



In address to Nation, Prez Murmu bats for 'One Nation One Election'

HT NEWS NETWORK
 NEW DELHI, JAN 25

President Droupadi Murmu on Saturday advocated for the "One Nation One Election" initiative, asserting it has the potential to redefine "good governance" in the country by promoting consistency in governance, preventing policy paralysis, mitigating resource diversion, and alleviating financial



burdens on the state. In her address to the nation ahead of the 76th Republic Day, she emphasised the government's ongoing efforts to "eliminate remnants of a colonial mindset that have lingered in the country for decades" and cited the replacement of the British-era criminal laws with three new modern laws. "We have been
 CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 2

Republic Day Address of LG Manoj Sinha to the people of J&K on 76th Republic Day

HT NEWS NETWORK
 SRINAGAR, JAN 25

My dear brothers, sisters and lovable children,

On the eve of the 76th Republic Day of our great nation, I extend my heartfelt greetings to every citizen of Jammu and Kashmir. This day

reminds us of the enduring values enshrined in the Constitution of India. It is a day

of pride, reflection, and reaffirmation of our commitment
 CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 11

President Murmu approves Gallantry awards to 93 Armed & CAP forces personnel; 11 posthumous

AGENCIES
 NEW DELHI, JAN 25 (UND)

On the eve of 76th Republic Day, President Droupadi Murmu on Saturday approved Gallantry awards to 93 Armed Forces and Central Armed Police Forces personnel, including 11 posthumous. The awards include two Kirti Chakras, including one posthumous; 14

Shaurya Chakras, including three posthumous; one Bar to Sena Medal (Gallantry); 66 Sena Medals, including seven posthumous; two Nao Sena Medal (Gallantry) and eight Vayu Sena Medals (Gallantry), a Defence Ministry statement said. Kirti Chakras have been awarded to Major Manjit, Punjab 22 RR
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'Vibrant Village' programme reducing 'dil ki doori' between Delhi, rural population: Amit Shah

HT NEWS NETWORK
 NEW DELHI, JAN 25

Lauding the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for hosting people from far-flung villages on national events, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said that "Vibrant Village" programme is a step towards reducing 'dil ki doori' between Delhi and rural population.



Addressing a group of sarpanchs, deputy sarpanchs, women entrepreneurs, and students
 CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 2

انتقال پر ملال
 سنیر صحافی شہد رشید کو صدمہ،
 والد محترم انتقال کر گئے

سنیر صحافی اور روزنامہ سٹیٹ رپورٹر کے چیف ایڈیٹر شہد رشید کے والد محترم غلام محمد تانتڑے ساکنہ پارنیوہ پڑگام 25 جنوری 2025 بروز پتھوار شام داعی کو لیبیک کہہ کر خالق حقیقی سے جا ملے
 اناللہ وانا الیہ راجعون
 مرحوم کے انتقال پر صحافی برادری نے رنج و غم کا اظہار کرتے ہوئے دکھ زدہ خاندان خاص طور پر شہد رشید سے تعزیت کا اظہار کیا ہے اور اللہ تعالیٰ سے دعا کی کہ مرحوم کو کروٹ کروٹ جنت الفردوس میں جگہ دیں اور لواحقین کو یہ صدمہ عظیم برداشت کرنے کی توفیق بخشے

TEAM HT Congratulates
 Basit Nisar, his Father Nisar Ahmad Bhat

Basit Shines with Flying Colours:
 Fetches Gold Medal in Bachelors in Aeronautical Engineering

Basit Nisar Bhat has been awarded the gold medal in B.Tech Aeronautical Engineering from B.S. Abdur Rahman Crescent Institute of Science and Technology during the institution's 14th Convocation Ceremony on January 23 in Chennai. This achievement reflects both Basit's exceptional academic performance and consistent dedication throughout his course distinguished him among his peers. A statement said that the prestigious award was presented by M. Vellaipandi, Director General of the STQC Directorate, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India. Basit's high-quality education provided by the Crescent Institute of Science and Technology, a statement said.

76TH
REPUBLIC DAY
 GREETINGS TO THE PEOPLE OF
JAMMU & KASHMIR
GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

DIPK-11235/24 Date: 25-1-25

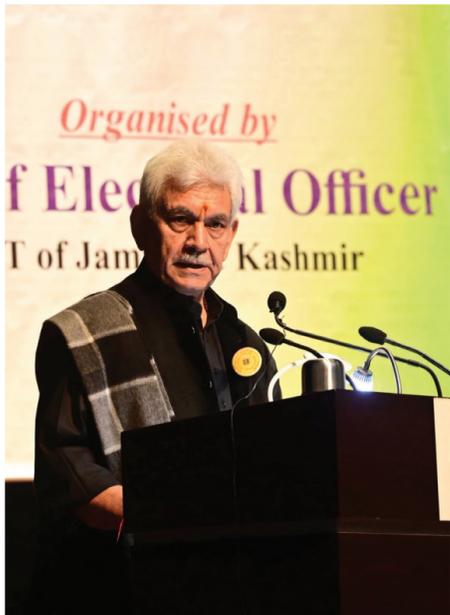
On National Voters Day, LG Sinha terms 2024 Lok Sabha, Assembly elections in J&K historic

HT NEWS NETWORK
JAMMU, JAN 25

Terming the 2024 Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in J&K historic since independence, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday said that not a single bullet was fired, no stone was pelted, and repolling wasn't required even at a single polling booth across the Union Territory.

Speaking at an event organized to celebrate National Voters' Day in Jammu, LG Sinha, according to the news agency, said, "Coordinated efforts between the administration and security forces led to an unprecedented voter turnout in 2024, the highest in 35 years."

"This record participation by the people sent a resounding message that they are equal stakeholders in peace and democracy. Remarkably, not a



single bullet was fired, even at a single polling booth," he added. He congratulated the

Election Commission of India (ECI) for holding impartial and spectacular polls and praised the efforts of officials who managed a massive voter list of 89 lakh people, which was revised after delimitation. "This included 4,27,000 first-time voters. The administration ensured seamless operations across 11,838 polling stations, and not a single instance of repolling was recorded," he said.

The LG also congratulated Jammu and Kashmir for receiving the "Best Performing State/UT Award" from the ECI. "This recognition is a testament to the dedication of officers and the people of J&K who participated in the democratic process in record numbers," he said.

LG Sinha paid rich tributes to the framers of the Constitution who empowered the Commission to hold free and fair elec-

tions. "The ECI has played a pivotal role in establishing democracy in India, which is proudly known as the 'mother of democracy.' Its ability to declare results on the same day as counting is unparalleled," he noted.

LG Sinha highlighted that India's election model has become a global benchmark, with countries from both the Global North and South learning from its practices. "The ECI, which has issued 97 crore voter ID cards, continues to uphold democratic values across the country, ensuring smooth and credible elections," he said. National Voters' Day, he said, holds immense significance in India's democratic journey. "It's a day to celebrate the power of the vote, which empowers every citizen and strengthens the foundation of our democracy," LG Sinha added. KNO

Trial run completed as Vande Bharat Express reaches Srinagar station

HT NEWS NETWORK
SRINAGAR, JAN 25

The trial run of the first Vande Bharat Express train from Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Railway Station Katra, to Budgam has been successfully completed, railway officials said.

Officials informed the news agency that the trial run of the Vande Bharat Express train was completed on Saturday along Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL). They said the train arrived at Katra Railway Station on Friday, reached Srinagar on Saturday, and later returned back to Katra.

