reintegration" support system designed to assist the dependents of incarcerated persons and victims of crime who often face significant legal and economic vulnerabilities. By providing a combination of free legal aid and professional counselling, the scheme helps families navigate the complexities of the justice system while simultaneously addressing the social stigma associated with imprisonment. Beyond legal support, the program focuses on long-term stability by ensuring educational continuity for children, offering vocational training for families, and facilitating the successful social and economic reintegration of individuals to maintain family cohesion during and after incarceration.

4. eCourts Mission Mode Project:

The eCourts Mission Mode Project was launched to improve access to justice through the use of technology and has been implemented in three phases. Phase-I, launched in 2011 with an outlay of Rs 935 crore, focused on basic computerization of courts and establishment of local network connectivity. Phase-II began in 2015 with an outlay of Rs 1,670 crore and expanded the project towards citizen-centric digital services, under which 18,735 District and Subordinate Courts have been computerized. On 13.09.2023, the Cabinet approved Phase-III with a budgetary outlay of Rs

7,210 crore for a four-year period. Phase-III aims at creating digital and paperless courts through digitization of legacy and current case records, expansion of video conferencing to courts, jails and selected hospitals, adoption of AI and OCR, extension of virtual courts beyond traffic offences, and universal saturation of eSewa Kendras.

Over the years, the eCourts project has developed a digital ecosystem throughout the lifecycle of a case. The e-Filing portal allows lawyers and litigants to file cases electronically on a 24x7 basis without physical visits to courts. They can also make online payments of court fees, fines etc using the e-Payment portal under the jurisdiction of 24 High Courts. Approximately 92.08 lakh cases have been filed electronically, and the e-Payments system has processed 49.2 lakh transactions amounting to Rs 1,215.98 crore towards court fees and 4.86 lakh transactions worth Rs 61.97 crore towards fines.

All the cases filed in the courts are managed end-to-end digitally through the Case Information System (CIS), now upgraded to CIS 4.0. Each case is assigned a unique CNR number, enabling litigants to track case status seamlessly. This digitization of the case records makes the online availability of information on case status, cause lists and judgments etc through multilingual e-Courts portal. In addition, the case related information is delivered to the litigants and lawyers through multiple service delivery channels including SMS push and pull, emails, Judicial Service Centres, information kiosks, the e-Courts mobile app with 3.38 crore downloads. The courts currently issue over 4 lakh SMS and 6 lakh emails daily, record nearly 35 lakh daily hits on the e-Courts portal, and have sent more than 14 crore SMS to litigants and advocates.

The CIS also consumes seamlessly the data from various Interoperable Criminal Justice System (ICJS) initiatives such as Crime and Criminal Tracking Networks & Systems of the police, e-Prison, e-Forensic etc rendering the criminal justice system more efficient.

The National Service and Tracking of Electronic Processes (NSTEP) has been developed for process serving and issue of summons. NSTEP is currently functional in 28 States/UTs, has generated 6.21 crore e-processes, of which 1.61 crore have been successfully delivered.

Courts are increasingly adopting virtual and hybrid modes of functioning. Video conferencing facilities support hearings across courts, jails and other institutions, with over 3.91 crore virtual hearings conducted since the Covid lockdown period, positioning India as a global leader in virtual hearings. Live streaming of court proceedings has been implemented in 11 High Courts and the Constitutional Benches of the Supreme Court. 29 virtual courts in 21 States and UTs have been set up to try traffic offences, having adjudicated more than 8.9 crore cases and realized more than Rs 895 crore in fines. The Delhi High Court has established 34 Digital Courts to hear cheque bounce cases under Section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act.

Large-scale digitization of court records has been undertaken covering 3108 crore pages in Phase - III. Currently, 224.66 crore pages in High Courts and 354.87 crore pages in District Courts, amounting to over 579 crore pages of judicial records have been digitized. Digital Courts 2.1 enables judges to access pleadings, evidence and case records entirely in digital form, with pilot implementation already underway. In addition, the JustIS app facilitates the judges in online case management.

The National Judicial Data Grid enables lawyers and litigants to access case information and more than 34.23 crore orders and judgments. A dedicated Judgment & Order Search portal has been inaugurated which hosts 1.69 crore judgments and allows easy retrieval of judicial decisions. Advanced technologies such as AI-based tools, analytics and OCR are now being integrated for case analysis, decision support, and efficient record management.

Citizen access and inclusivity have been strengthened through 1,987 eSewa Kendras established across the country to facilitate citizen centric services, helping bridge the digital divide. Network infrastructure across courts has been strengthened through WAN connectivity to 2,977 out of 2,992 court complexes, achieving 99.5 % coverage with bandwidth ranging from 10 Mbps to 100 Mbps. All eCourts portals are now hosted on NIC's Cloud infrastructure, and 730 District Court websites have been migrated to the S3WAAS platform. In addition, solar power systems have been installed in 1,471 out of 1,530 targeted court complexes to ensure uninterrupted ICT operations.

The e-Committee of the Supreme Court of India

has conducted 910 training programmes and trained 3,22,740 stakeholders, including judges, court staff, advocates and technical personnel, with specialized programmes for visually challenged officers and training in cybersecurity and digital forensics.

The project has also received national recognition, including the National Award for e-Governance for three consecutive years. From its inception in 2011 to the ongoing Phase III, the eCourts Mission Mode Project has progressed in a structured and chronological manner from basic computerization to a mature, citizen-centric and technology-driven justice delivery system, significantly enhancing efficiency, transparency and access to justice across the country.

5. Scheme of Fast Track Special Courts (FTSC): A Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for the establishment of Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs), including exclusive POCOS (ePOCOS) Courts was launched by the Union of India in October, 2019. These courts are dedicated to the time-bound trial and disposal of pending cases related to rape and crimes under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012. This Scheme for establishment of 790 courts has been extended twice with the latest extension up to 31st March 2026. The total financial outlay of the scheme is Rs.1,952.23 cr. with Rs.1,207.24 cr. as Central Share to be incurred from Nirbhaya Fund on the CSS pattern.

The Department of Justice has released a total amount of Rs. 1,108.97 crore up to 24.12.2025 since the inception of the Scheme, including Rs. 74.42 crore during the FY 2025-26, out of a budget allocation of Rs. 200.00 crore, to 30 States and Union Territories for the operationalization of FTSCs.

