



## Health, well-being critical pillars of progress: President Murmu

Says govt's focus on rural, tribal areas

Hails over 11 cr treatments under Ayushman Bharat

KNO Monitoring Desk

New Delhi, Jan 28: President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday said the government is focused on strengthening the public healthcare system and improving health outcomes for all citizens.

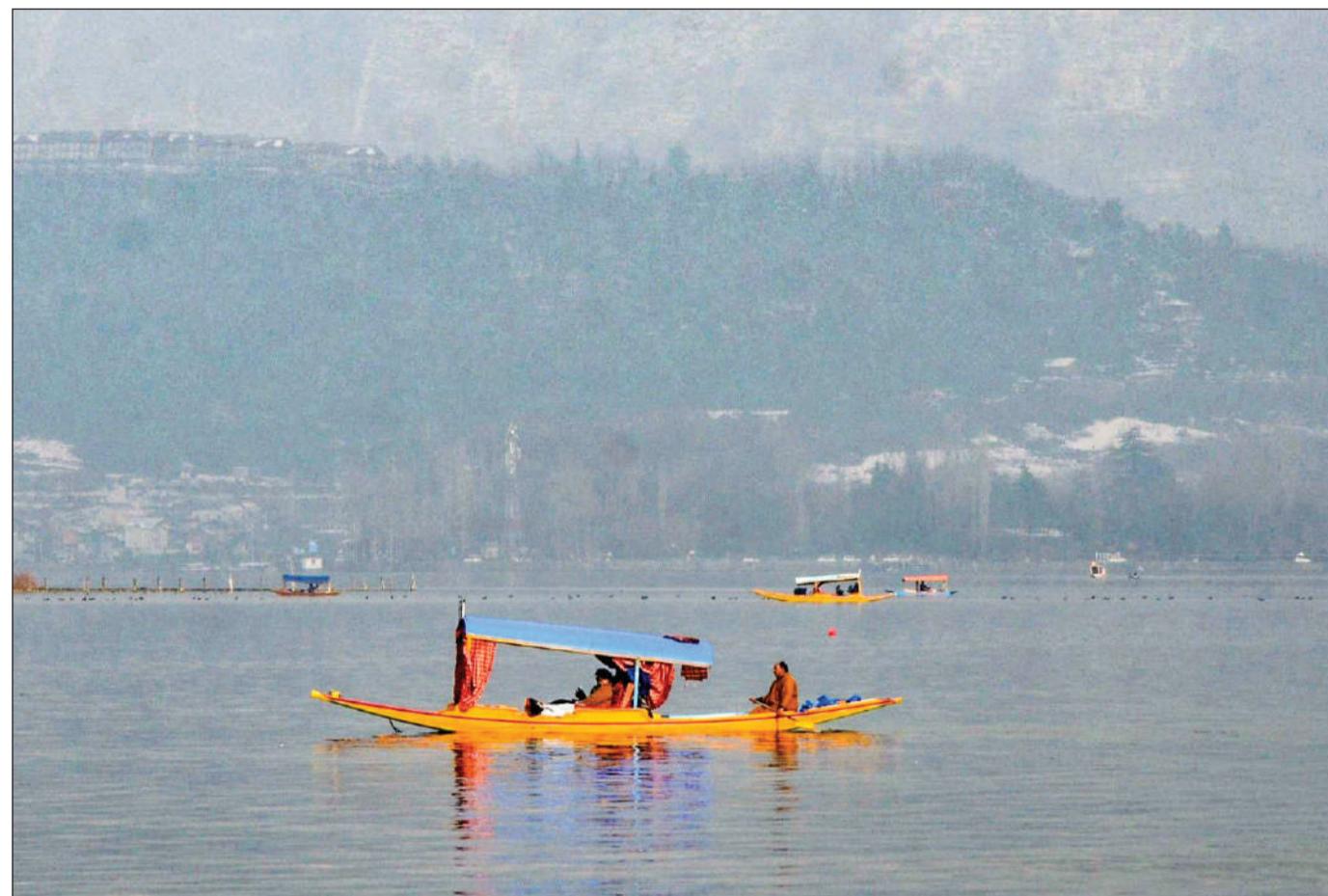
In her ceremonial address at the commencement of the Budget Session of Parliament, Murmu, as per the news agency-Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said, "Health and well-being are a critical pillar of human capital development and national progress. Ensuring accessible, affordable, and quality healthcare services, particularly for the poor, vulnerable, and underserved sections of society,



remains a priority."

The President said over 11 crore hospital treatments have been provided under the Ayushman Bharat Jan Arogya

Yojana since its inception. "In the last year alone, around 2.5 crore poor and vulnerable citizens availed free medical treatment under | More on P6



Tourists enjoying a Shikara ride in Dal Lake on Wednesday, January 28, 2026. Pic: Jahangir Shah (KNO/KT)

**Man suffocates to death after sleeping in car with heater on**

KNO Correspondent

Kulgam, Jan 28: A 32-year-old man died of suspected suffocation after sleeping in his car with the heater on while waiting outside District Hospital Kulgam, where his wife was admitted, officials said.

An official told the news agency-Kashmir News Observer (KNO), that the man, a resident of Kulgam, had parked his car near the hospital and slept inside it during the night to stay warm.

He said the man's ailing wife was admitted to the hospital and the continuous use of the heater inside the closed car reportedly caused suffocation.

He was later found unconscious inside the car and taken to the hospital, where doctors declared him dead on arrival. His body was then sent for medico-legal formalities.

The deceased was identified as Mashoq Ahmad Mir (32), son of | More on P6

## PM Modi engages global energy CEOs, pitches India as key energy hub

PTI

New Delhi, Jan 28: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday interacted with the chief executives of leading global and Indian energy companies during India Energy Week (IEW) 2026, with industry leaders expressing strong confidence in India's growth outlook and a keen interest in exploring their presence in the country.

During the interaction at the Prime Minister's residence, CEOs cited policy stability, reform momentum, and long-term demand visibility as key drivers of their investment interest in India's energy sector, according to an official statement.

The prime minister said such roundtables have become an important platform for industry-government alignment, enabling direct feedback from global leaders to



refine policy frameworks, address sectoral challenges, and further strengthen India's attractiveness as an investment destination.

Highlighting India's economic momentum, Modi said the country is moving rapidly towards becoming the world's third-largest economy and will play a decisive role in shaping

the global energy demand-supply balance.

He pointed to significant investment opportunities, including around USD 100 billion in exploration and production, supported by investor-friendly policy reforms.

He also highlighted a USD 30-billion opportunity in the compressed bio-gas (CBG)

segment and outlined prospects across the broader energy value chain, including gas-based infrastructure, refinery-petrochemical integration, and maritime and shipbuilding sectors.

Noting that the global energy landscape is marked by uncertainty as well as opportunity, the prime minister called for greater innovation, collaboration, and deeper partnerships, reiterating India's readiness to serve as a reliable and trusted partner across the entire energy value chain.

"During the interaction, the CEOs expressed strong confidence in India's growth trajectory. They conveyed their keen interest in expanding and deepening their business presence in India, citing policy stability, reform momentum, and long-term demand visibility," the statement said.

Welcoming the CEOs, the prime minister | More on P6

## LG Sinha, CM Omar express grief over demise of Ajit Pawar

Maharashtra Dy CM died in tragic plane crash

KT News Desk



My condolences to his family & admirers. श्री शांति"

In a condolence message, the Lieutenant Governor said: "It is with shock and deep sadness that I learnt about the untimely demise of Shri Ajit Pawar Ji. He was a widely respected leader who was committed to the well-being of the people and who served the Maharashtra with distinction.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also expressed grief over the demise of Ajit Pawar, terming him an able administrator and a consummate political organiser whose loss will be | More on P6

## LG condoles demise of SGCT of SSF

KT News Desk

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has condoled the passing away of Selection Grade Constable (SGCT) Sunny Salgotra of the Special Security Force (SSF), who lost his life in an unfortunate road accident on Wednesday. The Lieutenant Governor conveyed his deepest condolences to | More on P6

## Srinagar-Jammu National Highway opens; flight, rail services back on track

Northern Railway adds AC coaches to special trains

Srinagar airport resumes normal operations

**Umaisar Gull Ganie**

Srinagar, Jan 28: The 270-km Jammu-Srinagar National Highway (NH-44) was fully reopened for passenger traffic on Wednesday after being closed due to heavy snowfall on Tuesday, officials said.

They said priority was given to clearing light motor vehicles

(LMVs) stranded at multiple points in Qazigund, while snow clearance continues on vulnerable stretches.

"Salt and urea were sprinkled at key locations earlier in the morning to improve road safety," officials told the news agency-Kashmir News Observer (KNO). They advised commuters to follow lane discipline and avoid overtaking or wrong-lane driving to prevent congestion.

Travellers have been urged to check road status via Traffic Police social | More on P6

## MeT predicts dry weather till month end

High avalanche risk above 2,000 metres in Bandipora, Ganderbal, Kupwara

Sajid Raina



cloudy with light to moderate rain or snow at scattered to

fairly widespread places. From February 3 to 6, skies are expected to be partly cloudy across the region."

Meanwhile, authorities have issued several advisories in view of the inclement weather prediction.

Travelers and transporters have been urged to confirm road and highway status from the concerned traffic departments and follow official instructions.

Farmers have been advised to suspend farm operations and the general public has been cautioned against venturing into | More on P6

## Man found dead inside hotel room in Srinagar

Probe launched

KNO Correspondent

Srinagar, Jan 28: A man from Uttar Pradesh was found dead inside his hotel room near the Dal Lake in Srinagar late Tuesday night, officials said.

An official told the news agency-Kashmir News Observer (KNO), that the man was found unconscious inside his room around midnight, and was immediately shifted to SMHS hospital.

He said that he was declared dead on arrival by doctors at the hospital following which | More on P6

## CS assesses roadmap to strengthen disaster preparedness across J&K

Stresses mandatory pre-monsoon preparedness, district-level readiness

KT News Desk

Jammu, Jan 28: Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo on Wednesday reviewed the measures undertaken by the Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction (DMRR&R) to strengthen the Union Territory's disaster preparedness, response and mitigation framework. He called for anticipatory action, technology-enabled early warning systems, and seamless inter-agency coordination.

During the meeting, the

Chief Secretary was apprised of a comprehensive roadmap for strengthening disaster management across Jammu and Kashmir, which has been developed by incorporating lessons learnt from recent extreme weather events, post-disaster reviews and national-level consultations with agencies such as the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

The meeting was attended by the Additional Chief Secretary, Public Works Department;



Principal Secretary, DMRR&R; Secretary, Forests; Secretary, Commissioner, Divisional; General Administration Department; Commissioner, Jammu/Kashmir; Secretary, Rural Development Department; Director General,

Budget; Chief Executive Officer, Economic Reconstruction Agency, and other senior officers.

Deputy Commissioners from all districts participated virtually.

The Chief Secretary urged the department to take steps for implementation of the disaster mitigation framework without further delay, stressing the need for strong inter-departmental coordination to ensure effective execution of the roadmap on the ground. He also called for regular monitoring and close supervision at

senior levels to track progress and ensure accountability.

He directed the Divisional and District Administrations to ensure timely update of their respective District Disaster Management Plans (DDMPs) and to periodically review the status of preparedness and mitigation measures undertaken at their level.

Emphasizing preparedness as the cornerstone of disaster management, the Chief Secretary underscored the mandatory conduct of pre-monsoon preparedness measures by | More on P6

## NashaMukt J&K Abhiyan

# From awareness to accountability: J&K's new 'Nasha Mukt' model

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, JANUARY 28: At a time when drug addiction is posing a serious social and public health challenge across the country and when enforcement-heavy approaches have often struggled to deliver sustained results Jammu & Kashmir has scripted a fundamentally different narrative. Anchored in data, transparency, institutional convergence and sustained community engagement, the Union Territory's approach marks a decisive shift in how substance abuse is being addressed in India.

Launched on April 5, 2025, the NashaMukt Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, as per an official statement spearheaded by the Department of Information & Public Relations (DIPR) with other government departments has emerged as one of the most comprehensive, technology-driven and publicly verifiable de-addiction campaigns in the country. Aligned with the national vision of the NashaMukt Bharat Abhiyan, the J&K initiative introduces governance innovations that distinguish it from similar efforts elsewhere.