Vande Bharat Express ICF rakes 49 and 80 have been nominated for commercial operation in the USBRL section. "These Vande Bharat Express trains are uniquely designed for cold conditions during the winter season with feature advanced technologies to ensure comfort, safety, and reliability," an official said.

Chief Area Manager of Srinagar Northern Railways, Saqib Yousuf,

said the Prime Minister's dream of connecting Kashmir with the rest of the country has come true. Vande Bharat train has reached the Kashmir valley.

"This train has been designed in such a way that it can run even in mountainous and snowy conditions," he said, adding, "eating ducts have been installed in the toilets. Silicon heating tabs have been installed in the pipes and tanks so that the water does not freeze. This is a very modern train."

The train also passed through the iconic Anji Khad Bridge, India's first cable-stayed rail bridge, and the Chenab Bridge, which is the world's highest railway bridge.

Specially designed to withstand the cold climate of the Kashmir Valley, this is the third Vande Bharat train introduced for Jammu & Kashmir, but the first to serve the Kashmir Valley. The Northern Railway zone will oversee its operations and maintenance. The train includes advanced heating systems to prevent the freezing of water and bio-toilet tanks.

It also features a unique air-brake system and warm air circulation to ensure smooth operation in sub-zero temperatures.

Additional modifications include embedded heating elements in the windshield to clear frost during harsh winters. Triple-layered windscreens with heating filaments provide clear visibility for the driver, even during snowfall. These enhancements make the train capable of operating efficiently in temperatures as low as -30°C. Following the successful trial run, railway authorities are preparing to launch the commercial operation of the Vande Bharat Express. This new train service is expected to play a role in boosting tourism and ensuring more convenient travel.

"The Vande Bharat Express will not only make our travel easier but also bring more tourists to the valley, boosting our economy and culture," said Ashiq Ahmad, a traveller. The Railways has completed the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project, spanning 272 kilometres. KNO

J&K Bye-Polls: Top NC Leadership Reaches Out to MP Ruhullah Mehdi

HT NEWS NETWORK
SRINAGAR, JAN 25

Amid indications that the National Conference (NC) is fielding its senior leader Nasir Aslam Wani from the Budgam Assembly segment, he, along with Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary, on Saturday reached out to Member of Parliament Aga Ruhullah Mehdi in an apparent move to "mollify" him.

In a sudden move, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's advisor and trusted aide, Nasir Aslam Wani, along with Deputy CM Surinder Choudhary, arrived at NC MP Aga Ruhullah Mehdi's residence in central Kashmir's Budgam town.

The meeting took place at a time when serious differences have emerged between NC and Ruhullah Mehdi after the latter staged a protest outside CM Omar Abdullah's residence over the issue of the reservation policy.

Sources indicate that Ruhullah, who has represented the Budgam segment thrice in the Assembly, is not averse to the fielding of Wani from the Budgam seat.

After emerging from the meeting, Deputy CM Surinder Choudhary was all praise for Ruhullah. "I feel proud to meet Aga Ruhullah, who is not only a political leader but also a religious cleric," he said, as per the news agency.

Choudhary evaded a response to a question on who will be NC's candidate for the Budgam Assembly seat, where by-polls have to be held before April 20. "We have come for a cup of tea and let's talk about that only," he responded.

The bye-poll was necessitated after Omar Abdullah resigned from the Budgam seat to retain Ganderbal. Omar had won both Budgam and Ganderbal seats in the Assembly polls held last year. The Budgam polls have assumed significance as it is the first litmus test for Omar Abdullah, who is facing questions from different quarters over his poll promises. KNO

Woman burnt to death, husband injured in Bandipora fire mishap

HT NEWS NETWORK
BANDIPORA, JAN 25

A woman died while her husband suffered severe burn injuries after a fire broke out in a room they were putting up at the Beacon headquarters in the Sonerwani area of Bandipora district on Saturday.

An official told news agency that fire broke out in the room in which the couple suffered severe burn injuries. "Soon after fire was brought under control while the couple was shifted to district hospital Bandipora," he said.

He added that the woman, identified as Anjani Devi (30) of Uttar Pradesh was declared dead on arrival, while her husband, Parmanand, is in a critical condition.

He also said that the fire was brought under control with the help of police and fire tenders.

The cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained, and proceedings under Section 194 BNS have been initiated, the official added. KNO

Rajouri Deaths: Mystery remains unsolved for 50 days

HT NEWS NETWORK
SRINAGAR, JAN 25

The uncertainty and fear continues among the public in Badhaal area of Rajouri as the authorities are yet to ascertain the reasons behind 17 deaths in the hamlet in the last 50 days. Officials, who spoke to the news agency, said that all 14 patients from the affected village, who are under medical care in different hospitals are recovering.

He said that there is some breather at present as no fresh such case has been reported in the last three days while all people from the affected village are under proper surveillance so that they can get treatment on time in case any of them are found symptomatic.

He said that this is a fight against an invisible enemy, and various measures have been implemented to manage the situation but people

should not panic and cooperate with the government.

Locals from Badhaal village told KNO that they are in constant fear as the government is yet to get any clue about 17 deaths.

They said that they are dependent on their livestock that has been locked at Badhaal where government officials have been taking care of them but they want the mystery to be solved so that they can start anew.

FROM THE FRONT PAGE...

In address to Nation...

witnessing concerted efforts to change that mindset... Reforms of such magnitude require an audacity of vision," she said.

Highlighting the significance of the proposed bill aimed at synchronising election schedules across the country, Murmu noted, "The 'One Nation One Election' plan can offer numerous benefits, including enhanced governance and reduced financial strain."

In discussing legal reforms, she pointed out the need to replace the Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure, and the Indian Evidence Act with new laws reflective of Indian traditions.

She mentioned the introduction of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam, which prioritise the delivery of justice over mere punishment and place a strong emphasis on addressing crimes against women and children.

Reflecting on the significance of the Constitution, the President highlighted the progress achieved over the past 75 years.

"At the time of Independence, many parts of the country faced extreme poverty and hunger. However, we maintained a belief in ourselves and created conditions for growth," she said.

Noting the contributions of farmers and labourers, she said India's economy now plays a pivotal role in global economic trends, asserting that this transformation is rooted in the framework established by the Constitution.

The President also pointed to the persistently high economic growth rate in recent years, which has generated job opportunities, increased income for farmers and labourers, and lifted many out of poverty.

She underscored the importance of inclusive growth and the government's commitment to welfare, making basic necessities such as housing and access to clean drinking water entitlements for citizens.

Efforts to support marginalised communities, particularly those belonging to Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC), were also highlighted.

Murmu mentioned various initiatives, including pre-matric and post-matric scholarships, national fellowships, and dedicated schemes aimed at the socio-economic development of these communities, such as the Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana and the Pradhan

Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan.

The President's address underscored the government's commitment to fostering inclusive growth and redefining governance standards in the country, creating a vision for a more equitable and prosperous future for all citizens.

She emphasised that this occasion is a collective celebration of joy and pride for all citizens and remarked that while 75 years may seem like a brief moment in the life of a nation, it has been a significant period for India, marked by the revival of its long-dormant spirit and its journey to reclaim its rightful status among the world's civilisations.

Reflecting on India's historical journey, she urged citizens to remember the brave souls who sacrificed their lives for the nation's freedom, highlighting the 150th birth anniversary of Bhagwan Birsa Munda, whose contributions to the freedom movement are now receiving due recognition.

The President praised the early 20th-century freedom fighters for uniting the nation in a well-organised independence movement and credited iconic figures like Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, and Babasaheb Ambedkar for helping India rediscover its democratic values.

"Justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity are not just modern concepts; they have always been integral to our civilisational heritage," she asserted, noting that skeptics of the Constitution's future were proven wrong.

