

Kashmir Convener



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J&K braces for 3-day wet spell



Owais Gul

SRINAGAR: Dense fog engulfed Kashmir Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu & Kashmir and other parts on Friday ahead of the forecast of a major three-day snow spell in the Union Territory from Saturday, which is expected to affect the surface traffic.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), a thick layer of fog enveloped Kashmir parts this morning, delaying the flight operations at Srinagar International Airport.

Although no flight was cancelled, the operation of multiple flights was delayed this morning as the visibility fell to about 300 metres, Director Srinagar Airport, Javed Anjum said.

Meanwhile, as per the forecast, Jammu and Kashmir would likely witness a three-day wet spell from tomorrow.

"Moderate to strong WD is expected and under its influence, there is a possibility of light to moderate rain in plains of Jammu and snow at most places of J&K with peak activity during 4th (Night) to 5th (late Night) and 6th morning & improvement from the afternoon," Director MeT, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad, said.

He added that generally cloudy and dry weather is expected on January 7-10, adding that from January 11-12th, generally cloudy weather is expected with possibility of light snow at isolated places.

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Srinagar admin asks dep'ts to stay prepared

Rehan Qayoom Wani

SRINAGAR: In the wake of the snowfall forecast from January 4 to January 6, the authorities have asked the departments to keep the men and machinery ready.

The office of the District Magistrate Srinagar in a order, a copy of which lies with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), urged residents to follow safety guidelines issued by the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) and avoid unnecessary travel during the adverse weather

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Yellow Weather Alert: JKDMA issues advisory

KC NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Following the yellow weather alert issued by the Meteorological Department (MeT), forecasting light to moderate snowfall across Jammu & Kashmir from January 4 to 6, the Jammu and Kashmir Disaster Management Authority (JKDMA) has released a list of safety Dos and Don'ts.

JKDMA, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) has said the snowfall is expected to peak during the night of January 4 and the morning of

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Ready to deal with major snowfall: SMC Com

Rehan Qayoom Mir

SRINAGAR: The Srinagar administration has geared itself up following the predictions that Jammu and Kashmir may receive another major spell of snowfall from Saturday.

The authorities are all prepared with snow clearance machines, men and semi-manual machinery introduced by the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC).

As part of the preparations, the SMC, Roads

and Buildings (R&B) Department, along with the district administration of Srinagar have expressed readiness to deal with snowfall.

SMC Commissioner Dr Owais Ahmad, speaking with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said they are prepared to handle the major snowfall expected from Saturday. He said snow clearance machines

GOC White Knight Corps reviews preparedness of troops



KC NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR : General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the White Knight Corps, accompanied by the GOC of the Ace of Spades Division, visited forward posts along the Line of Control (LOC) in the Poonch and Rajouri sectors. During the visit as per news agency

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Katra-Srinagar train likely to chug after Jan 20

● Northern Railway announces timings

Umair Gul Ganaie

SRINAGAR: The Katra-Srinagar train is likely to chug on the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) after January 20.

Officials told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that final preparations are being made to connect Kashmir with Kanyakumari through a railway network.

In connection with train to Kashmir the Railway Ministry has decided to set up a new division with headquarters at Jammu under the Northern Railway Zone by reorganising the Firozpur division.

The Jammu division, according to the officials, is proposed to have five sections — Pathankot-Jammu-Udhampur, Srinagar-Baramulla, Bhogpur Sirwal-Pathankot, Batala (excluding)-Pathankot, and Pathankot-Joginder Nagar. The combined length of the section will be 742.1 km.



According to railway officials, there are currently 68 rail divisions under 17 railway zones and Jammu will become the 69th division.

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Restoring normalcy in J&K a process: CM Omar

● "Govt ready to tackle weather vagaries"

Owais Gull

SRINAGAR: A day after Union Home Minister Amit Shah stated that the Centre has ended terrorism and the terror ecosystem in Kashmir, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday said that the normalcy has not been fully restored in Jammu and Kashmir.

Talking to the reporters here, Omar, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said, "I do not want to say anything on that (Union Home Minister's statement). (But), today also, reports come from some places when attacks take place. Normalcy has not been fully restored in Jammu and Kashmir even today. It is a process and we will have to see what happens in the coming days."

Meanwhile, in wake of the prediction that Jammu and Kashmir may receive yet another spell of major

there were shortcomings that will be taken care of this time. We have held several meetings to ensure that people don't face



snowfall from Saturday, the Chief Minister reviewed the preparations and assured that the government was ready to tackle the weather vagaries.

"The last spell of snow provided us with an experience. Wherever the work was good it will be repeated. Wherever

any inconvenience," Omar said.

Replying to a query about the prevailing electricity scenario, the Chief Minister said, "This year's situation is better than the previous years, but power cuts take place,

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Fight for restoration of J&K's special status, statehood to continue: Dy CM

KC NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Asserting that the fight for restoration of J&K's special status and statehood would continue, Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Kumar Choudhary on Friday said that the government is committed to work for the welfare of people.

Talking to reporters here after reviewing the readiness of the snowfall prediction, Choudhary, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said, "We will keep on working towards people's welfare. The ongoing fight for statehood and special status restoration won't hamper people-centric initiatives."

"There are some difficulties in the absence of statehood and special status, but it doesn't mean the government will stop working for public wellbeing," he added.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that the elected government as well as the bureaucracy need to work collectively for the welfare of the masses.

Taking a dig at the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Choudhary said, "Some people, who used to talk about toffee and milk during their tenure, are now criticizing us for working towards public welfare."

"We don't need any certificate from them. We have been elected by the people and we will ensure their wellbeing. People have high expectations from the NC regime," he added.

Referring to the "smart meters" the Deputy

Chief Minister said that the NC government has not brought meters to J&K. "Questions about the smart meters should be put to those people who introduced these devices in the region," he said, adding, "Our concern is that the meters have been installed in the houses of poor families while the rich have been exempted."

"The consumers using two bulbs have been



connected with meters while those using air conditioners and other gadgets have been exempted.

The poor didn't face any difficulty due to metering as they were always paying their bills on time, but those who were not paying are facing the heat. We will expose the irregularities," he said.

Terming unemployment as a major concern, the Deputy Chief Minister said, "People in J&K have nothing to do with the electricity and other issues as their major concern is about providing employment to the educated youth. The electricity and other issues can be sorted out later."

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ASI Discovers Neolithic Site in Pulwama

Mushtaq UI Islam

PULWAMA: The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has unearthed



a significant Neolithic site in Newa, Pulwama district, sparking efforts to preserve the site and raising questions about its future. The Directorate of Archives, Archaeology, and

Museums, Jammu/Srinagar, has directed local authorities to take immediate measures to protect the site, which holds immense historical

importance.

In a communication dated December 31, 2024, the Directorate instructed the District Development Commissioner of Pulwama to oversee the site's protection

until its formal declaration as a protected monument. The measures include deploying jurisdictional magistrates to safeguard the area, erecting multilingual signboards in Urdu, Hindi, and English to inform visitors of the site's significance, and enforcing restrictions within a 200-meter radius to prevent any disturbances.

Additionally, the Directorate has sought revenue records, detailed maps, and information about the surrounding area to aid in preserving this archaeological treasure. Historians and researchers

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CS fixes target of 30,000 installations by March under PM Surya Ghar Yojana



KC NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a meeting to take first hand appraisal of the progress made in installation of solar rooftops under PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana in Jammu and Kashmir.

Present in the meeting were Principal Secretary, PDD, Principal Secretary, Finance, Commissioner, Secretary

Science & Technology, MD JPDCL/KPDCL, CEO, JAKEDA, Chief Engineers and other concerned officers in person and through virtual mode.

Dulloo emphasised upon the concerned departments to carry out rigorous IEC campaigns to generate awareness among the public about this scheme. He called for creating awareness

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Agri Minister calls for check on substandard pesticides, fertilisers

KC NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Minister for Agriculture Production Department, Javid Ahmad Dar, today reiterated government's commitment towards supporting the farmers and strengthening the agricultural sector through targeted initiatives and effective oversight.

He stated this while chairing a meeting with Director Agriculture Kashmir, Joint Directors, Provincial Heads, Scheme Heads, Sectoral Officers and Chief Agriculture Officers from various districts at the Agriculture Complex, Lalmandi, Srinagar.

During the meeting, the Minister reviewed the physical and financial progress under the Holistic Agriculture Development Program (HADP), CAPEX budget and Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS). Besides, implementation of projects under HADP and the performance of allied departments was discussed in detail.

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NIA court convicts 28 for murder during 2018 Kasganj Tiranga Yatra

LUCKNOW: A special NIA court here has convicted 28 persons in connection with the murder of Chandan Gupta, who was shot dead in a communal clash that broke out during a 2018 Tiranga Yatra in Kasganj.

Special judge Vivekanand Sharan Tripathi said that the sentence will be announced on Friday. The accused were convicted on charges of murder, attempted murder, rioting and insulting the national flag on Thursday.

The case has drawn significant attention after Chandan Gupta's death sparked riots in the region.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) court also acquitted Nasiruddin and Asim Qureshi, citing a lack of sufficient evidence to convict them.

On the morning of January 26, 2018, Chandan Gupta and his brother Vivek Gupta took part in a Tiranga Yatra. When the procession reached near the Government Girls Inter College gate on Tehsil Road, a group, including Salim, Wasim and Naseem, allegedly blocked the road and stopped the procession, a government counsel said.

When Chandan objected, the situation escalated and stone-pelting began from the side of the accused, the lawyer said.

Salim, one of the main accused, shot Chandan, seriously injuring him, he said. Despite the grave injury, Vivek and their companions managed to rush Chandan to the Kasganj police station,



from where he was immediately transferred to the district hospital where he was declared dead shortly after arrival.

The murder of Chandan led to widespread riots in Kasganj for three days, fueling communal tensions in the region.

Chandan's father Sushil Gupta lodged a murder complaint.

In September 2019, the Kasganj Sessions Court framed charges against 23 individuals. Later, in November 2019, charges were framed

against an additional seven persons.

The charges included Sections 147 (rioting), 148 (rioting with deadly weapons), 307/149 (attempted murder), 302/149 (murder), 341 (wrongful restraint), 336 (endangerment), 504 (intentional insult), 506 (criminal intimidation), and Section 124K (insult to national flag) of the Indian Penal Code. Additionally, several of the accused faced charges under the Arms Act for possession of firearms.

The trial was transferred to the Lucknow

court after initial proceedings in Kasganj.

After Thursday's conviction, Chandan's parents said they had faith in the judicial process. "We have full faith in the court, and we will be satisfied with whatever verdict is given," said Chandan's father, Sushil Gupta. However, he also voiced his frustration with the lack of support from political leaders.

He said none of these promises made by BJP leaders have been fulfilled, which included the construction of a square in Chandan's name and the provision of a government job for a member of his family.

"My son is getting justice from the court, but the government leaders have failed to deliver on their promises," Sushil Gupta added.

Out of the 28 convicted, 26 were present in court, while one, Munajir Rafi, appeared via video conferencing from jail. The court issued an arrest warrant for another accused, Salim, who was absent from the proceedings.

The accused were taken into judicial custody after the verdict and were sent to jail.

Salim, Wasim, Naseem, Mohsin, Rahat, Bablu and Salman have also been convicted under the Arms Act for carrying weapons during the incident. The prosecution, led by government lawyers MK Singh and LK Dixit, presented 18 witnesses, while the defence brought forward 23 witnesses during the trial.

Border areas, remote villages in Ladakh digitally connected: Army

NEW DELHI: Sustained efforts by the Army, in collaboration with telecom service providers, in the past five months has brought border areas and remote villages in Ladakh, including remote locations of Kargil and Siachen, on the digital connectivity map.

In a post on X on Thursday, the Indian Army also shared a video of this journey and glimpses of the change it has brought to the lives of local people in the region.

In its post captioned 'Indian Army for India's First Villages: Bringing Connectivity & Hope to Remote Areas', the Army said the border areas and remote villages in Ladakh were "devoid of 4G mobile connectivity" until June 2024.

"This was depriving the local communities from being connected to the digital revolution in the nation. The Indian Army in collaboration with Bharti Airtel set out to ensure connectivity in these First Villages of India," it said. The Army further said the Leh-based Fire and Fury Corps "proactively engaged all the telecom service providers" and assisted them in installation of mobile towers in these remote areas.

"Fighting against the harsh weather including sub-zero temperatures, a total of 42 Airtel 4G mobile towers have been installed in 5 months covering the remote locations of Kargil, Siachen, Demchok, DBO and Galwan providing much needed connectivity to the populace as well as soldiers serving in Ladakh," it said in its post.

"This initiative will boost tourism in the state and help the local community by improving access to online education, remote healthcare and fostering economic opportunities through government schemes bridging the existing digital divide.

"Indian Army is committed to fostering holistic development of First Villages located in remote areas to achieve our national vision of #ViksitBharat by 2047," the Army said.

40 pc girl cadets in NCC, phase-wise expansion planned for Corps



NEW DELHI: The strength of girl cadets in the NCC has risen to 40 per cent and a phase-wise expansion has been planned for the Corps in the next few years, senior officials said on Friday.

At a press briefing here, Director General, National Cadet Corps, Lt Gen Gurbirpal Singh shared details about the ongoing NCC Republic Day Camp at Delhi Cantonment and the future roadmap of the Corps.

A total of 2,361 NCC cadets from across the country are taking part in a month-long Republic Day camp which began on December 30. The annual event will also witness the participation of 917 girl cadets, the largest so far.

Out of 2,361 NCC cadets, 114 are from Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh and 178 from the northeast region.

The DG, NCC told reporters that cadets from than 15 friendly foreign countries are set to take part in the camp.