### Meticulously Designed, Mission-Mode Execution

From the outset, the campaign has been designed with exceptional institutional rigour, combining strategic planning at the highest administrative levels with disciplined execution on the ground. Outreach activities are conducted across three clearly defined levels—Panchayats, Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and educational institutions—ensuring complete rural and urban coverage across Jammu & Kashmir. District administrations operate on a structured



and pre-approved weekly calendar, with specific days earmarked for activities at Panchayat, ULB and institutional levels. This approach has transformed awareness generation from isolated or symbolic events into a continuous, predictable and sustained process. Special emphasis on schools and colleges reflects a conscious strategy to prioritise early intervention, prevention and behavioural change among young populations.

### A Campaign That Can Be Seen, Measured and Verified

One of the most path-breaking features of the Abhiyan is the NashaMukt Jammu & Kashmir public dashboard updated on real-time basis placing transparency at the heart of governance. Unlike conventional campaigns where progress remains confined to internal files, every outreach event under this initiative is digitally logged, monitored and made publicly accessible.

As reflected on the dashboard as of January 2026, a total of 5,736 Panchayat-level events have been conducted out of 7,193 scheduled, while Urban Local Bodies have completed 630 events against a target of 853. Educational

institutions have held 2,319 programmes out of 2,513 planned. Collectively, these activities have directly engaged over 4.35 lakh participants across the Union Territory. This level of real-time, district-wise transparency depicting schedule, execution and even participation sets a new benchmark in public accountability.

### Whole-of-Government Convergence for a Unified Response

Recognising that substance abuse is a multi-dimensional challenge, the administration has adopted a whole-of-government approach, bringing Health, Home/Police, Education, Social Welfare, Rural Development, Urban Development, Youth Services & Sports and Information Departments under a single unified framework. Each department has been assigned clearly defined responsibilities to ensure that prevention, enforcement, counselling, awareness and rehabilitation efforts function in a coordinated manner.

To overcome the long-standing problem of fragmented reporting, eight key departments have been onboarded onto a common digital platform, enabling real-time uploading of activity data onto the Nasha Mukt Jammu & Kashmir portal. This institutional convergence has reduced duplication, bridged data gaps and ensured a cohesive and synchronised response to substance abuse across sectors.

### Engrossing Outreach Through Visual Storytelling

To ensure that awareness activities remain engaging and impactful, the campaign has made extensive use of short, theme-based video films during outreach programmes. Screened at Panchayat halls, ULB venues, schools and colleges, these films portray real-life situations involving family distress, peer pressure, addiction cycles and recovery journeys.

By blending compelling visual narratives with expert messaging, the films have transformed routine awareness sessions into immersive community experiences. This audio-visual approach has proven particularly effective in overcoming barriers of literacy and attention span, while generating deeper emotional engagement especially among youth

and students.

### From One-Time Awareness to Sustained Citizen Engagement

A defining innovation of the programme lies in its structured post-event engagement mechanism. After every outreach activity, participant details including contact numbers are uploaded to the portal. By the same evening, participants receive personalised acknowledgement messages reinforcing the campaign's core message and reconnecting them with available support systems.

So far, over 1.12 lakh SMS messages have been sent under this mechanism. In addition, the portal prominently displays district-wise helpline numbers for all 20 districts and enables district administrations to upload grievance summaries, ensuring responsiveness, follow-up and institutional accountability beyond the event stage.

### Human Capacity Building for Sustained De-Addiction Efforts

Beyond awareness generation, the administration has placed strong emphasis on strengthening human capacity at the grassroots. District administrations have initiated fresh rounds of training for resource persons, identified dedicated counsellors for schools and colleges, and mobilised ASHA workers and paramedics to reach vulnerable populations at the community level.

Self-Help Groups have also been actively engaged to deepen community participation and ownership of the campaign. Together, these measures are creating a trained and locally rooted support system capable of sustained intervention, counselling and rehabilitation well beyond

the formal campaign phase.

### Media, Cultural and Youth-Centric Engagement

The campaign's reach has been significantly amplified through a strategic mix of print, electronic and digital media, supported by radio jingles and television commercials. A dedicated 'Inspire' podcast series, aired on DD Jammu and DD Kashmir, has featured mental health experts, doctors and eminent personalities, generating over one lakh views and impressions, particularly among Gen-Z audiences.

Cultural interventions such as street plays, folk performances and nukkad nataks have added a powerful local dimension, enabling messages to resonate in familiar cultural idioms and local languages, and extending the campaign's influence beyond formal institutional settings.

### A Governance Model setting new benchmarks

By combining data transparency, institutional convergence, immersive communication and citizen-level follow-up, the Nasha Mukt Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan has evolved beyond the idea of a conventional campaign. It now stands as a replicable governance model, demonstrating how complex public health challenges can be addressed through planning, participation and public accountability.

As Phase-II of the campaign gains momentum following high-level administrative reviews by the Chief Secretary himself, Jammu & Kashmir's fight against drugs is no longer merely being waged, it is being tracked, tested and trusted by the public itself, setting a new national standard in the pursuit of a drug-free India.

## KASHMIR THUNDER



IS AVAILABLE  
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STALLS

Government of Jammu and Kashmir  
OFFICE OF THE  
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER  
PWD(R&B) DIVISION ANANTNAG

Email: xen-pwdrnbanantnag@jk.gov.in  
Phone and Fax: 01932-222221

### CANCELLATION

Subject: Cancellation of work namely  
"C/O Drain from H/o Ajaz Ahmad Makhdoomi Pirpora Pehroo Anantnag".

Ref: This Office NIT NO 141 (Item 04)  
OF R&B/Ang/2025-26 /E-TENDERING/  
11640-49, DATED 21-01-2026.

Due to Administrative reasons, the subject cited work which was put to tenders vide this office above referred NIT is hereby Cancelled.

No. 11744-49  
Dated: 28-01-2026

DIPK-10429/25  
Dated: 28-01-2026  
Executive Engineer,  
R&B Division Anantnag.

## SMC launches city-wide de-watering drive after snowfall

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 28: On the directions of the Commissioner, Fazul Haseeb, the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) launched an intensive, city-wide de-watering operation to mitigate waterlogging triggered by recent snowfall and subsequent snowmelt.

SMC, as per an official statement, deployed men and machinery round the clock, leveraging modern high-capacity de-watering pumps and field teams to ensure swift drainage.

All identified waterlogging hotspots have been cleared, with focused interventions in low-lying pockets, major corridors, traffic-prone stretches, and residential-commercial clusters.

To ensure seamless coordination and rapid response, a dedicated 24x7 Control Room has been activated for grievance redressal, while the SCADA-enabled monitoring system is being used to track drainage performance and pump operations in real time. Senior officers conducted on-ground supervision to guarantee timely execution and inter-departmental coordination.

The prompt and coordinated measures restored normalcy across affected areas, significantly easing inconvenience to residents and commuters. SMC reiterates its commitment to proactive civic management during adverse weather and urges citizens to report any residual waterlogging through the helpline for immediate action.

SMC remains fully geared to respond swiftly to weather-related challenges, prioritising public safety and uninterrupted civic services across Srinagar.

## DC Srinagar reviews health schemes, 12,000 seniors receive AVV cards

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 28: In order to ensure timely and effective delivery of benefits under key health sector flagship schemes to citizens in district, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo Wednesday convened a meeting with senior health functionaries here at Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, undertook a comprehensive Medical Zone/Block wise review of citizen centric health schemes, focusing on the progress of enrolment under the Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA), the status of coverage of eligible beneficiaries under the Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA), the DC stressed the need to accelerate registration drives to achieve comprehensive coverage target under the initiatives across the district.

Additionally, the DC also took stock of the progress under Tuberculosis (TB) control programme. He appreciated the District TB Control Team for achieving good progress and directed them to enable senior citizens to avail the benefits of free and cashless healthcare services.

He emphasized that all eligible individuals aged 70 years and above must be covered under the scheme.

The DC directed Zonal/Block Medical Officers and other concerned officials to work with added zeal to ensure that no eligible beneficiary is left out.

On the occasion, it was informed that over 12,000 senior citizens in the district have been provided Ayushman Vay Vandana (AVV) cards, enabling them to avail additional free health coverage of up to Rs 5 lakh per year. The



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## DIRECTORATE OF FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES, J&K JAMMU / SRINAGAR

Email: info.fesjk@jk.gov.in

Tell: 0191-2457821, 2453013

Shri Nazir Ahmad Dar Fireman No. 1015 (Under Suspension)

S/o Late Mohammad Shabir Dar

R/o Bagwanpora Sathu Barbarshah At/P Rawalpora Wanbal Chowk Srinagar

### ATTENDANCE NOTICE NO. III (FINAL)

Whereas, Joint Director Fire & Emergency Services, Kashmir Range Srinagar vide letter No. JDF&ES-K/Estdt./2019/3657 dated 26.12.2019 has reported that you have remained absent from duty w.e.f. 10.01.2011 from Fire & Emergency Station Yaripora Command Kulgam and on 08.03.2011 the Deputy Commissioner Kulgam conducted surprise inspection of Fire & Emergency Station Yaripora and you were found absent from duty and placed under suspension with immediate effect for unauthorised absence from duty vide No. DCK/PA/1631-32 dated 08.03.2011 and subsequently you were attached to Fire & Emergency Station Kulgam for facing the enquiry vide Deputy Director Fire & Emergency Services Command Kulgam order No. 06 of 2011 dated 14.03.2011 and reported at Fire & Emergency Station Kulgam on 16.03.2011 AN and again remained absent w.e.f. 25.03.2011 FN to 02.08.2013 AN from Fire & Emergency Station Kulgam with the result the enquiry could not be initiated against you, and,

Whereas, Attendance Notices No. I and II were served to you vide Deputy Director Fire & Emergency Services Command Kulgam No. DDKG/Estdt/274-78 dated 24.05.2011 and No. DDKG/Estdt/645-49 dated 24.06.2011 and 3rd Attendance Notice was also issued to you by Deputy Director Fire & Emergency Services Command Kulgam vide No. DDKGM/Estdt/735-39 dated 25.10.2012 which was also got published in the daily newspaper "Tamil-Ishad" dated 31.10.2012, and;

Whereas, on 03.08.2013 after obtaining permission from Director General Fire & Emergency Services J&K you reported at Fire & Emergency Station Kunzer Command Sopore to Fire & Emergency Services Headquarters Srinagar vide Director General Fire & Emergency Services J&K order No. DGF&ES-278 of 2015 dated 28.07.2015 and were relieved on the same day AN. to report your new place of posting (Attachment) i.e Fire & Emergency Service Headquarter Srinagar but you have not joined and are unauthorised absent since then, and;

Whereas, an Attendance Notice No. 01 was served to you by Joint Director Fire & Emergency Services Srinagar vide No. JDFK&ES/Estdt/7885-88 dated 17.11.2017 through In-charge, Fire & Emergency Station Rawalpora, but you refused to take the copy of the said Attendance Notice vide Joint Director Fire & Emergency Services Kashmir Range Srinagar intimation No. JDF&ESK/Estdt/4854 dated 25.08.2018, and;

Whereas, Attendance Notice No. II was served to you vide this office No. DGF&ES/Estdt/2968-73 dated 04.06.2020 which was dispatched by registered post besides published in (1) Under No. DIP/J-1120/20 dated 05.06.2020 The Excel Express Jammu (II) State Times Jammu on 05.06.2020 (iii) Weekly Voice of the Masses on 08.06.2020 (iv) Under DIPK-1385-20, The Global Kashmir and (v) Kashmir Uzma on 06.06.2020 and also acknowledged through Incharge Fire & Emergency Station Rawalpora in presence of Divisional Fire Officer Fire & Emergency Services Hqrs. and two local witnesses vide Deputy Director Fire & Emergency Services Command Srinagar intimation No. DDS/Estdt/2020/1075 dated 10.06.2020 and also has been acknowledged by you through Station House Officer police station Sadar, Barzullah Bagh, Srinagar on 08.06.2020. But you did not respond/reported back at your place of posting (Attachment) i.e. Fire & Emergency Services Hqrs. Srinagar till date.

Whereas, in terms of Article 128 of J&K CSR Vol. I, and provisions of Fire Force Act of 1967 absence from duty without leave or after end of leave involves loss of appointment.