Murmu highlighted the inclusive nature of the Constituent Assembly, which represented diverse communities across the nation, including 15 women members who played pivotal roles in shaping the country's democratic framework.

"When women's equality was a distant goal in many parts of the world, Indian women were actively engaged in the nation's destiny," she said.

The Constitution, according to the President, has evolved into a living document that serves as the foundation of India's collective identity and has guided the nation's progress over the past 75 years.

Shifting focus to present-day advancements, she highlighted the government's emphasis on physical infrastructure development, which has laid the groundwork for sustained growth.

She commended the innovative use of technology in finance, noting that digital payment systems and direct benefit transfers have enhanced inclusion and transparency in the economy.

The health of the banking system has improved due to reforms like the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, which significantly reduced non-performing assets in commercial banks. Looking towards the future, the President underscored the importance of education in shaping the next generation.

The government has increased investments in the education sector, resulting in substantial improvements in learning quality and digital inclusion, especially in regional languages.

Murmu noted that women teachers have played a crucial role in this educational transformation, with over 60 per cent of new teachers being women.

As India marches confidently towards the future, the President affirmed that the dreams of today's youth, particularly young women, will shape the nation by the time it celebrates a century of independence.

She expressed hope that future generations will recognise the pivotal role of the Constitution in guiding their journey.

Quoting Mahatma Gandhi, she reiterated the importance of morality in governance and civic life, stating, "If Swaraj was not meant to civilize us, it would be nothing worth."

The President called for a renewed commitment to Gandhiji's ideals of truth, nonviolence, and compassion - not just towards fellow humans but also towards nature.

She urged all citizens to reaffirm their dedication to realising the dreams of a prosperous, inclusive, and morally conscious India as the country looks forward to its future. (Agencies)

President Murmu approves...

and Naik Dilwar Khan, Arty, 28 RR (Posthumous). The Shaurya Chakra awardees include Major Ashish Dahiya, Engrs, 50 RR; Maj. Kunal, ASC, 1 RR; Maj Satender Dhankar, Armd, 4 RR; Capt. Deepak Singh, Sigs, 48 RR (Posthumous); Asstt Commandant Eshenthung Kikon, 4 Assam Rifle; Subedar Vikas Tomar, 1 Para (SF); Sub. Mohan Ram, 20 Jat; Hav. Rohit Kumar, Dogra, Haws (Posthumous); Hav. Prakash Tamang, 9 GR, 32 RR; Flight Lieutenant Aman Singh Hans (36412), Flying (Pilot) IAF; Corporal Dabhi Sanjay Hiffabai Essa, IAF; OEM Gde-1 Vijayan Kutty G (Posthumous) BRDB; Vikrant Kumar, Dy Commandant, CRPF and Jeffrey Hmingchullo, Inspector, CRPF.

The President also approved 305 defence decorations

to Armed Forces and other personnel. These include 30 Param Vishisht Seva Medals; five Uttam Yudh Seva Medals; 57 Ati Vishisht Seva Medals; 10 Yudh Seva Medals; one Bar to Sena Medals (Devotion to Duty); 43 Sena Medals (Devotion to Duty); eight Nao Sena Medals (Devotion to Duty); 15 Vayu Sena Medals (Devotion to Duty); four Bar to Vishisht Seva Medal and 132 Vishisht Seva Medals.

The Bar to Sena Medal (Gallantry) has been conferred on Lt. Col KH Shem, 20 Jat.

A total of 66 personnel from the Army have been conferred with Sena Medal, including seven posthumously.

Two Indian Navy personnel have been awarded the Nao Sena Medal (Gallantry), eight Indian Air Force personnel with Vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry), 30 Armed Forces personnel have been awarded the Param Vishisht Seva Medal.

Besides, five Armed Forces personnel have been conferred with Uttam Yudh Seva Medal; 57 personnel with Ati Vishisht Seva Medal; 10 personnel with Yudh Seva Medal; one official with Bar to Sena Medal (Devotion to Duty); 43 personnel with Sena Medal (Devotion to Duty); eight with Nao Sena (Devotion to Duty); 15 with Vayu Sena Medal (Devotion to Duty); four Bar to Vishisht Seva Medal; and 132 personnel with Vishisht Seva Medal.

'Vibrant Village' programme...

from remote areas who were invited as special guests for Republic Day celebrations, Shah, according to the news agency, said, "When the Prime Minister personally invites people from distant areas to participate in national celebrations and acts as a host, it sends a strong message of unity and inclusion. It reflects his desire to bring people closer to his heart." He said that the "Vibrant Villages" programme is a significant step toward bridging the emotional and developmental gap between Delhi and the far-flung villages of India. "This programme is not only about building roads or infrastructure—it is about reducing the 'dil ki doori' (emotional distance) between Delhi and your villages," said Shah. "This initiative marks the beginning of a shift in mindset and how we approach development in remote areas." He noted that the programme aims to improve connectivity while fostering a sense of inclusion among residents of far-off regions. "When roads are constructed, they reduce physical distances, but this programme goes beyond infrastructure to enhance communication and bring people closer to the heart of the nation," Shah added. KNO



15th National Voters Day: DC/DEO Srinagar flags off Shikara Race at Nehru Park

Says Greater Electoral participation pivotal for strengthening roots of democracy and socio-economic development of people

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 25:- As a part of National Voters Day being celebrated to create awareness of the significance of every vote, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, who is also the District Election Officer (DEO) today flagged off a Shikara Race (Canoeing and Kayaking event) here at the Sports Centre, Nehru Park.

The DC/DEO also presided over the pledge taking ceremony regarding National Voters Day-2025 where hundreds of students and athletes took the pledge for strengthening the democratic institutions.

The event organized by District Election Authority Srinagar saw participation of around 200 athletes associated with the Department of Youth Services and Sports with an objective of mobilization and awareness regarding voting registration, voting awareness and participation in the democratic activities.

The theme of this year's National Voters Day is "Nothing Like Voting, 1 Vote for



Shine". Addressing the gathering of participants at the event, the DC/DEO emphasized on the need to understand the value of participating in the electoral process and one's voting rights. He said it is imperative for every citizen who has attained 18 years of age to get included in the voter list to exercise franchise in

every election as part of discharging their democratic duty.

He highlighted the efforts of the Electoral Registration Officers, Assistant Electoral Registration Officers, BLO and all the stakeholders who put in their commendable efforts during Special Summary Revisions-2024 that paved the

way in ensuring successful Lok Sabha and J&K Assembly Elections with a remarkable increase in voter turnout in both the Elections. He stressed on responsibility to vote besides the right to vote to strengthen the democratic setup.

The DC/DEO urged the participants to carry forward the message regarding power of voting and spread awareness about the importance of voting in a democracy. He said National Voters Day also educates people about their voting rights and encourages youngsters to participate in the electoral process.

The DC/DEO added that greater electoral participation helps in making good welfare and developmental plans/policies which in turn make the roots of democracy stronger. He stressed on responsibility to vote besides the right to vote to strengthen the democratic setup.

Deputy District Election Officer, Srinagar, Mir Imtiaz-Ul Aziz, Assistant Electoral Registration Officers of Zadibal, Umar Gulzar, Tehsildar Khanyar, Syed Shahid, other Officers/Officials of the District Election Authority were present on the occasion.

Srinagar Municipal Corporation lights up the City for R-Day celebrations

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 25: In preparation for the upcoming Republic Day, the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) has illuminated several key areas throughout the city, creating a festive atmosphere in honor of this momentous occasion in India's history.