"We began it with a Sarva Dharma Pooja for well-being of all... This year we also have a new category of competition – ideas and innovation," he said. Asked about the expansion plan and the strength of girl cadets in the NCC, the top official said, the sanctioned strength of the Corps is 20 lakh, and the current strength at present is 17 lakh. The share of girl cadets in the total strength is 40 per cent, he said. A senior official, on the sidelines of the briefing, said the strength of girl cadets has risen manifold in the last 10 years, and a phase-wise expansion has been planned for the NCC.

Reference to Sanatan, Hindu evokes baffling reaction in India: Dhankhar

NEW DELHI: Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar

on Friday lamented that reference to Sanatan and Hindu in India evokes baffling reaction from "misguided" people. He also said that people who react to these terms without understanding the depths of the words and their deep meaning are "misguided" souls driven by a "dangerous ecosystem". Addressing the International Congress of Vedanta organised at JNU here, Dhankhar said it was ironical and painful that in this country

"reference to Sanatan, reference to Hindu evokes baffling reaction beyond comprehension."

"Rather than understand the depth of these words, their deep meaning, people tend to be in a reaction mode at the drop of a hat," he said.

Dhankhar dubbed such people as "souls which are misguided themselves". He said such persons are "driven by a dangerous ecosystem that is a threat not only to society but to themselves".

The vice president said at a time when global disciplines are embracing the Vedanta philosophy, there are "some in this land of spirituality", who dismiss Vedanta and Sanatan text as "regressive".

"This dismissal often stems from perverted, colonial mindsets, inefficient understanding of our intellectual heritage. These elements work in a structured manner, in a sinister fashion," the vice president said.

CJI Praises Retiring SC Judge Justice Ravikumar As 'Humane And Noble Soul'

NEW DELHI: Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna on Friday lauded Supreme Court judge Justice CT Ravikumar on his last working day, describing him as a "humane and noble soul" whose journey from a humble rural background to the apex court was nothing short of extraordinary.

Justice Ravikumar was elevated to the top court on August 31, 2021, after an illustrious tenure at Kerala High Court.

He is the ninth senior-most judge in the apex court.

As he prepares to superannuate on Sunday, the ceremonial bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) Khanna, Justice Ravikumar and Justice Sanjay Kumar bid an emotional farewell, celebrating his contributions and legacy.

"Coming from a rural background and achieving the distinction of serving as a judge of the Supreme Court is a remarkable accomplishment. Justice Ravikumar has not only achieved this but also outperformed in his duties," remarked CJI Khanna, highlighting the challenges of rising through the ranks without the privileges of urban upbringing.

The CJI further acknowledged Justice Ravikumar's enduring impact on the judiciary, calling him an inspiration for future generations.

"He has left behind a legacy for all judges to follow. We will certainly miss him but wish him the very best in his future endeavours," he said

and added that Justice Ravikumar would continue to reside in Delhi.

In a heartfelt address, Justice Ravikumar



expressed his gratitude to the Bar for its support throughout his tenure.

"I was an advocate and that advocate remains in me. That is why I always hold the Bar in the highest respect," he said.

Several legal luminaries, including Attorney General R Venkataramani, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta and Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) President Kapil Sibal, paid glowing tributes to the retiring judge.

Over 100 Flights Delayed Due To Dense Fog In Delhi, Visibility Drops To Zero In Many Parts

NEW DELHI: More than 100 flights were delayed at the Delhi airport due to bad weather conditions but there are no diversions so far.

A thick blanket of fog engulfed the national capital in the morning, with the weather department predicting cloudy skies for much of the day. Delhi's minimum temperature was recorded at 7 degrees Celsius, the weather office said.

An official said over 100 flights have been delayed at the Delhi airport due to bad weather conditions but there are no diversions so far.

"While landing and takeoffs continue at Delhi Airport, flights that are not CAT III compliant may get affected. Passengers are requested to contact the airline concerned for updated flight information. Any inconvenience caused is deeply regretted," Delhi International Airport Ltd



(DIAL) said in a post on X at 6.35 am.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said the IGI Airport experienced very dense fog with visibility recorded at 0 metres. It said all runways are operating under CAT-III, which allows aircraft to operate in low visibility conditions.

The IGI airport handles around 1,300 flight movements daily.

At 8 am, Palam weather station reported very dense fog with 0 metres visibility and calm winds over the past two hours, while the city's primary weather station, Safdarjung, reported visibility of 50 metres with calm winds, according to a weather department official.

The weather office has predicted very dense fog for Friday, with the maximum temperature expected to settle around 17 degrees Celsius.

UP is poised to accelerate its development in New Year: Yogi Adityanath

GORAKHPUR: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday said that while previous governments focused on stifling development by shutting down industries and factories, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led double-engine government is actively creating an environment conducive to progress through new initiatives and constructions.

Speaking at the foundation stone laying and inauguration ceremony for nine development projects worth Rs 1,533 crore in Gorakhpur, the CM highlighted examples like the revival of the Gorakhpur fertilizer factory and the Pipraich sugar mill.

"Previous governments had closed these facilities and were preparing to sell them. The double-engine government has proven they can be revitalized and made operational again," he said.

Yogi emphasised that UP is poised to accelerate its development in the new year under the double-engine government. "Job and employment opportunities will grow rapidly, ensuring our youth no longer need to migrate elsewhere for work," he said.

During the event at Janta Inter College, Chargawan, the Chief Minister inaugurated five development projects worth Rs 53.74 crore and laid the foundation stone for four projects of Rs 1,478.81 crore. He said that these initiatives would further strengthen the vision of a modern and prosperous Gorakhpur in the years to come.

While highlighting the transformative changes brought by the double-engine government, he said, "During the Samajwadi Party (SP) government, children were dying in large numbers due to encephalitis. These children were the trust of society and the nation, but those who divided society along caste lines paid no attention. Tragically, 90 percent of the children who succumbed to encephalitis belonged to Dalit and minority communities."

Yogi said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the double-engine government has successfully eradicated

encephalitis from the state.

Referring to the development of Gorakhpur, he said, "Today's Gorakhpur reflects the vision of a modern UP and a modern India.



During the SP government, there was no electricity, no access to proper healthcare and even BRD Medical College was in a deplorable state, unable to provide adequate treatment."

The Chief Minister said that in 1990s, the SP and Congress governments shut down the Gorakhpur fertilizer factory. "The Pipraich sugar mill was also closed, with plans underway to sell it. Roads were in such poor condition that it was hard to tell whether they were covered in potholes or the potholes were part of the road. Ramgarh Taal was nothing more than a garbage dump," he said.

Yogi said, "Now, under the double-engine government, Ramgarh Taal has become a thriving tourist destination. The Gorakhpur fertilizer factory and Pipraich sugar mill have been revived. BRD Medical College has been upgraded and AIIMS is operational in

Gorakhpur. The city is now connected with two-lane, four-lane, and six-lane roads."

He said that once the work on the Godhdrohiya Nala project is completed, the issue of waterlogging will be resolved permanently.

The CM emphasised the importance of having a passion for work and a sense of accountability toward society, stating that with these qualities, all challenges can be overcome. Yogi highlighted the significant developments in Gorakhpur, mentioning the operational Pipraich sugar mill, a functional fertilizer factory, and the newly opened zoo.

He said, "Gorakhpur now enjoys excellent road connectivity with key cities like Lucknow and Varanasi. This development has brought new employment opportunities to the region."

The CM said that over the past five years, Gorakhpur has witnessed investments worth Rs 15,000 crore to Rs 20,000 crore. "These investments have led to the establishment of industries, providing thousands of youth with guaranteed employment," he said.

Yogi said, "Today, Gorakhpur is home to four universities, and a veterinary college is also under construction, further strengthening the region's educational and economic landscape."

The Chief Minister said that this year is set to be crucial, marking the beginning of significant development works.

He mentioned that the veterinary college being established in Gorakhpur will provide training in animal husbandry. Additionally, an agricultural university is being set up in Kushinagar to offer training in modern agricultural technologies to farmers, alongside agricultural studies.

Yogi also highlighted that farmers will have the opportunity to learn new methods at the newly renovated agricultural school in Gorakhpur.

The CM said that the double-engine BJP government is drawing

global attention by focusing on both development and the preservation of heritage. "This government is fully committed to the progress and preservation of our cultural heritage," he said.

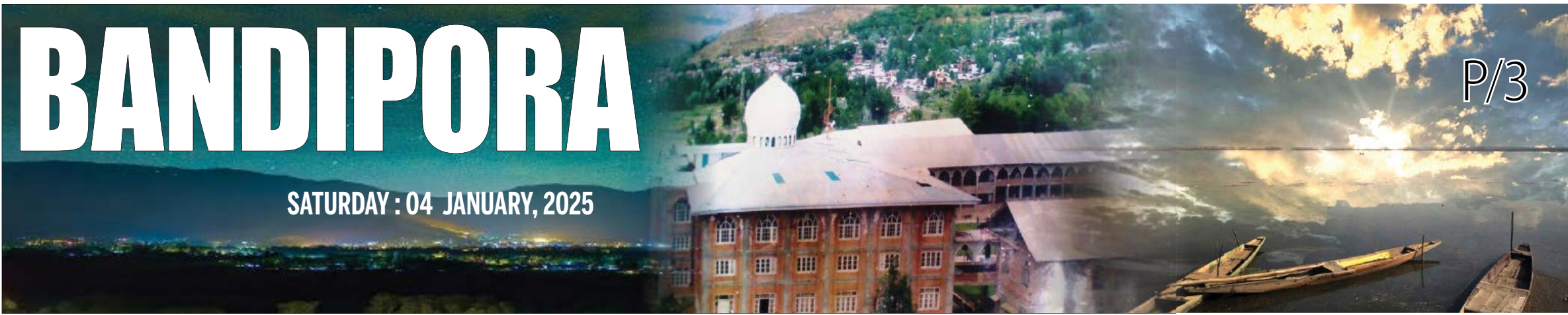
Yogi announced that the first Maha Kumbh of the century will be held in Prayagraj from Paush Purnima on January 13 to Mahashivratri on February 26, calling it a momentous event that has come after 144 years. "The government has made elaborate arrangements for the Prayagraj Maha Kumbh. Devotees from across the country and the world will gather here, experiencing the unparalleled hospitality of UP," he said.

The Chief Minister highlighted that last year, after a 500-year wait, Lord Ramlala was installed in Ayodhya. "This year, with the Maha Kumbh, UP will once again captivate the world by connecting development with its rich heritage," he said.

Extending his wishes for the new year, as well as for the upcoming Khichdi Mela and Maha Kumbh, Yogi emphasised the importance of the double-engine government in solving problems and advancing the development process. "Rapid development can only be achieved when there is a government with similar ideologies both at the centre and the state," he said.

The CM stressed the need for self-discipline to connect with development, ensuring that the benefits of government schemes reach every eligible individual. He highlighted the importance of inclusive participation, stating that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mantra of Sabka Saath-Sabka Vikas aims to ensure that every deprived person, farmer, woman, and youth benefits from the schemes, without discrimination.

Yogi said, "The double-engine government is fully committed to this mission. We hope that the people's blessings will continue to support the double-engine government in its journey of development and heritage."



DC Bandipora Pushes for Livelihood and Conservation Goals in MGNREGA Projects

BANDIPORA: The District Development Commissioner (DDC) Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri, convened a meeting on Friday to review the Convergence and Action Taken Reports (ATRs) under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) for the financial year 2024-25. The meeting also deliberated on formulating the convergence plan for 2025-26.

On the occasion, threadbare discussions were held on fostering interdepartmental collaboration and optimizing resource utilization to enhance the implementation of MGNREGA projects across the district.



The DDC emphasized the importance of aligning departmental efforts to achieve tangible outcomes under MGNREGA. He stressed integrating livelihood, conservation, and developmental objectives to ensure projects address community needs while promoting sustainable development.

The ongoing initiatives under MGNREGA for the current year were also reviewed. The DDC directed concerned officers to expedite pending works while maintaining quality standards. Specific instructions were issued to ensure proper documentation and the timely submission of progress reports.

Additionally, M.A Qadri instructed officers to draft a comprehensive convergence plan for 2025-26. He said, the plan should leverage the strengths of various departments to maximize impact and foster holistic development across the district.

The meeting was attended by District Programme Officer (ICDS), Yaar Ali Khan, ACD, Irfan Bahadur, Chief Planning Officer Mohammad Maqbool Lone, DFO, Chief Agriculture Officer, District Sheep Husbandry Officer, Chief Animal Husbandry Officer, and other officers and representatives from relevant departments.

DC Bandipora Stresses Short-Term Loans to Boost Farmer Economy



BANDIPORA: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri on Friday chaired a meeting of District Level Technical Committee (DLTC) at Mini Secretariat, Bandipora. The meeting was held to finalize the Scale of Finance (SOF) for the year 2025-26 for Agriculture, Horticulture, Sericulture, Floriculture, Fisheries, Animal and Sheep Husbandry.

During the meeting, threadbare discussion was held on various aspects to determine and fix the Scale of Finance (SOF) for providing short term loans to the farmers to strengthen the backbone of the economy.

On the occasion, the DC sought detailed feedback from the officers regarding the costs involved in different inputs of crops.

He directed officers to ensure maximum coverage of beneficiaries under Government Schemes.

Chief Planning Officer Mohammad Maqbool Lone, Lead District Manager Bandipora, representatives of Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Fisheries, NABARD, District Coordinator SBI, Manager PNB, Manager Grameen Bank, and other concerned attended the meeting.

SDM Lolab reviews arrangements for celebration of Republic Day

KUPWARA: Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Lolab, Javid Masoodi today convened a meeting of all concerned officers at SDM Office Sogam and reviewed the arrangements for conduct of the Republic Day 2025 in Lolab Sub Division.