Now, therefore, for prolonged absence from duty and turning a deaf ear towards the aforesaid Attendance Notices No. I served by Joint Director Fire & Emergency Services Kashmir Range Srinagar and Attendance No. II served by, this office to you from time to time, you have not bothered to resume your duty after receiving the said Notices, clearly tantamounts to violation of Service Conduct Rules/Grave Service misconduct and it is evident that you are not interested to serve in the department anymore and are unlikely to prove to be a good Fire & Emergency Services Official. As such, Attendance Notice No. III (last/ Final) is hereby served upon you to resume your duty immediately at your place of posting i.e. Fire & Emergency Services Station Hqrs. Batmaloo Srinagar within Seven (07) days positively after the publication/receipt of this Notice failing which it shall be presumed that you are not interested to serve in the Fire & Emergency Services Department anymore and is liable to be removed from the rolls of the department.

Alok Kumar-IPS (ADGP)  
Director,  
Fire & Emergency Services, J&K Jammu / Srinagar.

Dated: 27.01.2026 DIPK-10408/25  
Dated: 28-01-2026

No: DFES-ESSTOPER/42/2025-02 (CC- 7762278)

## Snow-seekers flock to Kashmir: Gulmarg full, Sonamarg beckon

WARIS FAYAZ / RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Jan 28: Fresh snowfall has sent occupancy rates soaring at Kashmir's top winter destinations, with Gulmarg hotels jammed at 100% while Sonamarg reaches 70%, as tourists from across India and beyond swarm the snow-blanketed valley.

Declaring "no place like Valley snow," exhilarated visitors hailed destinations as unmatched, even surpassing international spots.

Gujarat skier Khusboo, a regular visitor said she has tried skiing in many destinations, but prefers

Gulmarg over other places. "It's truly heaven on earth," she said.

Similarly, a group of Punjab residents, concluding a six-day skiing adventure in Gulmarg urged natives to visit and witness the snow-covered mountains.

"There's no match to Gulmarg," they declared.

"It has been an unexpected joy and happiness. We enjoyed skiing and Gondola ride. The people here are awesome, and the weather has no comparison," first-timer Sania Mirza beamed.

CEO Gulmarg Development Authority (GDA) Tariq Hussain, said



they have invited adventure seekers to experience winter thrills. He confirmed hotels at 100% occupancy post-snowfall.

"Visit Gulmarg and feel the thrill of winter adventure activities. Gulmarg belongs to every tourist for whom it is the first choice for skiing and other snow activities," he said.

Stressing safety, the CEO advised visitors to ensure cooperation with authorities and use only the specified ski tracks for skiing.

Meanwhile, Sonamarg saw a similar post-snowfall surge, with hotels at over 70% occupancy. From January 1 to 27, the destination

welcomed 87,693 visitors, with 77,200 domestic tourists, 1,225 foreigners and 9,268 locals.

Tourist flow picked up pace amid the white carpet; however, the unscheduled power cuts have surfaced. The stakeholders have urged the administration to ensure uninterrupted facilities to enhance tourist comfort.

On Tuesday night, a minor avalanche occurred with minimal impact and no loss of life, according to officials.

Police reiterated warnings for the public and tourists to strictly avoid avalanche-prone areas—(KNO)

## Dy CM inspects snow hit areas of Pulwama, Shopian



KT NEWS DESK

Pulwama, Jan 28: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary Wednesday undertook an extensive tour of the snow-bound areas of Pulwama and Shopian districts to assess the post-snowfall situation besides reviewing progress on ongoing development works.

During the tour, the Deputy Chief Minister held a series of review meetings with the heads of concerned departments in both Pulwama and Shopian districts. He reviewed the snow clearance operations, restoration efforts and progress on ongoing development works.

The Deputy Chief Minister was accompanied by legislators including Shabir Ahmad Kullay, Zainapora Showkat Hussain, Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Mir and Vice Chairman DDC Pulwama Mukhtar Ahmad Bandh.

Deputy Commissioner Shopian Shishir Gupta, Chief Engineer PMGSY/MED/R&B

South Kashmir, ADC Pulwama, ADC Shopian and other concerned officers also attended the meetings.

The Deputy Chief Minister visited several snow-affected areas including Pulwama, Rajpora, Kashbazar, Chek-Badrinath, Shajmarg and other adjoining localities to assess the ground condition and restoration efforts. He also toured snow-bound areas of Shopian, Imam Sahab, Mimandar and surrounding parts, taking firsthand appraisal of snow clearance operations and essential service restoration.

During the visit, the Deputy Chief Minister held comprehensive review meetings on the status of ongoing PWD works in both the districts.

He issued strict directions to the concerned departments to ensure prompt restoration of road connectivity, uninterrupted essential services and timely completion of all developmental works.

Emphasising public convenience, the Deputy Chief

Minister directed the officers to work in close coordination and adopt a time-bound approach to mitigate hardships faced by the residents due to snowfall. He further instructed that all available machinery be pressed into service to ensure effective and swift restoration works. The Deputy Chief Minister stressed that all necessary measures must be taken on priority to ensure safety, accessibility, and seamless service delivery across the affected areas.

While reviewing the progress of works in both the districts, the Deputy Chief Minister called for expediting the pace of execution and ensuring timely completion of all the projects.

During the tour, the Deputy Chief Minister also met various public delegations, patiently heard their grievances. He assured them that all their genuine issues would be taken up with the concerned departments for early redressal.

## NC Govt delivering as promised: Choudhary

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Pulwama Jan 28: Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary on Wednesday asserted that the National Conference-led government is "on the ground" and actively responding to public issues, fulfilling the commitments made to people before the elections.

Speaking to reporters during his visit to Pulwama and Shopian, Choudhary said the recent spell of snowfall and rain, though much needed, had created temporary difficulties in some areas.

"We were eagerly waiting for snow and rains, and they have finally arrived. Yes, there were some problems, but our government is on the ground to address every issue," he said.

The Deputy CM informed that most of the roads across the two districts have been cleared, while the remaining stretches are being taken up on priority. "Whatever is pending will be cleared at the earliest so that people do not face inconvenience at any cost," he assured.

He acknowledged that certain roads in Shopian are yet to be cleared, citing difficult terrain as a major hurdle. "In some areas, machines are unable to reach due to steep slopes and other technical issues, but our teams are working continuously to overcome these challenges," Choudhary said.

Praising the efforts of the administration,

he said all concerned departments worked tirelessly to restore essential services. However, he issued a warning against negligence. "We do not want to take action against anyone, but if someone fails to perform their duties properly or works under the influence of others, the government will be compelled to act," he cautioned.

Taking a swipe at previous regimes, the Deputy Chief Minister blamed the BJP and PDP for the delay in completion of several infrastructure projects. "Many roads and bridges have remained incomplete for years. Neither did they complete pending projects, nor did they strengthen infrastructure. Instead, they snatched our special status and strength," he alleged.

Choudhary said that when the then Chief Minister Omar Abdullah demitted office in 2014, Jammu and Kashmir enjoyed full statehood and special status. "When he returned to power after nearly a decade, J&K had been reduced to a Union Territory. Both BJP and PDP are responsible for this," he said.

Responding to the demand for a separate mechanical division for Shopian, Choudhary said the government would examine the issue. "We will look into the demand and take appropriate steps, keeping in view the welfare of the people," he assured—(KNO)

## CS reviews yatra preparedness in HLC meet of SASB

KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Jan 28: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Wednesday chaired the 15th High-Level Committee (HLC) meeting of the Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board (SASB) and impressed upon all line departments and stakeholders to ensure that comprehensive arrangements for the annual Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY)-2026 are put in place well ahead of its commencement.

Besides the DG Police the meeting was attended by the Administrative Secretaries of all the Departments, Senior officers from the civil administration, police, and other concerned departments.

Deputy Commissioners attended the meeting through video conferencing.

Emphasising advance planning and timely execution, the Chief Secretary directed departments including Tourism, PWD, PDD, Jal Shakti, RDD, H&UDD, Animal & Sheep Husbandry, BRO, Telecommunication and others to complete all tendering, procurement and contract-related processes within the coming month. He stressed that early finalisation of works is critical to ensure seamless arrangements before the onset of the yatra.

Highlighting safety as the top priority, the Chief Secretary instructed the Divisional Administrations and Deputy Commissioners of Anantnag and Ganderbal to identify and mark all disaster-prone and vulnerable areas along both the Baltal and Pahalgam routes.

He categorically directed that no utilities, including tents and temporary structures, be installed in such high-risk zones.

The Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction (DMRR&R) was asked to coordinate closely with district administrations to frame and implement robust Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to ensure the safety of pilgrims.

He also called for an



assessment and augmentation of holding capacities at camps and transit points both within and outside the yatra area.

The Chief Secretary asked the Deputy Commissioners to facilitate all service providers and ensure that facilities created at every location are adequate, appropriate and sufficient for pilgrims as well as service personnel. He urged inter-departmental coordination and optimal utilisation of the available work window so that all infrastructure and services are fully ready well before the scheduled yatra dates.

Dulloo reviewed the specific roles and responsibilities assigned to each department and district administration, and took note of the budgetary requirements for execution of various works and procurements. He laid special emphasis on the Power Development Department for timely maintenance of HT/LT power lines and on the Jal Shakti Department for completing the requisite works along the yatra routes.

Traffic management also came under detailed discussion, with the Chief Secretary directing preparation of comprehensive traffic plans to

avoid congestion and ensure smooth movement of pilgrims and locals alike. The Police Department was asked to ensure deployment of adequate manpower to facilitate a safe, secure and hassle-free yatra.

The Health Department was asked to ensure deployment of adequate deployment of medical manpower and functionality of base hospitals at Chandanwari and Baltal, besides strengthening health facilities enroute. The Health Department was asked to initiate the process of engaging additional medical staff from outside, as per established practice.

The meeting also deliberated on ensuring that only RFID-registered pilgrims possessing valid health certificates are allowed to undertake the pilgrimage. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) was enjoined to provide daily weather updates to registered pilgrims to enable informed movement decisions.

Sanitation and cleanliness arrangements were reviewed in detail. The RDD and H&UDD were directed to ensure installation of adequate toilets and bathing facilities along the yatra track and near the cave shrine, uninterrupted water

supply, placement of dustbins and deployment of sufficient sanitation staff across transit camps, holding areas and routes.

Departments including FCS&CA, Transport, Information, IT, Forest, BSNL and others were advised to carry out their routine responsibilities as per past practice, while enhancing capacity wherever required and ensuring proper backup plans. The Chief Secretary described their role as crucial for smooth conduct of the yatra and urged them to function with a strong sense of purpose and urgency.

He further directed that all essential infrastructure such as lighting, water tanks, toilets, backup generators, public address systems and communication towers must be fully installed and functional at each camp location before the commencement of the pilgrimage.

During the meeting, CEO, SASB, Dr. Mandeep Kumar Bhandari presented a detailed overview of arrangements made during the previous year and outlined requirements for the upcoming yatra. He highlighted improvements achieved after the conclusion of Yatra-2025, ongoing works and those proposed to be completed ahead of Yatra-2026.

He also briefed the meeting on BRO-related works for track upgradation, measures to ensure reliable power and water supply, disaster mitigation initiatives, prepaid hiring systems, camp holding capacities, registration of labour and pony services. The Divisional Administrations assured the Chief Secretary that fool-proof arrangements would be made at all identified locations. They informed that power supply, water, health facilities, toilets, communication services, ration supply, firefighting equipment, shelter sheds, helipads, mobile connectivity, Langars, tents, and deployment of SDRF/NDRF personnel would be ensured as per standard operating procedures and the directions issued during the meeting.

## District committees to oversee student mental health, suicide prevention

KNO

Srinagar, Jan 28: The Jammu and Kashmir administration has constituted district level monitoring committees in all districts of the Union Territory to ensure implementation, conduct inspections, and receive complaints concerning mental health protection and prevention of suicides by students across educational institutions.

As per an order issued by the government, each district level monitoring committee shall include Deputy Commissioner (Chairperson), Chief Education Officer, Chief Medical Officer, District Social Welfare Officer and a representative from civil society (nominated by the Deputy Commissioner).

The Committees are tasked with: monitoring implementation of

## Sopore streets waterlogged post-snowfall; pumps deployed

KNO

Sopore, Jan 28: Streets across Sopore town in north Kashmir's Baramulla district remained waterlogged following recent snowfall, turning busy areas into virtual ponds and disrupting normal life, even as the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) has assured relief measures.

The areas near Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Main Chowk, Degree College and other key streets are waterlogged. The residents demand a permanent drainage system to curb recurring submersion during rains or snowmelt.

ADC Sopore, S A Raina acknowledged the issue, saying that dewatering operations were immediately initiated with two pumps pressed into service. "The

leftover water will be fully dewatered by tomorrow," he assured.