Among the locations brightened by the SMC are the Central Office in Karanagar, the scenic Rajbagh Riverfront, the picturesque Dal Lake, M.A. Road, Jehangir Chowk to Rambagh Flyover, Poloview, Balidan Stambh and the historic Old Zero Bridge. This initiative aims to instill a sense of pride and patriotism among residents as they come together to celebrate the Republic Day.

The dazzling display of lights at these prominent sites symbolizes the unity of the nation and underscores the SMC's dedication to enhancing the beauty of Srinagar while commemorating this significant day. Residents and visitors are encouraged to explore the illuminated areas and take part in the celebrations that highlight the essence of democracy and unity in India.

Directorate of School Education Kashmir observes 15th National Voters' Day

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 25: On the eve of 15th National Voters' Day (NVD), the Directorate School Education Kashmir, Dr. G.N Itoo today presided over a function at Conference Hall of Directorate of School Education Kashmir and administered the NVD pledge to all the participants. Speaking on the occasion, the Director appreciated all the officers/officials and teachers of the department engaged with the election process in 2024 in the Kashmir division and highlighted the importance of casting the vote.

He said youth is the architect of our future who need to come forward to play a vital role in exemplifying the power of their vote.

Div Com Kashmir administers oath on National Voters Day

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 25: On the National Voters Day, the Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri on Saturday administered oath to the Officers & Officials of his Office. The officers & officials enthusiastically participated in the event to celebrate National Voters Day and read "We, the citizens of India, having abiding faith in democracy, hereby pledge to uphold the democratic traditions of our country and the dignity of free, fair and peaceful elections, and to vote in every election fearlessly and without being influenced by considerations of religion, race, caste, community, language or any inducement.



Altaf Bukhari Lauds Kashmiri Ulema's Efforts to Address Waqf Amendment Bill Concerns

HT News Network



Srinagar, Jan 25, KNT: Jammu Kashmir Apni Party President Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari has commended the initiative taken by prominent Kashmiri Ulema, led by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, to meet with the chairman of the Joint Parliamentary Committee in New Delhi to discuss their serious concerns regarding the proposed Waqf Amendment Bill.

In a statement, Bukhari described the move as a bold and pragmatic step. "It is a matter of great satisfaction that Kashmir's Ulema, under the leadership of Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, traveled to New Delhi to voice their profound concerns about the proposed Waqf Amendment Bill," he said. He praised the Ulema for presenting their arguments both verbally and in writing, ensuring their stance was conveyed without ambiguity. "This proactive approach highlights the importance of engaging in decision-making processes to address critical matters affecting the community," Bukhari added. [KNT]

Govt urges artisans, weavers to avail subsidized loans under Credit Card Scheme

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 25: Reaffirming its commitment to safeguard the interests and welfare of the highly-skilled craftsmen, the Handicrafts and Handloom Department, Kashmir, today urged the registered artisans and weavers to apply online for availing the soft loans under its Credit Card Scheme, which offers interest subvention of 7% for a five-year payback period, on a loan of Rs.2.00 lakh. Nearly 97,000 artisans and weavers have already availed the loan facility to meet their credit requirements of both investment and working capital in a flexible and cost-effective manner. The department has borne an expenditure of Rs.5.62 Cr as interest subvention, payable to the banks and other financial institu-



tions, in a bid to support the artisans and weavers to set up independent units. Highlighting the main takeaways of the scheme, an official spokesperson from the Handicrafts and Handloom Department, stated that the beneficiary's contribution against a loan of .200 lakh shall only be .20,000 and no collateral security is required to be deposited in the financial institution. "The selection of the beneficiary artisan and weaver is made by a District-level Committee, headed by the con-

cerned General Manager of the District Industries Centre," he said, adding that the beneficiary shall be issued a Photo Card indicating therein the sanctioned limit and validity period of the credit facility. Seeking support from the banks and financial institutions in the saturation of artisans and weavers under the subsidized scheme, the spokesman called for real-time sanction and disbursement of the beneficiary cases, after they are sponsored as per targets fixed by the Government. The spokesman further stated that the Handicrafts and Handloom Department, Kashmir, monitors the implementation of the Credit Card Scheme and puts on notice those beneficiaries who become NPAs and fail to pay their monthly instalments on time, in coordination with the financial institutions.

Pre-Republic Day-2025 celebrations: SMC concludes Swachh Tantra activities successfully

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 25: The Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) has triumphantly wrapped up a series of Swachh Tantra-themed initiatives as part of the lead-up to Republic Day 2025, fostering a spirit of community engagement and environmental responsibility.

From January 21 to January 24, the campaign, aptly titled 'Swachh Tantra - Gantantra Ki Shaan, Swachhta Se Bane Mahaan,' focused on highlighting the importance of cleanliness in nurturing national pride and social progress.

Throughout the four-day event, a variety of dynamic activities were organized, engaging citizens of all ages in the pursuit of a cleaner Srinagar. Key highlights of the campaign included Plogging Run,

Swachh Tantra Pledge, Nukkad Natak, Quiz Competition and Painting Competition.

The innovative fitness and cleanliness initiative of 'Plogging Run' encouraged participants to jog along the picturesque Jehlum River Front at Raj Bagh while simultaneously collecting litter. It besides promoting physical fitness also fostered a sense of civic duty among the participants.

Similarly under Swachh Tantra Pledge, citizens and local officials gathered to take pledge, committing themselves to uphold cleanliness in their surroundings. This collective vow reinforced community solidarity and the shared goal of a cleaner environment.

Through Nukkad Natak, local artists captivated audiences with street performances at the renowned Ghanta Ghar Lal Chowk, using the medium of theatre to communicate the



critical message of waste management and community responsibility. These dramatizations effectively engaged the public in conversations about environmental issues.

Quiz Competition proved to be another attractive activity in which students from various coaching centers showcased their knowledge and enthusiasm for environmental issues through a competitive quiz focused on the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and related topics. This activity served to educate and inspire the younger generation about the importance of cleanliness.

Also through Painting Competition, young artists capitalized the opportunity to express their creative visions of a cleaner and greener India through an art competition. Their imaginative works underscored the

role of creativity in advocating for environmental awareness.

The events witnessed enthusiastic participation from local citizens, students, and various organizations, reflecting a strong community commitment to cleanliness and sustainability.

Commissioner of SMC, Dr. Owais Ahmed expressed his heartfelt gratitude to all participants during his closing remarks. He emphasized the corporation's ongoing dedication to making Srinagar a model city for cleanliness and environmental consciousness.

These Swachh Tantra activities not only enriched the Republic Day celebrations but also served as a poignant reminder that a clean and healthy environment is the foundation to the prosperity and independence of our nation.

EDITORIAL

**Need of the hour;
uninterrupted
transport service for
people of Kashmir**

With the introduction of smart buses and e-rickshaws the services of public transport have improved to a great extent in Srinagar city, but the picture is not rosy with respect to the city outskirts and other districts of the Kashmir valley. As soon as the sun sets the public transport vehicles plying on different routes in the city outskirts and other districts go off the roads and as a result the same people suffer.

Curious people could be seen waiting for the contract carriage vehicles at the busy intersections and the absence of the same makes them worrisome. Even though some of the smart buses ply on different routes in the city outskirts and different districts, as the number of such buses is less, not much relief is being felt by the common masses. It is important that the concerned stakeholders pay attention to the same so that there is an end to the sufferings of the people.