The SDM directed all the departments to ensure fool proof arrangements in place so that the National event of Republic Day is celebrated seamlessly in the sub division.

He also emphasized the need for seating arrangement and security arrangements.

Arrangements including Power supply, water, sanitation, refreshment, deployment of magistrates, arrangement of cultural programmes, barricading, facility of commentators and availability of fire-tenders were also reviewed.

The SDM also reviewed the status of snow clearance, electricity and water supply schemes and availability & distribution of ration items.

BDO, Tehsilidar, BMO, AEE PHE Sogam, SHO and other concerned officers attended the meeting.

Altaf Bukhari Urges Helicopter Services for Snowbound Areas

Srinagar, Jan 3: Apni Party President Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari has called on the administration to provide helicopter services for medical emergencies in remote snowbound areas like Gurez, Tulail, Tangdhar, and Karnah.

These areas, heavily affected by recent snowfall, remain completely cut off, leaving residents in dire need of assistance.

In a statement issued to Kashmir Convener, Bukhari emphasized the urgency of the situation, saying, "The heavy snowfall has isolated several border areas, including Gurez, Tulail, Tangdhar, and Karnah, from the rest of the region. Media reports highlight



that residents are pleading for helicopter services to address medical emergencies, a demand that deserves immediate attention."

He further pointed out that key routes such as the Bandipora-Gurez Road, Kupwara-

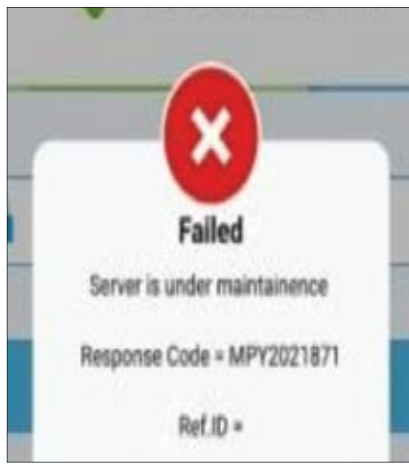
Tangdhar Road, and Karnah-Chowkibal Road are buried under snow, exacerbating the isolation of these areas.

"With more snow spells expected in the coming weeks, these areas are likely to remain inaccessible for a prolonged period. It is imperative for the authorities to act swiftly and ensure helicopter services are made available for emergencies. Residents cannot be left at the mercy of the harsh weather conditions," Bukhari asserted.

The Apni Party President's appeal underscores the critical need for proactive measures to support vulnerable populations in the region during the harsh winter months.

J&K Bank Under Fire as MPAY Shutdown Frustrates Users Again

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Bank's popular online transaction application, MPAY, has been abruptly shut down across the Union Territory, sparking widespread frustration and disruptions for consumers and businesses alike.



ers and businesses alike.

The continued shutdown of MPAY on the pretext of maintenance, has raised serious concerns about the bank's ability to deliver reliable digital services, with many questioning its commitment to ensuring seamless financial operations in the region.

Lakhs of consumers, heavily reliant on MPAY for daily transactions, expressed their outrage. Many lamented the app's frequent unavailability, which has become a persistent issue.

"JK Bank is the only bank that has to shut its Mobile App every month for maintenance. Why can they hire a better service provider like that of SBI, HDFC, PNB etc who are having a better mobile banking service," said a user from University of Kashmir who has been waiting since yesterday to submit fee online.

"This isn't the first time. MPAY is always a headache, especially during urgent times. Almost every second person in Jammu and Kashmir uses it, but it fails us when we need it most," said Nazir Bhat, a shopkeeper.

Frustrated by the recurring outages, some consumers are now opting for alternative banking solutions. "It's time to switch to a bank that offers hassle-free services 24/7 without charges. I've already moved to another bank, and I'm not facing any issues now," said a daily needs shopkeeper.

Both consumers and business owners have called on J&K Bank's management to implement a permanent fix to ensure uninterrupted service. They argue that the frequent outages not only damage the bank's reputation but also hinder important financial transactions.

Consumers have urged the management of J&K Bank to find a one-time solution for hassle free service.

Illegal Timber Seized in Baramulla, 3 arrested

BARAMULLA: Baramulla Police on Friday seized illegally smuggled timber and arrested three accused besides the vehicle.

An official spokesperson said Baramulla Police on Friday intercepted a Tata 207 vehicle at Drung Crossing during naka checking and discovered nine logs of illegally transported timber.

"Upon inspection, it was found that the timber was being transported without the necessary permissions. The vehicle was seized on the spot, and three individuals involved in the smuggling were arrested".

The arrested persons have been identified as Mehraj Ahmad Khan, son of Ab Majeed Khan and a resident of Nowgam Khag; Mohammed Amin Lone, son of Ab Gaffar Lone and a resident of Drung; and Owais Ahmad Parrey, son of Ab Ahad Parrey and a resident of Soibugh Budgam.

Baramulla Police have registered a case under FIR No. 01/2025 at Police Station Tangmarg, invoking Section 26 of the Forest Act and Sections 303 and 329(1) of the Indian Penal Code.

Officials said Investigations are ongoing to determine the source and intended destination of the illegal timber. "This operation reflects the commitment of Baramulla Police to protect the region's natural resources and crack down on illegal activities".

Citizens have been encouraged to report any suspicious activities related to forest produce to the nearest police station.



'If Gulmarg Can, Why Not Gurez?': Locals Advocate for Winter Games

Sajid Raina

BANDIPORA : Blanketed in massive snowfall, Gurez Valley in north Kashmir's Bandipora district shows potential as a winter sports tourism hub, with locals urging the government to support infrastructure development in the area.

With its snow-covered terrain, the residents believe Gurez Valley can rival other prominent winter sports destinations such as Gulmarg. The locals have been organizing snow cricket tournaments for years, which have become a hallmark of winter activities in the valley.

These tournaments, held on makeshift snow grounds, attract participants and spectators from neighboring areas.

"Gurez has everything needed for winter tourism—snow, open

spaces, and the enthusiasm of the people. If Gulmarg can host winter games, why not Gurez?" asked Imran Ahmad, a local resident as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

The snow cricket tournaments, often conducted by local youth groups, are seen as an attempt to bring attention to the valley's potential.

Zahid Lone, another resident and an organizer of these tournaments, said, "We have been holding these tournaments every winter. It's not just about cricket; it's about showing the world what Gurez can offer in terms of winter sports and tourism."

Despite the enthusiasm of the locals, infrastructural and logistical challenges remain. The valley's remote location and harsh weather conditions often hinder accessibility during winter months. Residents believe government intervention could alleviate these issues and put Gurez on the winter tourism map.

We need better roads and facilities to host visitors and players," said Mushtaq Ahmad, a resident, who actively participates in local tourism initiatives. "If the government invests in developing Gurez as a winter sports destination, it can create jobs and improve the

economy here."

"This place is no less than a paradise in winter. We just need the right support and exposure to bring tourists here," said Shahid Qureshi, a local school teacher.

The residents also point out that Gurez Valley has immense potential for snow skiing. The valley's vast, snow-covered slopes and natural contours provide an ideal setting for both beginner and advanced skiers.

They believe that with proper infrastructure, such as ski lifts, training facilities, and equipment rental centers, Gurez could attract skiing enthusiasts from across the country and beyond.

"Our slopes are untouched and perfect for skiing. If developed, they could become a major attraction," said Bashir Khan, a local adventure enthusiast. "We have the natural terrain; we just need the infrastructure to make it accessible and safe for visitors," he said.

Meanwhile, the residents urged MLA Gurez and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to prioritize winter sports in Gurez on a large scale, aiming to boost tourism in the area—(KNO)

MVD Bandipora organises Free Medical Camp for drivers

BANDIPORA: In view of ongoing Road Safety Month being, the Motor Vehicles Department (MVD) Bandipora, led by ARTO Anis Ahmed Wani, organized a free medical camp for drivers at the Main Bus Stand, Bandipora.



Speaking at the event, ARTO said that the initiative was conducted in collaboration with the Health Department which aims to promote road safety and well-being among the transporters.

He said more than 300 drivers received thorough medical check-ups including eye check-ups besides free medicines were provided to them.

The camp in addition to address the immediate health needs of the drivers also served as an important

platform for raising awareness about road safety measures.

He added that transporters and drivers were educated on the significance of adhering to road safety guidelines with a focus on safe driving practices besides importance of vehicle maintenance and the implementation of road safety laws.

ARTO emphasized the role of medical check-ups in ensuring the fitness of drivers which directly impacts road safety. He also highlighted that such initiatives are essential to protect the lives of drivers, passengers and the wider community.

He informed that Motor Vehicles Department Bandipora has planned a series of events throughout Road Safety Month including health camps, awareness workshops, and distribution of informational materials on safe driving practices.

JK, Ladakh Cadets Shine at 67th National Shooting Competition

JAMMU: The Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh Directorate (JK&L Dte.) Friday celebrated the exceptional achievements of Cadet Arushi Rajput and Cadet Krish Singh Chauhan, who represented the region in the 67th National Shooting Competition held in Bhopal from December 15 to 31, 2024.



Selected among the top 45 cadets from 17 NCC Directorates nationwide, their performance marks a historic milestone for the region.

Cadet Krish Singh Chauhan has been honored with the prestigious title of a National Shooter, a testament to his exceptional skill and dedication to the sport. His journey at the Nationals cements his status as a rising star in the shooting arena.

Cadet Arushi Rajput achieved another remarkable feat by qualifying for the India Trials for International Shooting Events, positioning her as a potential representative for India on the global stage. Her qualification underscores her extraordinary talent and unwavering determination.

In a felicitation ceremony, Major General Anupinder Bevi, VSM, Additional Director General (ADG) of the NCC Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh Directorate, lauded the cadets for their dedication and achievements. He emphasized the pivotal role of the NCC in providing young cadets with platforms to excel in sports and other fields, fostering their growth and helping them realize their aspirations.

These accolades reflect not only individual triumphs but also the growing prominence of Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh in the field of sports excellence.

REC Limited Disburses Rs 54,692 Crore in Q3 FY25; Renewable Energy Loans Surge by 58pc

GURUGRAM: REC Limited, a Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) under the Ministry of Power and a leading Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC), reported a robust loan disbursement of Rs 54,692 crore in Q3 FY25, reflecting a 17.98% year-on-year growth.

Renewable energy loan disbursements witnessed a substantial surge, growing by 58.09% year-on-year to Rs 6,314 crore during the same quarter, underscoring REC's commitment to supporting India's transition to clean energy.

For the first nine months of FY25 (April-December 2024), REC's total loan disbursements stood at Rs 1,45,647 crore, marking a 19.30% increase from Rs 1,22,089 crore in the corresponding period of FY24. Renewable energy loans during this period amounted to Rs 17,612 crore, a significant 78.68% year-on-year growth.

The figures highlight REC's focus on bolstering India's power infrastructure while accelerating its green energy initiatives, aligning with the nation's sustainable development goals.



ELECTRIC VEHICLES

The Government of India has made significant strides in promoting sustainable mobility, placing special emphasis on affordable and eco-friendly public transportation options for the masses. A cornerstone of this initiative is the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles in India (FAME-India) Scheme, aimed at accelerating the transition to electric mobility. Since its inception in 2015, the scheme has evolved into a robust framework for incentivizing electric vehicles (EVs) and establishing essential infrastructure, ushering in a greener and more sustainable transportation era.

The first phase of FAME was a foundational step, rolled out for two years starting April 1, 2015. Following its success, the scheme's second phase, FAME-II, was launched in 2019 with an ambitious outlay of ₹11,500 crore. Beyond financial incentives, the FAME-II scheme has supported pivotal policy measures, including reducing the GST on EVs and facilitating the formulation of state-specific EV policies. A noteworthy aspect of FAME-II is its phased manufacturing program, which encourages domestic production of EV components and reduces reliance on imports. With an expenditure of ₹8,844 crore under FAME-II—comprising ₹6,577 crore for subsidies, ₹2,244 crore for capital assets, and ₹23 crore for other expenses—the government has demonstrated its unwavering focus on fostering an EV ecosystem. The scheme's progress has positioned India as a key player in sustainable mobility, significantly reducing the nation's carbon footprint while creating new economic opportunities in the EV sector. As India accelerates its transition to green mobility, the success of FAME-II sets the stage for deeper investments in clean energy transportation solutions. However, to fully capitalize on these gains, there is a need for consistent policy support, rapid infrastructure development, and increased public awareness about the environmental and economic benefits of EVs. With the right blend of innovation, collaboration, and governance, India can pave the way for a sustainable transportation future that resonates globally.

Online Gambling: A Silent Predator Consuming Kashmir’s Youth



Peerzada Aarif

Recently a video went viral on social media in which a man from Srinagar had lost around 80 Lakh Rupees while playing online gambling on some gambling site called Teen Pati. This is the first instance in which any individual has lost such a big amount of money to this menace of gambling.

Many people in the valley have money so far on these platforms. Earlier a man from Baramulla lost 42 lakh rupees through online gambling, forcing his parents to sell their house to repay the debt. Another individual from the town gambled away 32 lakhs and now suffers from severe depression.

To quote the recent instance of a man from Srinagar, as per the reports and as per his own statement on social media, the person had invested his whole savings and had also borrowed money from friends and relatives.

This menace of online gaming as well as gambling has become a nuisance in our society. More and more youth are getting involved and addicted to it thereby leading to huge monetary losses and creating many problems for their families. This issue needs to be brought to the limelight so that immediate public attention is sought in order to curb this menace.

Online gambling refers to any kind of gambling as well as gaming that is conducted on the internet. This includes the gambling platforms like virtual poker, casinos, and sports betting. Online gambling platforms used worldwide include sports betting, Online Casinos, Poker, Blackjack, Lotteries, Roulette, Slots, Arbitrage betting, Baccarat and Bingo.