On snow clearance, the ADC informed that all Priority 1 and 2 roads were cleared on the first day itself, while upper reaches like Rampura, Rajpora and Marbal were addressed today. Electricity restoration in Sopore and Rafiabad was completed yesterday.

He urged residents to exercise judicious use of electricity and water amid ongoing challenges.

Meanwhile, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Sopore Municipal Council revealed that over 60% of the drainage project works have been completed.

Locals, however, urged the administration to expedite efforts. They questioned why main streets flood repeatedly—(KNO)

EDITORIAL

## Anantnag's Sheikhgund Village Is A Model For Change

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent mention of the anti-drug campaign in Sheikhgund village, Anantnag, in his 'Mann Ki Baat' speech highlights a simple but powerful idea: the strongest solutions to our biggest problems often start with people, not just policies. By praising the work of a man named Mir Jafar and his entire village, the Prime Minister has shown the country a practical model for change that any com-

munity can follow. The story of Sheikhgund is powerful because it is so straightforward. Faced with young people falling into drug abuse and elders suffering from tobacco-related diseases, one worried villager decided to act. Mir Jafar understood that you cannot solve this problem just by making rules; you have to change people's minds. He brought together the village elders, the youth, and even local shopkeepers to form a united front.

This turned personal worry into a shared promise for better health. The result was that shops voluntarily stopped selling tobacco products, proving what a community can achieve when it stands together. This example is vital for Jammu & Kashmir and for all of India. The fight against drugs and addiction cannot be won only by police action and rehab centres, as important as they are. We need a social movement that makes these habits

unacceptable in every neighbourhood. When a community collectively decides that the well-being of its children and the honour of its families are not up for debate, it creates a place where bad habits get no support and no easy supply. The Prime Minister's recognition is a huge boost for the many quiet heroes working in their own towns and villages. It tells us clearly: one person's effort matters, and a community's united action is a strong

force. As Mir Jafar wisely said, "If we can do it, others too can." Every village, town, and city neighbourhood should be inspired by Sheikhgund. The fight for a drug-free society will be won in our own streets and our own homes, by ordinary people who choose to make an extraordinary difference. This is the real meaning of public participation, and it is the most reliable way to build a healthier future for everyone.

# India's Expanding Role In The Global Energy Transition

India's Energy Imperative in a Changing World

Energy is fundamental to economic activity, social development, and human well-being. It enables industrial production, transportation, agriculture, healthcare services, digital connectivity, and daily household needs. India, one of the world's fastest-growing economies, is the third-largest consumer of crude oil, reflecting the continued importance of petroleum in mobility, logistics, and industrial activity. At the same time, India's energy demand is projected to grow faster than almost any other major economy through 2035, and the country is expected to account for over 23 per cent of global incremental energy demand by 2050, the highest for any country.

In order to meet this growing demand, India has focused on strengthening its energy systems through policy reforms, infrastructure expansion, and cleaner energy pathways. In June 2025, India achieved the milestone of 50 per cent of its cumulative installed electricity capacity from non-fossil fuel sources, five years ahead of its 2030 target under the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the Paris Agreement. Reforms across the hydrocarbons sector, expansion of energy infrastructure, and rapid growth of renewable energy are collectively supporting economic growth, job creation, and India's evolving role in global energy markets.

Hydrocarbon Energy Governance and Sectoral Reforms

As India's energy demand continues to rise, the effectiveness of its energy transition depends not only on expanding infrastructure and cleaner fuels but also on the strength of its governance and regulatory framework across the energy value chain. Clear policies, predictable regulations, and streamlined approval processes are essential to attract investment, reduce project timelines, and ensure reliable energy supply. Against this backdrop, India has undertaken a series of reforms to modernise energy governance and align it with evolving market conditions and transition requirements.

India's hydrocarbons sector spans the upstream, midstream, and downstream segments. The upstream segment relates to the exploration and production of oil and natural gas. The midstream segment covers the transportation and storage of fuels, and the downstream segment includes refining and distribution. Reforms across these segments are aimed at improving efficiency, enhancing supply security, and supporting a gradual transition to cleaner energy systems.

Upstream Sector Reforms:  
Oilfield (Regulation and Development) Amendment Act, 2025: ORDA (Amendment) Act, 2025 modernises India's upstream regulatory framework by simplifying procedures, enabling integrated energy development, and strengthening investor confidence. The reform aims to enhance domestic oil and gas production, improve energy security, and support a stable, transparent policy environment. Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules, 2025: The Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules, 2025, provide a modern and transparent regulatory framework for the exploration and production of oil and natural gas. The Rules strengthen ease of doing business, improve regulatory certainty, and support India's energy security objectives.

The sector underwent reform with the enactment of the ORDA (Amendment) Act, 2025, and notification of the Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules, 2025. Under the Hydrocarbon Exploration Licensing Policy, 172 blocks covering more than 3.78 lakh sq km were awarded, attracting committed investments of about USD 4.36 billion. Exploration activity intensified through seismic surveys, drilling programmes, and government-funded initiatives.

Midstream and Downstream Reforms:  
Reforms in the midstream and downstream segments have focused on improving fuel transportation, pricing transparency, and market access.

Unified Pipeline Tariff (UPT): Introduced in 2023, under "One Nation, One Grid, One Tariff," the UPT was launched to address



regional disparity in gas transportation costs. The UPT system standardizes transportation charges across the national gas grid, replacing the earlier distance-based tariff structure. As of December 2025, approximately 90 percent of operational pipelines are covered under UPT, improving the affordability and competitiveness of natural gas.

**Strengthening Energy Security through Infrastructure Expansion**

Alongside governance reforms, efforts have focused on expanding energy infrastructure across the country to improve fuel supply chains, gas connectivity, and mobility systems. This has contributed to enhanced energy access, improved system reliability, and cleaner energy use.

**Fuel and Gas Infrastructure:**

The nationwide fuel retail network expanded from around 52,000 outlets in 2014 to over one lakh by 2025, improving last-mile fuel availability across urban and rural areas.

Cleaner fuel infrastructure witnessed rapid growth, with CNG stations increasing from about 968 to over 8,477 and PNG household connections rising from 25 lakh to over 1.59 crore, supporting cleaner mobility and household energy use.

Under the vision of One Nation, One Gas Grid, the natural gas pipeline network expanded to over 25,400 km, with an additional 10,459 km under construction, enabling pan-India transportation of gas.

The integrated gas grid has supported 100 percent City Gas Distribution (CGD) geographical coverage, strengthening energy security and the transition towards a gas-based economy.

**Petroleum Marketing and Electric Mobility Infrastructure:**

Petroleum marketing infrastructure was strengthened with over 90,000 retail outlets enabled with digital payment facilities, supported by more than 2.71 lakh POS terminals.

Over 3,200 fuel bowsers were commissioned to expand door-to-door fuel delivery, particularly in remote and underserved areas.

Electric mobility infrastructure expanded with 8,932 EV charging stations installed at retail outlets under Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles (FAME) Phase-II, along with over

18,500 additional charging stations set up by Oil Marketing Companies.

**Logistics and Wayside Amenities:** Over 500 APNA GHAR truckers' wayside amenities were established to improve road safety, rest facilities, and welfare for logistics workers.

1,064 integrated Energy Stations were commissioned as of 1 November 2025, offering conventional fuels alongside alternative energy options along major transport corridors.

**Clean Energy Transition and Low-Carbon Pathways**

With energy access and infrastructure expansion providing the physical foundation for India's energy system, the focus has increasingly shifted towards reducing the carbon intensity of energy use while meeting rising demand. Clean energy transition and low-carbon pathways are therefore central to balancing energy security, economic growth, and climate objectives.

India is advancing its clean energy transition through a diversified approach that combines renewable energy expansion with alternative and low-carbon fuels. The ethanol blending programme has resulted in foreign exchange savings of about 1.59 lakh crore, reduction of 813 lakh metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and substitution of 270 lakh metric tonnes of crude oil since 2014, reflecting the role of biofuels in reducing import dependence and emissions.

Biofuels form an important bridge between conventional fuels and cleaner energy systems, allowing emission reductions without large-scale changes to existing vehicle and fuel infrastructure. Alongside biofuels, India is scaling up initiatives in green hydrogen, sustainable fuels, and other emerging low-carbon technologies, supported by rapid growth in renewable energy capacity and grid modernisation. These efforts align with India's Net Zero emissions target for 2070, while ensuring energy security and economic growth.

The National Policy on Biofuels, 2018, as amended in 2022, advanced the target of 20 percent ethanol blending in petrol from 2030 to Ethanol Supply Year (ESY) 2025-26. Under the Ethanol Blended Petrol Programme, average ethanol blending reached 19.05 per cent as on 31 July 2025, with 19.93 per cent

achieved in July 2025, indicating steady progress towards the target.

Energy transition outcomes also depend on household-level adoption of cleaner fuels, particularly in cooking, where traditional fuel use has health and environmental implications. Accordingly, access to clean cooking energy has been significantly expanded under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY), with the number of beneficiaries reaching about 10.41 crore as of January 2026. To achieve saturation of LPG coverage, the Government has approved the release of 25 lakh additional LPG connections during FY 2025-26, supported by simplification of the eligibility process through a single Deprivation Declaration, making access faster and more inclusive.

Ensuring affordability is critical for sustained adoption of clean cooking fuels beyond initial access. Affordability is being ensured through a targeted subsidy of 300 per 14.2 kg cylinder for up to nine refills per year for PMUY beneficiaries. As a result, LPG usage has shown a sustained increase, with average per capita consumption rising from about three refills in 2019-20 to 4.85 refills per annum during FY 2025-26, indicating deeper adoption of clean cooking fuel.

**Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF): Indicative Blending Targets:** The union government has set indicative blending targets for SAF in Aviation Turbine Fuel for international flights at 1 per cent from 2027, 2 per cent from 2028 and 5 per cent from 2030.

Indian Oil Corporation Limited became the first Indian company to receive International Sustainability and Carbon Certification (ISCC) Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) certification for SAF production at its Panipat Refinery, followed by an MoU with Air India for SAF supply.

**India's Global Energy Leadership and Future Commitment**

As India's energy transition progresses, engagement with international energy platforms has become important for understanding global market developments, sharing implementation experiences, and contributing to collective responses on energy security and sustainability. As a large and growing energy-consuming economy, India participates in international discussions on

### Key Takeaways

- Natural gas pipelines exceed 25,400 km, enabling near-100% CGD geographical coverage nationwide.
- Ethanol blending reached 19.05% in ESY 2024-25, approaching the 20% national target.
- PMUY coverage expanded to 10.41 crore households, with rising LPG refill rates indicating sustained usage.
- India Energy Week 2026 convenes global stakeholders to examine energy security and transition issues.

energy security, transition pathways, and clean fuels, drawing on lessons from domestic programmes implemented at scale.

India's participation in platforms such as the Global Biofuel Alliance (GBA) and the G20 Energy Transitions Working Group reflects its emphasis on practical and inclusive approaches to energy transition. These engagements provide opportunities to exchange perspectives on biofuels, alternative fuels, and gas-based systems, and to examine issues related to supply diversification, affordability, and emissions reduction in the context of differing national circumstances.

In addition to formal multilateral forums, India Energy Week serves as an international platform for dialogue among governments, industry, financial institutions, and technology providers. The event supports structured knowledge exchange platforms on energy markets, investment, clean energy technologies, and transition pathways, complementing ongoing international and multilateral engagements.

India Energy Week (IEW)

India Energy Week 2026 is underway in Goa from 27-30 January 2026. Hosted by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, the platform highlights India's expanding role in shaping global energy conversations, particularly from the perspective of emerging and developing economies. The event will see participants from over 120 countries and more than 6,500 conference delegates at a critical moment for global energy markets, geopolitics, and climate action.

Launched in 2023, India Energy Week has evolved as a platform for international dialogue across the global energy value chain. The fourth edition of the event will bring together energy ministers, top leaders, financial institutions, international organisations, technology providers, and academic institutions to examine issues related to energy security, investment, affordability, and clean energy transition, with perspectives relevant to both emerging and advanced economies.

The IEW 2026 conference programme brings together policy-level discussions and implementation-focused exchanges through its strategic and technical tracks. These discussions will be held on varied issues such as energy security, investment mobilisation, clean energy transition, digital technologies, energy equity, and operational challenges across the energy value chain, including oil and gas, renewable energy, hydrogen, biofuels, carbon capture, power systems, and future mobility.

Together, India's international participation and forward-looking energy objectives underscore a commitment to cooperative solutions that balance development needs with climate action.