Some years back the Jammu & Kashmir Road Transport Corporation (JKRTC) introduced the environmentally friendly green buses on different routes of Kashmir. The people living in different districts of the valley felt relieved over the introduction of such buses, but here too there are some loopholes. The number of the green buses has remained static over the years and there has been no increase whatsoever. As a result of this the people are suffering and there seems to be no end to their miseries.

It is imperative that quality and affordable transport services are provided to the people across the valley since the masses want to cover the distance in the shortest possible time. There are people who are ready to pay more as transportation charges, but at the same time they want the time to be minimized. It is important that multiple modes of public transport are made available to the people and they be given the chance to choose from any of such modes.

It has been observed that many vehicles being used as public transport vehicles are not fit to run on the roads and as such the lives of people boarding such vehicles are jeopardized on a regular basis. As on date no action has been taken against the owners of these vehicles and they are playing with the rules like anything. Stern action needs to be taken against such people so that precious lives are saved.

**Bodybuilding: Enhancing Your
Personality and Reducing Your Stress**

SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

Today we are busy in day-to-day activities; we don't have time that we can pay heed to our health. We believe more in doctors than exercises and healthy diets.

Doctors treat us with medicines. No doubt medicine is vital when needed, but today we are observing people having medicine with little health issues like mild headaches, body pain, and muscle cramps. Even such issues we can get away with by doing exercises after consulting physiotherapist and trainers in gym centers. Most of the time, doctors are focusing on what to avoid, which can cause severity to health issues.

Despite we have facilities like gym centers nearby and in cities and in urban areas, this network will be in good position. Our smart and educated youth make every bit possible for the needy and will make our Kashmir proud in all corners of the world.

Why are gym centers so vital today?

Exercises are important for us to make our physique healthy and to avoid any issue related to our body. Bodybuilding is something that we need to enhance our personality, and in addition to that, we make our parts healthy and disease-free.

Gym centers can generate employment and provide a great chance to learn and hold upon new skills. Our youth have great and immense potential that they can generate employment for the hundreds of unemployed youth. Government administration has to minutely understand what our youth are lacking, like skills; financial support should be provided on a subsidiary basis and should be encouraged by providing training at the state level so that they feel every bit is possible.

The time is not far away when our nation provides us a mandatory gap to go and feel free in gym centers and sports stadiums.

Sports activities are going to be mandatory in the future. I hope so. Sports activities make our youth fit, healthy, and drug-free. Our nation has great potential in the sports field and government administration at all levels working on it by providing changes for all the age groups to engage in such beneficial activities. Our nation will develop in sports and in other fields as well

in the future, so far as in my consideration. Fit people indicate the sign of a healthy nation.

As per biological science, our life cycle undergoes various stages and processes. Adolescence is one of the stages where different biological changes take place naturally. Hormonal changes take place, due to which the whole body structure gets a new shape in both females and males. This stage is being considered a crucial period for teenagers. Adolescence periods start at 9 years of age for females and at 11 for males. Hormonal changes are very important and crucial. During this crucial period, most of the teenagers were involved in different kinds of evil. Like being involved in drugs, engaged in wayward tasks, getting arrogant, stubborn, rude, lacking patience, etc.

Teenagers need proper counselling and motivation for their upliftment during this crucial period. Our society is filled with great and renowned personalities who have done miracles for the nation and are still doing their best. For the time being, we have to utilize each and every facility for the upliftment of our young buds and teach them what is suitable and beneficial for them. The government administration, from lower to higher levels, left no stone unturned to minimize the crimes and drug addiction among the teenagers and youths, but it is very unfor-

tunate that we are still miles away from making it possible.

One thing is quite clear: with the passage of time, we have to experience all the happenings within our society, which include negative as well as positive events. This world is full of mysterious stories. Every event has its own story. Today in this article, let's try to motivate our friends of all ages towards bodybuilding sports. Today, bodybuilding is trending throughout the country. India has been enlisted among the top countries that have good sports infrastructure and have participated at the international level for centuries.

As I have experienced, bodybuilding is one of the best and most addictive activities one can engage in. Bodybuilding endows your body with an attractive shape that keeps you fit and fine. There are great and interesting facts about bodybuilding, as mentioned. (1). Bodybuilding keeps you disease-free and boosts your immunity in different ways. (2) Bodybuilding keeps you warm during the winter and makes you feel relaxed during the summer. (3). Bodybuilding reduces the risks among obese patients and burns their extra fat up to the optimum level. (4). Bodybuilding reduces your belly fat, makes you good, and enhances your diet capacity. (6) Bodybuilding keeps you happy and reduces your depression,

so when you are depressed, do certain exercises.

All the points I have mentioned are based on my own experience. First of all, try to convince yourself that "I want to look good, be disease-free, and not get involved in any drug addiction." I will motivate my friends toward sports activities and be ready, fit, and healthy all the time. These days, gym centers are everywhere, laced with advanced equipment. There are trained and experienced trainers there. So we have a great chance to burn our extra fat during these winter days. After spending a couple of days in the gym, we have to follow a balanced diet. Diet plays a vital role for those who indulge in bodybuilding activities.

Gym centers facilitate music, advanced equipment, a hygienic environment, and experienced trainers. Always follow the trainer and avoid muscle cramps, bone injuries, etc. I suggest you all join gym centers. I hope you will feel good and relaxed. Government administration at the district level should provide gym centers at the panchayat level so that everyone can get engaged in and keep themselves fit and fine. One more thing: do machine exercise for almost 6 months; that will get your body in cutting-edge shape; believe in a natural diet; and avoid supplements.

sahilmanzoor0401@gmail.com

Cooperative commodities exchange: A global vision for farmer empowerment

BINOD ANAND

The agricultural sector is the backbone of many economies, particularly in India, where nearly 60 per cent of the population depends on farming for their livelihood. Yet, smallholder farmers often remain at the mercy of intermediaries, fluctuating market prices and unequal access to global markets.

To address these challenges and promote equity, sustainability and growth, a bold initiative is proposed: the establishment of a Global Farmer-Centric Cooperative Commodities Exchange (GFCCE). This platform, rooted in the cooperative model, aims to empower farmers by ensuring fair pricing, direct market access, and sustainable practices. This ambitious

project resonates with the global agenda of the World Cooperation Economic Forum to foster inclusive economic growth and social equity. Empowering Farmers Through Technology

APEX Integration at the heart of this initiative lies technology—a powerful enabler that can bridge the gap between farmers and markets. The GFCCE will leverage the Government of India's support to develop a robust and accessible digital platform integrated with blockchain technology to ensure transparency and reduce pilferage in the supply chain. Blockchain will create a tamper-proof record of transactions, from production to storage and distribution, enhancing trust and accountability.

The project will adopt a PACS-to-APEX (Primary



Agricultural Cooperative Societies to Apex-level organisations) approach, leveraging India's extensive network of over 95,000 PACS. These societies will act as the foundational nodes, aggregating produce from farmers at the village level. The commodities will then be funnelled through district and state-level federations, culminating at the national apex organisation, which will oversee operations, ensure fair pricing and manage exports. To address storage issues, a network of modern warehouses will be constructed and integrated with block-

chain systems. These warehouses, equipped with real-time inventory tracking, temperature controls and pest management systems, will be strategically located across key agricultural regions.

Blockchain connectivity across warehouses will enable seamless tracking of stored produce, ensuring reduced wastage and pilferage. Farmers will also receive warehouse receipts, which can be used as collateral for loans, providing them with immediate financial support.

This interconnected system will not only pro-

vide farmers with better access to markets but also ensure that the supply chain is efficient, transparent and secure. It will serve as the backbone for procurement planning and play a vital role in stabilising food prices.

