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J&K on high alert ahead of Republic Day

- Drones, CCTV part of robust security
- Troops vigilant along LoC, IB
- IGP Kashmir invites public
- LG to take salute at main Jammu function
- CM to be chief guest

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Jan 24: Ahead of Republic Day, security has been tightened across Jammu and Kashmir with forces carrying out extensive area domination exercises, and sanitization operations.

A senior security official told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the security has been beefed up in all the 20



districts of J&K, particularly in the border areas. "Sensitive areas in Kashmir have seen enhanced security, including road blockades, vehicle checks, security cordons, and search operations," he said.

He said there is an extensive deployment of police and paramilitary forces along the International Border (IB) and

Line of Control (LoC). "Senior officers have reviewed security arrangements in sensitive border areas to ensure effective coordination between various agencies," the official added.

"To further bolster security, advanced surveillance technologies, including drones and high-resolution CCTV cameras, have been deployed to

[More on P6](#)

Budget Session of J&K Assembly to be stormy

'Battle-ready' BJP trains legislators to challenge NC-led govt

LoP Sharma to lead attacks over 'failed promises'

Divided Kashmir-based Opp to seek answers on reservation, emotive issues

KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, Jan 24: The upcoming budget session of Jammu & Kashmir is expected to be stormy, with opposition parties, especially the Bharatiya Janata Party, set to challenge the National Conference-led government on a range of issues, from its pre-election commitments regarding



freebies to what they describe as governance failures.

In a clear indication that the BJP will leave no stone unturned in questioning the government's performance over the past 16 months, the party held a training workshop for its legislators on Saturday at winter capital Jammu to prepare them for the upcoming session.

The party's National General Secretary Tarun Chugh, former Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh Jai Ram Thakur, and Delhi Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta were also present in the training session, which was attended by all MLAs and senior leaders of its J&K unit.

Speaking to news agency—Kashmir News Observer

(KNO), senior BJP leader and former minister Pawan Gupta said that they will question the government for its failure to fulfill its election promises.

"The government has completely failed to fulfill its election promises," he said, adding that the party will also raise the issue of flood victims and seek accountability over the package provided by the Government of India for rebuilding infrastructure.

Gupta further said that the party will question the government for weakening the institution of the MLA.

The BJP's attacks on the government in the House will be spearheaded by the Leader of the Opposition Sunil Kumar Sharma, who has been the main target of the NC leadership while countering the saffron party's [More on P6](#)

BREIF NEWS

Normal flights resume at Srinagar airport

Rehan Qayoom Mir

A day after snowfall disrupted air traffic and grounded several flights, normal operations resumed at the Srinagar International Airport on Saturday morning, officials said. They said, however, six flights to and from Delhi were cancelled due to temporary airspace restrictions [More on P6](#)

CM's advisor gets cabinet minister status

KNO Correspondent

Nasir Aslam Wani, Advisor to the Chief Minister, has been given the rank and status of a cabinet minister. According to an order, a copy of which is in possession of the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Nasir Aslam Wani will be entitled to a consolidated amount of [More on P6](#)

2 IPS officers transferred from J&K to Puducherry

KNO Correspondent

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Saturday ordered the transfer of two IPS officers serving in the Jammu and Kashmir segment of the AGMUT cadre to Puducherry. According to the official order, a copy of which is in possession of news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Divya D, serving [More on P6](#)

J&K records severe cold; snowfall, rain expected on Jan 26

- Valley receives significant precipitation over past 24 hrs
- Moderate to heavy rain, snow expected on Jan 26-27
- Thunder, gusty winds likely

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Jan 24: Kashmir recorded a sharp drop in night temperatures on Saturday, with several places reporting sub-zero minimums, even as the Meteorological Department forecast rain and snow across most areas on January 26.

According to data obtained by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Zethan Rafiabadi recorded the lowest

temperature at minus 10.9 degrees Celsius, followed by Gulmarg at minus 12.0 degrees Celsius and Sonamarg at minus 10.5 degrees Celsius.

Other areas in the Kashmir Valley also reported freezing temperatures, including Beerwah in Budgam at minus 8.2 degrees Celsius, Pahalgam at minus 7.6 degrees Celsius, and Shopian at minus 7.1 degrees Celsius.

Srinagar registered a minimum temperature of minus 1.4 degrees Celsius, while Srinagar Airport recorded minus 3.2 degrees Celsius.

Other areas across the Valley, including Kupwara, Kokernag, Pampore, Awantipora, Anantnag, Baramulla, Pulwama, Kulgam, and Bandipora, experienced temperatures ranging from minus 2.0 to minus 6.2 degrees Celsius.

In the Jammu region, comparatively milder conditions were recorded. [More on P6](#)

UP represents India's vital core, binds nation together: LG Sinha

- Pays homage to luminaries, freedom fighters, revolutionaries from State
- Recalls their pivotal role in building modern India

KNO Desk

Jammu, Jan 24: Stating that Uttar Pradesh represents India's vital core, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday said that the region binds the nation together in all directions—North to South, East to West.

Jammu Kashmir Lok Bhavan, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), hosted the grand celebrations of Uttar Pradesh Foundation Day here.

While addressing the gathering, LG Sinha extended his heartiest greetings and best



wishes to the people of Uttar Pradesh.

He paid homage to the great luminaries, freedom fighters, and revolutionaries from the state and recalled their pivotal role in building a modern India.

"Literary figures have identified the ancient Uttar Pradesh region as India's heartland, the cradle of

major scriptures—the Vedas, Upanishads, Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Puranas," he said, adding, "To me, Uttar Pradesh represents a wellspring that has nurtured the country's cultural consciousness."

The Lieutenant Governor stated that words fall short in capturing Uttar Pradesh's richness; it [More on P6](#)

Jmu-Sgr NH remains closed; over 3,000 vehicles stranded

- NHAI, other agencies working on war footing: IGP Traffic
- No vehicular movement on highway today: Traffic Police
- Mughal Road, Sinthan Pass, Sonamarg-Gumri closed

Umair Gull Ganie

Qazigund/Ramban, Jan 24: The Jammu-Srinagar National Highway remained closed for the second consecutive day on Saturday due to slippery road conditions caused by fresh snowfall, leaving over 3,000 vehicles stranded on the vital arterial road.

Officials told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that incessant snowfall for the second consecutive night on the Ramban-Banihal and Qazigund stretch rendered the highway non-motorable. [More on P6](#)

CM engages with legislators for pre-budget consultations 'Committed to balanced, inclusive, equitable dev across J&K'

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jan 24: As part of the ongoing pre-budget consultations for the Budget Session 2026-27, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Saturday continued his engagement with Members of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly from South and North Kashmir districts at the Civil Secretariat here.

The meeting was attended by Ministers Sakina Itoo, Javid Ahmad Dar and Satish Sharma, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Principal Secretary Finance Santosh D. Vaidya, Deputy Commissioners of the concerned districts, senior officers of the Finance Department



and other concerned officials.

During the meeting, legislators from South Kashmir districts—Anantnag, Pulwama, Kulgam, and Shopian—submitted various proposals focusing on infrastructure development and citizen-centric welfare initiatives in their respective constituencies. Similarly, MLAs

from North Kashmir districts including Kupwara, Baramulla and Bandipora presented their demands and suggestions before the Chief Minister, seeking adequate budgetary allocations in the Budget 2026-27 for developmental works and public welfare initiatives.

The MLAs from South Kashmir

districts who participated, both in person and virtually, included Peerzada Mohammad Syed, Ghulam Ahmad Mir, Bashir Ahmad Shah Veeri, Abdul Majeed Bhat, Altaf Ahmad Wani, Riyaz Ahmad Khan, Waheed-ur-Rehman Para, Hasnain Masoodi, Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Mir, Rafiq Ahmad Naik, Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami, Peerzada Feroze Ahmad, Shabir Ahmad Kullay, Zaffar Ali Khattana and Showkat Ahmad Ganai.

Similarly, MLAs who participated from North Kashmir districts included Saifullah Mir, Javed Ahmed Mirchal, Sheikh Khursheed Ahmed, Javid Hassan Beigh, Farooq Ahmad Shah, Dr Sajad Shafi, Reyaz Javid Bedar, Irshad Rasool Kar, Irfan Hafiz Lone, [More on P6](#)

Snowfall Aftermath

KPDCL restores over 85% electricity across valley

- 'Over 95% 33kV lines, 81% 33kV feeders up'
- Power load back to over 1500 MW from 100 MWs

Riyaz Bhat

Srinagar, Jan 23: A day after gusty winds and heavy snowfall in many areas of Kashmir, Power Development Department (PDD) Saturday restored over 85 percent electricity in the affected areas.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), till 8 Pm, KPDCL was

distributing a load of nearly over 1500 Megawatts (MWs) against the usual load of 1850 MWs.

An official said that since Friday morning till 8Pm of Saturday, KPDCL has restored 81.03 percent of 11kV feeders with eight feeders functioning 100 percent.

The official also said that out of the total 1302 11kV feeders, at least 1055 were running smoothly, 82 were under fault and 165 feeders were off due to the outage in 33kV lines or due to the fault in the respective receiving stations.

In case of 33kV lines, the official said that KPDCL has restored at least 95 percent of lines with [More on P6](#)

Prime Minister's Nationwide Employment Drive
Rozgar Mela held in
Srinagar, 100 CAPF constables
get appointment letters



KT NEWS DESK

Srinagar, JANUARY 24: As part of the nationwide Rozgar Mela programme for distribution of appointment letters to newly recruited youth, a Rozgar Mela was organised today at the Border Security Force (BSF) Frontier Headquarters, Kashmir. The event formed part of the eighteenth tranche of Rozgar Mela being held simultaneously at 40 locations across the country.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the newly appointed candidates through virtual mode,

reiterating the Government of India's commitment to employment generation through transparent, swift and merit-based recruitment processes. During the Rozgar Mela, appointment letters were distributed to 100 selected Constable (GD) candidates of the Central Armed Police Force (CAPF). At the national level, over 61,000 appointment letters were distributed across various Ministries and Departments as part of the initiative. The Rozgar Mela aims to provide meaningful employment opportunities to youth while

strengthening institutional recruitment mechanisms in the Central Government. The programme also underscores the Government's focus on capacity building and service delivery through a young and motivated workforce. The event witnessed participation of officials from concerned departments, representatives of recruiting agencies, and newly appointed candidates. Family members of the selected candidates appreciated the Government's efforts towards employment generation and transparent recruitment.

Handwara Admin
reviews snow
clearance, says major
roads traffic-worthy

KT NEWS DESK

KUPWARA, JANUARY 24: Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Handwara, Javed Naseem Masoodi, Saturday conducted an extensive inspection of key roads across the Handwara Sub-Division to review ongoing snow clearance operations and ensure smooth movement of traffic amid prevailing winter conditions.

During the inspection, the ADC, as per an official statement, assessed the deployment of men and machinery, interacted with field staff, and issued on-the-spot directions to expedite clearance work on vital routes connecting habitations, hospitals, and other essential service points. Emphasis was laid on maintaining round-the-clock operations to minimize inconvenience to the general public.

The ADC informed that all major roads across the Sub-Division have been cleared and are traffic-worthy, while snow clearance work on interior and link roads is being taken up on priority. He stressed the importance of coordinated efforts among all concerned departments and instructed officers to remain vigilant, particularly in vulnerable areas prone to heavy snowfall and road blockages.

The ADC further assured that adequate food and essential commodity stocks are available in the Sub-Division, and there is no cause for concern. Officials were directed to prioritize the clearance of emergency routes and ensure public safety at all times.