Teen Patti is another popular Indian gambling card game that originated from the English game of three-card brag and is influenced by poker. It is also known as flush or flash in some areas.

When we talk of gambling, it is not a new thing. People have been playing gambling earlier also in offline mode resulting in huge monetary losses. But the mode of online gambling using smartphones and the internet has posed grave threats and risks to its players and is more dangerous than offline gambling. In offline gambling the social restrictions and the stigma associated with it prevented the gamblers from expanding their networks and was restricted to few people. But the menace and plague of online gambling has turned out to be the silent killer in which our youth with the help of smartphones using internet are wasting their precious time and money leading to huge financial losses.

This addiction among the youth leaves them playing such gambling all night leading to many physical and psychological impacts on their well being.

Social influences, particularly through social media and peer interactions, normalize gambling behaviors, making them more appealing to adolescents. Mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression, are closely linked to online gambling addiction, as individuals may use gambling

During these online gambling activities people usually chase their losses they had faced earlier and in this chase they are subjected to huge loss which they later regret leaving them in a state of depression, anxiety and severe psychological trauma.

This menace is rapidly spreading among the youth particularly among the teenagers who under the garb of greed and earning money easily have become deeply

addicted to these gambling platforms.

One of the important reasons why people resort to gambling is that these people want shortcuts in their lives and want to earn money without any hard work, but we need to realise that by resorting to such gambling practices we are putting ourselves in a grave risk which not only drains our financial resources but this also becomes a cause anxiety, depression, disturbing mental health as well as distorted social relationships.

Another reason why youth fall prey to such gambling apps is that many celebrities and social media influencers

Parents can play a vital role in their children's online gaming habits and keep a close watch on what and how long they play it. This social control can have a very positive impact on the children. Parents can also set time limits to help break these bad habits. They can encourage their children to take regular breaks and help them come out of this addiction that is devouring our young minds.

Parents can also play some physical games involving their children to help them find a range of activities to enjoy.

Let the parents sit and talk with the children and discuss with them about such gaming sites in order to

themselves from such traps and scams. Youth must avoid bad companies who persuade them to play online gambling. Instead of spending time with mobile phones and social media, let our youth go for sports activities and abstain from such practices. So realise that money doesn't come overnight, it needs planned hard work. Nobody can become a millionaire by resorting to such spam and risky platforms.

There is a need for strict cyber laws to prevent such possible financial risks. Such apps and platforms should be completely banned which are dangerous for the



promote these gambling platforms and easily attract the attention of young minds. In many instances a person who faces huge financial loss to this ill practice may even think of committing suicidal attempts.

At a time when Kashmir valley is grappling with a crisis that is tearing apart its social fabric, the menace of drug addiction has already taken a toll on our youth. Drug addiction which has engulfed the valley, has already destroyed the physical as well as mental health of thousands of our youth. Now this another threatening menace of online gambling in which the young children are getting involved may lead to disastrous consequences which needs to be checked and curbed without any delay and neglect.

In order to check this menace of online gambling our society needs an integrated and a comprehensive approach involving different sections of the society.

One of the most predominant roles which can contribute in curbing this menace is the role of parents.

help them identify and express their feelings.

Parents can provide support and good parent-child relationships to help protect their children from unhealthy behaviors.

Some studies suggest that parental support is related to less gaming problems over time.

Spending a quality time with the kids and involving them in offline activities can help in eradication of this ill practice of online gambling as well as gaming.

There is a dire need of organising counselling sessions in schools, colleges, universities and other educational institutions in which youth can be guided and counselled properly about the ill effects of such online gambling apps and platforms.

At community level the religious clerics can play a role by making the religious sermons much more socially relevant and help in curbing this menace.

At individual level youth should make less use of social media and reduce screen time in order to prevent

youth. The laws which are already in place need strict enforcement and implementation.

Youth need to be guided towards a path that is moral, civilised and sensitive towards such social issues. Technology has indeed uplifted us in a number of ways but at the same time our youth, which is the future of our nation, need moral policing in order to prevent them from falling prey to such menace.

There should be regulation at individual as well as collective level to monitor the activities of the children on a daily basis. Both family and social regulation needs to be revived so as to come out of such filthy issues in our society.

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"Get Out": A Chilling Allegory of Racism, Manipulation, and Control

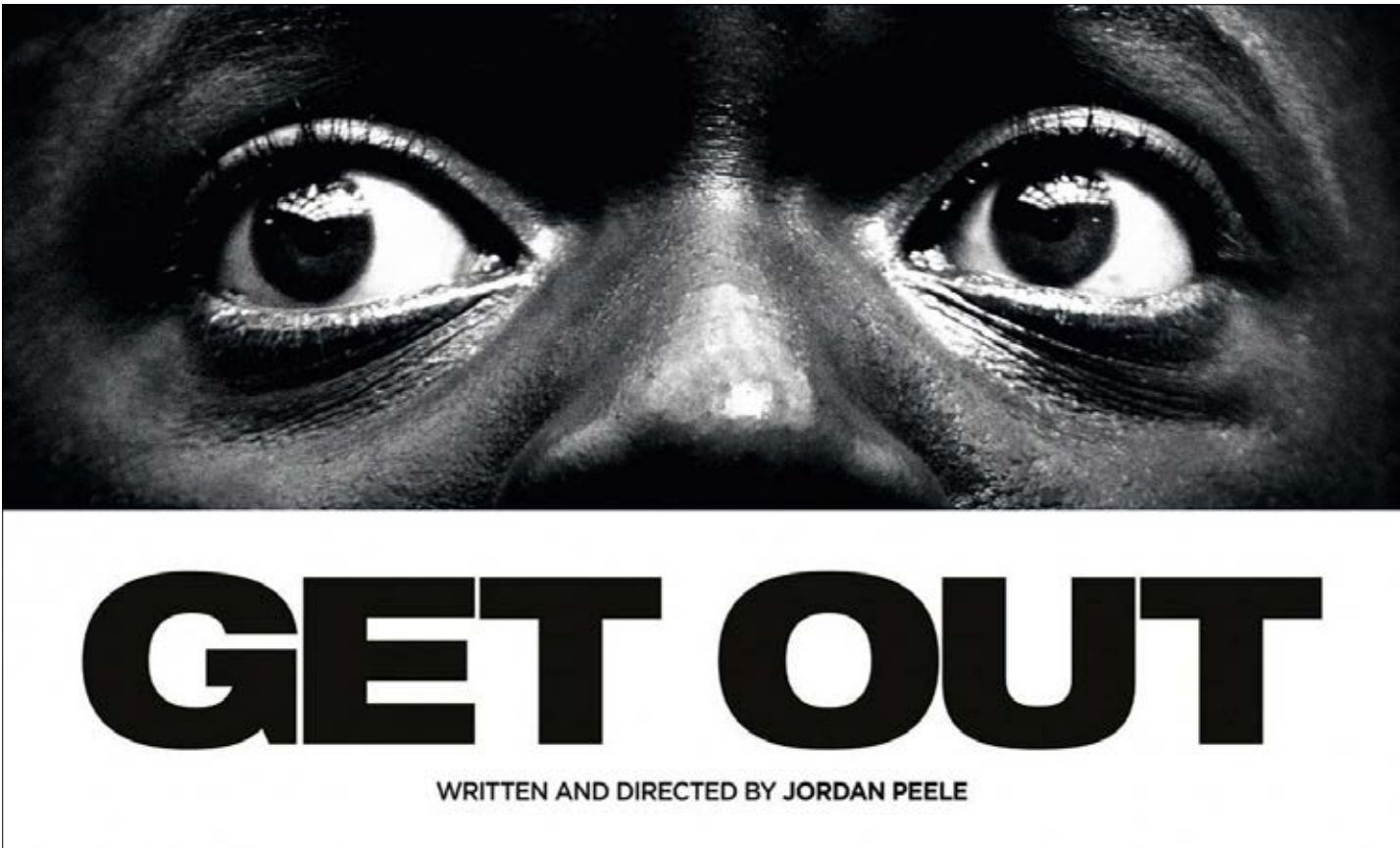
Aasif Ahmad Shah

"Get Out" is a thought-provoking horror film that delves deeply into the themes of racism and exploitation. It portrays a family of surgeons who surgically remove the brains of Black individuals, particularly those with athletic or muscular physiques, and replace them with the brains of white people. This grotesque procedure serves as a metaphor for the broader societal issues of white supremacy and the objectification of Black bodies. The film critiques the exploitation and appropriation of Black culture and identity for the benefit of white individuals, underscoring the horrific lengths to which some might go to maintain power and control.

One of the most chilling elements of the film is the representation of emotional manipulation. The family presents an image of warmth, acceptance, and emotional attachment, luring Black men into their lives with seemingly genuine affection. This facade of friendliness and belonging makes it difficult for the protagonists to perceive the malicious intentions that underpin such interactions. Once drawn into this deceitful web, the Black characters, particularly the protagonist Chris, undergo a harrowing transformation when they are hypnotized. This hypnotic manipulation strips them of their agency and autonomy, leaving them feeling helpless and trapped, even as they wrestle with an awareness of their dire circumstances.

This thematic exploration extends beyond the confines of the film, suggesting that the family dynamics portrayed are emblematic of societal patterns observed in many real-life contexts. There are numerous families and social structures that emulate the behavior seen in the film, where individuals may foster emotional bonds as a guise to exert control or influence over others. In these situations, the family becomes the nucleus of an ideological framework, seeking to maintain a monopoly over their narrative and social standing. Those who begin to question, challenge, or rebel against these structures often face significant backlash.

When one attempts to break free from these toxic dynamics, the repercussions can be severe. The conflict that ensues is often characterized by an intense psychological struggle,



where the individual's sense of self and autonomy is pitted against the overwhelming power of family expectations and societal norms. This struggle can escalate, leading to emotional turmoil and even outright confrontation. In some cases, the pressures are so great that individuals may feel they have only two choices: to destroy the oppressive structures that bind them or to succumb to despair, ultimately contemplating self-destruction as a means of escape.

In essence, "Get Out" serves as a microcosm of a more significant dilemma faced by many in society—a harrowing reflection of the struggle between individual identity and familial or societal control. The film culminates in a tragic cycle of destruction brought about by an inevitable clash between the reality of one's existence and the oppressive narratives that seek to define it. As audiences are drawn into this stark portrayal of conflict, they are prompted to reflect

on the insidious nature of manipulation, the complexities of familial relationships, and the dire consequences of unchallenged authority—a reality that resonates powerfully beyond the cinematic experience.

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Minister Sakeena Itoo Emphasizes Modernizing Health Infrastructure in South Kashmir

ANANTNAG: Minister for School Education, Higher Education, Social Welfare, Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo, today convened a review meeting at Khanabal to assess the functioning of Health and Medical Education (HME) department in the districts of Anantnag, Kulgam and Shopian.

Addressing the officers, Sakeena Itoo directed them to expedite the pace of works for completion of under construction health facilities while ensuring adherence to modern healthcare standards. She laid special emphasis on upgrading infrastructure at primary, secondary and tertiary care hospitals across the three districts. She was informed that all essential facilities including ambulances, equipment and medicines are available in all the hospitals.

The Minister urged for uninterrupted supply of diagnostic tools, advanced medical equipment and life-saving drugs. She emphasised on filling vacant positions of doctors, nurses and paramedics to address staffing shortage in both urban and rural healthcare centers. She underscored the need for robust preventive



healthcare programs including maternal and child health initiatives, immunisation drives and nutritional campaigns.

She directed for implementation of telemedicine services in remote areas to improve healthcare accessibility, strengthening

of ambulance network and emergency response systems to ensure prompt attention to critical cases.

The Minister also directed the executing agencies to complete construction of PHC Pahalgam well before the commencement of SANJY 2025. She also called for robust monitoring mechanism to ensure regular evaluation of health institution performance and accountability at all levels.

Reiterating government's resolve to provide quality healthcare services, Sakeena Itoo stated, "the public has immense trust in the medical fraternity and it is our responsibility to uphold their faith through dedication, commitment as well as provision of better healthcare services".

The Minister encouraged all the stakeholders to work collaboratively to ensure successful implementation of policies aimed at improving the health and well-being of the population. She also instructed the officers to submit periodic progress reports of several ongoing projects.



Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference President Dr. Farooq Abdullah and Vice President and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah have expressed profound grief over the demise of popular news reader in Radio Kashmir Srinagar and father of journalist Sarwar Kashani, Syed Muzaffar Hussain Kashani, who passed away in New Delhi after brief illness.

The duo, reflecting on his significant contributions to the field of broadcasting, paid heartfelt tributes to him. They prayed for peace to his soul in the highest realms of Jannat and for strength to be granted to his bereaved family during this difficult time.

Among others Speaker Assembly Abdur Rahim Rather, party General Secretary Ali Muhammad Sagar, AGS Dr. Sheikh Mustafa Kamal, Advisor to CM Nasir Aslam Wani, Chief Spokesperson Tanvir Sadiq, Sharief Ud Din Shariq, Muhammad Shafi Uri, Mir GM Saqi have also extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved household.

Chief Secretary Reviews Holistic Agriculture Development Programme in J&K

JAMMU: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a meeting of Agriculture Production Department to review implementation of different sub projects taken up under flagship Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) in J&K.



The Chief Secretary impressed upon the concerned to focus on establishment of units under different sub-projects of this programme. He maintained that the programme is target oriented with milestones to achieve at different intervals. He maintained that the productivity of this programme would be gauged by the activity-wise outcomes registered in different districts having direct bearing on its potential to generate

employment in the UT.

He sensitized the district administration about the need for periodical review of the targets so that the concerned sectoral officers chase them purposefully. He also directed the Mission Director to personally

examine the performance of each officer for course correction down the line.