Impact on Food Inflation

The GFCCE's blockchain-enabled supply chain and warehouse network will revolutionise procurement planning and control food inflation. With real-time data on production, storage, and distribution, government agencies will have accurate insights into commodity availability and demand patterns.

This data-driven approach will enable timely procurement decisions, ensuring that food stocks are adequately replenished and distrib-

uted. By reducing post-harvest losses and pilferage, the initiative will improve the efficiency of the Public Distribution System (PDS), preventing artificial shortages that often lead to price spikes. Additionally, the transparent pricing mechanism of the exchange will curb hoarding and speculation.

This system will also facilitate targeted interventions during periods of surplus or deficit. For instance, in the case of bumper harvests, surplus stocks can be stored efficiently and exported strategically to global markets, preventing a price crash domestically.

(The writer was a member of the high level MSP committee, Ministry of Agriculture; views are personal)

76 years of Republic: What we lost and what we gained

DR. SATYAWAN SAURABH

India is set to celebrate its 76th Republic Day on January 26, 2025, a poignant reminder of the goals, principles, and sacrifices of countless people who fought for the freedom and integrity of our country. There are conflicting feelings about what we have gained and lost in this long period. The question "What was lost?" seems to be wrong in this case. Because what was gained was lost. Both our republic and our independence were new. Thus, we sought it. Naturally, the former did not get as much as it deserved.

After gaining independence, a republic was established. The ability to preserve this independence and republic is the greatest achievement. For the last 25 years, we have been able to maintain the diversity and unity of our country despite continuous proxy conflicts across the border and domestic and international terrorism.

India faced mainly three types of difficulties. The first and the biggest challenge was to find a way to unite India, keeping in view the diversity of Indian society. In terms of size and diversity, India was equal to any continent. Apart from diverse cultures and religions, some people also spoke different dialects. People at that time believed that a country with such diversity cannot remain united for long. In a way, people's fears about the partition of the country came true.

Will India be able to maintain its unity? Will it give priority to national unity over other goals? Will such regional and sub-regional identities be rejected? The most burning and painful question of the time was how to maintain the territorial integrity of India. This gave rise to serious concerns about the future of the country. Keeping democracy intact was another challenge. Everyone knows about the Indian Constitution. As you know, every citizen has the right to vote and fundamental rights under the Constitution. India adopted parliamentary governance under representative democracy. These features ensured that political elections would be held in a democratic environment. Although a democratic constitution is necessary to sustain democracy, it is insufficient. Implementing democratic practices according to

the constitution was another challenge. The third difficulty was that of development.

On Republic Day, we introspect and think about what we have lost and what we have gained. On Republic Day, we assess our achievements and failures. Apart from this, we also reflect on the challenges and goals that lie ahead in the future. Now the time has come to pause and think about what we have lost and what we have gained in this journey of years. India has progressed in many fields since independence. India has made significant progress in many fields, including literature, sports, agriculture, science, and technology. India has preserved its diverse culture and given it a deeper meaning. India has moved ahead in development. The nation has established its identity in the fields of social, political,

economic, military, sports, and technology. New records have been set in this development journey. At present, India is considered a strong country. It is not so at this moment. Today the eyes of the world are on India. The country, despite its internal issues and difficulties, has achieved something in the past years that the world finds attractive. There are some things that the nation can be proud of, and there are some things that can be regretted. If socio-economic inequality persists in a democratic country, it swallows up political equality as well, even if formal and legal political equality remains intact. Today's India largely confirms this. Today our Constitution is suffering from various diseases. Many problems like corruption, rape, pollution, and population control have soaked Mother India in

blood. Even today our republic seems to be stuck in some thorny bushes.

Discontent and anger are growing among the youth. They are being forced to move in the wrong direction. Electoral corruption and misuse of force have distorted it. The power struggle of the by-the-can era has delegitimized politics. There is no concrete plan to deal with social evils. In some places, this has come to the fore in an alarming manner. Atrocities against Dalits have increased, along with caste discrimination. Attacks on their women and incidents of rape have increased. The poison of provincialism and casteism still exists in the environment. Instead of calling themselves Indians, people identify themselves as Bengali, Bihari, Gujarati, Punjabi, Tamil, Kannada, etc. Apart from this, they

also appear divided into different castes. Violence by caste armies is worrying. Debt, hunger, heavy rains, floods, and other reasons are pushing farmers to suicide. Displaced people do not have adequate housing and employment. The history of Naxalism is proof of this. Nowadays women and girls are more insecure than ever before, and incidents of rape are happening continuously. The regrettable comments made by our leaders have further demoralized us. The fundamental principle of freedom of expression in our Constitution is still being violated. This is a warning sign. We must push back. This momentous occasion now needs to be turned into a project, as we have only just given it organizational shape.

Poet, freelance journalist and columnist, radio and TV panelist.

Best Career Options After 10th For Girls



VIJAY GARG

Choosing the right career path is a critical decision that can significantly impact a person's life. For girls, this decision is especially crucial as it can shape their future and provide them with opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Before delving into specific career options, girls should consider seeking career counseling. Professional career counselors can help students understand their interests, strengths, and skills, and guide them towards suitable career paths.

For girls interested in pursuing a career in the fields of medicine, engineering, or research, the science stream is an ideal choice after 10th. Preparing for the science stream involves taking up subjects like Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and Mathematics.

The commerce stream is an excellent option for girls interested in finance, accounting, business, or entrepreneurship. This stream includes subjects like Accounting, Economics, Business Studies, and Mathematics.

Girls with a flair for creativity, literature, humanities, or social sciences can opt for the arts stream. This stream comprises subjects like History, Geography, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology.

There are several professional courses available for girls after 10th, such as nursing, hospital management, fashion designing, and interior designing.

Professional courses available for girls after 10th, such as nursing, hospital management, fashion designing, and interior designing. These courses provide specialized skills and practical knowledge to enter specific industries.

Vocational Courses offer practical training and skill development in areas like computer programming, beauty and wellness, culinary arts, and event management. Early preparation for these courses involves developing an understanding of the industry.

Understanding one's personality traits and aptitudes is crucial when making career choices. Girls can take personality assessment tests to identify their strengths and align them with potential career paths.

In addition to academic excellence, soft skills like communication, teamwork, leadership, and time management are essential for career success. Girls should start developing these skills early through extracurricular activities.

Internships and shadowing experiences allow girls to get firsthand exposure to various careers. Exploring these opportunities early on can help them understand the day-to-day responsibilities and challenges associated with different professions.

Choosing the best career options after the 10th is a significant decision for girls that can impact their future trajectory. It is crucial to start preparing early by seeking career counseling, understanding personal interests and strengths, and developing relevant skills.

Vijay Garg Retired Principal Educational columnist street kour Chand MHR Malout Punjab

Naev Dapiet A literary odyssey through innovative proverbs In the realm of contemporary literature

Naev Dapiet by Javid Iqbal Maweri emerges as a true gem, a masterpiece that defies convention and breathes new...



KHURSHID AHMAD DAR

HT - BOOK REVIEW

In the realm of contemporary literature, Naev Dapiet by Javid Iqbal Maweri emerges as a true gem, a masterpiece that defies convention and breathes new life into the rich cultural tapestry of Kashmir.

This visionary wordsmith of Kashmir has undertaken a literary journey that not only reimagines the traditional proverbs but also shapes the very form of his book resulting in a work that is both intellectually stimulating and emotionally resonant.