Achievements of the Scheme

774 FTSCs including 398 exclusive POCOS Courts, have been operationalized in 29 States/UTs.

These courts have disposed of 3,61,055 cases since the inception of the Scheme, as on 30.11.2025 Against a target of disposal of 165 rape and POCOS cases per year per court or 13.75 cases per month per court, FTSCs disposed of an average 7.41 cases per month per court, compared to 3.18 cases per month per court by regular courts during 2025 (January–November).

6. National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms:

The National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms was set up in August 2011. National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms focuses on improvement of administration of justice and justice delivery and legal reforms in the entire country and to address the diverse needs of all sections of stakeholders. Its objectives are two-fold:

i. Increasing access by reducing delays and arrears in the system, and

ii. Enhancing accountability through structural changes and by setting performance standards and capacities

Initiatives under National Mission

1. Implementation of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for Development of Infrastructure Facilities for District and Subordinate Courts:

One of the major initiatives of the National Mission relates to Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for Development of Infrastructure Facilities for District and Subordinate Courts. CSS for Development of Infrastructure Facilities for District and Subordinate Courts aims to increase the availability of suitable number of Court Halls, Residential Units for Judges / Judicial Officers of District and Subordinate Courts all over the country at District, Sub-District, Taluka, Tehsil, Gram Panchayat and Village level. This will help in improving the functioning and performance of the Judiciary across the country in reaching out to every citizen.

The Government has approved the continuance of this CSS for a period of 5 years i.e. from FY 2021-22 to 2025-26 with a total outlay of Rs.9000 crore (including Central Share of Rs.5307 crore) and also introduced some new features like provision of Lawyers Halls, Toilet Complexes and Digital Computer Rooms for the convenience of lawyers & litigants, besides Court Halls and Residential Units.

A sum of Rs. 12,455.57 crore has been released till 30.12.2025 since the inception of the scheme, of which Rs. 9,011.26 crore has been released since 2014-15 which is around 72.34% of the total releases under the Scheme. In the financial year 2024-25, an amount of Rs. 1123.40 crore was released to the States/UTs. During the current financial year 2025-26 a sum of Rs. 998 crore has been allocated of which a sum of Rs. 404.16 crore has been released till 30.12.2025.

As per the information made available by the High Courts as on 30.11.2025, there are 22,663 Court Halls available, a significant increase as compared to the 15,818 available Court Halls in 2014. As far as the Residential Units are concerned, 20,033 Residential units are available in comparison to 10,211 Residential Units available in 2014. In addition, 3,262 Court Halls and 2,824 Residential Units are currently under construction as per Nyaya Vikas portal.

Online Monitoring through Nyaya Vikas Portal Version 2.0: Nyaya Vikas as an online tool for monitoring of construction projects was launched by Hon'ble Minister of Law & Justice on 11th June, 2018. The Nyaya Vikas web portal and mobile app have been upgraded and Version 2.0 has been made available in public domain from 1st April, 2020 with enhanced capabilities and functionalities, which has been developed based on the feedback from different State Users, in coordination with National Remote Sensing Centre, ISRO. As on 30.12.2025, a total of 3,147 projects are available on Nyaya Vikas Portal, of which 2,979 (94.66%) have been geotagged.

Filling up of Vacancies in District and Subordinate Courts: As per the Constitutional framework, the selection and appointment of judges in subordinate courts is the responsibility of the High Courts and State Governments concerned. The Supreme Court, through a judicial order in Malik Mazhar case, has devised a process and time frame to be followed for the filling up of vacancies in subordinate judiciary. Department of Justice has been taking up the matter of filling up of vacant positions in District & Subordinate Courts with the States and High Courts. Department of Justice hosts a MIS web-portal on its website for reporting and monitoring of sanctioned and working strength, and vacancies of Judicial Officers of District and Subordinate Courts on monthly basis. This enables the policy makers to get monthly judicial data. Since April, 2021 portal for reporting of compliance of directions for filling up of the vacancies in District and Subordinate Judiciary as directed in Malik Mazhar Sultan case is also live on the Department of Justice website.

Pendency in Courts: Disposal of cases is within the domain of the judiciary. However, the Union Government is committed to speedy disposal of cases and reduction in pendency of cases to improve access to justice in line with the mandate under Article 39A of the Constitution. The National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms, established by the Union Government, has adopted many strategic initiatives, including improving infrastructure [court halls and residential units] for Judicial Officers of District and Subordinate Courts, leveraging Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for better justice delivery, filling up of vacant positions of Judges in High Courts and Supreme Court, reduction in pendency through follow up by Arrears Committees at District, High Court and Supreme Court level, emphasis on Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) and initiatives to fast track special type of cases. As on 31st December 2025, there are 92,118 cases pending in the Supreme Court. The pendency in respect of High Courts and District & Subordinate Courts, as on 31st December 2025 stands at 63,70,904 and 4,43,45,599 respectively.

Reforms under B-Ready Framework: The World Bank's Ease of Doing Business framework was officially discontinued in September 2021 and replaced by the Business Ready (B-READY) framework, formally launched in 2023, with the first report released in 2024, focusing on regulatory frameworks, public service delivery, operational efficiency, sustainability, and inclusion. India is among the economies participating in the B-READY assessment, with its report expected in the third phase in September 2026; firm surveys commenced in January 2025 and expert consultations in September 2025. DPIIT is the Nodal Department for coordinating with the World Bank, and India's performance is assessed across ten areas, including Dispute Resolution. For Dispute Resolution, DPIIT and the Department of Justice are the Nodal and Supportive Departments respectively, while the Department of Legal Affairs (DLA), Ministry of Law & Justice, administers the Commercial Courts Act, 2015 at the central level. In this context, the Department has been participating in Inter-Ministerial consultations and the meetings of the B-READY Taskforce convened by DPIIT and DLA respectively for finalization of questionnaires and action plans to improve India's performance under the B-READY framework.

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Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue:
Unlocking Youth Leadership For Viksit Bharat

‘It’s a movement to channel the ideas, energy, and leadership of
crores of young Indians into shaping the nation’s future’

Dr Mansukh Mandaviya

India's growth story will be written by those who are shaping its ideas today. Across the country, young Indians are thinking deeply about how India can grow faster, govern better and become developed by 2047. Their ideas are emerging from campuses and communities, start-ups and sports fields, classrooms and village meetings. The real question is no longer whether the youth have something to contribute, but whether their ideas are given a credible platform to influence the nation's direction. The Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue (VBLYD) is designed to provide that very platform.