The inspection aimed to assess ground realities and reaffirm the Sub-Divisional Administration's commitment to restoring normalcy at the earliest. Further, the ADC also inspected hospitals and various government offices within Sub-Division Handwara.

The ADC was accompanied by Executive Engineer, R&B Division Handwara, Farooq Ahmad Shah and other concerned officials.

DLSA Srinagar reviews 'Mediation
for the Nation 2.0' Implementation

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 24: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Srinagar Saturday organized a meeting of trained mediators and panel lawyers which was convened by the Secretary, District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Srinagar at ADR Centre District Court Complex Srinagar, to review and strengthen the implementation of the national initiative 'Mediation for the Nation 2.0'.

During the meeting, the Secretary, DLSA Srinagar

emphasized the vital role of mediation in providing speedy, cost-effective, and amicable resolution of disputes, thereby reducing the burden on courts and promoting access to justice. The trained mediators and panel lawyers were sensitized about their responsibilities in identifying suitable cases for mediation and encouraging litigants to opt for alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.

The Secretary highlighted the objectives of 'Mediation for the Nation 2.0' and stressed the need for

coordinated efforts among mediators, panel lawyers, and judicial institutions to ensure its effective implementation at the district level. Interactive discussions were held to address practical challenges and to share best practices for successful mediation.

The meeting concluded with a call to actively promote mediation among litigants and the general public, reaffirming DLSA Srinagar's commitment to strengthening the culture of mediation as an integral part of the justice delivery system

SHCW Shopian marks National Girl
Child Day at District Hospital

KT NEWS DESK

SHOPIAN, JANUARY 24: On the occasion of National Girl Child Day, the Sankalp Hub for Empowerment of Women (SHCW) Shopian Saturday organised a special awareness and welfare programme at the District Hospital, Shopian with the objective of promoting the value, dignity and education of the girl child.

The programme, as per an official statement, was graced by the Medical Superintendent, District Hospital Shopian, Dr Javid, who attended as the Chief Guest.

On the occasion, baby girl kits were

distributed among mothers who gave birth to baby girls at the hospital Saturday and the mothers were encouraged and congratulated as a gesture of support for families welcoming girl children.

While addressing the gathering, the Medical Superintendent highlighted the importance of the girl child in society and stressed that girls must be provided equal opportunities in education, health and overall development. He emphasized that educating girls is the foundation

of a progressive and empowered society and urged parents and the community to nurture and support their daughters with pride and responsibility.



Shopian Admin
launches massive
snow clearance
Restores 70% water
supply schemes

KT NEWS DESK

SHOPIAN, JANUARY 24: In the aftermath of record heavy snowfall ranging 3 to 5 feet in major parts of Shopian, District Administration Shopian, is on its toes and functioning in emergency mode while launching a massive, district-wide snow clearance and essential services restoration operation since the day one of the impact.

All line departments have been activated on a war footing since the intervening night of 22-23 January, with round-the-clock deployment of men and machinery to clear snow from the national highway, district roads, inner village links, hospital access routes, and other vital corridors.

To ensure fast-track restoration, additional snow clearance machinery has been mobilized from adjoining districts, further strengthening the operational capacity. However, full snow clearance, as per an official statement, may still need more time before the full restoration is achieved despite challenges of momentous snow accumulation across the length and breadth of the district. Almost 80 percent under P1 roads, and more than 50 percent P2 roads cleared till now.

Frontline workers of KPDCL and Jal Shakti are giving their best to restore the services. KPDCL has made significant progress in restoring electricity in major parts of the district. Jal Shakti staff is continuously working to resume the water supplies. Out of 92 Water Supply Schemes, nearly 80% have been affected, mainly because of heavy accumulation of snow at the headworks.

As of now, around 70% of the affected Water Supply Schemes have been restored and normal supply has been resumed in those areas. Restoration of the remaining schemes is taking additional time due to significant challenges, particularly the remotely located and difficult-to-access headworks in snowbound areas. Despite these constraints, every effort is being made to ensure early restoration, and it is expected that by tomorrow evening, almost all remaining schemes will be restored and regular water supply will be fully normalized across the district.

Deputy Commissioner, Shopian, Shishir Gupta is personally supervising and monitoring the situation, conducting regular reviews, and issuing field-level directions to ensure prompt response and effective coordination. He has toured different areas of Shopian and Keller to monitor the services restoration and snow clearance. All officers and officials have been directed to remain available in the field until full restoration while district officers, Tehsildars, sector officers, engineering and supervising staff have been directed to provide the on ground support to ensure the easement of traffic especially catering to ferrying of sick and expecting mothers to healthcare institutions and conduct rescue operations. The healthcare institutions are functioning normally with all aid and care being extended to patients.

TLSC Ganderbal observes National Girl Child Day

KT NEWS DESK

GANDERBAL, JANUARY 24: In observance of National Girl Child Day-2026, the Tehsil Legal Services Committee (TLSC), Ganderbal Saturday organised a legal awareness cum sensitisation programme at AWC Buserbugh, Ganderbal.

The programme was conducted with the primary objective of disseminating legal knowledge among the general public, particularly women, with regard to the constitutional rights, statutory safeguards and welfare schemes available for the girl child, and to promote access to justice, equality before law and social inclusion.

The initiative, as per an official statement,

was undertaken in strict conformity with the Calendar of Activities issued by the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) and the Jammu & Kashmir Legal Services Authority (J&K LSA). The programme was effectively coordinated under the administrative leadership of Shazia Tabasum, Member Secretary, J&K Legal Services Authority, and Abdul Nasir, Chairman, District Legal Services Authority, Ganderbal, with institutional support from Sheikh Babar Hussain, Secretary, DLSA Ganderbal.

During the course of the programme, focused deliberations were held on critical issues affecting the rights and welfare of the girl child, including



the prohibition of child marriage, prevention of gender-based discrimination, eradication of child labour and curbing of child trafficking, all of which constitute

serious violations of fundamental and statutory rights guaranteed under the Constitution of India and allied legislations.

The resource persons

delivered comprehensive lectures on the relevant legal regime governing the protection of Girl child. They elucidated the scope, object and penal consequences under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, the Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, thereby sensitising the participants about the legal remedies and enforcement mechanisms available under law. They also elaborated the constitutional provisions regarding the welfare of the girl child and their protection.

The resource persons further elaborated upon

the statutory right to free legal aid and legal representation as guaranteed under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, and apprised the participants about the functioning of Legal Services Institutions at district and tehsil levels, including the availability of legal counselling, legal assistance and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms for women and children without any financial impediment.

Supervisor, Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), Mehmooda also addressed the gathering and elaborated upon the significance of National Girl Child Day. She emphasised the crucial role of nutrition, health care, education and community support in ensuring the holistic

development of the girl child and highlighted the importance of collective responsibility of families, institutions and society at large in safeguarding the dignity and rights of girls.

Further, the participants were sensitised about various welfare and social security schemes formulated by the Government of India and the Government of Jammu & Kashmir for the benefit of the girl child, including Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Sukanya Samridhi Yojana, Ladli Beti Scheme, Balika Samridhi Yojana and other education and health-oriented incentive schemes aimed at ensuring financial security, educational advancement and overall socio-economic empowerment of the girl child.

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Snowfall Aftermath

Highway closure spurs train rush

UMAISAR GULL GANIE

ANANTNAG: As the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway remained closed for the second consecutive day due to slippery conditions, train services witnessed heavy rush with coaches jam-packed. The railways arranged two additional reserved special trains to cater to the surge in passengers.

This reporter visited the highway and the railway station and found tourists stranded on the highway at Qazigund, who later returned to Anantnag railway station and boarded overcrowded trains.

Ishfaq, a tourist from Jaipur said that all roads in the Kashmir Valley were closed, forcing them to travel by train. "We tried to travel by road but were asked to return. Now we are heading by train," he said.

Mohammad Asralan, also from Jaipur, said they have been stuck on the highway for the last two



days and decided to travel by train due to the on-going disruption. "Train is the only option left for us as we were stranded.

All seats are booked and no ticket is available. The train is fully packed," he said, adding that direct train service to Delhi

should be introduced to ease suffering of passengers.

Shauita, a passenger from Noida, said they were still unsure

about their travel plan as the station was overcrowded. "There is too much rush inside the train and no place for passengers," she said. Passengers urged that the highway should be restored as soon as possible.

Railways said that two reserved special trains have been planned owing to the closure of the highway and the heavy rush of passengers.

"In view of extremely heavy passenger rush between Katra and Srinagar due to closure of roads and flights owing to inclement weather, it is proposed to run suitable reserved special trains on the route of the non-running Vande Bharat on 27th and 28th January 2026 between Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra and Srinagar and vice-versa, with en-route stoppage at Banihal, so that at least two train services remain available on the section," the communication said—(KNO)

Uncleared roads isolates several valley villages

SAJID RAINA

Srinagar, Jan 24: Several remote areas of the Kashmir Valley on Saturday accused the government of failing to clear snow from roads, causing significant inconvenience to residents.

The residents of Ringzabal and Khanshab areas of Budgam district said that snow had remained uncleared in interior roads, leaving an ambulance stranded.

"We called several times, but no help arrived. It was terrifying when a patient needed urgent care," said a resident from Khanshab.

In the Charar-i-Sharief constituency, villagers urged immediate action after snowfall blocked several interior roads. "While the administration has cleared the main road, many interior routes remain cut off due to accumulated snow," said Hakeem Ahmad, a local resident.

Similar complaints came from Ramhall and Rajwar, where locals said the lack of clearance caused severe disruption to daily life.

In Kupwara district, residents in Watayin, Langate, and surrounding villages reported slippery and unsafe conditions on roads that remain uncleared. "Commuting has become dangerous, especially for children and the elderly," said a villager from Langate.

The administration said it was prioritising interior and link roads in Budgam, including Khag, Khanshab, Pakherpora, and Yousmarg, but locals said many areas continue to face hardship. Shopian,

Anantnag, Bandipora's Dardpora area, and higher reaches of the Valley also witnessed similar problems. "Snow clearance is slow, and essential services are badly affected. We urge the administration to act swiftly," said a resident of Dardpora in Bandipora district.

The locals criticised the government for failing to restore essential services, including power and water supply, in Rafiabab, Zain-gare and surrounding areas even after nearly 24 hours.

They said main and interior roads connecting the constituency to district and tehsil headquarters remain blocked, disrupting normal life, particularly affecting the movement of patients, elderly residents and emergency services.

Meanwhile, Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Anshul Garg said snow clearance work is underway across Kashmir, with about 75 per cent of roads cleared following recent heavy snowfall.

Garg said that out of nearly 20,000 kilometres of road length, around 15,000 kilometres have been cleared so far. He added that work on interior and link roads is in progress and is expected to be completed by Saturday evening.

The Div Com said a coordinated plan involving the Mechanical Engineering Department, Roads and Buildings Department, PMGSY and other agencies is being implemented to restore road connectivity across the Valley—(KNO)

Farmers cheered by first snow

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, Jan 24: The much-awaited season's first significant snowfall has brought relief and renewed optimism among the thousands of farmers, along with fruit growers across Kashmir, ending a months-long dry spell that had sparked fears among the people.

Jammu and Kashmir witnessed widespread snow and rain on Friday, marking the first major precipitation after several months of a dry spell.

The snow has been welcomed as a blessing by all, particularly those associated with the agriculture and horticulture sectors, which form the backbone of the region's rural economy.