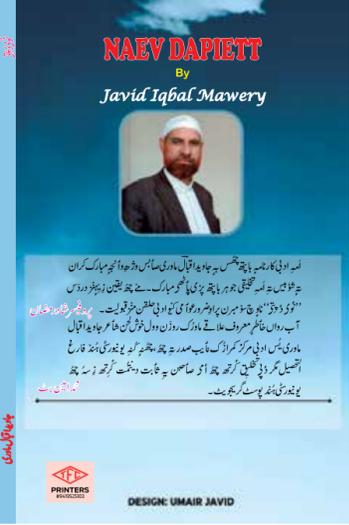
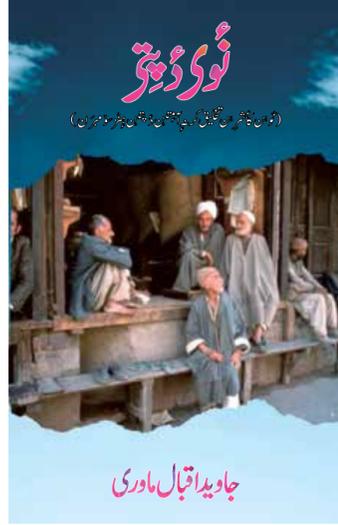
Naev Dapiet is a testament to the power of language and the evolution of Kashmiri culture. At its heart, this book introduces readers to a treasure trove of new proverbs, ingeniously crafted to reflect the contemporary essence of Kashmir.

These proverbs are not mere linguistic expressions but living artifacts that mirror the changing landscape of the region. Javid Iqbal Maweri's creativity shines as he seamlessly blends the old and the new, preserving the wisdom of the past while offering fresh insights into the present.

The proverbs in Naev Dapiet are more than just pithy sayings; they serve as a commentary on the societal shifts and cultural nuances that define the modern Kashmir. Each proverb is a window into the collective consciousness of a people, grappling with tradition and modernity.

What sets Naev Dapiet apart from conventional literature is not only its content but also its form. Maweri has ingeniously structured the book to engage readers in a unique narrative experience. Rather than following a linear storyline, the book presents itself as a series of proverbs. Let's explore some:

Kamaay-i-Ali te Khar-chaaye-i Wali The caterpillar does all the work but the butterfly gets all the publicity Oushruk fasal Poshruk Khojas Maeshruk bichoor safaid posh The paradise of the rich is made out of the hell of the poor



gradually come together to form a comprehensive tapestry. This approach demands active engagement from the reader, encouraging reflection and interpretation.

It's a literary experiment that pays off handsomely, as it immerses readers in the heart of Kashmir's complexities. Beyond the linguistic brilliance and unconventional structure Naev Dapiet is a cultural reverbation.

Maweri's deep connection to his homeland is palpable throughout the book. It serves as both a homage to Kashmir's rich heritage and a reflection of its contemporary challenges. Through the new proverbs Javid Iqbal Maweri explores the delicate balance between tradition and modernity in Kashmir. He highlights the resilience of a people who have weathered numerous storms and yet continue to forge ahead with unwavering spirit.

The unconventional structure invites readers to explore Maweri's Naev Dapiet from various angles, akin to stepping into different rooms of a vast, interconnected mansion. Each chapter, or proverb, delves into a distinct facet of Kashmiri life, culture, and history. The proverbs serve as thematic anchors, providing continuity and cohesion to the narrative.

The reader's journey through Naev Dapiet is akin to wandering through a maze of Kashmiri proverbs, where the pieces

gradually come together to form a comprehensive tapestry. This approach demands active engagement from the reader, encouraging reflection and interpretation. It's a literary experiment that pays off handsomely, as it immerses readers in the heart of Kashmir's complexities. Beyond the linguistic brilliance and unconventional structure Naev Dapiet is a cultural reverbation. Maweri's deep connection to his homeland is

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Through the new proverbs Javid Iqbal Maweri explores the delicate balance between tradition and modernity in Kashmir. He highlights the resilience of a people who have weathered numerous storms and yet continue to forge ahead with unwavering spirit. He has not only given birth to a new genre of literature but also provided readers with a profound exploration of a region's soul.

Maweri's passion for his subject matter, his linguistic expertise, and his respect for tradition shine through in every page. Whether you are a scholar of linguistics, a lover of proverbs, or simply someone interested in exploring the world's diverse cultures, Naev Dapiet is a must-read for anyone seeking intellectual stimulation, cultural enrichment, and a deeper understanding of enchanting Kashmir. The author is a teacher and Columnist.

Seeking True Shelter in the divine

AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

We are small, ignorant, helpless and unsafe. There should not be any doubt about our smallness with eight billion of us on the earth's planet itself. How knowledgeable we are or can be? Knowledge is unlimited. How much can we learn in one lifetime? Helpless we are from the time we are born till the time comes to dispose of our bodies.

Just count how many people we need daily to survive well. And unsafe all of us are, as the Covid-19 pandemic proved. Therefore, we instinctively seek shelter

all the time. An infant needs his parents. As one grows, one takes shelter from education to maintain oneself. Education /training over, time comes to seek shelter in a job or a business.

The idea is to have the shelter of enough money to be able to survive decently. Sex overpowers thinking beginning from a young age. Some are drawn towards fame like a sports person, while others get into politics, etc. for power. The most fortunate seek the shelter of God. Shelter of God is crucial to exist well. Let us see the degree of difficulty for a quality life. Our nature ('svabhava') is a

huge handicap. Something or other from lust, anger, greed, jealousy, ego, etc. predominates if not more than one.

What chance is there to have a quality life? Lust derails almost everyone. One assumes that sex is pleasure, and it has so many forms. The worst thing is it's possessing our minds. Ego is not far behind. Have you met anyone who does not feel his or her superiority vis-à-vis others? Greed does not allow us to assess our needs sensibly. More is better is the desire and there is no satisfaction. Anger is always lurking near the surface. It sur-

faces at the drop of a hat, literally. Then, there are karmaphalas always ready to manifest. We know how bad ones hurt. What most people don't realise are the ill effects of good karmaphalas. This is when one gets the feeling of invincibility and makes big mistakes.

People look for rewards during success, and we know what these rewards do to us. The third big enemy is old age, when we become weak and are mostly written off. Are we stuck? Far from it. God would not have made such a sorry Creation. Guidance and help are available to all of us if we accept the role of

God in our lives. Ignorance, false pride or laziness stops us from taking God's help, who is the owner, controller and everything. You seek guidance sincerely and see what happens. But we don't; we prefer to be in cyclic thinking short-circuiting our own lives. We condemn ourselves by our obstinate attitude. God is prepared to help all of us at any time, but there is a rider.

We must deserve such help. How to determine who should get or who shouldn't? Therefore, the question everyone should be asking is: how do we become deserving of God's

'kripa' (favour)? Simply, you recognise yourself as a soul - part of God. Then, all spiritual activities will make sense.