### Conclusion

India's energy landscape has undergone a significant transformation in recent years, supported by policy reforms, infrastructure expansion, and targeted clean energy interventions. Progress across hydrocarbons governance, gas connectivity, fuel and mobility infrastructure, biofuels, and clean cooking has strengthened energy access, improved system resilience, and reduced emissions intensity. These developments reflect a transition approach that emphasises scale, implementation, and inclusion while responding to rising energy demand.

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

## Jammu, Pulwama, Baramulla top financial inclusion, social security schemes

KT News Desk

JAMMU, JANUARY 28: The districts of Jammu, Pulwama and Baramulla have emerged as top performers in various financial inclusion and social security schemes being implemented by the Jammu and Kashmir government, showcasing significant progress in expanding the financial access and social security coverage.

The Chief Minister, as per an official statement, has commended the efforts of district administrations for notable improvement in coverage and year-on-year progress under these schemes during the financial year 2025-26.

The PM Jandhan Yojana, PM Suraksha Bima Yojana, PM Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana and Atal Pension Yojana are implemented through banks, promoting financial inclusion and providing accidental and life insurance cover, as well as pension benefits, to people from



weaker and deprived sections of the society.

Under Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), zero balance accounts of financially excluded poor people are opened in banks with facilities of RuPay debit card and overdraft limit of Rs 10,000. In the first three quarters of 2025-26, 1,26,803 new PMJDY accounts were opened, increasing total PMJDY accounts in Jammu & Kashmir

from 23,66,953 on March 31, 2025, to 24,93,756 on December 31, 2025. Jammu, Samba and Reasi are the top performing districts.

The Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) offers accidental insurance cover of up to Rs 2 lakh at an annual premium of just Rs 20. In 2025-26, approximately 5,42,675 additional individuals were covered, boosting total subscribers from

23,56,858 (March 31, 2025) to 29,12,830 (December 31, 2025). Pulwama district led the initiative, followed by Samba and Jammu.

The Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) provides life insurance cover up to Rs 2 lakh on annual premium of Rs 436. There were 2,20,660 additional subscribers in 2025-26 as the total subscription rose from 9,66,887 in March 31, 2025, to 11,87,547 in December 31, 2025. Baramulla has achieved the best results, followed by Jammu and Ganderbal.

The Atal Pension Yojana (APY) offers a fixed monthly pension after the age of 60 years to people aged 18-40 years not covered under any other pension scheme on annual subscription ranging from Rs 42 to Rs 200 based on their age. Nearly, 40,582 new subscribers were enrolled under the scheme, increasing the total subscribers from 2,48,020 in March 31, 2025, to 2,88,602 in December

31, 2025. Jammu registered the highest subscription, followed by Samba and Pulwama.

The Digital Life Certificate (Jeevan Praman) campaign, aimed at encouraging the pensioners to submit life certificates digitally, saw significant success. Digital certifications surged from 4,000 to 1,11,511 in 2025-26. Of 2,49 lakh pensioners, 2,37 lakh have completed life certification, with 1.16 lakh (49%) opting for digital submission. Rajouri district led the campaign, followed by Kargil and Udhampur.

The Chief Minister appreciated the efforts put in by the Deputy Commissioners, banking institutions/respondents, whose field-level coordination and outreach have played a key role in ensuring that social security benefits reach people in a seamless and transparent manner. Top three performing districts under each scheme have been awarded with a certificate of appreciation by the Chief Minister.

## DLSA Srinagar holds legal awareness programme at Central Jail



KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 28: An awareness programme was conducted Wednesday at Central Jail Srinagar by the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Srinagar under the guidance of Haq Nawaz Zargar Chairman DLSA (Pr. Distt. & Sessions Judge), Srinagar and overall supervision of Secretary DLSA, Srinagar to sensitize inmates about the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for premature release, parole and furlough, and the legal rights of prisoners.

During the programme, as per an official statement, Jahan Ara, Deputy Legal Aid Defense Counsel elaborated in detail on the procedures, eligibility criteria and documentation required for seeking premature release, parole and furlough,

enabling the inmates to better understand the legal remedies available to them.

Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsel highlighted the constitutional and legal rights of prisoners, including access to legal aid, humane treatment, and the right to seek redressal through appropriate legal forums. The inmates were encouraged to avail free legal services provided by DLSA Srinagar.

The interactive session witnessed active participation from the inmates, who raised queries related to their cases, which were duly addressed by the resource persons.

The programme was organized as part of DLSA Srinagar's ongoing efforts to ensure access to justice for all, particularly for vulnerable and marginalized sections of society, including prisoners.

## BHASHINI Rajyam workshop to boost multilingual digital governance in J&K: Satish Sharma



KT News Desk

JAMMU, JANUARY 28: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Youth Services & Sports and Information Technology, Satish Sharma, Wednesday said that the BHASHINI Rajyam workshop marks a major step towards building an inclusive, citizen-centric digital ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister was addressing the BHASHINI Rajyam workshop (Jammu & Kashmir Chapter), organised by the Information Technology Department in collaboration with the Digital India BHASHINI Division, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), at the Convention Centre, Jammu.

Highlighting the importance of linguistic inclusion in digital governance, Satish Sharma said that technology must empower every citizen irrespective of language, literacy level or geographical location. He stated that BHASHINI represents the true spirit of Digital India by enabling AI-driven multilingual solutions across governance, education, startups and entrepreneurship.

"It is a matter of great pride for Jammu and Kashmir to host the BHASHINI Rajyam Workshop, a forward-looking initiative that places inclusion at the core of technological transformation," the Minister said.

The Minister, as per an official statement, said that under the visionary leadership of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, the government of Jammu and Kashmir is committed towards ensuring that digital services remain accessible, inclusive and citizen-centric. He added that adoption of BHASHINI will significantly enhance service delivery while creating new opportunities for local developers, researchers and startups working in Indian language technologies.

The Minister congratulated the Information Technology Department and the Digital India BHASHINI team for organising the workshop. He expressed confidence that the initiative would accelerate multilingual digital transformation in the Union Territory.

"Let us work together to ensure that language never becomes a barrier, but a path towards opportunity and empowerment," the Minister said. The Minister assured full support of the J&K government to the BHASHINI mission, including piloting innovative use cases, sharing language datasets and promoting multilingual digital governance across departments.

Secretary Information Technology Department, Dr. Piyush Singla highlighted the increasing importance of information technology in day-to-day governance. He

emphasized that digital platforms are playing a crucial role in improving transparency, efficiency and citizen engagement across departments.

Chief Executive Officer, BHASHINI Rajyam, Amitabh Garg delivered a detailed presentation. He gave a brief overview of the BHASHINI programme, its architecture, key components and practical use cases. He elaborated on the applications of multilingual AI tools in governance, education, public service delivery and entrepreneurship, underlining their significance in bridging the language divide.

Chief Executive Officer, JAKEGA, Mahima Madan was also present on the occasion.

During the workshop, technical sessions were held on BHASHINI Udyat, ARPAN services and the National Hub for Language Technology (NHLT), along with live demonstrations of translation, transcription, speech-to-text, video translation and language model APIs. Sessions also showcased BHASHINI-powered applications, inter-ministerial use cases, startup engagement initiatives and upcoming hackathons aimed at promoting innovation among youth.

The event witnessed participation of senior government officers, technology experts, developers, startups, academicians and students from across Jammu and Kashmir.

## DC Udhampur reviews taskforce measures to curb illegal mining

KT News Desk

UDHAMPUR, JANUARY 28: Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, Saloni Rai, Wednesday chaired a meeting of the multi-departmental District-Level Task Force Cell to review enforcement measures in place to curb illegal mining in the district.

During the meeting, the DC reviewed enforcement challenges and discussed strategies for effective monitoring and control. Emphasis was laid on strengthening regulatory mechanisms to ensure strict compliance with mining laws and



environmental norms.

The DC, as per an official statement, urged officers to adopt a vigilant and proactive approach in identifying and curbing illegal mineral extraction. Stressing a policy of zero tolerance, she called for stringent legal and

punitive action against violators to deter future infractions.

To further tighten surveillance, the DC directed to install GPS devices in all vehicles transporting minerals to enable real-time tracking and prevent unauthorized transportation.

## Director Horticulture Jammu inspects development activities in Marh Block

KT News Desk

JAMMU, JANUARY 28: The Director Horticulture Jammu (DHJ), Gul Sayed Wednesday visited the Marh area to review horticultural activities and ongoing initiatives in the region. He was accompanied by the Assistant Director Horticulture, Sunil Gupta and Horticulture Department Officer, Dr Nazran Khan.

Later, the Director inspected the Government Fruit Plants Nursery, Raipur, where he reviewed the orchards of Dragon fruit. He also visited the Dragon



Fruit Mother Block established under the HADP (P-21) scheme by beneficiary, Sidharth Daluja.

Afterward, the Director inspected different horticulture orchards in the Marh area and interacted with orchardists. He appreciated their efforts and emphasized the importance of adopting modern horticultural practices to enhance productivity and income.

The visit aimed to assess the field-level implementation of horticulture schemes and to encourage farmers to adopt high-value crops under government-supported programmes.

SAMPOORNATAA 2.0

## DC Baramulla chairs preparedness meeting



KT News Desk

BARAMULLA, JANUARY 28: In view of the launch of Sampoornata Abhiyan 2.0, Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa Wednesday chaired a review meeting at the main meeting hall of DC office Baramulla to assess preparedness and ensure saturation of key performance indicators (KPIs) under the Aspirational District Programme (ADP) and Aspirational Block Programme (ABP).

The DC issued clear directions to all the concerned departments to ensure saturation of 5 KPIs under ADP and 6 KPIs under ABP during the campaign period ending on 14th April 2026, stressing that the Abhiyan must translate into tangible improvements at the grassroots level.

Minga Sherpa specifically directed departments to submit a detailed, time-bound action programme outlining activities to be undertaken during the three-month period aimed at achieving saturation of each indicator.

The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer, Chief Medical Officer, SDM Patti sectoral officers from Health, Education, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Rural Development and other concerned departments.

## Forest Dept Kathua foils illicit Khair Wood transportation bid



KT NEWS DESK

KATHUA, JANUARY 28: The Forest Department Kathua foiled an attempt to smuggle Khair wood (Acacia catechu) during a late-night enforcement operation in the district.

During the operation conducted on January 27, 2026, at about 11:55 PM, a Tata Yodha Load Carrier bearing Registration No. JK08L-1637 was intercepted near village Rouri, Sahar Panchayat, by the Block Officer, Budhi Block, along with field staff. On inspection, the vehicle was found carrying 15 billets of Khair Wood (Acacia catechu) being transported in violation of forest laws.

The vehicle, as per an official statement, was seized under Sections 52(1) and 52(2) of the Indian Forest Act, 1927 for violation of Sections 41, 41-A and 42 of the Act, besides violation of SRO 111 of 2016.

The seizure was carried out under the close supervision

of the Range Officer, Kathua, Neetan Khajuria and under the overall guidance of Divisional Forest Officer, Ankit Sinha. The seized vehicle along with the illicit forest produce was taken into custody at the Forest Complex, Kathua and further legal action is being initiated as per the provisions of the Indian Forest Act, 1927 and other relevant laws.

Meanwhile, the Forest Department lauded the proactive and coordinated role of the Revenue Department, Police Department and Forest Protection Force, whose joint efforts have significantly strengthened forest protection measures and curbed the menace of smuggling of Khairwood and other forest produce in Kathua district.

The Forest Department Kathua has appealed to the general public to cooperate by promptly reporting any instances of illegal felling, smuggling or transportation of forest produce.

## Two AC coaches added to special train for passenger convenience: Jammu Railways

KT News Desk

Jammu, Jan 28: Considering the disruption to road and air travel due to inclement weather and snowfall, the Jammu Division of Northern Railway operated a special reserved train, on Wednesday, January 28, between Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra and Srinagar.

Due to the large number of tourists visiting Kashmir and to ensure their comfortable journey, two additional AC coaches were added to the special reserved train. The addition of these two coaches provided 144 extra berths, helping passengers with waiting list tickets secure confirmed seats. Passengers appreciated the railway's initiative, calling it a positive step.

The operation of the special reserved train from Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra to Srinagar, with the additional coaches, was successful. In this challenging situation, the special train not only proved comfortable for passengers but also generated record revenue by operating at full capacity on this historic route.

Regarding the operation of the train, special reserved train number 04629 departed from Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra at its scheduled time of 10:30 AM, carrying over 800 passengers.