India today is home to the largest youth population in the world. It is therefore but natural that the direction of the nation's future will be shaped not merely by policies or institutions, but by the imagination, conviction and courage of its young citizens. This vast reservoir of Yuva Shakti is far more than a demographic advantage; it is India's greatest national asset, capable of driving innovation, strengthening democracy and propelling the country towards inclusive and sustainable development.

The aspirations of India's young generation are guided by a strong sense of purpose and possibility. Today's youth are not driven solely by personal advancement; they are equally motivated by a desire to shoulder responsibility and make a meaningful impact. They seek avenues where their creativity can translate into solutions, their energy into leadership and their ambition into service.

During my time as Youth Affairs and Sports Minister, I have had the opportunity to engage with young Indians in varied settings, on university campuses, in rural districts, at sports arenas and during youth-led



community initiatives. What consistently stands out is the seriousness with which young people think about the nation's future. I recall meeting a group of rural youth volunteers who had organised informal learning centres in their villages. With limited resources but strong conviction, they were addressing gaps in education and skill development through locally designed solutions. Their ideas were practical, rooted in ground realities and driven by a clear sense of responsibility. Experiences like these reaffirm a simple truth: when young people are trusted and given space, they do not merely participate, they lead.

Inspired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's call from the Red Fort to bring one lakh youth without political backgrounds into public life, the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue was launched in January 2025 reimagining the National Youth Festival in an entirely new format. The

response was unprecedented. Over 30 lakh young people engaged through the Viksit Bharat Challenge, more than two lakh essays were submitted, and thousands of youth presented their ideas at the state level. The journey culminated at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, where 3,000 youth leaders interacted in a free-flowing dialogue with the Prime Minister, who spent several hours listening to their ideas and inspiring them to lead.

Beyond the numbers, it was the nature of engagement that made the Dialogue truly historic. It recognised, both in letter and spirit, that the voices of India's youth matter in shaping the India of 2047. Young participants were encouraged to think critically about national challenges, propose solutions and align personal ambition with collective purpose, bridging the gap between aspiration and action.

The strength of the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue lies not only in its scale,

but in its design. Diversity of thought, language, culture and lived experience is embedded into the very structure of the initiative. Youth from urban and rural India, students and professionals, innovators and grassroots leaders come together on a common platform. Multiple stages of engagement ensure that ideas are refined through dialogue and exchange, not filtered out by geography, language or background. In doing so, the Dialogue ensures that every young person who participates has both a voice and a platform to amplify it.

India's youth have always been at the heart of the nation's defining moments, from the freedom struggle to the building of the institutions of an independent India. At every turning point, young Indians have stepped forward with courage, conviction and a willingness to lead. Today, the nation once again looks to its youth not just for participation, but for leadership and dynamism in co-creating India's growth story. The vision of Viksit Bharat at 2047 goes beyond economic progress alone; it calls for social harmony, environmental responsibility, technological stewardship and inclusive growth. These complex challenges require fresh thinking, adaptability and an ability to embrace the new: qualities that reside strongly in India's Yuva Shakti.

Building on the resounding success of a landmark first edition, VBLYD 2026, scheduled from 9-12 January 2026, signals a decisive leap from a national youth convening to a platform with global resonance. With new initiatives such as Design for Bharat and Tech for Viksit Bharat, and the inclusion of the international Indian youth diaspora, the dialogue expands beyond borders. Yet, at its heart, the mission remains unchanged: to empower young Indians to think boldly,

create fearlessly, and lead with conviction.

The scale of this edition underscores the depth of that ambition. More than 50 lakh young people participated in the Viksit Bharat Quiz, the first stage of selection for VBLYD 2026, making it one of the largest youth engagement exercises of its kind. Over four intensive days, participants from every corner of the country will engage with leading national and global voices, drawing upon practical insights, ideas, and visions that transcend disciplines and geographies.

What truly sets VBLYD 2026 apart, however, is that it gives our Yuva Shakti an opportunity not only to speak, but to be heard. The platform enables young Indians to articulate their ideas, aspirations, and solutions directly to the Prime Minister of India. On 12 January, observed nationwide as National Youth Day in commemoration of Swami Vivekananda, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will personally interact with the youth at Bharat Mandapam, listening to how they imagine, and intend to shape, the future of Bharat.

As India advances towards the centenary of its independence, it demands the engagement of young individuals who possess the courage to imagine boldly and the resolve to translate ideas into meaningful action. More than a platform for dialogue, the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue is a movement that calls upon young Indians to lead from the front, confront national challenges, and channel their ambitions towards building a Viksit Bharat.

A Viksit Bharat will be built by those who have the confidence to lead and the commitment to serve. India's youth are ready. The nation must be ready to walk with them.

The author is Union Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports and Labour & Employment

What Our New Words Say About
Our Anxiety In Today's World

Trending words show how the digital age impacts our lives

Valerie Fridland

What do “rage bait,” “parasocial,” and “slop” all have in common?

They are all words that speak to ways the internet and AI have infiltrated our lives—and their use has spiked dramatically over the last year. But more importantly, these words reveal a deeper concern about the potential for emotional exploitation in the digital age, the darker side of our embrace of technology.

The words of a year

At the dawn of the new year, dictionaries, publishers, and learned societies look back at that year's “it” words, meaning those which exploded in posts and news feeds, drove search engine and dictionary look-ups, and newly rolled off the lips of those in tech, business, media, and politics.