Dulloo also enquired from the DCs about the progress achieved under this ambitious programme in their respective districts. He asked them to give priority to the areas depicting poor performance. He also reviewed project wise applications received and approved by districts besides units established in each along

with position of funds received and utilized.

Earlier in the meeting, Principal Secretary, APD, Shailendra Kumar, gave an introduction about the overall progress of this programme. He highlighted the steps being taken up by the department to achieve the annual targets set under this 5 year programme.

It was given out that full disbursement of subsidy amount in favour of around 11,000 units had been done till date under this mission. It was added that the number of courses would be increased to 161 shortly under Daksh Kisan educational portal.

Moreover, nearly 4000 events had been organised under Kisan Sampark Abhiyan 3.0 with a total attendance of more than 1,85,000 farmers covering around 92% panchayats, as informed in the meeting.

Regarding the approvals given by the district level committees, the meeting was apprised that its rate hovers at around 74%.

Centralized Pension Payments System Fully Rolled Out Across India

New Delhi: In a landmark move towards enhancing pension services, EPFO completed full scale rollout of the new Centralized Pension Payments System (CPPS) under Employees' Pension Scheme 1995 in December 2024. About Rs. 1570 Crore pension was disbursed to more than 68 Lakh pensioners pertaining to all 122 pension disbursing Regional offices of EPFO for December 2024.

The first pilot of the Centralized Pension Payment System (CPPS) was successfully completed in October, 2024 in Karnal, Jammu and Srinagar Regional Offices with the pension disbursement of about Rs 11 Crore to more than 49,000 EPS Pensioners. The second pilot was taken up in November, 2024 in 24 Regional Offices in which around Rs. 213 crores pension was disbursed to more than 9.3 lakh pensioners.

Announcing the successful rollout, Union Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya said, "The full-scale implementation of the Centralized Pension Payments System (CPPS) across all Regional Offices of EPFO is a historic milestone. This transformative initiative empowers pensioners to access their pension seamlessly from any bank, any branch, anywhere in the country. It eliminates the need for physical verification visits and simplifies the pension disbursement process. CPPS is a testament to our commitment to modernizing EPFO services and ensuring convenience, transparency, and efficiency for our pensioners. With this rollout, we are setting a new benchmark in pension

service delivery, aligning with the vision of a tech-enabled and member-centric EPFO."

The CPPS is a paradigm shift from the existing pension disbursement system that is decentralized, with each Zonal/Regional Office



of EPFO maintaining separate agreements with only 3-4 banks. In CPPS, not only the pensioner will be able to take pension from any bank, but also, there will be no need for pensioners to visit the bank for any verification at the time of commencement of pension and the pension shall be immediately credited upon release.

The CPPS system from January 2025 onwards would also ensure disbursement of pension throughout India without any need for transfer of Pension Payment Orders (PPO) from one office to another even when the Pensioner moves from one location to another or changes his bank or branch.

Legal Services Units for Children and Persons with Mental Disabilities Constituted in Anantnag

Anantnag: Following the instructions of J&K Legal Services Authority, Legal Services Unit for Children & Legal Services Unit for Persons with Mental Illness and Persons with Intellectual Disabilities were constituted in Anantnag for providing accessible and impactful legal services to children & persons with mental disabilities.

These units shall be mentored by Mohammad Ashraf Bhat, Pr. District & Sessions Judge (retired).

During the four days of orientation programme, the unit members were sensitized by DLSA Secretary Muzamil Ahmad Wani and resource persons from JJB, CWC and Bar Association who shared knowledge & information for effective implementation of NALSA Scheme.

The unit members were trained with respect to process of responding to cases and ensuring Legal Aid at Police Station, Jail, Hospital, JJB, CWC or other places.

On the occasion, Secretary DLSA highlighted significance of effective coordination with other stakeholders & institutions.

Stakeholders Commit to Making Ganderbal a Tobacco-Free District

GANDERBAL: A review meeting of the District-Level Coordination Committee (DLCC) under the National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP) was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Shyambir to review and assess the implementation of tobacco control measures across the district here in the V.C Room of DC Office.

During the meeting, Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Dr. Bashir Ahmad Khan, Ganderbal delivered a comprehensive presentation highlighting provisions

of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003.

He highlighted the strategies for establishing Tobacco-Free Institutions, Villages, and Workplaces.

He emphasized to promote and declare more institutions, villages, and workplaces as tobacco-free zones. Speaking on the occasion, the DC emphasized the need for coordinated and sustained effort to make Ganderbal a model district in effective tobacco control. He urged all stakeholders to work collectively towards

achieving the goal of a Tobacco-Free Ganderbal.

The DC issued the several directions to all stakeholders for effective implementation of the COTPA Act, 2003, across the district to curb tobacco use. He also stressed to Promote and declare more institutions, villages, and workplaces as tobacco-free zone, thereby fostering a healthier environment. The meeting concluded with a strong commitment from all stakeholders to intensify their efforts and ensure timely reporting and monitoring of progress under the NTCP.

Commissioner SMC reviews progress of urban development projects

Srinagar: In a significant step towards enhancing urban development in Srinagar, Commissioner SMC Dr. Owais Ahmed chaired a high-level review meeting today to evaluate the progress of various projects undertaken by the SMC and Srinagar Smart City Limited (SSCL).

The meeting was attended by the senior officials from both organizations, who provided comprehensive updates on their respective projects, addressing timelines, challenges, and achievements.

Dr. Owais emphasized the importance of these initiatives in improving urban infrastructure and the overall quality of life for Srinagar's residents.

Key projects discussed included road improvements, advancements in water management, civil and electrical works, enhancements in waste management systems, and innovative smart city initiatives designed to integrate technology into public services.

"Timely execution is crucial for the success

of our ongoing projects," Dr. Owais remarked. "Our vision is to ensure sustainable development in Srinagar, with measurable benefits reaching every citizen. I encourage all teams to identify obstacles and collaborate on effective solutions."



The Commissioner also stressed the need for adopting innovative strategies and global best practices to improve project efficiency and delivery. He underscored the importance of regular follow-ups and detailed progress reports to maintain accountability and transparency in project management.

Orientation prog on NALSA scheme by DLSA Srinagar & Budgam concludes

Srinagar: District Legal Services Authorities (DLSAs) Srinagar and Budgam successfully concluded a two-day orientation programme today for members of the Legal



Services Unit for Children (LSUC).

initiative, held as part of the implementation of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) Scheme 2024, aimed to enhance the knowledge and effectiveness of LSUC members in ensuring justice for children.

The programme, which commenced on January 2, 2025,

brought together participants both physically and virtually to discuss strategies for providing accessible and impactful legal services to children. Nusrat Ali Hakak, Secretary DLSA Srinagar and Budgam, underscoring the critical role of LSUC members in upholding the rights of children. She highlighted the transformative potential of the NALSA Scheme 2024 in empowering vulnerable children and ensuring they receive timely and effective legal aid.

Shaheen, a retired judicial officer, joined the programme virtually and shared her expert insights on the legal framework for children's rights.

She emphasized the importance of understanding of the NALSA Scheme and its provisions, encouraging participants to adopt a proactive and empathetic approach in their roles.

Members of the LSUC actively engaged during the sessions, discussing practical applications of the NALSA Scheme and exchanging ideas to enhance service delivery.

Participants from DLSA Budgam joined virtually, ensuring that geographical constraints did not hinder comprehensive involvement. The orientation programme also focused on fostering a deeper understanding of the legal rights and entitlements of children, equipping participants with the tools necessary to address their specific needs effectively.

DC Shopian reviews implementation of PMAY-U



Shopian: The Deputy Commissioner (DC), Shopian, Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar, who is also chairman of the District Level Committee for Monitoring and Implementation of the Housing for All (Urban) Mission, convened a meeting today to assess the progress of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY)-Urban in the district here at Mini-Secretariat Shopian.

The meeting focused on evaluating the physical and financial status of sanctioned PMAY-Urban cases, ensuring adherence to guidelines and strategizing to cover all eligible beneficiaries.

CEO MC Shopian apprised that out of 477 housing units to be constructed in the Shopian Town, 360 units have been completed till date and remaining 117 are under construction.

An amount of 688 lacs have been released to 474 beneficiaries till date.

The DC directed the concerned officers to expedite the completion of all pending housing units within time.

ACR, CPO, DSEO, CEO, Project Officer, District Urban Dev. Agency and other concerned attended the meeting.

DLSA Srinagar organizes special Lok Adalat for Bank cases

JAMMU: Srinagar, January 03: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Srinagar, organized a Special Lok Adalat for Bank cases at the District Court Complex, Mominabad, Srinagar.

The Lok Adalat, aimed at amicably resolving Bank cases, which was held under direction of Jaffer Hussain Beg, Chairman of the District Legal Services Authority (Principal District & Sessions Judge) Srinagar, and under the supervision of Nusrat Ali Hakak, Sub-judge/Secretary DLSA Srinagar.

To facilitate the amicable settlement of cases, one bench was constituted for the said Special Lok Adalat, which was presided over by Kusoom Lata Pandita, Additional District & Sessions Judge, Bank Cases, Srinagar and Massarat Jabeen, PT&E Magistrate. The bench settled the maximum number of cases, marking a significant

achievement in promoting peaceful and quick resolutions for Bank matters. This initiative not only provided justice to the parties involved but also highlighted the advantages of settling disputes through Lok Adalats.

The Lok Adalat witness the active participation from the legal fraternity, Officers & Officials of Banks and litigants alike.

By organizing Lok Adalats, DLSA Srinagar continues its mission to provide equitable access to justice for all, ensuring that litigants can resolve their disputes quickly and amicably without the prolonged procedures typically associated with conventional courts.

Overall 43 number of cases was taken up for settlement out of which 12 number of cases were amicably settled & Rs. 9002065 was awarded as settlement amount in Bank Cases.

Legal Services Units for Children and Persons with Mental Disabilities Constituted in Anantnag

Anantnag: Following the instructions of J&K Legal Services Authority, Legal Services Unit for Children & Legal Services Unit for Persons with Mental Illness and Persons with Intellectual Disabilities were constituted in Anantnag for providing accessible and impactful legal services to children & persons with mental disabilities. These units shall be mentored by Mohammad Ashraf Bhat, Pr. District & Sessions Judge (retired).

During the four days of orientation programme, the unit members were sensitized by DLSA Secretary Muzamil Ahmad Wani and resource persons from JJB, CWC and Bar Association who shared knowledge & information for effective implementation of NALSA Scheme. The unit members were trained with respect to process of responding to cases and ensuring Legal Aid at Police Station, Jail, Hospital, JJB, CWC or other places.

On the occasion, Secretary DLSA highlighted significance of effective coordination with other stakeholders & institutions.

JKAACL organizes Kashmiri Literary programme at Writers' Club

Jammu: The Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages organised a day-long literary programme at the Writers' Club Jammu. The event was presided over by renowned short story writer and novelist Makhn Lal Pandita, while Sahitya Akademi Award winner Dr. Sohan Lal Koul was present in the hall as the chief guest.

Harvinder Kour Secretary Academy in her address stated that Kashmiri is the largest spoken language of Jammu and Kashmir and the Academy is focusing on its overall development. She further stated that the objective of today's programme is to provide a common platform to Kashmiri writers of both the regions to share their creative arts.

Earlier Dr. Javed Rahi Divisional Head JKAACL Jammu delivered the welcome address and expressed his views regarding the event.

M L Pandita in his presidential address thanked the Cultural Academy for organizing the event and said that such events should continue to be organized in the Jammu region in the future as well.

The second session of the event was the Mushaira, which was presided over by renowned poet and writer Bashir Bhaderwahi, while BN Betab and Avatar Krishan Naz were present in the hall as special guests and guests of honor.

Among the short story writers who

presented their works at the short story session were Rinku Koul with "Shash Panj," Vijay Wali with "Booneh Maut," Avatar Hogami with "Bod Shar," Dr. Sohan Lal Koul with "Kaband Ao Voo'rith," and ML Pandita with "Aasun Chh Hechhnavan."



Among the poets who presented their poetry to the audience at the Mushaira were Bashir Bhaderwahi, PN Shad, Dildar Mohan, AK Naz, BN Betab, Santosh Shah Nadan, Ashok Gohar, Moti Lal Masroor, Pyare Hatash, Ratan Lal Johar, BN Abhilash, Dali Tikku Arol, Tej Sagar, Dr. Ramesh Narash, Wali Muhammad Aseer Kishtwari, Kundan Paras, Rajinder Aghosh, Bandiya Tikku, Patambar Razdan, Kusum Dhar, Chaman Panjori, MK Bhat, and Dr. Azhar Izhar.

The proceedings of both literary sessions were conducted by Assistant Editor Kashmiri Dr. Gulzar Ahmad Rather, while Kashmiri Editor Javed Iqbal Khan presented the vote of thanks.

Jameel Ansari provided full cooperation in the filming and photography of these events, for which he was appreciated at the event.