Similarly, special reserved train number 04630, travelling from Srinagar to Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra, departed from Srinagar at its scheduled time of 3:00 PM, carrying over 850 passengers.

Regarding the operation of the train on the second day, Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Jammu, Uchit Singh said, "The special trains operated on 27th and 28th January provided much-needed relief to tourists and travellers visiting Kashmir, as road and air travel were disrupted due to inclement weather. More than 3,000 passengers travelled on these special trains over the two days and expressed their gratitude to the railways. The occupancy of these trains was over 100 per cent, and the revenue increased due to the addition of two extra AC coaches."

He further added that such initiatives will build confidence in the railways among travellers and tourists visiting Kashmir, and will lead to an increase in the number of tourists visiting Jammu and Kashmir in the future.

## CONT'D. FROM FRONT PAGE

### Health, well-being

government health schemes," she added.

On healthcare for senior citizens, Murmu said, "Nearly 1 crore Ayushman Vay Vandana Cards have been issued over the past one and a half years, enabling approximately 8 lakh senior and elderly citizens to receive free health care services."

She noted that primary healthcare infrastructure has been strengthened with "1.80 lakh Ayushman Arogya Mandirs operational nationwide, ensuring last-mile delivery of comprehensive primary healthcare services, particularly in rural, remote and underserved areas."

The President referred to targeted public health initiatives, saying, "Under the National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission, over 6.5 crore people have been screened, particularly in remote, rural and tribal regions, enabling early detection and effective prevention of the disease."

She further said that sustained efforts have resulted in "effective control of Japanese Encephalitis and related illnesses, especially in endemic districts of Uttar Pradesh".

On healthcare development in the Northeast, Murmu said, "The establishment of the State Cancer Institute in Itanagar, a Medical College in Shivasagar, Assam, a Medical College in Sichey, Sikkim, and a Women and Children's Hospital in Agartala will greatly support the treatment of millions of families and contribute to a strong and comprehensive health infrastructure in the region."

She highlighted women's health initiatives, stating, "Under the 'Swasth Nari, Sashakt Parivar' campaign conducted in September, approximately 7 crore women received health check-ups, facilitating timely medical care for women across the country."

The President added, "The World Health Organization has declared India a Trachoma-free country, marking a significant milestone in the nation's public health journey and reflecting global recognition of India's sustained efforts to eliminate preventable diseases."

Murmu said the government remains committed to "further strengthening healthcare infrastructure, expanding coverage under flagship health schemes, and continuing citizen-centric reforms aimed at building a resilient, inclusive and future-ready healthcare system for the country." (KNO)

### Man suffocates

Mohammad Yousuf Mir, a resident of Kupwara area of Kulgam. Meanwhile, police have taken cognizance of the incident. (KNO)

### PM Modi engages

said that these roundtables have emerged

## India must focus on leveraging digital data infrastructure to build AI solutions: NHA CEO

PTI

New Delhi, Jan 28: National Health Authority (NHA) CEO Dr Sunil Kumar Barnwal on Wednesday highlighted how Artificial Intelligence can be used to strengthen India's healthcare infrastructure, noting that India needs to focus on leveraging digital data infrastructure to build AI solutions.

He was speaking at the fourth edition of the Health of India Summit 2026, hosted by DataLEADS and FirstCheck in partnership with the National Institute of Health and Family Welfare.

With a central theme of 'Building a Healthier India with AI', the Health of India Summit 2026 opened with a keynote address from Barnwal focusing on reimagining healthcare in the age of AI.

The event brought together senior government officials, public health experts, and artificial intelligence innovators.

"We all know the way AI will change healthcare delivery. It will change the way the patient gets treatment, the way doctors perform the clinical case, and improve the capacity of the health profession and the workdays," Barnwal said, adding that much of their non-clinical work can be taken care of by AI.

"Similarly, we are looking at AI as a big opportunity for building the capacity of frontline health workers, and ASHA workers can actually segregate a chronic patient from a normal patient. They can ensure and make sure of some kind of early detection of a severe disease which may be likely to have," he added.

The Health of India Summit was recognised as the official pre-summit event of the upcoming India AI Impact Summit 2026, a flagship initiative led by the Government of India's Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and the IndiaAI Mission to advance safe, responsible, and inclusive AI



innovation.

The IndiaAI Impact Summit will be held in the national capital between February 16 and 20. This will be the first global artificial intelligence summit hosted in the Global South.

Barnwal also focused on creating Indian datasets so that AI solutions can be tailored to predict diseases in the Indian context.

He also announced that the National AI strategy for health will be launched during the India AI Impact Summit, and this will set the path for the responsible use of AI.

Dr Rajesh Ranjan, HOD, Epidemiology, National Institute of Health and Family Welfare, said, "India stands at the cusp of an AI-driven healthcare transformation. AI is no longer a choice but a necessity, empowering clinicians, expanding access, and enabling predictive care. With strong digital public infrastructure and ethical use, India can lead the world in human-centric, equitable healthcare."

### Diverse Panel Discussions:

The agenda, featuring nine specialised panels covering -- AI The New Frontier In Preventive and Predictive Healthcare, Bridging the Digital Divide - Presented by Global Health Strategies, AI-Driven Healthcare Transformation in India, the Role of AI in Health Information Pathways - Presented by Deutsche Welle, AI Applications For Innovation in Drug Discovery, the Pharmaceutical and MedTech Industry and AI in Medical Education: Preparing Doctors for the Future.

Speaking at the event, Syed Nazakat, CEO and founder, DataLEADS, said, "It is a proud moment for us to partner with the National Institute of Health and Family Welfare and host this important national AI summit."

"India is entering the frontier phase of digital health, where advanced AI models, population-scale data, and public digital infrastructure converge. The Health of India Summit 2026 is a

platform to move from pilots to a planetary scale. By aligning policymakers, frontier technologists, and clinicians, we are building a conversation about building an AI-native health system that is real-time, predictive, and interoperable, capable of serving a billion people with precision, trust, and speed," he added.

The Health of India Summit moved beyond dialogue and culminated in a strategic MoU between DataLEADS' AI initiative ADiRA (AI for Digital Readiness and Advancement) and Ujala Cygnus Hospital to train and upskill healthcare professionals for AI readiness.

The MoU was signed by Dr Sabba Mehmood, Co-founder and Director, DataLEADS and First Check, and Dr Vandana Chawla, Vice-President of Academic and Research, Ujala Cygnus Healthcare Services.

The ADiRA is an initiative to build an AI-ready workforce in India, supported by the AI Opportunity Fund: Asia-Pacific by AVPN, with support from Google.org and the Asian Development Bank.

The summit also hosted AI innovators, including representatives from Samsung Health and NeuroDX, who presented groundbreaking technologies currently transforming clinical practice.

The Health of India Summit 2026 was supported by a coalition of partners, with Global Health Strategies leading as the title partner. The National e-Governance Division (NeGD) under the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY), BMJ Group, and SocioScript served as the knowledge partners, Deutsche Welle and PTI joined as media partners, and Wadhwan Foundation as the industry partner.

Additionally, TiE Delhi and Healthcare Sector Skill Council supported the summit, with Samsung and RAFFTTAR AI featuring as exhibiting partners, alongside other key industry stakeholders.

## Javed Rana reviews development works in Mendhar's border villages



KT News Desk

Mendhar, Jan 28: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana on Wednesday undertook an extensive tour of various border villages of Mendhar Sub Division and Mankote area, where he interacted with the local residents and reviewed the status of development works being executed under different sectors.

During the visit, the Minister held on-the-spot interactions with the public. He listened to their grievances, particularly regarding drinking water supply, power supply, road connectivity and the functioning of health and educational institutions in the border and far-flung areas.

He assured the people that all their genuine issues would be addressed on priority to ensure improved basic amenities and quality public services.

The Minister also took stock of ongoing developmental works under various schemes. He stressed the need for timely completion of these vital projects with due focus on quality, transparency and accountability, keeping in view the strategic importance of the border belt.

Senior officers of the Sub Divisional Administration including SDM Mendhar, Tehsildar Mankote and BDO Mankote besides officers from Jal Shakti (PHE), Public Works Department (PWD), Health, Education and other concerned departments, accompanied the Minister. They briefed him on sector-wise progress and issues on the ground.

The areas visited during the tour included Upper Mankote, Basni, Sakrote, Choi, Tain, Changri, Dharana, and Gohlad besides other locations in Mendhar and Mankote.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to inclusive development, the Minister directed the concerned departments to remain proactive and responsive so that the benefits of development reach people living in border and remote areas in a time-bound manner.

coordination meetings at the UT and Corps levels, and the conduct of table-top exercises and mock drills at the district level. It also provides for clearly defined Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to regulate movement during adverse weather conditions and the establishment of Joint Control Rooms involving the Civil Administration, Army, CAPFs and SDRF.

Infrastructure-related measures include the construction of Yatri Niwas, comprehensive mapping of permanent and temporary helipads, pre-positioning of medical and engineering resources, and integration of civil helicopters into the overall disaster response planning framework.

The review emphasized the need for localized and valley-specific weather forecasting, deployment of Automatic Weather Stations (AWS) and Doppler Radars in high-risk areas, and the use of drones for delivery of essential supplies and medicines to cut-off regions.

Moreover, operational gaps identified during recent flood events, such as communication shortfalls, absence of sub-divisional EOCS and limited availability of satellite phones, are being systematically addressed.

Additionally, it was highlighted to expedite the key strategic infrastructure projects including the Indri Bridge over River Chenab at Pargwal, river training works on Chenab and Tawi, and targeted mitigation measures to reduce flood susceptibility of River MannawarTawi, noting its strategic significance.

The roadmap clearly delineates the roles and responsibilities of the UT Government, District Administrations, IMD, NDMA, Armed Forces, CAPFs, BRO, NDRF and SDRF, and provides for strengthened inter-agency coordination.

Major initiatives include the conduct of an annual state-level mock exercise every June (pre-monsoon), organization of one-day IDRN workshops for Himalayan states, finalization of SOPs for drone usage in disaster response in coordination with the DGCA and Indian Air Force, pre-positioning of HADR equipment and bridging resources, and strengthening of 'Apda Mitras', including engagement of trained local divers in vulnerable districts.

Sector-specific preparedness measures were also reviewed, including shrine-specific mock exercises for the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine, tunnel contingency drills by the Railways, and regional forest fire mock exercises by the Forest Department.

The Chief Secretary directed time-bound implementation of all agreed action points and reiterated that disaster management in Jammu and Kashmir must remain people-centric, technology-enabled and coordination-driven, with preparedness, rather than response alone, forming the cornerstone of the Union Territory's disaster risk reduction strategy.

### LG Sinha, CM Omar

greatly felt.

Omar recalled his close association with the deceased Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader during his college days in Mumbai, when he stayed with Sharad Pawar and his family. "I join my father (National Conference president Farooq Abdullah) in sending our condolences to Sharad Pawar Saab, Supriya (Sule) and the entire family," the chief minister wrote.

### LG condoles demise

the bereaved family members. He prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul and strength for the family in this hour of grief.

**Man found dead**

necessary medico-legal formalities were done.

He has been identified as Tarun Singh (41) son of Pushvendar Singh of Uttar Pradesh. Further investigation into the cause of death is underway, the official said. (KNO)

### MeT predicts dry

snowbound and avalanche-prone higher reaches.

The Jammu and Kashmir UT Disaster Management Authority (JKUTDMA) has issued a high-level avalanche warning for areas above 2,000 metres in Bandipora, Ganderbal, and Kupwara over the next 24 hours.

Residents and visitors have been asked to

avoid risky areas and strictly follow official advisories. In case of emergencies, people are advised to dial 112.

The Meteorological Department also warned that the weather could impact transport and daily activities, particularly in higher altitudes, and requested the public to exercise caution.

### SNOW AVALANCHE IN SONAMARG

Meanwhile, Ganderbal Police in a statement said that an avalanche occurred last night at around 10:15 pm near New Truck Yard, Sonamarg. "Fortunately, the impact was minimal and no loss of life or property has been reported. Police team along with SDRF timely reported in said area to assess the situation," it said.

"Concerned agencies are closely monitoring the situation, and precautionary measures have been put in place to ensure public safety in the region," it said, adding that in view of the prevailing conditions, Ganderbal Police adhere to the general public, tourists, and transporters to strictly avoid visiting or halting in avalanche-prone areas.