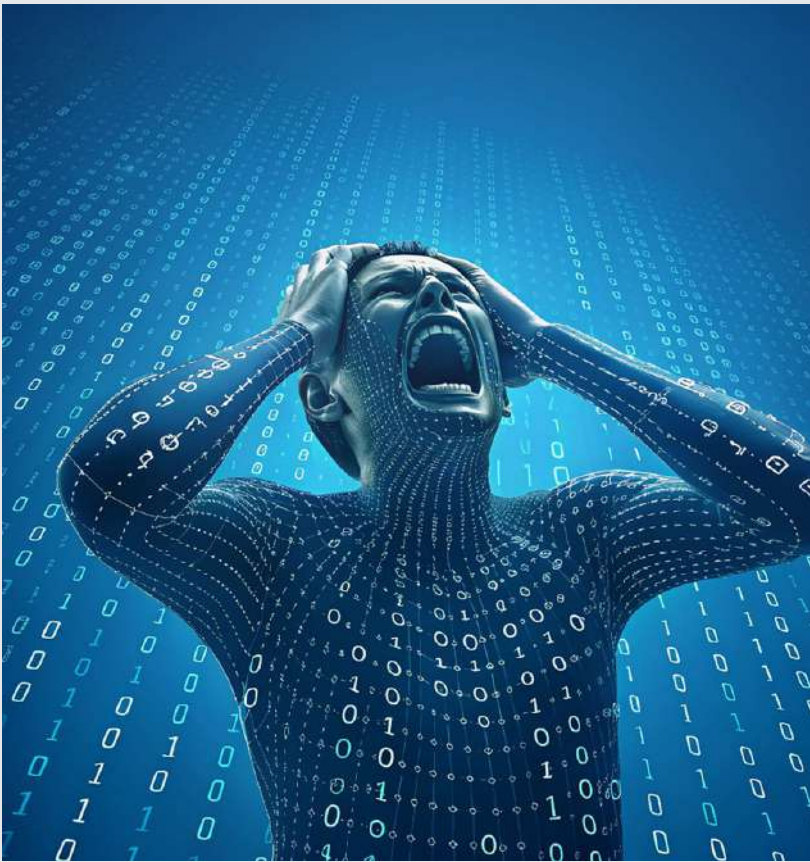
What they found overwhelmingly were words describing a new world dominated by AI and digitally mediated relationships.

A life online

Many of the new words most discussed this year reflected the dramatic change that the internet has introduced in how we live and work.

Oxford University Press selected “rage bait” as their word of the year, a word which describes online content specifically created to provoke anger for the sole purpose of driving up site traffic and engagement. They cited a massive rise in the usage of the word across media and public sentiment as factors underpinning this choice.

Also speaking to unhealthy emotional investment, Cambridge Dictionary picked “parasocial,” a word describing a fantasized relationship with someone—often a celebrity or influencer—who doesn't know you exist. Though this word has been around in academic



circles since the 1950s, its transfer over into mainstream conversation has been driven in large part by the faux intimacy that social media interactions with such figures helps create.

The proliferation of generative AI informed several other word selections. For instance, the American Dialect Society, Merriam-Webster, and the Australian Macquarie Dictionary all selected “slop” or “AI slop” as their words of the year based on the ever-increasing

prevalence of misleading or low-quality AI-generated content flooding digital feeds.

A more positive view

Not all tech-informed word selections focused on the negative: Collins English Dictionary chose “vibe-coding,” or creating code without any coding ability by simply telling generative AI what you want it to do, as its word of the year. This selection highlights the fact that AI has changed not just what

we see online, but also the types of content and work product that non-specialists can now create.

Though not selected as a winner, the word “agentic” also created a lot of buzz this year, pointing toward the next phase of AI general intelligence, where AI is able to act with increasing autonomy, or agency, and makes informed decisions without human guidance.

In short, a tug-of-war between the advances technology might afford and what it might cost in return was on full view in the words that exploded in popularity this year.

A life in view

Discussions about which new or increasingly popular words best summed up the cultural zeitgeist of the year centered not only around those describing how technology has changed how we engage online, but also on how constantly posting about our lives and activities has complicated notions of authenticity in self-presentation.

The idea that modern culture has made it so that people feel the need to curate their lives for the view of others comes through in the rising popularity of words like “aura-farming” and “performative.” “Aura-farming” refers to trying hard to exude charisma or confidence, without looking like you are trying at all.

The adjective “performative” has been put to work in new ways to call out inauthentic behavior, most prominently in the phrase “performative male,” describing a man who tries to impress a woman by insincerely presenting himself as sensitive or pro-feminist. This idea that people are often simply dressing a part for public show has also driven its use in phrases like “performative activist” and “performative politics.”

Getting away from it all

The third major theme in the round-up of words newly prominent or popular this year was that of getting away from constant (often online) distraction to focus on what's really important.

For instance, the use of the phrase “touching grass” has grown exponentially since first appearing in 2016, typically used in a derogatory way to tell someone that they need to “get a reality check” or get offline and experience the outside world.

As well, the term “holding space,” meaning being meaningfully present for and validating of someone else's experience, has also seen an uptick in use, moving out of primarily psychological discourse to more mainstream use.

This is in sharp contrast to “glazing,” describing an almost embarrassing over-the-top level of complimenting, a slang term often used on TikTok to call out comments construed as insincere flattery or sucking up.

The world in a word

From words that sum up the low-quality content that clogs our feeds to those that sum up how we now curate our lives and behaviors for others to view, the words selected this year as “Words of the Year” captured the deep impact the digital age has had on how we understand the world and ourselves.

Maybe that's why we needed the escapism of the silly nonsensical fun summed up in Dictionary.com's choice of “6/7” as word of the year, a word which means, well, absolutely nothing.

Valerie Fridland, Ph.D., is a professor of linguistics at the University of Nevada, Reno, and the author of Like, Literally, Dude: Arguing for the Good and Bad English.

Source: Psychology Today

SC to examine plea challenging legal immunity to CEC, ECs

PTI

New Delhi, Jan 12: The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to examine a plea challenging the immunity granted to the chief election commissioner and election commissioners under the CEC Act, 2023.

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi issued notice to the Centre and the Election Commission in the matter, though it refused to stay the provision.

The top court was hearing a PIL filed by Lok Prahari, an NGO, challenging Section 16 of the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023.

According to the provision, "notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force, no court shall entertain or continue any civil or criminal proceedings against any person who is or was a chief election commissioner or an election commissioner for any act, thing or word, committed, done or spoken by him, or in the course of acting or purporting to act in the discharge of his official duty or function".

The plea claimed the provision "gives unprecedented, unbridled power to the CEC and ECs by providing them complete blanket permanent immunity for life from any civil and even criminal proceedings for their wrongdoings in gross misuse of their office".

Cybercrime destroying social, economic fabric of society: Delhi court

PTI

New Delhi, Jan 12: Cybercrime is destroying the social and economic fabric of society, a Delhi court said while dismissing the anticipatory bail pleas of three men accused of online fraud.