Ministry of Defence: Year End Review: 2024- Part-VI

DEFENCE RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATION (DRDO)

- DRDO conducted a successful flight-test of the New Generation AKASH (AKASH-NG) missile from the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur off the coast of Odisha on January 12, 2024. The flight-test was conducted against a high-speed unmanned aerial target at very low altitude. During the flight-test, the target was successfully intercepted by the weapon system and destroyed.
- Four flight trials of High-speed Expendable Aerial Target (HEAT) - ABHYAS were successfully carried out by DRDO from the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur in Odisha during January 30 to February 02, 2024.
- DRDO conducted two successful flight tests of Very Short-Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS) missile on February 28 & 29, 2024 from a ground based portable launcher off the coast of Odisha from Integrated Test Range, Chandipur. These tests were carried out against high speed unmanned aerial targets under different interception scenarios. VSHORADS is a Man Portable Air Defence System (MANPAD) designed and developed indigenously by Research Centre Imarat (RCI) in collaboration with other DRDO laboratories and Indian Industry Partners.
- DRDO conducted first successful flight test of indigenously developed Agni-5 missile with Multiple Independently Targetable Re-Entry Vehicle (MIRV) technology. The flight test named Mission Divyastra was carried out from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island in Odisha.
- Strategic Forces Command, along with DRDO, conducted the successful flight-test of New Generation Ballistic Missile Agni-Prime from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha on April 03, 2024. The test met all the trial objectives validating its reliable performance, as confirmed from the data captured by a number of range sensors deployed at different locations, including two downrange ships placed at the terminal point.
- Man Portable Anti-tank Guided Missile Weapon System, indigenously designed and developed by DRDO, has been field evaluated in different flight configurations several times with the objective of proving the technology with high superiority. The Warhead Flight Trials were successfully conducted at the Pokhran Field Firing Range, Rajasthan on April 13, 2024.
- DRDO, along with researchers of IIT Delhi has developed Light Weight Bullet Proof Jackets named AB-HED (Advanced Ballistics for High Energy Defeat) in the country for protection against 7.62 x 54 R API (Level 6 of BIS 17051) ammunition. The jackets have been developed at the DRDO Industry Academia Centre of Excellence (DIA-CoE) at IIT, Delhi. This jacket is based upon new design approach, where novel material along with new processes have been used. These jackets have been created from polymers and indigenous boron carbide ceramic material.
- Supersonic Missile-Assisted Release of Torpedo (SMART) system was successfully flight-tested on May 01, 2024 from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha. SMART is a next-generation missile-based light-weight torpedo delivery system, designed and developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) to enhance the anti-submarine warfare capability of the Indian Navy far beyond the conventional range of lightweight torpedo.
- DRDO successfully flight-tested RudraM-II air-to-surface missile from Su-30 MK-I platform of IAF off the coast of Odisha on May 29, 2024. RudraM-II is an indigenously-developed solid-propelled air-launched missile system meant for Air-to-Surface role to neutralise many types of enemy assets. A number of state-of-the-art indigenous technologies developed by various DRDO laboratories have been incorporated in the missile system.
- DRDO handed over the Medium Range-Microwave Obscure Chaff Rocket to the Indian Navy at a ceremony held in New Delhi on June 26, 2024. Microwave Obscure Chaff, a niche technology developed by DRDO's Defence Laboratory, Jodhpur, obscures radar signals and creates a microwave shield around platforms and assets, thus reducing radar detection.
- DRDO successfully flight-tested Phase-II Ballistic Missile Defence System on July 24, 2024. The flight test fully met all the trial objectives validating complete network centric warfare weapon system consisting of Long Range Sensors, low latency communication system and MCC and Advance Interceptor missiles.
- DRDO has carried out successful maiden flight test of Long Range Glide Bomb, GAURAV from Su-30 MK-I platform of IAF. GAURAV is an air launched 1,000 kg class glide bomb capable of hitting targets at long distance. During the flight test, the glide bomb hit the target with pinpoint accuracy.
- DRDO and the Indian Navy have conducted back-to-back successful flight tests of the Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to Air Missile. The missile intercepted a high-speed aerial target, flying at a very low altitude and simulating a sea-skimming threat, which showcased its precision and capability to neutralise targets. The second consecutive test was conducted on September 13, 2024, from the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur, Odisha. This follows the earlier test on September 12, 2024, when the VLSRSAM missile effectively engaged another low-altitude target.
- DRDO conducted the maiden flight-test of Long Range Land Attack Cruise Missile from the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur off the coast of Odisha on November 12, 2024 from a mobile articulated launcher. During the test, all sub-systems performed as per expectation and met the primary mission objectives.
- DRDO has successfully completed the Flight Tests of Guided Pinaka Weapon System as part of Provisional Staff Qualitative Requirements Validation Trials. The flight tests have been conducted in three phases at different field firing ranges. During these tests, the PSQR parameters viz., ranging, accuracy, consistency and rate of fire for multiple

target engagement in a salvo mode have been assessed by extensive testing of rockets.

- DRDO conducted a successful flight-trial of India's first long-range hypersonic missile from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha on November 16, 2024. This hypersonic missile is designed to carry various payloads for ranges greater than 1,500 kms for the Armed Forces.
- Measures to promote research include:**
- DRDO's Technology Development Fund (TDF) scheme encourages participation of public/private industries especially Start-ups and MSMEs to create an eco-system for enhancing the capabilities in cutting-edge technology and promoting 'Aatmanirbharta' in defence. Till date, a total of 78 projects, with a commitment of over Rs 333 crore, have been sanctioned to various industries, and 27 defence technologies have been successfully realised under the scheme.
- The Dare to Dream Innovation Contest is another avenue through which DRDO promotes innovators and start-ups by encouraging disruptive ideas and concepts in emerging technologies for enhancing defence capabilities. Till date 4 Pan India Dare to Dream Innovation contest were carried out and 52 start-ups and 65 individuals have been awarded under the scheme.
- DRDO provides support to academia to carry out Directed Research in the identified research areas related to Defence application through DRDO Industry Academia-Centres of Excellence (DIA-CoEs) to undertake translational projects by providing direction, technical interactions and project funding. So far, 15 DIA-CoEs have been established. They are at IIT BHU, IIT Jodhpur, IIT Kanpur, IIT Roorkee, IIT Kharagpur, IIT Hyderabad, Gujarat University, IISc Bengaluru, Jammu University, Mizoram University, IIT Delhi, IIT Bombay, IIT Madras, University of Hyderabad and Bharathi University.
- DRDO has Grants-in-Aid Scheme for S&T projects under Extramural Research and under Research Boards. It also supports Exhibitions, inter school and inter college level competitions etc. besides paid apprenticeship scheme,



internship to B.Tech/ M.Tech/ M.Sc Students. These have been initiated by DRDO to generate interest in defence technologies among school and college students.

- DRDO has created five Young Scientists Laboratories to attract young Scientists/Engineers to join DRDO and provide R&D environment in emerging engineering fields and advanced technologies such as AI, Quantum Technologies, Cognitive Technologies, Asymmetric Technologies and Smart materials.
- Collaborating with DRDO in the development of major weapon systems, the Indian industry has matured to a stage where they can develop systems on their own. Indian industry has progressed from a 'build to print' partner to 'build to specification' partner. DRDO test facilities have been opened to the industries for utilisation and more than 18000 tests have been carried out for private industries/DPSUs in the past three years. Segments like Missiles, Bombs etc. have been opened to private industries for development.
- DRDO being a Research and Development agency focuses on system definition, design and prototype development. The relevant industries are identified for production purposes as Development cum Production Partner or Production Agency. Development cum Production Partner (DePP)/ Production Agency (PA) identified for more than 120 systems.
- DRDO has carried out more than 1,800 Transfer of Technologies (ToTs) to Indian Industry including both Private and public. ToT is being carried out as per the policy and procedure approved by Raksha Mantri. Development Cum Production Partner (DePP)/ Development Partners (DP)/ Production Agency (PA) of DRDO are given Technology free of cost i.e at "Nil ToT Fee".
- DRDO has a Policy for Free Access of DRDO Patents by Indian industries. This is likely to increase the technological capabilities of industries and enhance their competitiveness in global supply chain.

BORDER ROADS ORGANISATION

- Sela Tunnel: The Prime Minister virtually dedicated to the nation the Sela Tunnel project during the Viksit Bharat Viksit North East programme in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh in March 2024.
- Shinkhun La Tunnel: The Prime Minister virtually witnessed the first blast of the Shinkun La Tunnel Project in Ladakh from an event organised at the Kargil War Memorial in Dras on the occasion of 25th Kargil Vijay Diwas in July 2024.
- Inauguration of 75 Projects: In October 2024, Raksha Mantri inaugurated 75 infrastructure projects constructed by the BRO at a cost of Rs 2,236 crore and spread across 11 border States and Union Territories including Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Of the 75 projects, 19 are in Jammu & Kashmir, 18 in Arunachal Pradesh, 11 in Ladakh, nine in Uttarakhand, six in Sikkim, five in Himachal Pradesh, two each in West Bengal and Rajasthan and one each in Nagaland, Mizoram, and Andaman & Nicobar Islands.
- Mudh-Nyoma Airfield: Nyoma-Mudh Airfield Project (2.7 km) located 46 km from the LAC, at an altitude of 13700 ft, will be one of the highest Fighter Bases in the World. The

foundation stone was laid by Raksha Mantri in September 2023. The entire project will be completed by November 2025.

- Nimmu-Padum-Darcha road: Connectivity on 298-km long Nimu-Padam-Darcha road, an alternate route to Leh from Manali was established in March 2024. Approx. 201 km of this road has already been black topped.
- NATIONAL CADET CORPS**
- Key Initiatives**
- In line with ongoing efforts to expand NCC benefits to more youth, the Government approved Three Lakh Cadet Expansion Plan, which will increase the NCC's strength to 20 lakh cadets with close to 40% girl cadets, making it the largest volunteer uniformed force in the world. This initiative not only offers thousands of young people valuable leadership training, but it also creates employment opportunities for over 2,000 ex-servicemen, who will bring their expertise to mentor and guide the new cadets. Additionally, the expansion will address the demand from over 10,000 educational institutions seeking to affiliate with the NCC. The NCC Expansion plan is progressing steadily, with 30,00 Cadets enrolled under a pilot project and recruitment of 345 ex-servicemen already underway in the current year. Besides, three Army NCC units and one Air wing have also been operationalised in J&K and Ladakh. Enrolment of the remaining 2.7 Lakh cadets and hiring of 1,943 ex-servicemen will commence on 01 Apr 2025.
- NCC is equipping the Amrit Peedhi with skills to realise the vision of Viksit Bharat @ 2047, Contemporary subjects like Cyber Awareness, Disaster Management, and Drone Training have been incorporated, alongside simulator training to address modern challenges. Collaborations with organisations such as DRDO, ISRO, and NPCIL provide cadets with valuable insights into advanced research and the peaceful uses of technology. Initiatives like Skill Manthan and Kaushal Camps are being organised to align cadets' capabilities with industry requirements. Similarly, Idea and Innovation Camps encourage creativity and entrepreneurship, preparing cadets to contribute towards 'Swarnim Bharat'.

- In the current training year, the emphasis has been given on idea/innovation and start-up awareness to NCC Cadets. Three workshops have been conducted till date and further workshops by experts pan-India on Start-Up and Idea/Innovation is planned thereby providing the cadets an opportunity to showcase their innovative ideas and solutions to real-world challenges, emphasising the importance of entrepreneurship and teamwork. The idea/innovation competition is being conducted by all state Directorates which has engaged cadets thereby providing an opportunity to think outside the box, develop their concepts and contribute meaningfully to the NCC's mission of nation-building.
- In alignment with the government's push for digital transactions, NCC has disbursed over 07 lakh cadets with Rs 298 crore digitally last year for uniform purchases to the entitled cadets. This initiative not only simplifies the process but also ensures timely transfers reinforcing NCC's commitment to modernisation.

Training

- Certificate Examinations: In the training year 2023-24, a total of 6,20,564 NCC cadets appeared for the certificate examinations. Of these, 5,03,350 cadets successfully passed and were awarded NCC 'A', 'B', and 'C' certificates.
- Annual Training Camp/Combined Annual Training Camps: The NCC conducted 1,162 Annual Training Camps and Combined Annual Training Camps during the year, with participation from 5,44,894 cadets, reflecting significant engagement within the youth pan India.
- National Integration Camps: Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat (EBSB) camps are being conducted to foster National Integration and increase awareness about heritage and culture of different states on a reciprocal basis. A total of 34 EBSB Camps were conducted during the year wherein 13,550 cadets imbibed national cultural diversity. Besides, Special National Integration Camps were conducted to make cadets understand and value the rich heritage of cultures that forge unity despite the diverse languages, traditions and religions of our country. This year eight SNICs were conducted at Rangreth, Kakinada, Kevadiya, Jaisalmer, Wokha (Nagaland), Kavaratti, Sri Vijayapuram and Delhi which witnessed participation of 2,474 cadets from across the country.
- Centrally Organised Camps: During the year, three distinguished centrally organised camps were successfully held, the All India Thal Sainik Camp, the All India Vayu Sena Camp, and the All India Nau Sena Camp. Through rigorous training and collaborative experiences, 2,757 selected cadets not only enhanced their leadership and teamwork abilities but also deepened their national pride and shared purpose, shaping them into well-rounded individuals ready to contribute to the nation's growth.

Service Training

- Army Wing Activities: As part of its annual training initiatives, the NCC Army Wing Cadets were provided with invaluable exposure to the armed forces' ethos and lifestyle through various attachment programs. A total of 21,598 cadets participated in 12 day attachment training with Army units. Additionally, 100 Senior Wing cadets attended specialised training at the Officers Training Academy (OTA), Chennai, in Oct 2024, while 250 Senior Division cadets gained experience at the Indian Military Academy (IMA), Dehradun, in Dec 2024. Complementing these efforts, 4,000 cadets (2,000 SD and 2,000 SW) gained practical insights through attachment with Military Hospitals for 12 days.
- Naval Wing Activities: The NCC's Naval Wing showcased its robust training initiatives through a variety of impactful programs. From 05 Jan to 16 Jan 2024, 200 cadets (175 SW and 25 SD) participated in attachment training at the prestigious Indian Naval Academy, Ezhimala. Maritime skills were further honed through the All India NCC Yacht-

ing Regatta (AIYR), held at INS Chilka from 14 Oct to 21 Oct 2024, involving 102 cadets (51 SD and 51 SW). Special Yachting Camps were conducted in Dec 2024 at INWTCs in Kochi, Goa, and Vizag for 100 cadets, while Sea Training for 240 SD cadets was organised at Vizag and Mumbai from 11 Dec to 22 Dec 2024. Technical Attachment Camps for 204 cadets (150 SD and 54 SW) were held at Lonavala and Jamnagar from 03 Sep to 15 Sept 2024, complemented by Whaler Sailing Camps under the Most Enterprising Naval Unif (MENU) initiative across 17 NCC Directorates. Besides, in line with the Prime Minister's directive to integrate technology, 58 rowing simulators were made operational, significantly enhancing training capabilities.