Agricultural experts said that prolonged absence of rain and snow, besides leading to the drying up of water sources, severely stresses farmlands and orchards.

They said sustained dryness reduces the soil moisture levels and disrupts the natural growth cycle of crops and can have long-term consequences on both

yield and quality, mainly for the orchards, which are highly sensitive to moisture availability.

"Extended dry spells deprive the soil of essential moisture, which directly affects flowering, along with fruit setting. Such conditions can significantly lower productivity in the upcoming season," Aamir Yousuf Bhat, a well-known fruit trader and horticulture expert, said.

He said that delayed and uneven germination of crops due to moisture deficiency leads to reduced output. However, its impact will be less now as snowfall has eased these concerns to a large extent, he added.

Bhat said the situation had become alarming due to a lack of precipitation, as there was no rain or snow for nearly five months. "Had it not snowed, it would have dealt a severe blow to both agriculture and horticulture," he said.

Most of the orchards in Kashmir are rain-fed and dependent on snowmelt rather than artificial irrigation, and there was no water for irrigation due to a long

dry spell, said Dr Umar Mushtaq, an environmental expert.

"This snowfall will now replenish moisture levels and significantly reduce stress on fruit trees, and adequate moisture also helps curb pest attacks," he said.

Dr Umar Mushtaq said that prolonged dry weather poses serious challenges for orchard sustainability by disrupting natural irrigation systems and reducing water availability. This, he said, impacts both fruit quality and yield, and makes them vulnerable to pests and many other diseases.

He, however, added that this precipitation after a long time will replenish the moisture levels and maintain the water table and help in irrigation facilities in summer.

Farmers who had sown Rabi crops were also particularly anxious due to low moisture, thereby delaying seed germination.

With the arrival of snowfall, there is renewed confidence among farmers and orchardists. They expressed relief by saying that the snowfall had come just in

time, and the seeds will germinate now.

According to farmers, mustard, an important Rabi crop harvested in April, was also under threat because of the lack of rainfall. They said timely snowfall has now revived the expectations of a healthy crop and better yields.

Those associated with agriculture and horticulture described the snowfall as a need of the hour. They expressed optimism that natural moisture will translate into improved crop performance and better economic returns.

Officials from Public Health Engineering (PHE) department said that the prolonged dry spell has pushed many water sources to critical levels, and even some dried up. "This snowfall gives us hope that water sources will gradually recharge, ensuring smoother water supply and hydropower generation," an official said.

They said it may take a few days for springs and streams to fully replenish, but this snowfall has brought much-needed relief after widespread water shortages across the valley—(KNO)

Full dress rehearsals held for R-Day in J&K

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Jan 24: Ahead of the 77th Republic Day celebrations, Jammu and Kashmir remained on high alert on Saturday as full dress rehearsals were conducted simultaneously across all districts in the Union Territory amid patriotic fervour.

The rehearsals were held amid high enthusiasm and tricolour spirit, offering a preview of the grand Republic Day celebrations on January 26, featuring impressive parades and cultural performances.

In Kashmir valley, the main venue is at Bakshi Stadium, Srinagar, where today the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg unfurled the National Flag and inspected the parade and took the salute.

In Jammu the full dress rehearsal was held at M.A. Stadium, where Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Ramesh Kumar hoisted the National Flag and inspected the parade, and took the salute.

In both divisions of Jammu and Kashmir, contingents representing Army, BSF, CRPF, SSB, JKP, IRP, JKAP, UTDRF, NCC, Bharat Scouts & Guides and school students coordinated March Past and shows spirited cultural performances.

In Srinagar City, the Divisional Commissioner first paid floral tributes to martyrs at Balidan Stambh along with senior officers including IGP Kashmir Vijay Kumar Birdi, DIG Central Kashmir and DC Srinagar.

In his address, the Div Com Garg conveyed warm greetings to the people, stating that all arrangements for the Republic Day function at Bakshi Stadium were complete. He also lauded the efforts of participating contingents and departments who, despite weather disruptions, worked round-the-clock to ensure a grand celebration.

He also invited the public to attend the function and be seated by 8:30 a.m.

Senior officers including IGP Kashmir, DIG Central Kashmir, DC Srinagar, Commissioner SMC, SSP Srinagar and heads of line departments were present at the occasion.

BUDGAM: A full dress rehearsal was held at Sports Stadium Budgam where ADC Mehraj-ud-din Shah unfurled the tricolour, inspected



the parade and took the salute. Contingents from Police, JKAP, CRPF, NCC and school students participated, followed by colourful cultural performances. Senior officers from district and police administration were present.

KULGAM: At DPL Kulgam, ADC Viqar Ahmad Giri presided over the event, highlighting district development achievements. He said 1,633 works worth rupees 50.29 crore were completed under District Capex, 5,540 houses constructed under PMAY-G and 55,624 households connected to tap water under JJM.

The event also included patriotic cultural performances.

ANANTNAG: ADDC Sandeep Singh Bali unfurled the National Flag at DPL Anantnag and took the salute at the parade by CRPF, JKP, NCC and school contingents. In his address, he paid tributes to freedom fighters and highlighted the district's progress in education, healthcare, infrastructure and self-employment. The event featured energetic cultural programmes by students.

KUPWARA: At DPL Kupwara, ADC Gulzar Ahmad Khan presided over the function,

inspecting the parade of JKP, CRPF, IRP and school contingents. Similar events were held in Handwara, Lolab and Karnah, where local officers hoisted the National Flag and took salutes. Cultural programmes by students infused the atmosphere with patriotic fervour.

BARAMULLA: A grand rehearsal was held at DPL Baramulla under the chairmanship of ADC Syed Altaf Hussain Musvi. Students and contingents of Police and CRPF presented a synchronised parade followed by cultural displays showcasing Kashmir's diverse heritage. The event reviewed final arrangements for security, protocol and cultural segments ahead of the Republic Day.

BANDIPORA: At S.K. Stadium Bandipora, ADC Zaffar Hussain Shawal inspected the parade and took the salute from contingents of CRPF, JKP, IRP, Women Battalion, Forest Division and NCC. The event featured cultural performances by school students and a Police Band display.

The ADC also lauded developmental progress and public cooperation. Parallel rehearsals were also held at Sumbal and Gurez.

PULWAMA:

Full dress rehearsal at DPL Pulwama saw ADC Dr. S.M. Ashraf unfurl the tricolour and take the salute. The March Past included contingents from CRPF, JKP, NCC and Home Guards. A series of cultural performances themed around "Vande Mataram" captivated the audience.

The ADC highlighted the district's development milestones and public cooperation.

GANDERBAL: A grand rehearsal was held at Qamaria Stadium Ganderbal, where ADDC Manzoor Ahmad Bhat took the salute from multiple contingents including CRPF, SSB, JKAP, Police and school students.

He commended the district's achievements in infrastructure, tourism, youth empowerment under Mission YUVA, and women empowerment initiatives. Cultural performances celebrating the 150th year of "Vande Mataram" enthralled the audience.

SHOPIAN: At DPL Shopian, ADC Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz unfurled the National Flag and took the salute from contingents of CRPF, JKP, Women Police and Home Guards.

He paid tribute to freedom fighters and urged citizens to uphold constitutional values. Cultural presentations by students added colour to the event.

JAMMU: The Republic Day's full dress rehearsal was held at M.A. Stadium Jammu where the Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Ramesh Kumar hoisted the National Flag, inspected the parade and took the salute from contingents representing Army, BSF, CRPF, SSB, JKP, IRP, JKAP, UTDRF, NCC, Bharat Scouts & Guides and school students.

The event featured Tableaux on Government themes such as Operation Sindoor, Mission YUVA, Road Safety, Nasha Mukti J&K, Shram Ko Samman, GST Reforms 2.0 and Food Safety – Sahi Bhojan Behtar Jeevan.

Similarly, artists from the J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages and school students performed patriotic and folk presentations including "Aaj Ka Hindustan," "Itihaas Ki Goonj," and "Vande Bharatam."

The Dare Devils of J&K Police also mesmerised the audience with their motorcycle acrobatics.

Senior officers from the UT administration, nodal officers and contingents in charge were present at the event—(KNO)

BJP committed to keep J&K united: Chugh



REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Jammu, Jan 24: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s National General Secretary and J&K in-charge Tarun Chugh on Saturday said that party is committed to keep Jammu and Kashmir united.

Addressing a workshop here, Chugh said, "Under no circumstances will Jammu and Kashmir ever be separated and the party's top leadership is firmly committed to the unity and integrity of the Union Territory."

Chugh said, "BJP considers Jammu and Kashmir as one entity and one soul and the party's central leadership stands by this as an unbreakable commitment."

"Jammu and Kashmir is one unit, one entity, one soul," he said.

Chugh said, "The party remains committed to ensuring equal development of both regions while working to reclaim the areas of Jammu and Kashmir that are under Pakistan's illegal occupation."

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

Judicial Academy organizes workshop on expediting PCA, NDPS trials

KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Jan 24: Under the patronage of Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh (Patron-in-Chief, J&K Judicial Academy), Arun Palli and guidance of Chairperson and Members of Governing Committee for J&K Judicial Academy, Jammu & Kashmir Judicial Academy on Saturday organized a one day workshop on "Expediting Trials under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 and the NDPS Act, 1985, including Judicial Ethics & Behaviour" at its Jammu Campus, Janipur.

The workshop was aimed at enhancing the capacity of Judicial Officers by addressing procedural challenges, judicial best practices and ethical dimensions involved in conducting trials under special statutes which mandate strict compliance and expeditious disposal. The programme commenced with an introduction by Naseer Ahmad Dar, Director, J&K Judicial Academy, who highlighted the importance of judicial efficiency, ethical conduct and timely adjudication in cases involving corruption and narcotics offences.

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

EDITORIAL

Time For Systemic Reform To Ensure Safer Roads

The tragic loss of ten soldiers in Doda is a devastating symptom of a far wider crisis. It compels us to confront an unbearable truth: our roads have become killing fields. The concurrent data revealing nearly 3,700 deaths in over 20,000 accidents in Jammu & Kashmir since 2022 is a statistical scream for urgent, systemic intervention. While expressions of grief and condolences from leadership are necessary, they are woefully insufficient. What is required now is

uncompromising action to halt this carnage. The accident in Doda, on a high-altitude, strategically vital road, underscores that this is both a public safety and a national security concern. These roads are lifelines for communities and armed forces alike. Their perilous condition, often lacking basic safeguards like crash barriers, proper grading, and regular maintenance in extreme terrain, is a recipe for repeated tragedy. The government's own data points to clear solutions.

The Chief Secretary's directive for GIS-based, data-driven interventions to identify and rectify 'black spots' is precisely the scientific approach needed. However, identification must lead to immediate, funded rectification by agencies like the BRO, NHAI, and PWD. Engineering flaws which include blind curves, inadequate signage, missing parapets, must be corrected with wartime urgency. Simultaneously, enforcement cannot remain merely a revenue-generating exercise

of issuing challans. The punitive measures discussed, which include cancellation of licenses and vehicle registrations for habitual offenders, must be implemented stringently to create genuine deterrence. Enforcement must be paired with a massive public awareness campaign on responsible driving, targeting the prime accident hours of 3 PM to 9 PM. This is a complex challenge demanding a 'whole-of-government' response, integrating traffic police, transport authorities,

road engineering agencies, and district administrations. The goal must be zero preventable deaths. Every life lost on our roads, be it a soldier serving the nation or a citizen going about their day, is a profound failure of the state's duty to protect. Enough review meetings have been held. We need a declared, time-bound 'Road Safety Mission' with accountability, resources, and the political will to see it through. Our collective conscience and the safety of our people demand nothing less.