Special Judge Rajesh Malik was hearing the pre-arrest bail pleas of Ankit Jain, Amardeep Sharma and Arihant Jain, whom the CBI has booked for the offences of criminal conspiracy, cheating and cheating by personation.

The agency's FIR also booked the trio under Sections 43 (damage to computer, computer system, etc.), 66B (dishonestly

receiving stolen computer resource or communication device), 66C (identity theft) and Section 66D (cheating by personation by using computer resource) of the Information Technology (IT) Act.

In the order dated January 8, the court said, "Cybercrime is destroying the social as well as economic fabric of society. Where a connection is established between the allegations and cybercrime, the court shall be reluctant to give any protection in the form of anticipatory bail to the accused or applicant."

It said the investigation was still at a nascent stage, the exact number

of victims was not known, and the agency, in future, could require their custodial interrogation.

The court dismissed the pleas, saying that based on the gravity of the offence and the evidence collected so far, no case for relief was made out.

The FIR alleged that a private company, M/s Lord Mahavira Services India Pvt Ltd, obtained 7,721 SIM connections from Vodafone Idea Ltd during 2024-2025, which were used to deceive unsuspecting citizens by making fraudulent calls, where callers impersonated as officials of TRAI, law enforcement agencies and others.

During the proceedings,

the prosecution alleged that the accused got the SIM cards issued by Vodafone by submitting a false list of end users.

It alleged, "The SIM cards were issued in the names of persons who were not employees of the applicant company (Mahavira Services), and it clearly establishes the mala fide intention of the applicant(s) to participate in cybercrime activities."

The prosecution also claimed that these SIM numbers were used to send phishing links to a large number of people, because of which "innocent citizens lost their personal sensitive information to the cybercriminals".

TATA Mobile hits two at Rangreth; one killed, another injured

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Jan 12: A man was killed while another sustained injuries after being hit by a TATA Mobile vehicle in the Gogoo Rangreth area of Srinagar on Saturday evening, officials said.

An official told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), that a TATA Mobile vehicle bearing registration number JK01AX-7738 hit two pedestrians near Gogoo Rangreth.

He said both were shifted to the hospital, where doctors declared one of them dead. The other person is undergoing treatment.

The deceased has been identified as Ghulam Qadir Wani, son of Ghulam Rasool Wani, a resident of Nawa Kadal, Srinagar, and the injured as Firdous Ahmad Gofri, son of Noor Mohammad, resident of Gogoo Rangreth. (KNO)

Police nab drug peddler in Pulwama

Contraband substance recovered

KNO

Srinagar, Jan 12: Continuing its efforts to eradicate the menace of drugs from the society, Jammu and Kashmir Police have arrested a drug peddler in Pulwama and recovered contraband substance from his possession.

As per the police statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), a police party of Police Post Nawa intercepted a suspicious person during naka at Nawa. During search, 1.120 Kgs of Poppy Straw was recovered from his possession. He has been identified as Hilal Ahmad Wani, son of Abdul Khaliq Wani, resident of Ghat Tokna. He has been arrested and shifted to police station where he remains in custody.

Accordingly, a case vide FIR No. 04/2026 under relevant sections of law has been registered at Police Station Pulwama and further investigation has been taken up. (KNO)

Study finds how brain waves helps distinguish between one's own body & external world

PTI

New Delhi, Jan 12: Frequency of alpha waves in the parietal cortex -- the brain region that processes sensory information from the body -- determines how precisely we perceive our body as our own, according to a new study.

Faster frequencies of the brain waves could result in a more precise sense of body ownership, while slower frequencies could make it harder to separate self-related sensations from external ones, weakening the distinction between body and world, findings published in the journal Nature Communications show.

Researchers from Sweden's Karolinska Institutet looked at how the brain combines visual and tactile (touch-related) signals to create a feeling that a body part belongs to



oneself -- a phenomenon known as the sense of body ownership.

An analysis of behavioural experiments and brain recordings from 106

participants showed that the frequency of alpha waves in the parietal cortex -- the brain region that processes sensory information from the

body -- determines how precisely we perceive our body as our own.

Alpha waves is the brain's electrical activity that is at play when one is in a relaxed, alert and calm state, often with eyes closed.

"We have identified a fundamental brain process that shapes our continuous experience of being embodied," lead author Mariano D'Angelo, researcher at Karolinska Institutet's department of neuroscience, said.

"The findings may provide new insights into psychiatric conditions such as schizophrenia, where the sense of self is disturbed," D'Angelo said.

The participants were engaged in a 'rubber hand' task. When touches on a visible rubber hand and the participant's hidden real hand were synchronised, many reported feeling that the rubber hand was part of their body -- but when the timing

was off, the feeling faded, the researchers said.

They also found that those with faster alpha frequencies were more sensitive to timing differences between touches that were seen and touches felt.

The individuals noted smaller differences in timing, as if their brains operated at a higher temporal (time) resolution, resulting in a more precise sense of body ownership, the team said.

However, slower alpha frequencies were linked to a broader "temporal binding window", causing the brain to treat out-of-sync visual and tactile signals as if occurring together.

The reduced precision in timing made it harder to separate self-related sensations from external ones, thereby weakening the distinction between body and world, the researchers said.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Use power of art

Kesar's extraordinary contribution in nurturing and training thousands of artists who have achieved exceptional success globally marking significant milestones under his mentorship.

Padma Dr SP Varma; Brij Mohan Sharma, Principal Secretary Culture; Shruti Awasthi, Regional Director, IGNCA; KK Sidha, Director Archives; Harvinder Kour, Secretary JKAACL; Dr. Javaid Rahi, Secretary, Kala Kendra Jammu; senior officials, prominent artists and citizens from different walks of life were present. (KNO)

Budget 2026-27

The budget presentation will be followed by a three-day discussion on February 7, 9 and 10. The budget discussion will conclude on February 10 with the Finance Minister's reply.

The Assembly Secretariat has earmarked seven days for demands for grants of different departments between February 11 and 19. As per the tentative calendar, February 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18 and 19 have been reserved for demands for grants.

With the passage of grants, the House will break for a one-month long recess during the holy month of Ramzan, when Muslims observe fasting.

The session will resume on March 27 with the passage of appropriation bills, which will mark the approval of the budget.

As per the calendar, two days each have been kept for government business, private member bills and private member resolutions.