The chances of avalanches, it said, remain very high, and unnecessary movement in vulnerable zones can pose serious risks. "People are advised to follow official advisories, cooperate with local authorities, and prioritize safety while traveling through the Sonamarg axis and adjoining areas," it added.

"J&K Police remains committed to the safety and well-being of the public and requests everyone to stay alert and act responsibly," the police added. (KNO)

### Srinagar-Jammu National

media handles.

Meanwhile, flight operations at Srinagar Airport have resumed. A few morning flights faced minor delays due to poor visibility, but arrivals and departures throughout the day operated smoothly.

Officials also said that F&B outlets and retail shops are open, and the terminal remains warm and passenger-friendly despite the chilly weather.

To ease travel disruptions, the Jammu Division of Northern Railway operated special reserved trains between Katra and Srinagar, adding two extra AC coaches on Wednesday to accommodate 144 additional passengers.

Over 1,650 passengers travelled on the special trains, achieving full occupancy and generating record revenue.

Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Jammu, Uchit Singh, told KNO that the special trains operated on January 27th and 28th provided much-needed relief to tourists and travellers visiting Kashmir, as road and air travel were disrupted due to inclement weather.

"More than 3000 passengers travelled on these special trains over the two days and

expressed their gratitude to the railways. The occupancy of these special trains was over 100 per cent, and the revenue generated from these trains increased due to the addition of two extra AC coaches," he said.

Singhal added that such initiatives will build confidence in the railways among travellers and tourists visiting Kashmir, and will lead to an increase in the number of tourists visiting Jammu and Kashmir in the future. (KNO)

### CS assesses roadmap

all districts, particularly for floods and other weather-induced disasters during the April to September period, which has historically witnessed a higher frequency of such events in the UT.

The Chief Secretary called for RFID-based management of pilgrimages, particularly the Machail Mata Yatra, along with creation of the requisite supporting infrastructure along the yatra route. He also stressed the importance of conducting shrine-specific mock exercises, including at the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine, to ensure coordinated and timely response during emergencies.

He further enjoined upon the Deputy Commissioners to remain vigilant in view of the risk of avalanches following recent snowfall and directed them to ensure the prompt restoration of road connectivity, drinking water supply and electricity to all affected habitations in their respective districts.

Speaking on the occasion, Principal Secretary, DMR&R, Chandraker Bharti, highlighted the critical importance of strengthening last-mile dissemination of weather warnings, enhancing public awareness and promoting the adoption of digital platforms such as the SACHET App. He emphasized that District and Sub-Divisional Emergency Operation Centres (EOCs) must be made functional with redundant communication systems, particularly in remote and border areas.

The review highlighted a clear strategic shift from reactive disaster response to a more anticipatory disaster management approach, supported by improved early warning systems, preparedness planning and the integration of modern technology.

The presentation also captured key operational insights from recent incidents, including the Chasoti flash flood during the Machail Mata Yatra in Kishtwar, cloudburst impacts in Doda, and floods in parts of the Jammu region including Kathua and other areas. These experiences have informed a series of targeted improvements in planning, response and coordination mechanisms.

To

# Prez Murmu cities Macaulay's 'conspiracies' in her Parl speech, hails Somnath's enduring spirit

PTI

New Delhi, Jan 28: Through "Macaulay's conspiracies", a sense of "inferiority" was instilled among the people of India during the colonial period, and now, for the first time since independence, the Indian government has shown the courage to "strike a blow" on this, President Droupadi Murmu said on Wednesday.

Addressing a joint sitting of both the Houses of Parliament, which marked the start of the Budget Session, she said, for the country to reach the goal of 'Viksit Bharat', as much importance is required to be given to national self-respect and cultural pride as to modern development.

"From the cultural perspective, India is among the richest nations in the world. My government is working to transform this heritage into a source of strength for the country," Murmu said.

In her address, she also made a reference to British official Macaulay and his policies during the colonial rule in the 19th century.

"Through Macaulay's conspiracies, a sense of inferiority was instilled among the people of India during the colonial period. Now, for the first time since independence, my government has shown the courage to strike a blow on this," the President said.

Murmu said today, the nation is working on every front to preserve and "enrich its own cultural heritage."

"In this direction, through the efforts of my government, the sacred relics of Bhagwan Buddha have returned to India after 125 years. These relics have now been offered for public viewing," she said.

The sacred Piprahwa relics, which include bone fragments believed to be of the Buddha, among other relics, originally excavated in northern India in 1898, and a set of recently repatriated gems, are currently part of a



grand exposition in Delhi.

Titled, 'The Light and the Lotus: Relics of the Awakened One,' it was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 3.

Murmu said 2026 also marks the completion of 75 years since the reconstruction of the Somnath Temple in Gujarat's Saurashtra.

"The thousand year journey since the attacks on the Somnath Temple stands as a symbol of India's religious devotion, Sanatan culture and enduring faith. The enthusiasm with which people across the country participated in the Somnath Swabhimaan Parv has been truly unmatched," she added.

The President said some time ago, the establishment of Gangaikonda-Cholapuram by Rajendra Chola completed one thousand years. This occasion, too, has given crores of Indians an opportunity to feel proud about their glorious past, she said.

Murmu emphasised that "our nation has been a centre of ancient learning".

This body of knowledge was preserved for thousands of years, generation after generation, in the form of ancient manuscripts. However, due

to "foreign invasions and the neglect in the years following Independence, this priceless heritage has suffered serious loss," she said.

Now, the government is taking steps to preserve this vast reservoir of knowledge. Through the Gyan Bharatam Mission, digitisation of ancient manuscripts has begun across the country, the President emphasised.

"These efforts will play an important role in preserving the Indian accessible tradition and making it accessible to the people in future," she said.

Murmu said, "My government is also establishing tribal museums to preserve the rich tribal heritage of the country".

As a part of this, the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh Tribal Freedom Fighters' Museum in Chhattisgarh was inaugurated recently.

"I am happy to announce that by getting the Constitution translated in Santhali language, my government has enhanced the pride of tribal community," she added.

The President asserted that when "we respect our traditions and culture, the world also respects them."

Last year, the UNESCO included "our Diwali festival" in its list of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity. Besides the increasing popularity of Diwali across the world, this recognition by UNESCO has been a matter of great pride for all Indians, she said.

She further said that amid different opinions and diverse viewpoints, "there has been unanimity about nothing being greater than the nation".

"Venerable Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru Ji, Babasaheb, Sardar Patel, JP Ji, Lohia Ji, Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya, Atal Ji have all shared the belief that differences of opinion on issues are natural in democracy, but there are certain subjects which are beyond all differences," she said.

The resolve of 'Viksit Bharat', the security of India, 'Atmanirbharata', the campaign for 'Swadeshi', efforts toward national unity, 'Swachhata', and on all such matters concerning the nation, "the Parliamentarians must stand united. This precisely is the spirit of our Constitution," she said.

"Therefore, today I urge all of you: let every Member of Parliament take a unified stand on issues of national interest as participants in the nation's development, and infuse new energy into India's progress," Murmu said.

Today, all citizens can see that India stands at an "important stage" in its journey towards the future. The impact of the decisions being taken today will be seen in the years to come, the President said.

"The goal of Viksit Bharat is not limited to any one government or one generation. It is a continuous journey. In this journey, the efforts, discipline and continuity of all of us are important. In the times to come, the nation's progress will be shaped by its collective determination," she said.

## Trade pact opens doors for AYUSH practitioners in EU-member states: PM Modi



PTI

New Delhi, Jan 28: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said the practitioners of Indian traditional systems of medicine will now be able to provide their services in the European Union countries, following the historic India-EU trade pact.

AYUSH practitioners will be able to provide their services in the EU member states, based on professional qualifications earned in India, which will greatly benefit the youngsters associated with ayurveda and yoga, Modi said at the centenary celebrations of the Arya Vaidyasaala Charitable Hospital in Kerala.

In a video message, the prime minister said the recently-announced historic trade agreement with the EU will give a major boost to Indian traditional medicine services and practitioners.

He said the pact will also help establish AYUSH wellness centres in Europe and extended his congratulations to all dignitaries associated with ayurveda and AYUSH for this achievement.

Modi said India has been treating people through ayurveda for centuries, but it is unfortunate that within the country and largely abroad, efforts have been required to explain its importance.

He said a major reason for this has been the lack of evidence-based research and research papers.

The prime minister said when ayurvedic methods are tested on the principles of science, public trust becomes stronger.

He expressed happiness that the Arya Vaidyasaala has consistently tested ayurveda on the touchstone of science and research, working in collaboration with institutions like the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and Indian Institute of Technology (IIT).

Modi pointed out that the institution has focussed on drug research, clinical research and cancer care, and with the support of the Ministry of Ayush, the establishment of a Centre of Excellence for cancer research marks an important step in this direction.

The prime minister said the Arya Vaidyasaala has played a significant role in preserving, protecting and advancing ayurveda, and recalled the contributions of its founder, Vaidyaratnam P S Varier.

Modi said the Arya Vaidyasaala is a living symbol of India's healing tradition that has served humanity for centuries.

He said ayurveda in India has never been confined to an era or a region and in every age, this ancient medical system has shown the way to understand life, create balance and harmonise with nature.

The Arya Vaidyasaala manufactures more than 600 ayurvedic medicines and its hospitals across different parts of the country treat patients through ayurvedic methods, including patients from over 60 countries, the prime minister noted.

He said the Arya Vaidyasaala has earned this trust through its work and when people are in distress, the institution becomes a great source of hope for them.

## Maharashtra Dy CM Ajit Pawar, four others killed in plane crash in Pune



PTI

Pune, Jan 28: Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and four other persons were killed after an aircraft carrying them crashed in Pune district on Wednesday morning, officials said.

The incident occurred when the plane carrying Pawar (66) and others landed near Baramati, they said.

According to Flight Radar, the flight took off from Mumbai at 8.10 am and it disappeared from radar around 8.45 am.

Pawar was traveling to Baramati from Mumbai to address public meetings as part of the campaign for the February 5 zilla parishad elections in the state.

There were five people on board when the aircraft crashed at 8.50 am, a police official said.

Superintendent of Police, Sandip

### Ajit Pawar's funeral today; Modi, Shah likely to attend



PTI

Baramati, Jan 28: The last rites of Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, killed in a plane crash, will be held with full state honours on Thursday in Baramati, Pune district.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah are expected to attend the funeral, which will be held at Vidya Pratishthan ground at 11 AM. Leaders cutting across the political spectrum will be present, the Nationalist Congress Party said.

The plane crash occurred in the morning shortly after Ajit Pawar and four other persons took off from Baramati.

Besides Pawar, his Personal Security Officer, an attendant, and two crew members (pilot in command and the first officer) were also killed.

Pawar is survived by wife Sunetra, a member of the Rajya Sabha, and two sons, Parth and Jay.

Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) had contested the recent municipal corporation elections in Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad in alliance with his uncle Sharad Pawar's NCP (SP).

The state government declared a public holiday on Wednesday and announced a three-day period of state mourning.

## India-EU FTA

### Stock markets rally for 2nd day; Sensex jumps 487 points on optimism

PTI

Mumbai, Jan 28: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended higher on Wednesday, extending their previous day's rally, on optimism over the India-EU landmark free trade agreement.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 487.20 points or 0.60 per cent to settle at 82,344.68. During the day, it soared 646.49 points or 0.78 per cent to 82,503.97.

The 50-share NSE Nifty surged 167.35 points or 0.66 per cent to end at 25,342.75.

From the 30-Sensex firms, Bharat Electronics surged nearly 9 per cent post its December quarter earnings.

Eternal, Bajaj Finance, Power Grid, Trent, Mahindra & Mahindra and UltraTech Cement were the other major gainers.

However, Asian Paints dropped over 4 per cent after the firm reported a consolidated net profit at Rs 1,073.92 crore for December quarter FY26 on a year-on-year basis on account of exceptional items as implementation of the new Labour Codes and impairment of loss in a subsidiary.

Maruti, Sun Pharma, Infosys and Bharti Airtel were among the other laggards.

India and the European Union on Tuesday sealed a landmark free trade agreement-- billed as the "mother of all deals" -- to create a market of two billion people with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the top EU leadership



unveiling a transformative five-year agenda to largely leverage trade and defence in protecting the rules-based world order.

The free trade agreement that will account for almost a quarter of the global GDP will reduce tariffs on 99 per cent of Indian exports to the EU and cut duties on over 97 per cent of the EU's exports to India, according to officials.

Meanwhile, foreign institutional investors offloaded equities worth Rs 3,068.49 crore on Tuesday, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) outnumbered them by buying stocks worth Rs 8,999.71 crore, according to exchange data.