CERT-In: India's Frontline Defender Against Cyber Threats

Building a safe, trusted and accountable cyberspace

Press Information Bureau

India's rapid digital transformation has reshaped governance, commerce, and citizen services at an unprecedented scale. From digital payments and e-commerce to online public service delivery, digital technology has become integral to everyday life. As digital adoption accelerates, safeguarding cyberspace has emerged as a national priority.

With rising instances of online fraud, phishing, ransomware attacks, AI-driven scams, and threats to critical digital infrastructure, the need for a coordinated and resilient cybersecurity framework has never been greater. Recognising this challenge, the Government of India has put in place robust policies, institutional mechanisms, and operational capabilities to ensure a safe, trusted, and secure digital environment.

At the centre of India's cybersecurity architecture is the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), operating under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and mandated by the Information Technology Act, 2000. CERT-In provides the institutional depth for national cyber defence by overseeing incident management, enhancing systemic resilience, and promoting secure digital practices across government, industry, and society. Its work underpins the protection of India's rapidly expanding digital ecosystem and supports confidence in digital platforms and services.

In today's interconnected digital landscape, cybersecurity is no longer a purely technical concern but a foundational pillar of national security, economic stability, and public trust. The scale and complexity of digital systems demand continuous vigilance, coordinated action, and strong institutional leadership. By combining policy direction with operational readiness, CERT-In not only responds to emerging cyber threats but also anticipates risks, builds resilience, and ensures that India's digital growth remains secure, inclusive, and sustainable.

India's Expanding Digital Landscape

Over the last decade, India's digital footprint has grown exponentially. It is driven by rising internet penetration, widespread smartphone adoption, and the rapid expansion of digital public services. By 2025, internet connections in India crossed the milestone of 100 crore, reaching 100.29 crore, compared to 25.15 crore in March 2014. Average monthly data consumption per wireless data subscriber increased nearly 399 times, rising from 61.66 MB in 2014 to 24.01 GB in 2025, among the highest globally.

This strong digital foundation has enabled remarkable growth in digital payments. The Unified Payments Interface (UPI) has emerged as the central pillar of India's digital payment ecosystem. In December 2025 alone, UPI processed over 21 billion transactions valued at more than 27 lakh crore. While this digital expansion has significantly enhanced convenience and inclusion, it has also widened the attack surface for cyber threats. To address these risks, the Union Budget 2025-26 allocated 782 crore for cybersecurity, underscoring the government's strong focus on securing India's digital infrastructure.

In this context, CERT-In's role assumes critical importance as the cornerstone of India's cybersecurity framework. CSIRT-Fin i.e. Computer Security Incident Response Team for the Financial Sector functioning under CERT In, strengthens cybersecurity in the financial sector by enabling coordinated incident response, information sharing, and providing guidance and support for the Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance (BFSI) sector. Similarly CSIRT-Power works as an extended arm of CERT-In for fortifying the cybersecurity posture of the Power Sector by coordinating and analysing cyber incidents, acting on cyber threat intelligence from CERT-In, taking proactive containment measures based on situational awareness details provided by CERT-In, ensuring cybersecurity audits are carried out and mitigating vulnerabilities as reported by CERT-In's Cyber Swachhta Kendra (CSKs).

Core Functions of CERT-In for the National Cybersecurity

CERT-In is the national agency for cyber incident response in India. Its mandate under



section 70B of the Information Technology (IT) Act 2000 includes the prevention of cyberattacks, real-time monitoring of cyber threats, and swift coordination with stakeholders to mitigate and contain cyber incidents.

Core functions of CERT-In includes:

Promoting cybersecurity awareness among organisations and citizens

Facilitating information sharing through its automated cyber threat exchange platform

Sharing near-real time information on existing and potential cyber threats with organisations covering all sectors

Collaborating with international partners, industry and academia

Conducting regular training programmes, cybersecurity exercises/drills

Operating CSKs for ensuring cyber hygiene & a Command & Control Center for facilitating monitoring of cyber threats and attack campaigns

Coordinating mitigation measures with organisations and stakeholders during significant national and international activities

Institutionalising responsible vulnerability disclosure

Supporting incident investigations & supporting law enforcement agencies through its cyber forensics capabilities

Enabling organisations & providing guidance on cyber crisis management plan implementation to enhance national preparedness

Through sustained operational engagement and coordinated response mechanisms, CERT-In ensures rapid containment of cyber incidents and supports the restoration of affected systems across sectors. Its continuous flow of actionable intelligence and guidance enables stakeholders to strengthen preparedness, reduce systemic risk, and respond effectively to evolving threats. Together, these efforts contribute to minimising disruption, accelerating recovery, and reinforcing confidence in India's digital ecosystem.

CERT-In at the Core of India's Cyber Resilience Strategy

CERT-In continues to serve as the cornerstone of India's national cyber defence architecture through proactive threat detection, rapid incident response, and large-scale capacity building. Its achievements in 2025 reflect a sustained and systematic effort to strengthen institutional resilience, secure critical digital infrastructure, and reinforce trust in India's rapidly expanding digital ecosystem.

An overview of CERT-In's Key achievements of 2025

National Cyber Incident Response and Threat Intelligence

In 2025, CERT-In handled over 29.44 lakh cyber incidents, issuing 1,530 alerts, 390 vulnerability notes, and 65 advisories, reflecting large-scale national cyber response capability.

29 Common Vulnerabilities and Exposures (CVEs) were identified and published by CERT-In.

Cybersecurity Audits

CERT-In empaneled 231 certified security audit organisations to strengthen cybersecurity across government, public, and private sector

ICT systems.

A majority of these audits were carried out in the banking and financial institutions, power and energy, and transport sectors.

Capacity Building

CERT-In conducted 32 specialised technical training programmes and 95 cybersecurity awareness sessions for government, PSU, and private-sector stakeholders.

Trained 20,799 officers and cybersecurity professionals across government, PSUs, and industry through specialised capacity-building programmes.

Cybersecurity Drills and Preparedness Exercises

CERT-In conducted 122 cybersecurity drills and exercises of varying complexity, including tabletop exercises, with participation from about 1,570 organisations across government, public, and private sectors (Defence, Paramilitary Forces, Space, Atomic Energy, Telecommunications (ISPs), Finance, Power, Oil and Natural Gas, Transportation, IT/ITES sectors, and State Data Centres).

Awareness Initiatives

CERT-In conducted 95 awareness sessions covering 91,065 participants (including National Cybersecurity Awareness Month (NCSAM) October 2025).

In 2025, CERT-In also published a comprehensive suite of reports, whitepapers, guidelines, advisories, and vulnerability notes, providing timely, actionable guidance to organisations and stakeholders for proactive cyber risk mitigation and resilience building.

Reports & Guidelines Published in 2025
Cybersecurity Guidelines for Smart City Infrastructure (February 2025)

Advisory on Cybersecurity threats and best practices for satellite communications (Feb 2025)

India Ransomware Report (March 2025)

Digital Threat Report 2024 for the BFSI (Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance) sector (April 2025)

White paper on "Good Practices for protecting Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) against Cybersecurity Threats" (April 2025)

Technical Guidelines on SBOM (Software Bill of Materials), QBOM & CBOM (Quantum Bill of Materials) and Cryptographic Bill of Materials), HBOM (Hardware Bill of Material), AIBOM (Artificial Intelligence Bill of Materials) Version 2 (July 2025)

Comprehensive Cybersecurity Audit Policy Guidelines (July 2025)

White paper on Transitioning to Quantum Cyber Readiness (July 2025)

15 Elemental Cyber Defense Controls for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)- (Sep 2025)

During NCSAM October 2025, published a "Cyber Smart Kids: Suraksha Guide".

Cybersecurity Best Practices for Senior Citizens - booklet.

CERT-In's achievements in 2025 reflect its central role in safeguarding India's rapidly expanding digital ecosystem. Through large-scale capacity building, rigorous audits, continuous awareness efforts, and the release

of forward-looking guidelines and technical frameworks, CERT-In has strengthened institutional preparedness across government, industry, and society.

Institutional Frameworks anchored by CERT-In

To operationalise national cybersecurity policy and translate strategic intent into on-ground action, CERT-In anchors a set of specialised institutional frameworks. These mechanisms provide structured coordination, preventive safeguards, and rapid response capabilities across sectors, States, and citizens.

The Cyber Swachhta Kendra (CSK) the CSK (Botnet Cleaning and Malware Analysis Centre) is established by CERT-In to enhance cyber hygiene among citizens. The centre tracks networks of internet connected devices such as computers, mobile phones, IoT devices, and home routers—that are infected with malware. It provides free tools and guidance to help users clean infected devices and works closely with industry, academia, and internet service providers to identify compromised systems and alert users. Regular awareness campaigns promote safe online behaviour and responsible digital practices.

As of December 2025, CSK covers 98% of India's digital population, sending large-scale notifications on botnet and malware infections. Engaging 1,427 organisations across key sectors, it helps detect and remediate malware, while 89.55 lakh downloads of its free botnet-removal tools underscore CSK's role as a citizen-centric, preventive cybersecurity initiatives.

Security Assurance Framework CERT-In operates a security assurance framework to strengthen the security of government and critical sector systems. Under this framework; certified IT security audit organisations conduct regular audits; Vulnerability assessments and penetration testing are undertaken; and Audit findings are analysed to identify common weaknesses. Based on these insights, CERT-In issues secure design guidelines and promotes best practices. Regular audits under this framework significantly enhance cyber readiness and resilience across sectors.

National Cyber Coordination Centre (NCCC) NCCC, implemented by CERT-In, monitors cyberspace at metadata level to detect potential cybersecurity threats for situational awareness. It facilitates real-time information sharing with concerned organisations, State governments, and other stakeholders, enabling timely preventive and response actions.

Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRTs) CERT-In oversees a network of CSIRTs operating at the sectoral and State/UT levels. Sectoral CSIRTs support domains such as finance, power, and telecom, while State CSIRTs operate under respective State and UT governments.

Cyber Crisis Management Plan (CCMP) CERT-In has also developed a CCMP for government bodies, providing structured guidance during major cyberattacks and cyber-terrorism incidents. The plan supports rapid response, recovery, and continuity of essential services, particularly for critical infrastructure.

Key Takeaways

- In 2025, CERT-In handled over 29.44 lakh cyber incidents, issuing 1,530 alerts, 390 vulnerability notes, and 65 advisories, reflecting large-scale national cyber response capability.
- 231 cybersecurity audit organisations empaneled, significantly strengthening audit and vulnerability assessment capacity across critical Information Communication Technology infrastructure.
- 98% digital population covered by Cyber Swachhta Kendra, 1,427 organisations onboarded, and 89.55 lakh malware removal tool downloads.
- CERT-In's sustained cybersecurity efforts have earned global recognition, with leading international platforms such as the World Economic Forum, the University of Oxford, and France's ANSSI acknowledging India's leadership in AI-driven threat detection, cyber resilience, trusted AI frameworks, and citizen-centric malware mitigation.

Collectively, these institutional frameworks enable a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to cybersecurity. By integrating prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery. It ensures that India's digital ecosystem remains resilient, adaptive, and secure amid evolving cyber threats. This layered institutional design strengthens national readiness while safeguarding critical infrastructure and citizens alike.