March 28 and April 4 have been reserved for government business; March 30 and April 1 for Private Member Bills; and March 31 and April 2 for Private Member Resolutions. (KNO)

JKBOSE to announce

exams and the board has made 994 exam centers for them.

Pertinently, BOSE had announced syllabus relaxation of 15 percent for 10th, 11th and 12th standard examination.

Director Academics of BOSE in a notification said that the decision was taken upon the recommendations received from the DSEK and DSEJ and pleas received from other stakeholders regarding reduction in syllabus due to delayed commencement of academic session this year coupled with disruptions in academic calendar due to heat wave, torrential rains, cloud-bursts and floods.

"As approved by the competent authority, it is notified that the prospective eligible students appearing in class 10th, 11th and 12th in the ensuing annual regular, 2025 examination in Kashmir Division and winter zone areas of Jammu Division including UT of Ladakh, shall attempt 85 percent marks which will correspond to 100 percent marks, availing thus 15 percent relaxation in syllabus," reads the notification. (KNO)

When Jammu got

reviewed last year's performance and found that a substantial portion of the funds released to the district had already been utilised.

"Major decisions will be reflected in the next Budget. The money will be provided in March. At this stage, there is no scope for big decisions," the chief minister said, adding that minor gaps in implementation were being addressed.

The Chief Minister said the financial position of Jammu and Kashmir remains challenging and assistance from the Centre would be helpful.

He said the government would move ahead with schemes announced in the previous Budget and also bring some new measures for public benefit. "We will try to take things forward within the available resources," he said.

The Chief Minister declined to share details of the upcoming Budget, saying it would be placed before the House in due course. "It is not possible to stand here and talk about the Budget. You will have to wait for it," he said.

Earlier the Chief Minister chaired a review meeting at the Deputy Commissioner's office in Jammu. He walked from his official residence at Wazarat Road to the DC office.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary, cabinet ministers, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo and legislators from the Jammu district.

The Chief Minister said such review exercises were aimed at assessing ground-level implementation and ensuring better utilisation of funds across sectors. (KNO)

Nearly 10% of

the body needs more insulin to control blood sugar levels, which can speed up the progression from pre-diabetes to diabetes," he said.

He added that obesity is strongly connected to pre-diabetes in adolescents, with overweight teens being over 40 per cent more likely to have early blood sugar problems compared to their normal-weight peers.

"Obesity affects every organ and is a disease with lifelong implications, including diabetes, heart disease, and metabolic disorders," he said.

Dr Bilal Ahmad Bhat, another doctor, said that early symptoms like fatigue and excessive thirst are often ignored. He called for eating whole foods, which include fruits, vegetables, legumes, and lean proteins, and traditional home-cooked meals to help prevent the disease.

Doctors also recommend reducing sugary, fried, and packaged foods, engaging in regular physical activity, routine health screenings, managing stress, and getting enough sleep.

It's important to note that around 19 per cent of the population in Jammu and about 10 per cent in Kashmir are already diabetic. (KNO)

Army foils multiple

Border, including multiple attempts at reconnaissance in sensitive areas.

"Alert Army units engaged the intruding drones promptly using standard counter-drone measures, preventing further intrusion," he added.

Security has been further stepped up in forward areas of Rajouri and adjoining sectors, with surveillance and monitoring intensified to deal with any future attempts, he said.

Authorities said that drones are often used by terror groups, allegedly with support from Pakistan's intelligence agencies, to smuggle weapons, cash, and narcotics into Jammu and Kashmir.

These consignments are typically collected by local operatives and passed on to terrorists. The deployment of anti-drone systems along both the LoC and International Border has

significantly reduced the success of such operations, he said.

"In addition, police in Samba district increased vigilance after a suspected Pakistani drone was spotted near Ramgarh. Special naka points have been established for vehicle checks in the area," the official said, adding, "Separately, Jammu and Kashmir Police carried out a search operation near the International Border at Ranbir Singh Pura, on the outskirts of Jammu, as part of ongoing anti-infiltration measures."

All measures are aimed at maintaining high alert along the borders and ensuring the safety of citizens during the Republic Day period. (KNO)

Intense cold

of the coldest places in the Valley at minus 6.5 degrees Celsius, though still warmer than Sunday's minus 7.7 degrees. Shopian recorded minus 5.2 degrees, up from minus 8.6 degrees, while Kupwara settled at minus 3.7 degrees, improving from minus 5.6 degrees.

Gulmarg, the ski resort, recorded minus 3.4 degrees, compared to minus 6.2 degrees a day earlier.

In the Jammu region, minimum temperatures hovered above freezing at most places, though dense fog continued to affect normal life.

Jammu city recorded 3.4 degrees Celsius, slightly lower than Sunday's 4.0 degrees, while Banihal settled at 5.1 degrees, down from 7.1 degrees.

Samba recorded 0.7 degrees, improving from minus 0.7 degrees, and Rajouri saw temperatures rise to 0.8 degrees from minus 1.6 degrees.

Ladakh remained the coldest region, though temperatures there also showed a slight rise.

Leh recorded a low of minus 10.8 degrees, compared to minus 13.4 degrees a day earlier, while Hanle registered minus 15 degrees, up from minus 16.3 degrees. Kargil recorded minus 9.3 degrees, improving from minus 12.3 degrees.

Officials said dense fog across the plains of Jammu severely impacted vehicular movement during early morning hours, while markets witnessed thin attendance due to harsh weather conditions.

Street vendors and small traders reported reduced business as residents preferred staying indoors.

DRY WEATHER TO PREVAIL TILL JAN 15

The Meteorological Centre Srinagar forecast mainly dry weather till January 15, with cloudiness likely towards the evening.

Light rain or snow is expected at isolated scattered higher reaches between January 16 and 17, while light to moderate rain or snow may occur at several places between January 20 and 22.

The Met department also said that minimum temperatures are likely to rise gradually, though moderate to dense fog is expected to persist over the plains of Jammu division for the next five days. (KNO)

Chief Secretary releases

Secretary to the Chief Secretary, K.S. Chib; Special Secretary, General Administration Department, Joginder Singh Rai; Special Secretary to the Chief Secretary, Naginder Singh Jamwal, and other senior officers of the Information Department and concerned officers.