"Indian equity markets closed the session on a positive note, supported by improving global cues and renewed optimism on

the external trade front following the successful conclusion of the Free Trade Agreement between India and the European Union," Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index ended higher.

Equity markets in Europe were trading lower.

US markets ended mostly higher on Tuesday.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, dipped 0.62 per cent to USD 67.25 per barrel.

On Tuesday, the Sensex climbed 319.78 points or 0.39 per cent to settle at 81,857.48.

The Nifty surged 126.75 points or 0.51 per cent to end at 25,175.40.

## 'Obesity impacts on brain may depend on how fat is distributed across body'

PTI

New Delhi, Jan 28: A new study suggests obesity's impact on brain function depends not only on how much fat the body carries, but also on where it is stored, linking pancreatic fat and 'skinny fat' body types to accelerated brain aging, cognitive decline and higher neurological disease risk.

While previous studies have linked obesity – particularly those with a higher ratio

of visceral fat – with a decline in brain or cognitive health, the new study highlights the specific risks tied to different fat storage patterns, said study co-author Kai Liu, an associate professor at The Affiliated Hospital of Xuzhou Medical University in China.

"Our work leveraged MRI's ability to quantify fat in various body compartments, especially internal organs, to create a classification system that's data-driven instead of subjective. The data-driven classification



unexpectedly discovered two previously undefined fat distribution types that deserve greater attention," Liu said.

Data of nearly 26,000 individuals from the UK Biobank were analysed. Medical records had medical imaging measurements, along with the participants' physical measurements, demographics, disease biomarkers, medical history and lifestyle habits.

Brain health outcomes were compared with patterns in how body fat was

distributed. The analysis "revealed distinct patterns of body fat distribution, where pancreatic-predominant and skinny-fat patterns, in particular, were associated with adverse neurologic outcomes."

The body fat profiles were mostly associated with extensive gray matter shrinking, an accelerated brain aging, cognitive decline and an increased risk of neurological disease, with risks present in both men and women, the researchers said.

## India got 2030 CWG hosting due to its confidence, preparedness: President



PTI

New Delhi, Jan 28: President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday said India has bagged the 2030 Commonwealth Games hosting rights on back of its "confidence and preparedness" as she highlighted the "unprecedented" development in sports under the current Narendra Modi-led NDA government.

Addressing a joint sitting of both the Houses of Parliament to mark the start of the Budget Session, Murmu said the current government has undertaken structural reforms to improve the sports governance system.

"Through the combined efforts of India's youth and my government, the country is also witnessing

unprecedented development in sports," she said.

"Over the past decade, reforms have been undertaken in every system related to sports in India. My government has formulated the Kheleo India policy and made sports-related institutions transparent.

"As a result of its preparedness and confidence, India has been entrusted with the responsibility of hosting the Commonwealth Games-2030," she added.

The Games will be held in Ahmedabad, which is also bidding to become an Olympic host in 2036.

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya was the driving force behind the enactment of the landmark National Sports Governance Act, which

would ensure greater financial and administrative accountability for the country's sports federations.

The President also applauded India's women cricketers for their World Cup triumph in November last year. She also congratulated the blind women cricketers for winning the World Cup a few weeks later.

"The way the performance of our daughters and divyang fellow citizens has improved, is truly remarkable. India's women's cricket team has won the World Cup for the first time. Similarly, the Blind women's cricket team has also won the World Cup. I extend my heartiest congratulations to my daughters," she said.

## India comes out on top on this: Trump administration on Delhi's trade deal with EU

PTI

New York, Jan 28: India came out on "top" in the trade deal with the European Union and is going to have a heyday with this, US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said in the first reaction from the Trump administration on the free trade agreement.

Greer was responding to a question on the trade agreement, billed as the "mother of all deals", sealed between India and the EU on Tuesday.

"I've looked at some of the details of the deal so far. I think India comes out on top on this, frankly. They get more market access into Europe," Greer said in an interview with Fox Business on Tuesday.

"It sounds like they (India) have some additional immigration rights. I don't know for sure, but President (Ursula) von der Leyen of the EU has talked about mobility for Indian workers into Europe. So I think on net, India is going to have a heyday with this. They have low-cost labour," Greer added.

He said that it looks like the EU is doubling down on globalisation when the US is trying to "fix some of the problems of globalisation here in the US."



When asked if he has any impressions on the India-EU trade deal, Greer said that it's important to understand that, because President Trump has prioritised domestic production and essentially started charging a fee for other countries to access the US market, these countries are trying to find other outlets for their overproduction.

"So the EU is turning to India to try to find a place. The EU is so trade dependent, they need other outlets if they can't keep sending all their stuff to the United States," he added.

Responding to a question on the 25 per cent tariff on India for Russian oil purchases, Greer said Delhi still pays those levies, on top of the 25 per cent reciprocal tariff

that the Trump administration imposed on the country.

When asked if India is still buying Russian oil, Greer said, "They have made a lot of progress on this. I'm in frequent contact with my counterpart in India. I have a great working relationship with him, but they still have a way to go on this point. They like the discount that you get from Russian oil; it's close by, so it's hard for them." He said that the US Treasury Department had put into place more significant sanctions a few weeks ago, adding that the US expect India "to continue to wind that down, but we're watching it closely."

The deal is set to create a market of two billion people, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the top

EU leadership unveiling a transformative five-year agenda to largely leverage trade and defence in protecting the rules-based world order.

The two sides also inked two crucial pacts -- one on security and defence collaboration and another on mobility of Indian talents to Europe -- after Prime Minister Modi hosted von der Leyen and European Council President Antonio Costa for summit talks amid frosty ties with the US.

The free trade agreement that will account for almost a quarter of the global GDP will reduce tariffs on 99 per cent of Indian exports to the EU and cut duties on over 97 per cent of the EU's exports to India, according to officials.

UN experts condemn US move to strip migrant children of legal aid

REUTERS

Washington, Jan 28: UN human rights experts have denounced the Trump administration's decision last year to cut legal aid for unaccompanied children in US immigration proceedings. The condemnation came days after UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk urged the Trump administration to ensure that its migration policies respect individual rights and international law.

"Denying children their rights to legal representation and forcing them to navigate complex immigration proceedings without legal counsel is a serious violation of the rights of children," said the independent experts, who are appointed by the UN Human Rights Council.

The White House dismissed the experts and said it had made attempts to locate children it says were smuggled into the United States under the previous administration, without elaborating with specific examples.

"No one takes the UN seriously because of their extreme bias and selective outrage -- they should be praising the Administration for protecting children, not lying about our policies," Abigail Jackson, a spokeswoman for the White House, said.

In February, the US Department of the Interior ordered legal service providers working with the children to stop work and cut their funding. The providers sued over the move and a federal judge later temporarily restored the funding for the program. The cuts came amid President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown, including an effort to deport hundreds of thousands of migrant children who entered the US without their parents.

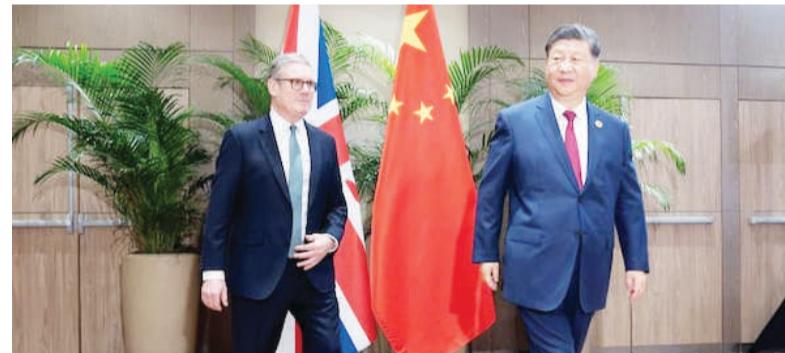
## UK PM takes 'China matters' message on first Beijing visit

PTI

London, Jan 28: "Like it or not, China matters to the UK," is the message British Prime Minister Keir Starmer is taking on his visit to Beijing on Wednesday, accompanied by a 60-strong business and cultural delegation.

Downing Street said the visit, which will also cover Shanghai, reflects the UK's "clear-eyed and realistic" approach to China in terms of opportunities and challenges they pose by continuing to pursue cooperation while "maintaining guardrails" when it comes to the country's national security.

The Labour Party government is keen to highlight its re-engagement with



China with this first visit in eight years, coming close on the heels of a ministerial go-ahead for its controversial new "mega embassy" in London.

"For years, our approach to China has

been dogged by inconsistency -- blowing hot and cold, from Golden Age to Ice Age. But like it or not, China matters for the UK," Starmer said in a pre-visit statement. "As one of the world's

biggest economic players, a strategic and consistent relationship with them is firmly in our national interest. That does not mean turning a blind eye to the challenges they pose -- but engaging even where we disagree.

The UK PM is set to meet President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang in Beijing on Thursday for talks on trade, investment and national security, before travelling to Shanghai for a range of engagements with British and Chinese businesses. Accompanied by a delegation of leading UK-based businesses, including Tata Motors owned Jaguar Land Rover, sporting institutions, museums and theatre groups, Starmer is expected to push for access in areas such as the financial services sector, creative industries and life sciences.

## EU top diplomat urges 'more European' NATO as Trump upends ties

AFP

Brussels, Jan 28: Europe must step up efforts on defense and play a bigger role in NATO as US President Donald Trump has "shaken the transatlantic relationship to its foundation," EU top diplomat Kaja Kallas said Wednesday.

"Let me be clear: we want strong transatlantic ties. The US will remain Europe's partner and ally. But Europe needs to adapt to the new realities. Europe is no longer Washington's primary center of gravity," Kallas told a defense conference in Brussels.

"This shift has been ongoing for a while. It is structural, not temporary. It means that Europe must step up -- no great power in history has outsourced its survival and survived."

Trump rocked European allies this month by threatening to seize Greenland from NATO and EU member Denmark -- before eventually backing off.

The crisis -- the latest to buffet ties since his return to power a year ago -- has reinforced calls for the continent to cut its decades-long reliance on NATO's dominant military superpower for protection.

## Suryakumar jumps five spots to seventh in latest ICC T20I rankings

PTI

Dubai, Jan 28: India captain Suryakumar Yadav on Wednesday climbed five places to seventh in the ICC men's T20I rankings following a prolific run in the ongoing five-match home series against New Zealand, which India currently lead 3-0.

The former No.1 batter struck scores of 32, 82 not out and 57 not out to climb the table, as India dominate the upper reaches of the rankings with Abhishek Sharma at the summit and Tilak Varma in third position, just 10 days out from the T20 World Cup.

Ishan Kishan, who hit 76 off 32 balls in the second match in Raipur has re-entered the rankings in the 64th position while Shivam Dubey (up nine places to 58th) and Rinku Singh (up 13 places to 68th) are among other batters to gain from the top-ranked T20I side.



the West Indies has lifted him into the top 20, while the West Indies' Brandon King (up 15 places to 35th) and New Zealand's Glenn Phillips (up 18 places to 44th) have also made notable progress.

In the T20I bowling rankings, Afghanistan spinner Mujeeb ur Rahman's haul of four for 21 in the second match against the West Indies sees him gain five places and reach ninth position, while India's Jasprit Bumrah (up four places to 13th) and Ravi Bishnoi (up 13 places to 19th) have progressed along with South Africa's Corbin Bosch (up eight places to a career-best 32nd).

India's Hardik Pandya has surged 18 places to 59th position in the bowling rankings after taking four

wickets in three matches. He is also up two places to 53rd among batters and inched up one slot to third among all-rounders.

In the ODI rankings, England batters Harry Brook and Joe Root have gained after helping with their side register a 2-1 series win in Sri Lanka.

Brook's 247 runs across the three matches have lifted him 17 places to 11th, while Root's 184 runs take him from 23rd to 17th spot.

In the ODI bowling rankings, leg-spinner Adil Rashid has moved up six places to fifth with seven wickets in the series and Sri Lanka's left-arm spinner Dunith Wellalage has progressed from 43rd to 29th.

# Show TIMINGS

THURSDAY, 29 JANUARY

**DHURANDHAR (A)**  
HINDI - 12:05 PM

**MERCY (UA13+)**  
HINDI - 11:30 AM

**BORDER 2 (U/A 13+)**  
HINDI - 01:45 PM, 04:15 PM, 05:45 PM  
HINDI ATMOS - 11:00 AM, 02:55 PM, 06:45 PM

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