Global Recognition of India's Cybersecurity Leadership

CERT-In's sustained domestic efforts have increasingly resonated at the global level. Its operational scale, technology-driven approaches, and emphasis on collaborative cyber governance have positioned India as a credible and responsible stakeholder in the international cybersecurity ecosystem.

In the Global Cybersecurity Outlook 2025 published by the World Economic Forum (WEF), CERT-In has been highlighted for its deployment of AI-driven situational awareness systems to analyse and detect malicious domains and phishing activities, as well as for its real-time sharing of threat intelligence at the global level.

In April 2025, CERT-In contributed to the Cyber Resilience Compass paper published jointly by the WEF and the University of Oxford, which identified seven critical domains of cyber resilience.

In February 2025, CERT-In was among the international partners to co-sign the joint high-level risk analysis report on Artificial Intelligence titled "Building Trust in AI through a Cyber-Risk-Based Approach", published by France's National Cybersecurity Agency (ANSSI). The report advocates a risk-based approach to enable trusted AI systems, secure AI value chains, and address emerging AI-related cyber risks.

Together, these recognitions underscore CERT-In's growing influence and leadership in shaping global cybersecurity and AI risk governance. They underscore CERT-In's emerging role in shaping global discussions on cyber resilience, threat intelligence sharing, and responsible AI risk governance.

Conclusion

Amid the growing complexity and scale of cyber threats, CERT-In continues to anchor India's cybersecurity ecosystem. Through continuously identifying and mitigating cyber risks, CERT-In has significantly strengthened national cyber resilience. Its initiatives, ranging from institutional frameworks and sectoral & state CSIRTs to citizen-centric awareness programmes, demonstrate a comprehensive and forward-looking approach to securing India's ICT infrastructure and protecting users. International recognition of CERT-In's AI-driven innovations further underscores India's growing leadership in cybersecurity. Collectively, these sustained efforts reaffirm the Government of India's commitment to safeguarding cyberspace and ensuring a safe, trusted, and secure digital future for all citizens.

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

Director Agriculture Kashmir assesses wind damage

‘Restore affected facilities, ensure early revival of cultivation activities’

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 24: Director Agriculture Kashmir, Sartaj Ahmad Shah, Saturday visited the Floriculture Development Scheme, kitchen garden, and entomology sections at Lalmandi, Srinagar, to assess the damage caused by severe gusty winds during the intervening night of January 22-23, 2026.

The strong winds, as per an official statement, triggered by a broader weather disturbance across the Kashmir Valley, led to uprooting of plants, damage to poly-houses and disruption of ongoing cultivation activities at the site. The Director conducted a comprehensive on-site inspection of the affected areas, including floriculture nurseries, entomology unit,



and kitchen garden demonstration plots managed by the Agriculture Department.

During the visit, the Director was accompanied by senior officers and technical staff of the department. He reviewed the extent of losses to flower crops, seedlings, and departmental infrastructure and issued

necessary directions for immediate remedial measures to mitigate further damage.

The Director emphasized timely restoration of affected facilities and instructed field staff to ensure early revival of cultivation activities while maintaining close monitoring of weather advisories.

Transport Dept launches UT-Wide drive against high-intensity headlights

KT News Desk

JAMMU, JANUARY 24: The Transport Department, Jammu & Kashmir, has launched a Union Territory-wide enforcement drive against motor vehicles fitted with unauthorized high-intensity white LED headlights and other non-standard lighting systems in view of growing concerns over road safety.

The Transport Commissioner, as per an official statement, has directed all enforcement agencies, including Regional Transport Officers (RTOS), Assistant Regional Transport Officers (ARTOS), Motor Vehicle Inspectors (MVIS) and field enforcement staff, to initiate strict action against vehicles using high-intensity lights that cause glare and impair visibility for other road users.

Officials stated that the blinding effect of such non-standard lighting systems has emerged as a serious road



safety hazard, particularly during night-time driving and low-visibility conditions. These lights have been found

to contribute to road traffic accidents, including fatal incidents, by significantly reducing visibility and reaction

time for oncoming drivers and pedestrians.

The enforcement drive will be conducted across urban areas, highways, rural roads and accident-prone zones throughout the Union Territory. Vehicles found fitted with unauthorized or modified lighting systems will be penalized in accordance with the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act and relevant rules and such lights shall be removed on the spot wherever legally permissible.

The Transport Department has also appealed to vehicle owners and drivers to refrain from using non-standard lighting systems and to ensure that their vehicles strictly adhere to approved specifications in the interest of public safety and the safety of fellow road users.

This initiative aims to enhance night-time road safety, reduce road accidents and ensure safer driving conditions for all citizens.

Youth Marathon, Tiranga Rally organized in Poonch ahead of Republic Day-2026

DC, SSP lead Vande Matram Phase-II initiative



KT News Desk

POONCH, JANUARY 24: As part of the Republic Day Celebrations-2026 and Vande Matram Phase-II celebrations, the District Administration Poonch on Saturday organised a Youth Marathon and Tiranga Rally to promote national unity, patriotism and youth participation in nation-building.

The event was flagged off from the Sports Stadium by Deputy Commissioner, Ashok Kular Sharma and Senior Superintendent of Police, Shafket Hussain Bhat in the presence of senior officers of the civil and police administration.

The marathon and rally passed through main areas of the town and culminated at Jogger Park near SK Bridge, symbolizing collective commitment towards the values enshrined in the Constitution of India.

Additional Deputy Commissioner, Tahir Mustafa Malik, senior officers from district administration, line departments, Department of Youth Services and Sports (DYSSO), heads of educational institutions, teaching faculty and officials actively participated and extended their support to the initiative.

A large number of students from schools and colleges from across the district took part with great enthusiasm, holding the National Flag and chanting patriotic slogans including “Vande Mataram” and “Bharat Mata Ki Jai”, transforming the rally into a vibrant display of national pride and solidarity.

The event concluded with high spirits, reinforcing the district administration's commitment to celebrating Republic Day 2026 in a meaningful and participatory manner while strengthening the bond between citizens and the nation.

National Voters' Day Jammu hosts district-level voters' awareness rally

KT News Desk

JAMMU, JANUARY 24: To commemorate National Voters' Day, a District-Level Voters' Awareness Rally was successfully organized Saturday in Jammu by the Higher Education Department, in collaboration with the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer-J&K.

The rally was flagged off from Government College for Women (GCW), Parade Ground Jammu and culminated at MAM College, covering a distance of approximately 3.5 kilometers.

About 700 students drawn from the government colleges of Jammu district participated enthusiastically in the event, displaying strong commitment towards democratic values and responsible citizenship.

The rally, as per an official statement, was organized under the national theme “Nothing Like Voting, I Vote for Sure”, with the objective of creating awareness among youth—especially first-time voters and women—about the importance of voting and active participation in the democratic process.

Students and faculty from Government College for Women, Parade Ground; MAM College, Jammu; Government Gandhi Memorial Science College, Jammu; Government College for Women, Gandhi Nagar; SPMR College of Commerce, Jammu; Government College



of Education, Jammu; Government Degree College, Akhnoor; Government Degree College, Paloura; Government Degree College, Bishnah; Government Degree College, Kunjwani and Government Degree Sidhra took part in the rally.

At MAM College, Nodal Principal Jammu Dr. Ravender Kumar Tickoo addressed the gathering and highlighted the significance of voting as a fundamental democratic right and civic responsibility. He urged students to become informed, ethical and responsible voters and to actively participate in strengthening the democratic fabric of the nation.

Principal MAM College Prof. Archana Kaul also addressed the participants and emphasized the crucial role of youth in shaping the future of democracy. She encouraged students to exercise their franchise conscientiously and to spread voter awareness within

their communities.

The event witnessed the active presence and support of principals, faculty members from all participating colleges, NSS Programme Officers, NCC Cadets and student volunteers, who ensured disciplined conduct and smooth coordination throughout the rally.

Participants marched in orderly columns carrying placards and banners displaying messages such as “My Vote, My Right,” “Every Vote Counts,” and “Empowered Voters, Strong Democracy.” Uniform caps with voter awareness slogans added to the visual impact and public outreach of the rally.

The successful organization of the rally reaffirmed the collective commitment of the Higher Education Department, educational institutions, faculty and students towards promoting democratic consciousness, electoral awareness and responsible citizenship among young voters.

MY Bharat Srinagar to hold National Voters' Day Padyatra today



KT News Desk

Srinagar, January 24: MY Bharat, Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India, is organising the National Voters' Day Padyatra - Sundays on Cycle - 2026 on January 25, 2026, in Srinagar. The aim of the programme of to maximising youth participation in the democratic process under the theme “MY Bharat, MY Vote.”

The Padyatra - Sundays on Cycle will act as a visible and participatory platform to spread voter awareness through collective civic action. Participants include MY Bharat volunteers, youth leaders, and first-time voters. Besides, the event will include felicitation of newly registered voters, voter awareness interactions and pledge-taking ceremonies.

The initiative, as per a PIB statement, is part of a nationwide youth mobilisation

campaign to promote informed, ethical, and participative electoral engagement, with a special focus on first-time voters.

While addressing a press conference Deputy Director, MY Bharat Srinagar, Shri Pardip Kumar said that youth participation in democratic exercises is central to nation-building. Empowering young citizens with awareness, responsibility, and a sense of ownership in the electoral process strengthens the very foundations of democracy, he stated.

Through this initiative, MY Bharat encourages young people to emerge as ambassadors of democratic values and responsible citizenship, playing an active role in shaping the future of the nation, Shri Kumar further added. MY Bharat Srinagar has invited young citizens to actively participate in the National Voters' Day Padyatra - Sundays on Cycle - 2026.

Vande Mataram Celebrations Samba District organises mega Tiranga rally

KT News Desk

SAMBA, JANUARY 24: The streets of Samba district witnessed a magnificent scene of patriotic celebration Saturday as thousands of citizens came together to participate in the Tiranga Rally organised to celebrate 150th anniversary of National Song Vande Mataram.

The event was an extraordinary demonstration of national pride and unity, marking the district's contribution to the pan-India celebration of 150 years of the immortal patriotic hymn “Vande Mataram.”

District Magistrate, Ayushi Sudan flagged off the Mega Tiranga Rally from the historic Rani Suchet Singh Sports Stadium, setting in motion a powerful procession that wound its way through the district before culminating at the iconic Samba Fort.

As part of this momentous nationwide commemoration that honors the timeless anthem penned by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee—a song that became the battle cry of India's freedom struggle—Samba's participation resonated with historical significance and contemporary relevance alike.

The spectacle, as per an official statement, was nothing short of breathtaking—students marching



shoulder to shoulder with NCC cadets, police personnel walking alongside civil society members, all united under the saffron, white and green of our beloved National Flag. The rhythmic cadence of the marching band echoed through the lanes, stirring hearts and evoking memories of the countless sacrifices made by our freedom fighters who drew inspiration from the very words of “Vande Mataram” as they dreamed of this moment of independence and unity.

The rally was truly exceptional not merely in terms of its scale, but the spirit it embodied—a spirit that transcended age, profession and background, bringing together an entire district in celebration of the values enshrined in our Constitution while honoring a 150-year legacy of patriotic awakening that continues to inspire generations.

The meticulous coordination by

District Administration ensured that every aspect of the event reflected the dignity and solemnity befitting both our national symbols and this historic milestone. As the rally reached its crescendo at the Historic Fort of Samba, thousands of voices rose in unison to sing the National Anthem, creating a moment of profound collective emotion that connected Samba's citizens with millions across the nation participating in this sesquicentennial celebration.