PM Modi to inaugurate Commonwealth speakers' conference

Pakistan, Bangladesh to stay away

PTI

New Delhi, Jan 12: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will on Thursday inaugurate the 28th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC), which is expected to witness participation from 42 of the 56 member nations. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said on Monday that the participation will be the highest ever in the history of the conference that will be attended by countries including Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom. Birla said there will be no representation from Bangladesh as that country's Parliament is under suspension. Pakistan is also unlikely to send any representative, officials said.

A total of 61 speakers and presiding officers are expected to attend the event to be held at the Samvidhan Sadan here from January 14 to 16.

"It is a matter of pride that the 28th CSPOC being hosted in India will see the highest participation so far," Birla said. The



CSPOC will discuss shared parliamentary values, democratic governance and institutional cooperation.

Birla said the work related to the conference has been done online and no paper has been used.

The speaker said an app has been developed to enable all aspects of conference coordination, facilitation and information

dissemination.

The 27th edition of the CSPOC was hosted by Uganda in January 2024 where Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha Harivansh, the leader of the Indian Parliamentary Delegation, assumed the baton as the host of the next edition of the conference.

The Lok Sabha speaker will chair the meeting of the Standing Committee of the CSPOC at

the Red Fort here on Wednesday.

The CSPOC was created in 1969 as an initiative of then speaker of the House of Commons of Canada, Lucien Lamoureux. Since its inception, Canada has provided the CSPOC with a secretariat to support its activities.

The stated aims of the CSPOC are to maintain, foster and encourage impartiality and fairness on the part of speakers and presiding officers of parliaments, promote knowledge and understanding of parliamentary democracy in its various forms and develop parliamentary institutions.

The conference will have workshop sessions on topics, such as "AI in Parliament: Balancing Innovation, Oversight and Adaptation", "Social Media and its Impact on Parliamentarians", "Innovative Strategies to Enhance Public Understanding of Parliament and Citizen's Participation Beyond Voting" and "Security, Health and Wellbeing of Members of Parliament and Parliamentary Officials".

ISRO's PSLV-C62 rocket encounters 'anomaly', deviates from flight path, misses orbit

PTI

Sriharikota (Andhra Pradesh), Jan 12: ISRO's PSLV-C62 rocket carrying 16 satellites, including a foreign Earth Observation satellite, "encountered an anomaly", the space agency said on Monday, signalling the failure of the mission.

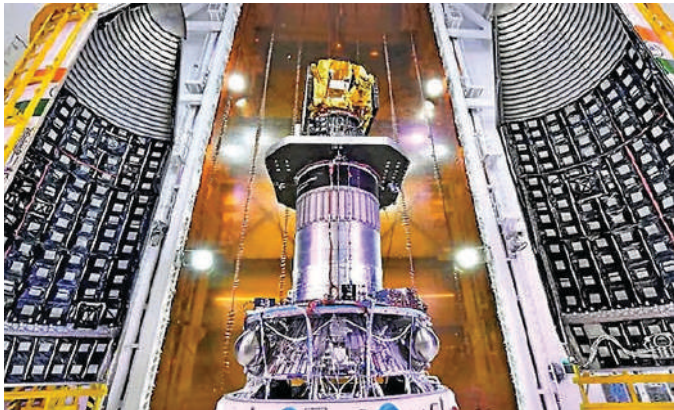
Disturbances in the rocket and later deviation from flight path was observed when strap-on motors were providing thrust during the flight's third stage to propel the vehicle to the intended altitude, space agency chairman V Narayanan said adding a detailed analysis has been initiated to identify the cause.

The mission of placing the satellites in the intended orbit could not be achieved and all the 16 satellites were lost in space, ISRO sources told PTI adding this was the second consecutive PSLV mission failure during the third stage.

A similar, previous attempt in May 2025 (PSLV-C61-EOS-09) also did not succeed due to "motor pressure issue," and there was a fall in the chamber pressure of the motor case.

A former top ISRO scientist said it would take some time for the space agency to collect data, analyse; understand what happened and make necessary corrections. It is expected that ISRO would officially release the findings in the days to come, he told PTI requesting anonymity. To a query, he said, "it is a setback as the satellites did not reach the intended orbit and all satellites lost in space may be drifting as space debris."

As the 22.5-hour countdown concluded on Monday morning, the 44.4 metre tall four-stage



rocket lifted off as scheduled at 10.18 am from the spaceport here. The mission was to deploy a primary Earth Observation satellite and multiple co-passenger satellites into a 512 km Sun-Synchronous Orbit, after a flight journey of about 17 minutes.

The automatic launch sequence commenced following approval from the mission director. ISRO scientists provided real-time updates as the vehicle ascended. The initial phases of the flight proceeded according to plan.

However, after the announcement that the "third stage ignited", an uneasy calm took over the Mission Control Centre. In his address at the centre, Narayanan said: "The PSLV is a four-stage vehicle with two solid stages and two liquid stages. The performance of the vehicle up to the end of the third stage was expected. Close to the end of the third stage we are seeing more disturbance in the vehicle and subsequently, there was a deviation observed in the flight path."

Confirming the mission's failure on its 'X' handle, ISRO said,

"The PSLV-C62 mission encountered an anomaly during the end of PS3 (third stage) of the vehicle. A detailed analysis has been initiated." However, the space agency did not provide more details.

Later, in a brief press conference, Narayanan, who is also the Secretary of Department of Space, said, "As all of you are aware, today we attempted PSLV-C62/EOS-N1 mission... the mission could not proceed in the expected (flight) path. That is the information right now available."

Further, he said: "We are going through the data and with the data collected from all the ground stations and once the data analysis is completed, we shall come back to you."

When the earlier PSLV-C61 mission failed last year, former ISRO Chairman S Somanath had said he was aware of the formidable challenges faced during the development of the third-stage solid motor, an endeavour marked by multiple failures.

"Failure is never defeat, but rather a formidable tutor," he had said.

Ex-VP Dhankhar admitted to AIIMS after two bouts of unconsciousness

PTI

New Delhi, Jan 12: Former vice president Jagdeep Dhankhar was admitted to the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here on Monday after he fell unconscious twice on January 10, officials said.

Dhankhar, 74, underwent an MRI, the officials said, adding that other tests will be carried out on Tuesday.

The former vice president had "two bouts of unconsciousness" in the washroom around 3.30 am on January 10, they said.

"Today, he had gone to AIIMS for a check-up when the doctors insisted that he should get admitted for tests. He will remain there overnight," an official said.