- Overseas Deployment: With an aim to evolve cadets into disciplined leaders with maritime expertise and a global outlook, on the international stage, 10 Cadets each were deployed aboard Training Squadron Ships at Kochi. The Spring Term covered Oman, Djibouti, Eritrea, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia (12 Apr to 18 May 2024), while the Autumn Term included Oman, Kuwait, UAE, Iran, and Djibouti (22 Sep to 30 Oct 2024).

- Air Wing Activities: On similar lines of Air and Naval wing activities, NCC's Air Wing provided extensive exposure to aviation and Air Force training. Attachment training for 200 SD and SW cadets was conducted at various Air Force Stations and the Air Force Academy, Dundigal. Flying training remained a highlight, with over 3,500 flying hours logged and 4,000 cadets gaining experience on NCC Microflight aircraft from Jan to Oct 2024. Additionally, 35 flying simulators provided advanced, technology-driven training.

Youth Exchange Programme

Through the programme, the NCC offers cadets unique opportunities to connect with peers from across the world, broadening their horizons and promoting cultural understanding. The 2024 Republic Day Camp, the largest YEP event to date, brought together 24 countries from every inhabited continent. With 16 Heads of Delegations, 14 Staff Officers, and 219 cadets, this event underscored the spirit of international cooperation and cultural exchange, reflecting the true essence of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam - 'The world is one family'. The outgoing YEP also witnessed 16 officers and 98 cadets from India travelling to countries such as the UK, Vietnam, Singapore, Russia, Bhutan and Kazakhstan etc., further strengthening global ties and fostering international camaraderie.

Social Service & Community Development Activities

Nation-building is a cornerstone of NCC training, focusing on instilling values of civic duty, responsibility, and national pride. Through activities like community service, environmental campaigns, and blood donation drives, cadets are encouraged to actively contribute to society. NCC Cadets actively participated in Swachhta Hi Seva, Ek Pedh Maa Ke Naam, International Day of Yoga, World Environment Day and Vibrant Village Programme

DEFENCE ACCOUNTS DEPARTMENT

Project DTS 2.0

Defence Travel System was primarily started to cater as an alternate solution for travel warrants of officers & PBOs. The system has since been extended to train tickets, air travel and foreign ticket booking through authorised agents. Facility extended to civilians also i.e DAD, Coast Guard & DRDO. Online submission of TA/DA claims for DAD and Army Officers has also been implemented in 2022-23. Currently, DTS has been upgraded to DTS 2.0 in 2024.

DTS 2.0 represents a critical upgrade. It is being built on the more robust Spring Boot Framework and WildFly Application server, ensuring compatibility with latest software versions.

OROP-III

Ministry of Defence vide their letter No. 1(2)/2023/D(Pen/Pol) dated 10.07.2024 has issued orders for revision of pension/family pension of Armed Forces Personnel under OROP scheme w.e.f. 01.07.2024. Revision tables have been notified vide GoI, MoD letter dated 04.09.2024. Accordingly, CGDA has carried out the revision and ensured payment of revised pension to defence pensioners through SPARSH in the month of Sep'2024 itself.

Raksha Pension Samadhan Ayojan (RPSA)

RPSA are held every year at identified locations. 7 RPSAs were organized during the calendar year 2023-24, and 3 RPSAs out of the 7 planned in the year 2024-25 have been held up to Nov' 2024. Number of cases resolved during period are more than one thousand.

Digital Life Certificate (DLC 3.0) campaign

DAD is a major stake holder in DLC Campaign promulgated by DoP&PW. All the SPARSH Service Centres at 200 locations across the country have been geared up to facilitate pensioners identification with emphasis on Face Authentication Technology. Mega DLC campaign was held at Hyderabad on 12th and 13th Nov 2024, where more than 1000 pensioners attended. DLCs in r/o approx. 22.85 lakh Defence Pensioners have been generated till 22.11.2024.

SAINIK SCHOOLS SOCIETY

The Government has approved the initiative of setting up of 100 new Sainik Schools in partnership mode with NGOs/Trusts/Private schools/State Government schools in a graded manner, starting from Class 6 onwards. As on date, Sainik Schools Society has approved 45 new Sainik Schools under partnership mode, of which Memorandum of Agreement has been signed with 41 schools.

Forty (40) of these schools have started functioning from academic session 2024-25. Among the 40 schools is Sainik School, Jaipur which was formally inaugurated by Raksha Mantri in September 2024. The 100 new Sainik Schools in partnership mode are apart from the existing 33 Sainik Schools already functioning under the erstwhile pattern.

(The Full Oped Will be available on our website www.kashmirconvener.com)

Continued From P1...

J&K braces

According to him, the weather is expected to remain generally dry from January 13 to 15.

In its advisory, the MeT has said that in view of fresh snowfall, sub-freezing temperature & icy conditions over roads in plains and higher reaches, the tourists, travelers and transporters are advised to plan accordingly & follow administration and traffic advisory. "There is a possibility of heavy snow at isolated higher reaches during 4th night to 5th late night," the advisory reads.

Furthermore, the night temperature improved at multiple places across the Valley. Srinagar recorded a minimum temperature of minus 2.2 degree Celsius while Kupwara recorded a minimum temperature of 1.6 degree Celsius.

However, Gulmarg, a famous ski-resort, recorded a low of minus 4.5 degree Celsius while Pahalgam, a famous tourist destination recorded a minimum temperature of minus 4.6 degree Celsius. Qazigund, a gateway of Kashmir, has recorded a low of minus 7.3 degree Celsius while Kokernag in South Kashmir recorded minus 5.5 degree Celsius.

Srinagar admin

conditions to ensure their safety and prevent disruptions.

It reads as in view of the forecast, the Mechanical Engineering Department (MH&ED), Public Works Department (PWD), Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDC), Jai Shakti, and Health & Medical Education departments have been directed to remain prepared for snow clearance and related works.

It reads that the field staff of these departments have been instructed to stay at their respective headquarters to provide immediate assistance when required.

"The administration has also shared emergency contact numbers for the public to reach out in case of any need, and the contact number as District Emergency Operation Centre (DEOC): 0194-2483651, 0194-2457552, 0194-2457543, MH&ED: 0194-2497458, Srinagar Municipal Corporation: 0194-2470466, R&B, Rajbagh: 0194-2313751, Traffic Department: 0194-2450022, Fire & Emergency Control Room: 0194-2453224 and Animal Husbandry Control Room: 0194-2956201.

The authorities have advised people to remain cautious, follow weather updates, and take necessary precautions to avoid any untoward incidents during the expected snowfall.

Yellow Weather

January 5, with gradual improvement anticipated from January 6.

Clear snow from rooftops to prevent structural damage. Ensure adequate stocks of food, water, and essential emergency supplies. Follow official advisories issued by government authorities.

Avoid unnecessary travel, especially during periods of heavy snowfall.

Stay away from unstable snow zones to prevent accidents or avalanches. Do not overlook weather updates or emergency advisories.

JKDMA has advised to remain vigilant and take necessary precautions to ensure safety during this period of adverse weather. It has also shared the emergency helpline 112 for assistance.

Srinagar's weather station said on Friday in its forecast that weather will be generally cloudy with light snow at isolated higher reaches.

Restoring normalcy

we are trying to provide the electricity as per schedule. Whenever a system develops any snag, every attempt is made to rectify the fault at the earliest."

Asked about the reports that the name of Kashmir may be changed to Kashyap, Omar said, "There is no such proposal and no one can change J&K's name without the government's consent. Some media outlet ran it but then corrected it."

Pertinently, Union Home Minister, Amit Shah on Thursday described Kashmir as the land of Kashyap Rishi saying that it's an inseparable part of India's soul.

Shah, while addressing a gathering in New Delhi after launching a book "Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh: Through the Ages" had said, "There is every possibility that Kashmir may have been named after Kashyap Rishi."

Ready to deal

are ready and on standby for operations, with men and machinery on alert in all wards. "We have also introduced semi-manual machinery – the hand blowers, which will be used to clear the snowfall if it occurs, and these blowers are currently in the testing phase," he said.

Dr Owais said snow clearance operations will be conducted in a phased manner, similar to previous instances, with priority given to major roads connecting schools, colleges, hospitals and other essential services.

"We have identified 5,631 lanes and by-lanes and nearly 1,600 kilometres of road length under SMC Srinagar's jurisdiction, while the remaining roads fall under the R&B and Mechanical Engineering Departments," the SMC Commissioner said.

When contacted, officials from the R&B Department said they are prepared for snowfall, with their men and machinery on standby and ready to deal with any situation if snowfall occurs.

Additional Deputy Commissioner of Srinagar, Dr Khalid Hussain Malik, briefed KNO about winter arrangements ahead of possible snowfall. He said a control room has been set up in Srinagar for 24×7 monitoring. "SMC is in touch with other prominent departments, including the KPDC, Mechanical Engineering Department, R&B and others," he said.

Our snow cutters, machinery and other resources are on standby and will be deployed accordingly when needed, Malik added.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah earlier said the government is ready to tackle weather-related challenges. "The last spell of snow provided us with valuable experience. Wherever the work was done well, it will be repeated, and any shortcomings will be addressed this time," he said

Fight for

Replying to a query about making the officials accountable, he stated that the government will ensure accountability in every department and all the irregularities will be exposed.

Meanwhile, Choudhary reviewed the arrangements ahead of the snowfall prediction, saying that his visit was aimed to ensure that the people don't face any hardships in case weather turns inclement.

"The credit goes to the Chief Minister Omar Abdullah for keeping administration on toes during the recent snowfall," he said

GOC White

KINS, the senior officers reviewed the preparedness of troops deployed in these critical border areas. Commending the soldiers for their unwavering commitment to peace and national security, the GOC lauded their dedication and emphasized the need for constant vigilance amidst evolving challenges.

In a parallel engagement, the GOC also held an insightful interaction with trainee IAS officers.

"Discussions revolved around national security, effective governance, and fostering civil-military synergy to build a stronger and more cohesive India". The session highlighted the importance of collaboration between the armed forces and civil administration in addressing contemporary challenges and ensuring the nation's overall progress.

en preserving the past and planning for the future.

Katra-Srinagar

Meanwhile, Northern Railway on Friday announced train timings for the Katra-Srinagar route.

According to the timing schedule, the Vande Bharat Express train will depart from Katra at 8.10 a.m. and arrive in Srinagar at 11.20 a.m.

Mail Express will run twice every day from Katra -- departure at 9.50 a.m. and arrival in Srinagar at 1.10 pm; departure at 3.00 p.m. and arrival in Srinagar at 6.20 pm

Train timings from Srinagar to Katra for the Mail Express: departure from Srinagar at 8.55 am and arrival in Katra at 12.05 pm The second run will be at 3:10 pm and arrival in Katra is at 6:30 pm.

Vande Bharat will depart from Srinagar at 12.45 p.m. and arrive in Katra at 3.55 pm

The Vande Bharat train will start at 7 pm from Delhi and arrive in Srinagar at 8 am

ASI Discovers

anticipate that the site will shed new light on the Neolithic era's cultural and historical context in the region. However, the discovery has sparked tensions in the area. The land, which hosts the Neolithic site, is

also the proposed location for a new campus of the National Institute of Technology (NIT). Moreover, the land is vital to the livelihoods of thousands of families in 12 nearby villages who rely on its agricultural output. Residents have been protesting for weeks, demanding the protection of the land to safeguard their livelihoods.

Local community members expressed concern over the competing priorities of historical preservation and developmental projects. "This land is not just history; it's our present and future. While we respect the importance of the discovery, the government must also consider the well-being of the farmers and their families," said a resident of one of the affected villages.

Authorities are now faced with a challenging task: balancing the preservation of a historically significant site with the developmental needs of the region and the livelihood concerns of its residents. Further decisions on the site's status and the proposed NIT campus are expected in the coming weeks, as the issue continues to garner attention from various stakeholders.

CS fixes target

material in local languages for easy comprehension besides sending bulk SMSs to the targeted consumers.

He directed for reaching out to each panchayat with full fledged programs distributing IEC materials in local languages besides demonstrating educational videos and success stories there. He enjoined upon the Discoms to designate nodal officers among their engineers to accomplish these tasks with relevant feedback to their higher-ups.

The Chief Secretary observed that such schemes are reform-oriented with direct benefits accruing to public. He asked for making concerted efforts to increase the number of applicants and timely installations in favour of each of them. He also fixed a target for the Discoms to achieve installation of around 30,000 solar rooftops across the districts of the UT. He advised for intensifying the outreach campaign till the desired outcomes are achieved.

Principal Secretary, PDD, H Rajesh Prasad, informed the meeting that the financial institutions/banks are extending loans at a rate of 7 percent in order to make the installations easier for the consumers. Besides, the central financial assistance is being directly disbursed among the applicants in their bank accounts only after 15 days of solar rooftop installation by the vendors.