The remarkable gathering stands as a testament to the enduring patriotic spirit of the people of Samba and their unwavering commitment to preserving the unity, integrity and progressive vision that defines our great nation, while honoring the timeless message of “Vande Mataram” that continues to unite and inspire India even after 150 years.

Ramban marks 150 years of ‘Vande Mataram’ with mega rally, plantation drives

KT News Desk

RAMBAN, JANUARY 24: As part of the ongoing celebrations marking 150 glorious years of India's National Song “Vande Mataram”, the District Administration Ramban, under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Alyas Khan Saturday organized ‘Vande Mataram’ rallies and a series of thematic events across the district under the theme “Plantation Drive - Salute to Mother Earth.”

Additional Deputy Commissioner, Varunjeet Singh Charak, flagged off the Mega ‘Vande Mataram’ Rally from the District Police Lines (DPL), Ramban. The rally conveyed a strong message of unity, integrity and national pride. A large number of locals, along with students and teachers from various schools across the district, participated enthusiastically, infusing the event with vibrant patriotic fervour.

The programme witnessed the presence of Chief Education Officer, MS Khan, Tehsildar Ramban, Deep Kumar, Tehsildar (HQ), Reejuta Mahajan, District Youth

Services and Sports Officer, Jagdish Raj Sharma, besides officers and officials from various departments, teachers and students.

As part of the celebrations, as per an official statement, plantation drives were conducted at multiple locations across the district, symbolising reverence for Bharat Mata. Saplings planted by the Horticulture Department, in coordination with other line departments, stood as living tributes to the spirit of Vande Mataram, blending national pride with environmental responsibility. A major plantation drive was also organised at Maitra under the supervision of Chief Horticulture Officer Rajinder Lochan.

Similarly, a Tiranga Rally was held at Banihal by the Municipal Committee Banihal and PWD Division Banihal, showcasing patriotic murals highlighting 150 years of Vande Mataram.

The events concluded with renewed community spirit and a collective resolve to uphold national values while working towards a greener and more sustainable Ramban.



KT News Desk

DODA, JANUARY 24: National Girl Child Day was celebrated with great zeal and enthusiasm across Doda district to highlight the importance of empowering girls and promoting their rights, education, health and safety.

The main programme was organized by the District Administration in collaboration with the Social Welfare Department, Education Department and other allied departments under the supervision of District Social Welfare Officer Zubair Ahmed. A large number of girl students participated actively in the event.

The programme featured a variety of activities including awareness sessions, speeches, debates and painting competitions, highlighting the significance of the day.

Girl students eloquently expressed their views on eliminating gender discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities for the girl child in all spheres of life. Key issues such

as girls' education, healthcare, nutrition and protection from social evils were highlighted during the discussions. The academic and sports topper were felicitated at the event.

The Chief Guest, District Development Commissioner (DDC), Harvinder Singh as per an official statement, emphasized the importance of National Girl Child Day and highlighted the remarkable achievements of women in fields such as politics, education, sports, literature, civil services and other sectors. He urged parents and the community to collectively work towards creating a safe, inclusive and supportive environment for girls to achieve their full potential.

The DDC also commended the enthusiastic participation of the girl students and felicitated meritorious students with medals and awards.

The programme was attended by ACP, CEO, DSWO, Executive Officer Municipality Doda along with concerned teachers and other officials.

Republic Day Celebrations

Srinagar District Admin felicitates meritorious civil, police officials

DC, SSP, SMC Commissioner hand over awards to officials for excellence in public services

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jan 24: To acknowledge and recognize the services rendered by the Officers and Officials of District Administration Srinagar, SMC and District Police, who have delivered distinguished and meritorious services, the District Administration Srinagar on Saturday held a Felicitation & Award Ceremony here at Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex.

The felicitation ceremony was presided over by Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, Commissioner SMC, Faz Lul Haseeb and Senior Superintendent of Police, Sandeep Chakraborty who awarded the Commendation Certificates and Mementos to the employees who have showcased meritorious service in the run up to Republic Day Celebrations.

Addressing the felicitation function, the Deputy Commissioner congratulated all the award winners and said that hard work and dedication towards one's profession are the



keys to achieving success and earning a unique place in society.

The DC lauded the contributions of all awardees and other officials who have made a difference through their hard work, exemplary performance, and dedication towards ensuring a prompt, efficient, and effective public service delivery system in the district. The DC also highlighted the importance of coordination among the District Administration, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), and Police in ensuring effective and efficient administration in the district.

Speaking on the occasion, the Commissioner SMC highlighted

the importance of coordinated efforts in fostering a better work culture for the benefit of the public. He urged the participants to continue working with added zeal, responsibility, and commitment in the future for public welfare and the overall betterment of society.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Srinagar also addressed the gathering and lauded the awardees for their dedication and outstanding service.

Additional District Development Commissioner, Srinagar, Rifat Aftab Qureshi; Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mir Imtiyaz

UI Aziz; Additional Deputy Commissioner, Aakil Fareed; Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, other senior Officers of District Administration, District/Sectoral Officers and other concerned were present on the occasion.

The Officers/Officials who were felicitated during the programme included Tanveer Ahmad Dar and Ms Aaliya Amin from the Employment Department for successful implementation of Mission YUVA. Ms Rumana, Tariq Ahmad, Rouf Sheikh, Asif Sarwal, and Javed Kathu from J&K Bank were also honoured for their contributions.

From KPDCCL, Ghulam Mohammad Ganai, Irfan Ahmad, Mohammad Ashraf, Tafazul Ahmad, Tanveer Ahmad, and Bilal Ahmad were felicitated for effective implementation of Solar Rooftops under PM Surya Muft Bijli Yojana.

Similarly, from District Police, Mohammad Iqbal Sheikh, Masarat Ahmad Mir, Nazir Ahmad Mir, Showkat Ahmad, Waseem Mohi-ud-Din Lone, and

Adil Ahmad Tak were honoured for their dedicated service.

From Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Er Sajad Kawoosa was felicitated, while Zahid Rashid from the Irrigation and Flood Control Department was also honoured.

From the R&B Department, Er Khalid Mehmood, Er Muzamil Bashir and Er Noor Mohammad Malik were awarded for their contributions.

Likewise, Yameen-ul-Nabi and his team from the Food Safety Department were felicitated. From Fire and Emergency Services, Dr. Aqib Hussain Mir, Mr Adil Hussain Zargar, and Mr Aijaz Ahmad Shah were honoured.

Additionally, Mst Shahida, Mst Shayista, Tahir Abbas, Mst Rifat Nazir, and Zaid Allaqband from the DC Office, SDM Office and Chief Planning Office Srinagar were felicitated. From the Education Department, Aabid Ahmad Wangnoo was awarded.

Besides, Aditya, Ghulam Hassan, Aijaz Ahmad, and Wasim Bashir were also felicitated during the programme.

IT Dept encadres 44 officials under J&K IT Services

Step addresses long-pending issues of career progression, service structure

KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Jan 23: The Jammu and Kashmir Information Technology Department has successfully encadred its 44 officials who were earlier appointed on substantive IT-related posts in various Government departments across the Union Territory.

This encadrement marks the first major step in a phased process, wherein the remaining IT personnel shall also be brought under the ambit of the J&K IT Services, ensuring a comprehensive and structured cadre for IT professionals. In parallel, the Department is in the process of establishing dedicated IT Directorates at Jammu and Kashmir, which will further strengthen administrative control, technical oversight and coordinated implementation of digital initiatives.

The present encadrement has resulted in the creation of clear promotion avenues for the officials, addressing long-pending issues related to career progression and service structure. It brings uniformity in service conditions and provides a defined professional hierarchy, thereby boosting

morale and motivation among IT personnel.

This initiative represents a significant milestone in strengthening the institutional framework of IT governance in Jammu & Kashmir. A unified IT cadre will facilitate better human resource planning, optimal utilization of technical expertise, and improved delivery of e-Governance services, cyber security operations, data centre management, and adoption of emerging technologies.

The encadred officials have expressed their appreciation to the Secretary, Information Technology, Piyush Singla for his proactive leadership and sustained efforts in resolving long-standing cadre-related issues and steering institutional reforms within the IT ecosystem.

The Information Technology department reaffirms its commitment towards capacity building, cadre reforms, and institutional strengthening, emphasizing that a robust IT services structure and dedicated directorates are essential for ensuring secure, efficient, and citizen-centric digital governance across the Union Territory.

HCs are 'primary sentinel', must be more proactive, alert to systemic failures in rule of law: CJI

PTI

Mumbai, Jan 24: High courts need to be more proactive and alert to systemic failures in the rule of law, Chief Justice of India Surya Kant said on Saturday while asserting that "justice delayed is not only justice denied but it is justice destroyed".

He also emphasised the need to encourage mechanisms of mediation and reconciliation.

The CJI was speaking at two events here, one at the Fali Nariman memorial lecture and the second at a felicitation programme organised by the Bombay High Court.

CJI Kant, in his speech at the Fali Nariman memorial lecture, urged HCs to be more proactive and remain alert to systemic rpt systemic failures in the rule of law and not wait for the knock on its doors.

"The goal must be to transform access to justice from a passive right to a state-guaranteed service. Justice delayed is not only justice denied but it is justice destroyed," he said.

While speaking at the felicitation programme by the Bombay High Court, CJI Kant emphasised on the need to strengthen dispute resolution beyond the courtroom.

"The future of justice depends not only on how efficiently we adjudicate disputes but also on how wisely we resolve them. Mediation, reconciliation, and arbitration are not just alternatives of convenience but they are instruments of mature justice," he said.

They preserve relationships, reduce costs and delays, and allow courts to focus their energies to cases where authoritative

adjudication is truly required, CJI Kant said.

"Courts must create an environment where mediation is encouraged. The success of these mechanisms rests largely on a proactive court where judges are open to exploring alternative dispute resolution with seriousness," he urged.

CJI Kant said the budget allocation for judiciary is liberal and adequate in Maharashtra

and every request is met with in a most respectable manner and without any delay by the state government.

High Courts should not remain only revisional or appellate courts but should be vibrant and accessible centres to constitutional remedy, CJI Kant said.

High courts are not mere stepping stones to the Supreme Court, the CJI stressed.

"High Courts are the primary sentinel guarding the doorsteps of the ordinary citizen, ensuring that the rule of law is not a distant concept but a localised, breathing reality," he said.

It is the court that hears the first cry of an infant child, the CJI remarked.

"While the Supreme Court may have the final word, the high court often has the most vital one," he opined.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

J&K on high alert

monitor event venues and surrounding areas," he said, adding that checkpoints have been set up in Srinagar and other district headquarters, particularly at key entry points.

"Random vehicle checks and frisking operations are being conducted to prevent the movement of subversive elements," he added.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, will preside over the main Republic Day function at M A Stadium in Jammu. He will take the salute, while Chief Minister Omar Abdullah will be the chief guest. Other ministers will oversee Republic Day functions in various districts.

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary will preside over the Republic Day function in Srinagar and take the salute there.

Meanwhile, Inspector General of Police (IGP) for the Kashmir Zone, Vidhi Kumar Birdi said that multi-tiered security arrangements have been put in place across the Valley for Republic Day celebrations.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the Republic Day rehearsal function at Bakshi Stadium here, Birdi said the security setup involved the J&K Police, its security wing, and central paramilitary forces to ensure smooth conduct of the event across the Valley.

He said elaborate arrangements have been made not only for the main Republic Day function in Srinagar but also for similar celebrations scheduled to be held in all districts of the Valley.