Dhankhar had blacked out on multiple occasions in the past, including in the Rann of Kutch, Uttarakhand, Kerala and the national capital while attending public events as the vice president, he said.

Dhankhar had quit as the vice president on July 21 citing health grounds.

He was admitted to AIIMS last year too for a heart-related ailment.



'India faces second highest economic burden due to diabetes'

PTI

New Delhi, Jan 12: India faces the second highest economic burden due to diabetes of USD 11.4 trillion -- the United States bears the highest costs at USD 16.5 trillion, and China the third at USD 11 trillion, a new study has estimated. Researchers, including those from the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis and the Vienna University of Economics and Business in Austria, calculated the economic impact of diabetes across 204 countries from 2020 to 2050.

Global costs amount to around USD 10 trillion, excluding informal care provided by family members -- about 0.2 per cent of the world's annual gross domestic product (GDP), findings published in the journal Nature Medicine show.

Factoring in informal care amounts to up to USD 152 trillion, or 1.7 per cent of the world's yearly GDP, the study estimates.

"Caregivers often drop



out of the labour market, at least partially, which creates additional economic costs," author Klaus Prettnner, professor of macroeconomics and digitalisation at the Vienna University of Economics and Business, said.

The high share of informal caregiving, making up almost 90 per cent of the total economic burden, is explained by the fact that prevalence exceeds mortality by a factor of 30-50, the researchers said.

"The United States faces the largest economic burden of diabetes mellitus at INT\$ 2.5 trillion, followed by India at INT\$ 1.6 trillion and China at INT\$ 1.0 trillion. When

considering informal care loss, the largest economic burdens are INT\$ 16.5 trillion in the United States, INT\$ 11.4 trillion in India and INT\$ 11.0 trillion in China," the authors wrote.

An international dollar (INT\$) is a hypothetical, statistical unit used to compare economic metrics across countries. It has the same purchasing power as a United States dollar (USD).

For India and China, the high economic costs of diabetes were mainly attributed to a large affected population, while those in the US were primarily due to high treatment costs and physical capital diversion, the researchers said.

Glamorisation of tobacco can trigger next epidemic of cancer, lung diseases, warn experts

PTI

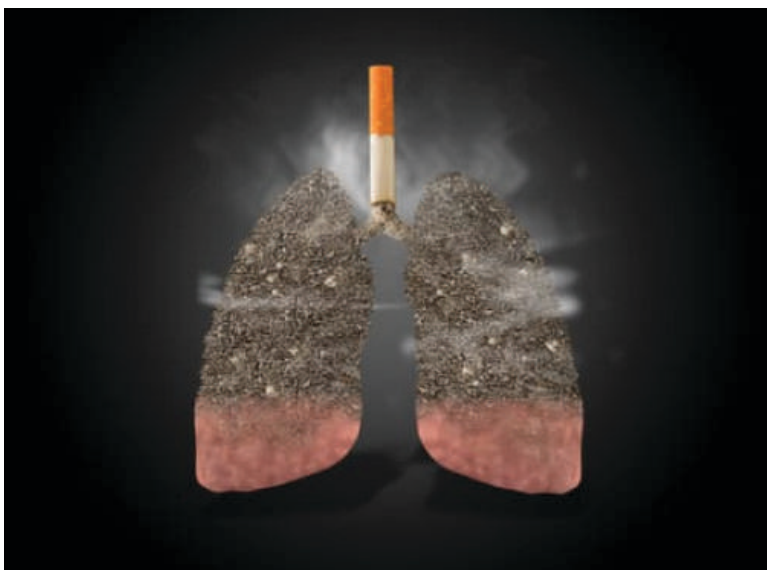
New Delhi, Jan 12: Health and education experts have warned that the growing glamorisation of tobacco through surrogate advertising and its normalisation, by selling it alongside toffees and candies, pose a serious threat to the health of children and adolescents.

They cautioned that if this trend is not checked urgently, it could lead to a new epidemic of cancer and lung diseases in the coming years.

The warning came during a National Youth Day webinar titled "The Silent Push: Tobacco and Young India", organised by Tobacco Free India, a citizen initiative, on the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekanand.

Speakers noted that while India has taken several commendable steps in recent years to strengthen tobacco control, children and young people between 10 and 20 years of age are increasingly being targeted through subtle and indirect practices.

They stressed that addressing this challenge would require tighter controls on surrogate promotions, strict limits on point-of-sale visibility, and



ensuring that tobacco is not sold alongside products meant for children.

They also underlined the need to delay initiation by raising the legal age for purchase, ending single-stick sales, and strengthening enforcement around educational institutions to better protect children's everyday

environment.

Dr Shalini Singh, director of the ICMR- National Institute of Cancer Prevention and Research, highlighted how children are exposed to tobacco through everyday influences, starting at retail points and extending to surrogate promotion. "When

tobacco products are displayed openly at points of sale and placed alongside items meant for children, it sends a misleading signal that these products are harmless," she said, adding that branding cues and indirect promotions further reinforce this exposure.

Other experts noted that these layered exposures together make tobacco products appear harmless, easily accessible, and socially acceptable to young minds.

From a child health perspective, Dr Naveen Thacker, executive director of the International Pediatric Association, warned that the problem begins far earlier than commonly assumed. Referring to a cross-sectional study conducted under his leadership in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, he said nearly one in six children around the age of 10 had already experimented with tobacco.

Echoing these concerns, Dr M C Misra, public health expert and former director of AIIMS, Delhi, cautioned that the consequences of inaction could be severe and long-lasting.

"If we do not intervene today and reduce children's exposure to tobacco, we are clearly heading towards the

next epidemic of cancers and lung diseases," he said.

Professor JS Rajput, former director of NCERT, said celebrity-linked surrogate promotions add another troubling layer to the problem and called for collective responsibility.

"Education does not happen only in classrooms. Children learn from what they see in society," he said. "When film stars or sports personalities are indirectly associated with tobacco brands, it sends a powerful and misleading message. Society and government must take responsibility."

Drawing on child health evidence, Dr Thacker said the growing signs of early exposure call for a much sharper focus on protecting children's everyday environment from tobacco influence.

Several speakers, including Prof Rajput, stressed the importance of curbing surrogate branding and celebrity-linked promotions, observing that aspirational cues play a disproportionate role in shaping youth behaviour. When admired public figures are indirectly associated with tobacco brands, it undermines both health messaging and value-based education, they said.