He revealed that the savings under this scheme, even if installed after taking credit from banks, are attractive. He informed that a subsidy of Rs 33,000/kw is being given by GoI with additional subsidy of Rs 3000/kw by UT government upto the installation capacity of 3 kw in favour of domestic consumers. It was further disclosed that around 11,000 applications had been received by the respective Discoms in Jammu and Kashmir divisions while 617 installations had been done till date. It was added that the savings are going to increase with future revisions in power tariff. It was informed that this scheme is going to substantially improve our progress on restricting AT&C losses bringing efficiency in power supply to the consumers.

Agri Minister

Highlighting the importance of timely and efficient utilisation of funds, the Minister stressed the need for expeditious and judicious expenditure under HADP, CAPEX and CSS projects. He emphasised the need for maintaining highest standards of transparency and

Fateh E Khawani

It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of Abdul Rahim Kathjoo, son of Ghulam Hasan Kathjoo, resident of Naidyar Rainawari, who passed away on 02nd January 2025. A Fateh (prayer) in his memory will be held on 5th January 2025 at 10:30 AM at his graveyard near Zindshah Masjid. We request all friends, relatives, and well-wishers to join us in offering prayers for the departed soul. May Allah grant him eternal peace and provide strength to his family during this difficult time.

From Family

accountability throughout the expenditure process.

Dar directed the officers to ensure that only genuine and high-quality inputs including pesticides, fertilisers and seeds are made available to farmers. He also underlined the significance of stringent enforcement of norms to prevent circulation of substandard products that could harm agricultural productivity and farmer livelihoods.

The Minister instructed the officers to actively engage with farmers in every area and educate them about the latest farmer-friendly technologies in the agriculture sector.

NOTICE

This is an information for general public that in my Driving licence bearing Registration No JK15 20130007739, my father's name has been Mistakenly written as Hidayat ullah Mir. While as my Actual and correct Father's name is Hidayat ullah Meer. Now i want to apply for its correction in this regard any person having any objection he/she may file the Objections in office of the Assistant Regional Transport Office Bandipora with in a period of seven days from the date of the publication of this notice, after that no objection shall be accepted.

Farooq Ahmad Meer.
S/O Hidayat ullah Meer.
R/O Chettibandi Bandipora.

NOTICE

This is an information for general public that the Name of my Daughter has been Mistakenly written in her Birth certificate issued by Municipal council Bandipora as Zoya Gulzar, while as her actual and correct name is Aqsa Gulzar. Now i want to apply for its correction in this regard any person having any objection he/she may file the Objections in office of the Municipal council Bandipora with in a period of seven days from the date of the publication of this notice, after that no objection shall be accepted.

Gulzar Ahmad Gojar kaladudi.
F/O Aqsa Gulzar.
R/O Sumlar Shokbaba Bandipora.

NOTICE

I have lost the Date of Birth Certificate of my Daughtet somewhere. Now i am applying for its duplicate. If anybody has any objection in this regard may contact Registrar Birth and Death SMC Karan Nagar Sringar within a weeks time.

Name -Ajwa shabir
D/o Shabir ahmad najar
DOB-02-07-2021

NOTICE

I have lost the Date of Birth Certificate of my Daughtet somewhere. Now i am applying for its duplicate. If anybody has any objection in this regard may contact Registrar Birth and Death SMC Karan Nagar Sringar within a weeks time.

Name -Hoorain khan
D/o Mohammad waseem khan
DOB-29-11-2021

مدرسۃ البنات دار العلوم رحیمیہ بانڈی پورہ

کی تعمیر و تکمیل کے صدقہ جاریہ میں خصوصی حصہ لیجئے، موقع غنیمت جانیں

اللہ تبارک و تعالیٰ کے فضل و کرم سے لڑکیوں کے لئے زیر تعمیر ”مدرسۃ البنات“ کی پہلی عمارت کی آخری منزل مکمل ہونے جا رہی ہے۔ اب اس میں اہم مرحلہ چھت کے بنانے کا ہے۔ انجینئرز حضرات کے تجویز کے مطابق چھت میں تقریباً 33 ٹن لوہا لگے گا۔ اس کا لیور اور میٹرل مکمل مالا کر خرچ تقریباً 40 لاکھ روپیہ بنتا ہے۔ چھت پر لگنے والے ٹین کے شیٹ کامرطلا اس کے بعد جسے جس الگ سے تقریباً 10 لاکھ روپیہ لگنے کا تخمینہ ہے۔

عمارت کی چھت کی حیثیت سرپوش کی ہوتی ہے جو سارے کام کی سترپوشی اور سہا پہن کرتا ہے۔ لہذا انجینوں اور مستورات اس کے ادارے کی سرپوش اور سہا پہن کا انتظام کرنا اللہ تعالیٰ کی جانب سے رحمت اور سہا پہن نصیب ہونے کا ذریعہ بنے گا۔ ان شاء اللہ تعالیٰ۔ اس کارنیر میں حصہ لینے کے لئے مدرسۃ البنات کا یہ اکاؤنٹ نمبر متعین کیا گیا ہے:

Account Number	0727010100000200
Title of account	Madrasa Tul Banat Darul Uloom Raheemiyah
Branch	JK Bank Branch Nishat Park Bandipora Kashmir
IFSC Code	JAKAONIPARK

اس سے قبل بھی اس تعمیر میں بہت سے خوش نصیب حضرات نے کمرے بنا کر یا ان کا حصہ لیکر صدقہ جاریہ رکھنے کے لئے اپنا حصہ ادا فرمایا۔ اب پھر اللہ پاک نے یہ موقعہ عطا فرمایا کہ شوق رکھنے والے لوگ اس کام میں بھی حصہ لیکر اپنے لئے، اپنے والدین کے لئے، عزیز و متعلقین کے لئے صدقہ جاریہ متعین کر سکتے ہیں۔ اپنی خواتین کو بھی ترغیب دیں تاکہ وہ بھی اپنا حصہ اس کارنیر میں لگائیں کیونکہ یہ مدرسہ مستورات کے لئے مخصوص ہے۔ ایک کمرے کی لاگت ساڑھے پانچ لاکھ روپے ہے جتنی نوپس ہو کر وہ میں یا چھت میں حصہ لیں۔ اللہ قبول فرمائے۔

اہم نمبردارش یہ ہے کہ بنک کھاتہ میں رقم ڈالنے کے بعد نوٹ نمبر 9419089250 یا 8899101091 پر سکرین شاٹ ڈال دیں یا وائس آپ نیج کے ذریعہ پرافٹا کر دیں نیز اپنا نام اور ایڈرس روانہ کریں تاکہ رسید پیجیجے میں ہولت ہو کیونکہ اب یہ تفصیلات بنک سے دستیاب نہیں ہوتیں۔

محمد رحمت اللہ کشمیری
ناظم دار العلوم رحیمیہ بانڈی پورہ شہر

Ryan Rickelton, Temba Bavuma centuries drive South Africa's day

South Africa 316 for 4 (Rickelton 176*, Bavuma 106) vs Pakistan

Ryan Rickelton, promoted to open the batting in Tony de Zorzi's injury-enforced absence, and Temba Bavuma, enjoying the form of his career, both scored hundreds on a perfect batting day at Newlands. The pair shared a 235-run stand, the highest fourth-wicket partnership by a South African pair against Pakistan and at Newlands.

The pair played perfectly complementary roles, with Rickelton scoring heavily on the off side (102 of his 176 runs came there) and Bavuma plundering the on-side. Together, they reeled off some exquisite drives and while Rickelton's runs came in the areas straight down the ground, Bavuma was excellent on the flick and pull.

The volume of runs tells as much about the flatness of the pitch as it does about Pakistan's attack, which lacked genuine pace. That may have been the only way to force an error on a surface that is playing exponentially better than it did last year when a vicious pitch saw the match end in 107 overs. Then, 23 wickets fell on the opening day. Now, the same strip which has similar mottled green patches, has played placidly and is expected to get better for batting over the next day and a half.

The ease of conditions aside, the runs still had to be scored. Rickelton and Bavuma put on a fine display against a Pakistan side that suffered an early blow. They lost Saim Ayub to what has turned out to be a match-ending

injury. Ayub twisted his ankle in the field and was taken to hospital for further scans. The PCB confirmed he would take no further part in the Test, and the extent of his injury would be assessed by specialists in London. While shoulders dropped after Ayub was



stretched off, Pakistan came back well and took three wickets in the last 40 minutes of the morning session. Aiden Markram, Wiaan Mulder, newly installed at No.3, and Tristan Stubbs will all question their shots after they got through Mohammad Abbas' initial spell, where he posed the greatest threat.

Abbas bowled 19.3 consecutive overs at SuperSport Park last weekend for a career-best 6 for 54 and took the new ball at Newlands. His first delivery hit Markam on the front pad and Pakistan thought they had the first

wicket. Umpire Nitin Menon was unmoved so they reviewed but replays showed it was clipping the top of off. Markram survived on umpire's call.

Rickelton was the more free-flowing of the opening pair and scored seven boundaries to

No actual damage was done as, in the next over, Markram slashed at a ball that just moved away and inside-edged through to Mohammad Rizwan. Abbas' return after a seven-over break found Mulder's outside edge to give Pakistan a second wicket. And Pakistan burgled another on the stroke of lunch when Stubbs stayed back to a tossed-up ball from part-time spinner Salman Agha and edged to Rizwan.

Pakistan squandered the opportunity to maximise their advantage after the break when they stuck with Aamer Jamal at one end and Agha on the other instead of bringing on one of their strike bowlers and allowed Bavuma to ease in. Bavuma got his first runs when he steered Jamal to deep third and unfurled a series of gorgeous drives to continue his fine form this summer.

Masood brought Mir Hamza on five overs after the break and Shahzad after eight overs. By then, Rickelton was into the 60s. He hit two boundaries off Shahzad's first second-session over and the sting was taken out of Pakistan's attack. They allowed South Africa easy run-scoring opportunities with the field spread and a variety of lengths.

Rickelton entered the 90s with back-to-back boundaries off Shahzad and quietly worked his way to 99. He only faced one ball in the next two overs as Bavuma kept strike but when Agha bowled one on his pads, he whipped it away to bring up a second hundred in three Tests. Two overs later Bavuma brought up fifty off 82 balls and South Africa went to tea on 184 for 3.

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Justin Langer named as London Spirit's new head coach

Justin Langer, the former Australia men's head coach, has been appointed as Trevor Bayliss's replacement at London Spirit.

Langer, who played 105 Tests for Australia between 1993 and 2007, coached the squad from 2018 until 2022, including during a memorable 2-2 drawn Ashes series in 2019. Australia won the ICC Men's T20 World Cup under his guidance in 2021, before going on to win the Ashes 4-0 on home soil.

He has a strong affinity with Lord's, the home ground of London Spirit, having played for Middlesex as an overseas player between 1998 and 2000. He also became an Honorary Life Member of MCC in 2015.

He has previously coached Perth Scorchers in the Big Bash and is currently head coach of Lucknow Super Giants in the Indian Premier League.

"I'm thrilled to be appointed to this role with London Spirit, and I'm excited to experience 'The Hundred'," Langer said. "I'm looking forward to being a part of the tournament later this year, and working with such a talented group of players and coaches."

London Spirit General Manager, Fraser Stewart, added: "We are delighted to have secured the services of a highly respected and talented coach in Justin Langer. He excelled in the interview process, which took place before Christmas, and came out on top in what was a hugely competitive field.

"Justin has a real passion for the aims and objectives that we have for the team, in seeing London Spirit competing at the right end of table, and for 'The Hundred' title. He has an impressive CV in coaching and we are thrilled to have him on board."

Bayliss, who left last month after three years in the role, had replaced the late Shane Warne as Spirit's head coach ahead of the 2022 season, when Eoin Morgan captained the squad to the play-offs. However, the team won only three games and lost 11 in the last two years since Morgan's retirement.



Chris Lynn's 51-ball 88 seals Strikers' comfortable win

Adelaide Strikers 143 for 5 (Lynn 88, Zampa 2-29) beat Melbourne Renegades 142 for 9 (Brown 66, Thornton 3-22) by five wickets

Chris Lynn unleashed on Melbourne Renegades, powering Adelaide Strikers to their first BBL win in four games.

Moved up from No.3, Lynn dominated the 104-run opening stand with D'Arcy Short that ensured Adelaide's five-wicket win on Thursday night at Marvel Stadium. Lynn belted 88 from just 51 balls, with 10 fours and four sixes, as Adelaide romped to 143 for 5 in 17.1 overs.

It is Lynn's highest BBL score since the 2019-20 tournament and his first half-century in this campaign.



Adelaide were second-last before Thursday's game and the badly needed win improved their record to 2-4, while the Renegades are fifth on 2-3. After four overs, Lynn had belted 37 and Short was yet to score, having faced just three balls.

Short finally scored a single in the fifth over and was the first wicket to fall, bowled by Tom Rogers in the 11th over for 27 from 20 balls.

A century went begging for Lynn in the next over when he belted Adam Zampa straight to Laurie Evans at cover. Lynn threw his head back in frustration.

Wickets fell steadily for Strikers but Lynn and Short had scored so heavily that the result was never in doubt.

After losing the toss and looking shaky at 40 for 2 after five overs, Renegades consolidated behind opener Josh Brown and put the pressure on the Adelaide bowlers.

Brown had belted 66 from 41 balls, with five fours and six sixes, and at halfway the Renegades were looking solid at 80 for 2. But legspinner Cameron Boyce had him caught at long-off in the 14th over and that proved a massive turning point.

From a solid-enough 100 for 4, Renegades lost all momentum and no other batsman scored more than 21.

Opening bowler Henry Thornton was the pick of the attack with 3-20 and after being smacked for 20 off one over, spinner Lloyd Pope rallied and finished with 2-34 from his three overs.

Sutherland looked promising at No.7, hitting a six and a four in his 18, but Pope had him caught behind on video review in a significant blow. Alex Ross captained Strikers after Matthew Short was ruled out again because of a toe injury.

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