The IGP said that separate Republic Day functions will be organised in respective districts, where chief guests will take the salute, adding that similar strict security measures have been implemented for those events as well.

IGP Birdi extended an open invitation to the public to participate in the celebrations along with their families. "I want to convey to the common people that they are very warmly welcomed to join these celebrations with their families," he said, adding that special encouragement was being extended to school-going children to attend the events.

Responding to a query about whether any specific invitations were required, the IGP said the celebrations were open to all. "It is an open kind of invitation. Everyone is free to come," he said.

Furthermore, security forces along the Line of Control and the International Border have been placed on high alert to prevent infiltration and ceasefire violations

The officials said heightened surveillance has been enforced in key frontier areas, including Gurez, Uri, Karnah, Tangdhar and sectors in the Jammu region, while the Border Security Force has intensified round-the-clock patrolling and digital monitoring along the International Border.

They said troops are maintaining strict dominance over sensitive stretches and are fully prepared to respond to any infiltration attempts, adding that border management has been strengthened through smart fencing, drones, quadcopters, robotic surveillance systems and rapid-deployment vehicles to ensure

24x7 vigilance. (KNO)

Budget Session

accusations over the past 16 months.

On the other hand, Kashmir-based parties like Peoples Democratic Party, Peoples Conference are also likely to question the government over its 2024 assembly election commitments, reservation and other emotive issues concerning Kashmir.

However, the opposition from Kashmir-based small parties and independents is unlikely to be effective, given their limited strength and lack of unity. They have often targeted each other, leaving little room for any unity among them. (KNO)

UP represents India's

must be felt and lived to be fully appreciated. "This is where the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati rivers meet—a sacred junction with millennia of history. It serves as a spiritual center offering timeless wisdom to humanity, and stands as a place of devotion that stirs global consciousness through its cultural and literary heritage," LG Sinha said.

Reflecting on the spiritual-cultural contributions of the region, the Lieutenant Governor said that Uttar Pradesh represents India's vital core, binding the nation together across all directions—North to South, East to West.

"The spiritual luminaries of this dynamic region, through their deep contemplation, gifted us an invaluable teaching: that the ultimate quest transcends all others—the quest to understand oneself."

"The most profound journey we can undertake is the inward one. This wisdom offers essential guidance for navigating our contemporary, rapidly changing world," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor also highlighted the Uttar Pradesh's recent progress, noting that its development trajectory has been exemplary. He expressed his wishes for the state to continue to flourish and thrive, achieving even greater economic milestones and prosperity in the coming years.

The cultural evening was attended by Anoop Pradhan, Member of Parliament from Hathras; senior government officials, students, and the residents of Uttar Pradesh living in the Union Territory. (KNO)

J&K records severe

Katra recorded a minimum of 6.6 degrees Celsius, Jammu Airport 4.7 degrees Celsius, and Jammu city 4.5 degrees Celsius.

Other districts, including Banihal, Batote, Bhaderwah, Kathua, Udhampur, Ramban, Samba, Rajouri, Reasi, and Kishtwar, reported minimum temperatures ranging from minus 4.4 to 3.8 degrees Celsius.

Meanwhile, the valley received widespread rainfall and snowfall over the past 24 hours, with several areas recording significant accumulation.

Srinagar recorded 37 mm of rainfall and no snowfall on January 23, followed by 16.4 mm of rain and 2 cm of snow on January 24, bringing the total precipitation to 53.4 mm of rain and 2 cm of snow. Qazigund recorded 94.2 mm

of rainfall and 15 cm of snow, while Pahalgam saw 66.2 mm of rain and 64.2 cm of snow.

Kupwara received 45.5 mm of rain and 35 cm of snow, and Gulmarg recorded the highest totals with 101.2 mm of rain and 96.8 cm of snow.

Other areas, including Kulkarnag, Banihal, Batote, Bhaderwah, Jammu, Katra, Kathua, Mirpur, Awantipora, Udhampur, Ramban, Samba, and Rajouri, also reported varying levels of rainfall, while snowfall was recorded primarily in hilly and valley regions.

Furthermore, the J&K is likely to experience light rain and snow at isolated places on January 25, according to the Meteorological Department.

"Weather is expected to change from January 26, with rain and snow at most places, and a possibility of moderate to heavy precipitation accompanied by thunder and gusty winds at a few locations, mainly during the night of January 26 and evening of January 27," it said.

"Partly cloudy conditions are forecast from January 28 to 31 and continuing into February 1-3," it added.

The department advised farmers to suspend field operations until January 28, and the public in snow-bound higher reaches are warned against venturing into avalanche-prone or sloppy areas. (KNO)

Jmu-Sgr NH remains

"Snow accumulation and sub-zero temperatures during night hours made the road extremely slippery," an official said, adding that men and machinery have been pressed into service to restore traffic movement at the earliest.

Many tourists were stranded on Qazigund side of the highway and were forced to return towards safer locations, he said.

Thousands of vehicles, including those stranded at Udhampur and Dhar Road, have remained stuck since the highway was closed on Friday evening. "More than 3,000 vehicles, including trucks carrying essential commodities, are stranded," the officials said.

Meanwhile, other key routes, including the Mughal Road connecting Poonch-Rajouri with Shopian, Kishtwar-Sinthan-Kokernag road, and Srinagar-Sonamarg-Gumri road, also remained closed due to heavy snow accumulation.

IGP Traffic J&K, M. Suleman Choudhary, said that the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and other concerned agencies are working on a war footing to restore the highway.

"There has been heavy snowfall, particularly in south Kashmir areas and at the south portal of the Navvug Tunnel, including Banihal, Ramsu and Nachlana. Due to this, the stretch from Navvug Tunnel to Banihal and Ramsu has been reduced to a single lane," he said.

The IGP said clearance work is underway, but the road is yet to be restored. "Because of snowfall and cold night conditions, the road has become extremely slippery," he said.

Choudhary further said that a decision on reopening the highway will be taken after receiving a green signal from NHAI. "Till then, the highway will remain closed for traffic

movement," he said, adding that the Batote stretch has been partially cleared, which was also closed earlier due to snowfall.

In a traffic advisory issued for Sunday, the Traffic Police said, "Jammu-Srinagar National Highway is still closed due to snow accumulation between Nachlana and the Navvug Tunnel. Jammu-Doda road is also closed. Snow clearance work is in progress."

"Tomorrow, no vehicular movement shall be allowed from Nagrota (Jammu) towards Doda, Ramban, Banihal and Srinagar, and vice-versa," the advisory said.

Commuters belonging to Katra, Reasi and Udhampur towns have been advised to carry valid photo identity cards to facilitate smooth movement, it added. (KNO)

CM engages with

Hilal Akbar Lone, Nizam-ud-Din Bhat and Nazir Ahmad Khan Gurezi.

The legislators sought enhanced budgetary allocations, particularly in the sectors of health, education, agriculture, horticulture, irrigation, road widening, community halls, youth-centric initiatives, sports infrastructure, employment generation and the establishment of fire stations in far-flung areas.

They also emphasized the need for dedicated allocations towards climate change mitigation measures to prevent loss of life and property during natural calamities, establishment of public libraries and skill development centres, and time-bound utilization of funds for the execution of developmental projects.

Additionally, the legislators stressed strengthening irrigation infrastructure and exploring the tourism potential of the region to create sustainable employment opportunities for local youth.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister assured the legislators that the suggestions and proposals put forth regarding developmental priorities would be given due consideration in the forthcoming budget. He reiterated the Government's commitment to balanced, inclusive and regionally equitable development across Jammu and Kashmir.

KPDCL restores

seven out of ten districts with 100 percent restoration.

It also said that out of the total of 135 lines of 33kV, at least 128 were up and 7 were down.

PDD officials added that among the worst affected areas, it has started to restore the electricity. In SSD Tangmarg, only 6 percent of electricity was restored till 8pm followed by 10 percent in Electrical Distribution (ED) Kupwara, 44 percent in ED Handwara, 49 percent in ED Baramulla and 52 percent in ED Sopore respectively.

About the 100 percent restoration of 33kV lines, PDD said that it fully restored STD Ist and STD 2nd of Srinagar, STD 2nd in Budgam, STD Ganderbal and Bandipora, STD Pulwama and Shopian, STD Bijbehara for Kulgam and Anantnag districts respectively.

In the meantime DIPR in a statement issued to KNO said that KPDCCL machinery is deployed in the field and working with full efficiency and

determination to restore power supply to all affected areas.

According to the official statement by KPDCCL, high-speed gusty winds and heavy Snowfall have severely damaged the electrical network in many locations. "Restoration could not be undertaken yesterday in several areas due to road blockades caused by heavy snowfall and limited accessibility."

The restoration process, which is being carried out on a war footing, is exhaustive in nature and involves clearing dismantled rooftops from electrical lines, repairing HT and LT networks, and replacing damaged distribution transformers (DTs). (KNO)

Normal flights

imposed in connection with the Republic Day celebrations.

An airport official told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the cancellations were caused by a NOTAM (Notice to Airmen) at the Delhi Airport, effective from 10:20 am to 12:45 pm.

"Except for the six cancellations due to the NOTAM at Delhi Airport, flight operations were later returned to normal, with aircraft from different parts of the country arriving and departing as per schedule," he said.

The official advised passengers to check with their respective airlines for real-time flight updates before heading to the airport.

Earlier, the IAF lifted restrictions after the AAI and BRO cleared snow from the apron and taxiways. "Indian Air Force has lifted the NOTAM for commercial operations. Airports Authority of India, in close coordination with BRO, has successfully cleared the apron and taxiways. A joint inspection is currently underway, and flight operations are expected to resume shortly, subject to safety clearance. Passengers are advised to stay in touch with their respective airlines for the latest updates," Srinagar Airport Tweeted on X (formerly Twitter).

Following the situation in a fresh tweet, the authorities shared the information of the first flight arriving in the Valley. "A smooth landing at 1100 hrs. Srinagar Airport welcomes its first flight of the day. All is normal now — the big bird has returned to the Valley," another tweet read.

It is worth mentioning that on Friday, more than a dozen flights were cancelled due to low visibility and runway closure following the season's first snowfall, leaving hundreds of passengers stranded. (KNO)

CM's advisor

Rs 80,000 per month, rent-free accommodation, and transport facilities to be provided by the Motor Garages Department.

Nasir Aslam Wani, who has served as a minister in the NC-Congress government, is a trusted aide of CM Omar Abdullah. (KNO)

2 IPS officers

as Superintendent of Police (SP) at the State Investigation Agency (SIA) Kashmir, and Raghav S, posted as SP Technical at CID Headquarters, have been moved to Puducherry. (KNO)

Trade agreements opening up new opportunities for youth: PM Modi

PTI

New Delhi, Jan 24: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said India is entering into trade and mobility agreements with various nations to create new opportunities for the youth both within the country and abroad.

Modi made these remarks at the 18th Rozgar Mela where he handed over 61,000 appointment letters for various government jobs electronically.

"India is signing trade and mobility agreements with several countries. These trade agreements are bringing new opportunities for the youth of the nation," Modi said, addressing the job fair at 45 locations across the country via video conferencing.

Modi said India has the maximum number of youngsters in the world and his government was making efforts to create new



opportunities for the youth within the country and abroad.

The prime minister urged the new appointees to consider the appointment letters as an invitation to join nation building and a pledge to work for creating a developed India.

He asked the youth to recall their experiences at government

offices in previous years and urged them to resolve to not let such hardships affect citizens during their tenure.

Modi also urged the youth to work with the motto 'Nagrik Devo Bhava' (citizen is akin to God) while discharging their duties.

The prime minister said in recent times, the government has

made unprecedented investments in modern infrastructure, leading to increased employment across construction-related sectors.

He said that India's startup ecosystem was expanding rapidly, with nearly two lakh registered startups employing over 21 lakh youth.

Modi said 'Digital India' has expanded a new economy, with India emerging as a global hub in animation, digital media, and several other sectors.

"Today, the nation has embarked on the reform express, aimed at making both life and business easier," he said.

The prime minister said that next-generation reforms in GST have benefitted youth entrepreneurs and MSMEs, while historic labour reforms have strengthened social security for workers and employees, benefiting businesses as well.

President Murmu to address nation on Republic Day eve

PTI

New Delhi, Jan 24: President Droupadi Murmu will address the nation on Sunday on the eve of the Republic Day, her office has said.

The address will be broadcast from 7 pm on the entire national network of Akashvani and telecast over all channels of Doordarshan in Hindi followed by the English version, it said on Saturday.

The broadcast of the address in Hindi and English on Doordarshan will be followed by broadcast in regional languages by regional channels of Doordarshan.

Akashvani will broadcast regional language versions from 9.30 pm onwards on its respective regional networks, the statement issued by the Rashtrapati Bhavan added.



UP to be 'engine' of developed India: Amit Shah

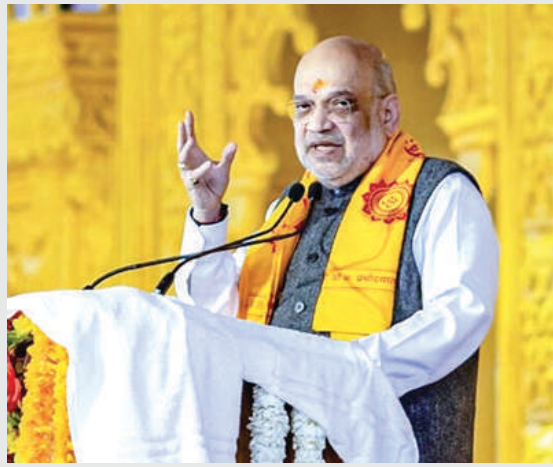
PTI

Lucknow, Jan 24: Describing Uttar Pradesh as the "soul" of the country, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said the state is poised to emerge as the engine of a developed India by 2047, when the nation will celebrate 100 years of its Independence.

Addressing a gathering at the state-level Uttar Pradesh Day celebrations held at Rashtra Prerna Sthal here, Shah took a swipe at non-BJP governments, saying they had kept Uttar Pradesh backward for decades, branding it a 'BIMARU' state, while the BJP government has transformed it into a "breakthrough state".

Shah asserted that the state occupies a central place in the nation's progress and will be fully developed by 2047.

"Uttar Pradesh is the heartbeat of India, and in other words, Uttar Pradesh is also the soul of India. And I can certainly see that Uttar Pradesh is going to become the engine of India's development, the engine of a developed India," he said on the state's foundation day.



Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision, Shah said the Centre and the Uttar Pradesh government are working in tandem to achieve the goal of a developed nation and a developed state.

"Prime Minister Modi has made a pledge to build a developed India, and under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, our double-engine government has also pledged to build a developed Uttar Pradesh" he said.

The Union Home Minister said, "We all reiterate this pledge today that when the centenary

of independence is celebrated on August 15, 2047, Uttar Pradesh will be a fully developed state and an important state of a developed India."

Shah was accompanied by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

The Union Home Minister said there has been a historic improvement in the law and order situation under the BJP government, which has helped attract investment and accelerate development.

Appealing to voters, the Union Home Minister urged people to rise above caste and support the BJP over dynastic parties.

Over 70 fugitives wanted by India located abroad during 2024-25: Govt report

PTI

New Delhi, Jan 24: Over 70 fugitives, wanted by India, were located abroad during 2024-25, according to an official report.

As many as 203 fugitives wanted by other countries were detected/located in India during the same period.

A total of 71 "wanted persons/fugitives wanted by India" were located abroad in 2024-25, according to the annual report of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.

The number of such wanted fugitives located abroad is the highest in the over a decade time, officials claimed.

A total of 27 fugitives/wanted persons returned to India, from abroad in the last financial year, said the ministry's annual report for 2024-25.

It also gave details on the working of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which acts as the National Central Bureau (NCB) -- the nodal point for Interpol in India.

During the period of April, 2024 to March, 2025, 74 Letters Rogatory (LRs) were sent abroad, out of which 54 pertained to CBI cases and 20 of them to state law



enforcement and other central agencies, the report said. Letters Rogatory is a judicial request to authorities abroad to seek cooperation in a probe being conducted by Indian investigating agencies.

It was confirmed by Indian law enforcement agencies including CBI that 47 LR were fully executed during the said period and 29 were disposed of as closed/withdrawn on partial execution.

As on March 31, 2025, a total 533 LR were pending with other countries, out of which 276 pertained to CBI cases and 257 to state police and other central law enforcement agencies.

As many as 32 LR/treaty based requests were received from various countries requesting to provide assistance in the investigation of criminal matters.

During the year, different Interpol notices were issued by NCB-India for fugitives wanted either for prosecution or to serve a sentence in the country.

These included 126 red notices (request to law enforcement agencies worldwide to locate and provisionally arrest a person pending extradition, surrender, or similar legal action), 89 blue notices (seeking information about a person's identity, location, or activities), 24 yellow notices (global police alert for a missing person), seven black notices (requests about unidentified bodies) and one green notice (a warning issued by Interpol to alert member countries about people who are considered a potential threat to public safety), the report said.

Never violated party line, unapologetic over Op Sindoor stance: Tharoor

PTI

Kozhikode (Kerala), Jan 24: Congress MP Shashi Tharoor on Saturday said he has never violated the party's stated positions in Parliament, asserting that his only public disagreement in principle was over Operation Sindoor. Answering questions during a session at the Kerala Literature Festival here, Tharoor said he had taken a strong stand on that issue and remained "unapologetic".

His statement comes amidst recent reports stating "Tharoor's differences with the party leadership", with a speculation that he is upset over Congress leader Rahul Gandhi not adequately acknowledging his presence at a recent event in Kochi and over alleged repeated attempts by state leaders to sideline him.

Explaining his position, Tharoor said that, as an observer and writer, he had written a newspaper column after the Pahalgam incident, stating that it should not go unpunished and that there should be a kinetic response.

He said that while India is focused on development, it should not be dragged into a prolonged conflict with Pakistan, and that any action should be limited to targeting terrorist camps.

Tharoor said that to his surprise, the Indian government did exactly what he had recommended.

Tharoor said it was Jawaharlal Nehru who posed the famous question: "Who lives if India dies?" "When India is at stake, when India's security and its place in the world are involved, India comes first," he said.

He added that political parties may have differences as part of the process of building a better India, but when national interests are involved, India must prevail.

MS Dhoni begins IPL 2026 preparations?



PTI

Ranchi, Jan 24: Former India and Chennai Super Kings captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni has returned to training here, fuelling speculation that he has started preparations for the IPL 2026.

Jharkhand State Cricket Association (JSCA) shared a short clip of Dhoni being padded up for a net session with the caption 'Look who is back', in a social media post.

"Pride of JSCA: Mahendra Singh Dhoni", said the caption of the video post.

Dhoni was seen chatting with former India batter and

JSCA official Saurabh Tiwary before the nets.

The window for the IPL 2026, meanwhile, has been fixed from March 26 to May 31.

Having retired from international cricket in 2020, Dhoni continues to feature only in the IPL. CSK are now led by Ruturaj Gaikwad, but Dhoni remains an essential part of the team.

He has scored 5,439 runs in 278 matches in the IPL since 2008 at an average of 38.30 and a strike rate of 137.45, including 24 half-centuries and a highest individual score of 84 not out.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard commander warns US, says his force has its 'finger on trigger'

AP

Dubai, Jan 24: Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, a force which was key in putting down recent nationwide protests in a crackdown that left thousands dead, is "more ready than ever, finger on the trigger," its commander said Saturday, as US warships headed toward the Middle East.

Nournews, a news outlet close to Iran's Supreme National Security Council, reported on its Telegram channel that the commander, Gen. Mohammad Pakpour, warned the United States and Israel "to avoid any miscalculation."

"The Islamic Revolutionary Guards and dear Iran stand more ready than ever, finger on the trigger, to execute the orders and directives of the Commander-in-Chief," Nournews quoted Pakpour as saying.

Tension remains high between Iran and the US in the wake of a bloody crackdown on protests that began on December 28, triggered by the collapse of Iran's currency, the rial, and swept the country for about two weeks.

Trump's warnings

US President Donald Trump has repeatedly warned Tehran, setting two red lines for the use of military



force: the killing of peaceful demonstrators and the mass execution of people arrested in the protests.

Trump has repeatedly said Iran halted the execution of 800 people detained in the protests. He has not elaborated on the source of the claim, which Iran's top prosecutor, Mohammad Movahedi, strongly denied on Friday in comments carried by the judiciary's Mizan news agency.

On Thursday, Trump said aboard Air Force One that the US was moving warships toward Iran "just in case" he wants to take action.

"We have a massive fleet heading in that direction, and

maybe we won't have to use it," Trump said.

A US Navy official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss military movements, said on Thursday that the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln and other warships travelling with it were in the Indian Ocean.

Trump also mentioned the multiple rounds of talks American officials had with Iran over its nuclear programme before Israel launched a 12-day war against the Islamic Republic in June, which also saw US warplanes bomb Iranian nuclear sites. He threatened Iran with military action that

would make earlier US strikes against Iranian uranium enrichment sites "look like peanuts."

"They should have made a deal before we hit them," Trump said.

Airline jitters

The tension has led at least one European airline to cancel some flights to the wider region, with Air France saying it had decided to temporarily suspend its service to Dubai in the United Arab Emirates.

The airline cancelled two return flights from Paris to Dubai over the weekend, saying, without elaborating, that it was due to the current situation in the Middle East. It said it would resume its service to Dubai later on Saturday.

"The airline is closely following developments in the Middle East in real time and continuously monitors the geopolitical situation in the territories served and overflown by its aircraft in order to ensure the highest level of flight safety and security," the company said.

Arrival information at Dubai's international airport also showed the cancellation of Saturday flights from Amsterdam by Dutch carriers KLM and Transavia, and a flight from Luxembourg by Luxair. The airlines did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Some flights from KLM were

also cancelled on Friday and Saturday to Tel Aviv, Israel, according to online flight trackers.

Rising death toll

Although there have been no further demonstrations in Iran for days, the death toll reported by activists has continued to rise as information trickles out despite the most comprehensive internet blackout in Iran's history, which has now lasted more than two weeks.

The US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency on Saturday put the death toll at 5,137, with the number expected to increase. More than 27,700 people have been arrested, it said.

The group's figures have been accurate in previous unrest and rely on a network of activists in Iran to verify deaths. That death toll exceeds that of any other round of protest or unrest there in decades, and recalls the chaos surrounding Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Iran's government offered its first death toll on Wednesday, saying 3,117 people were killed. It said 2,427 were civilians and security forces, and labelled the rest as "terrorists." In the past, Iran's theocracy has undercounted or not reported fatalities from unrest.

Divisional Commissioner Kashmir leads full dress rehearsal at Bakshi Stadium Srinagar ahead of Republic Day

Pic: Jahangir Shah (KNO/KT)