Shouldn't parts take shelter from God? Shouldn't we be very respectful to God and pay obeisance to Him? What about the 'dhyana' (meditation) of the entity, who is everything? How about thanking God for all that He does for everyone like providing air, water and sunlight free. In short, we should stop taking shelter of anyone or anything except God, and remain there.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher; views are personal)

Politics: Mother of All Evils



MOOLRAJ

When life came on the planet earth, it was not man alone; birds, animals and beasts had also taken birth here. Prior to that however, all arrangements to sustain life were made much before its arrival on the earth- food in the form of wild fruit and wild roots; heat and light in the form of sunshine; oxygen in the form of air and water in the form of snow and ice were already put

in place here. Initially, there was hardly any difference in the behavior of man and the beast as both wore no clothes, ate same food and lived without any shelter. Life of man was hard but not warring; food was ample so no struggle for existence hence no competition or animosity. It was much later that man started hiding their body by wearing leaves and eating cooked meat. However, some evils also came on this earth and politics perhaps was biggest of them, which divided humankind in religions, and regions with the sole aim of grabbing power to rule others. In the primitive society, people were disorganized, unruly and unrefined. However, with passage of

time some wise people among them might have thought of organizing, taming and refining the unruly population. For this, they would have framed a bunch of rules and called it in their own language something like dharma, religion or constitution. They also devised some terms like punya and paap; and swarg and narak. Eventually, those who followed rules were called as Puni while those who violated the rules were called as Paapi. They also created an imaginary character that in the later centuries was known as Ishwar, God or Allah who according to them would oversee anything happening in the world and punish or reward people according to their deeds. This unseen power would

then send after their death, the wicked in the burning hell and call the pious to the heaven where He would himself reside. :

However, with process of evolution continuing and character of the society changing, need to change the rules was also felt and it was then perhaps that politician was born. He was intelligent and cunning. Superiority was his character and seeing others as inferiors his temperament. Therefore, to find his place in the society he sowed the seeds of jealousy in the minds of the obedient juniors who captured power mostly by murdering their seniors. Being intelligent and cunning, a politician initially ruled from behind the Saints,

but started using his brain child- the policy of Divide and Rule enabling him to rule from the front. This was perhaps the beginning of world's division- in regions and religions; in sects and sub-sects and from party to parties. I am sure had there been no politicians the world would have been one and the whole of the humanity would be a united entity. Today man is everything except a human being, which he originally was. :

Let's remember that God did not make us Hindu, Muslim or Christian. Had this not been so then we would have come in the world with our individual religious signs like Khutna, Holy thread or a Cross on our body. Also, had nature made us different, it

would have created separate air; separate sunlight and separate water for us, but contrarily, nature provided us with same air, same water and same sunlight. Even the composition and color of blood is same, which means that all of us were born one and it was someone else who divided us vertically and horizontally by exploiting our sentiments, ignorance and backwardness. And, who else it could be than the power hungry politician? :

Respected readers this is my personal observation about politics and politicians. Rest I leave it to you to decide for yourself who else the villain of the humanity could be.

THE AUTHOR IS A REGULAR COLUMNIST AND FREELANCE WRITER

15th National Voters day Celebrations held in Kulgam, DC presides a grand function at New Conference Hall mini-secretariat.

Farooq Rather

KULGAM, JANUARY, 25: 15th National Voters Day was celebrated at Kulgam where a grand function was held at New Conference Hall mini-secretariat Kulgam and function was presided over by the District Election Officer Kulgam Athar Aamir Khan (IAS).

Dedicated to the voters, the NVD 2025 theme - "Nothing Like Voting I Vote For Sure" is a continuation of last year's theme and conveys individuals' feelings and aspirations

toward participation in the electoral process through the power of their vote. Since 2011, 25th January is being celebrated annually as voters' day to mark the foundation day of the Election Commission of India. Addressing the occasion, District Election Officer Kulgam deliberated on the importance of celebrating the National Voters Day and said that the right to vote empowers citizens to exercise his/her franchise for nation building and for making the democracy strong.

DEO added that every single vote counts and is important for the gov-



ernment formation and people must exercise this right responsibly and people must realize the power at their hands.

Earlier the DEO appreciated the role of District Election Cell for conducting the Lok Saba & Assembly Election smoothly.

The best performing Officers including Returning Officers, ARO's Master trainers, BLO's & Operators were given certificates & moments.

On the occasion Yaad Gaar art & music theater Kulgam thrilled the audience with their sizzling perfor-

mance by depicting the importance of vote through a drama.

DEO also administered the pledge to the participants for casting their vote free & fearly.

In the welcome address given by Dy DEO Bashir-ul Hassan highlighted the achievements made by District Election Cell like 64% EP ratio & 99.2% Sex ration in the district.

The event was attended by Dy-DEO, ACR, ACD, ACP, CEO District/ Sector Officers senior citizens, BLOs, Newly enrolled voters and students.

Dy CM, Advisor to CM visit Budgam

Committed to speedy, sustained development: Dy CM

HT News Network

BUDGAM, JANUARY 25: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, along with Advisor to Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani, today conducted a comprehensive tour of Budgam district. Member Parliament, Aga Syed Ruhullah and MLA Chadoora Ali Mohammad Dar accompanied them. DC Budgam, Akshay Labroo, Chief Engineers and other senior officers of different departments were also present.

While addressing a huge gathering, the Deputy Chief Minister said that the government has undertaken a massive development programme with special focus on far flung and neglected areas. "We have already directed for fast pacing the initiatives meant for changing the socio-economic profile of people besides upgrading



the basic infrastructure", he added. "We are committed to fast paced and sustained development with regular monitoring for ensuring quality works. This has been done in accordance with the local needs and area specific development", he maintained. Responding to public demands, the Deputy CM announced the provision of 4 lane roads to Budgam. He also directed for conducting a survey of road from DC office to Humhama besides preparation of DPR for 4 lane widening

of road from DC office to New bus Adda in phase -1. Advisor to Chief Minister,

while speaking on the occasion, highlighted various developmental initiatives undertaken by the present government since its formation. He said that a holistic developmental agenda is underway which would ensure transformation of Jammu and Kashmir.

MP Aga Ruhallah also enumerated various initiatives undertaken and assured for furthering the developmental agenda of the present dispensation.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE THEHSILDAR KREERI
(Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/Death certificate.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoor) / chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of ABU BAKR BIN JAVAID S/O JAVAID AHMAD RATHER R/O TILAGAM Tehsil PATTAN Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 07/07/2019 and event has been shown to be occurred at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of death certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

Executive Magistrate
1st Class KREERI

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE THEHSILDAR KREERI
(Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/Death certificate.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoor) / chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of IRFAN ALI LONE S/O ALI MOHAMMAD LONE R/O DOLIPORA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 23/09/2020 and event has been shown to be occurred at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of death certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained,

Executive Magistrate
1st Class KREERI

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE THEHSILDAR KREERI
(Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/Death certificate.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoor) / chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of MOHAMMAD ANAS RATHER S/O MOHAMMAD SHAFI RATHER R/O TARZOO Tehsil SOPORE Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 08/12/2022 and event has been shown to be occurred at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of death certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

Executive Magistrate
1st Class KREERI

اطلاع عام

مجے فٹلیزر لیسن بنام رینہ فٹلیزر پہلگام نکانی مطلوب ہے اس بارے میں اگر کسی کو کوئی عذر ہو تو وہ سات یوم کے اندر اندر ڈیفائنٹ آف فٹلیزر کے دفتر میں پیش کرے بعد ازاں معاد کوئی عذر قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا

المستہر

محمد یعقوب رینہ ولد عبدالسلام رینہ ساکن لاری پور پہلگام

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE THEHSILDAR PAHALGAM
(Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/Death certificate.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE ANANTNAG) has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of ABU BAKER MUZAFER GANIE S/O MUZAFER AHMAD GANIE R/O GRANDWEN GRAND AISA Tehsil PAHALGAM Distt. ANANTNAG with verified the date of Birth, as 11/07/2022 and event has been to be occurred atIn this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of said registration shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

Executive Magistrate
1st Class ANANTNAG

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE THEHSILDAR KREERI
(Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/Death certificate.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoor) / chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of IMTIYAZ AHMAD POSWAL S/O BASHIR AHMAD POSWAL R/O BANDI BALA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 20/03/2010 and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of death certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

Executive Magistrate
1st Class KREERI

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE THEHSILDAR WAGOORA
(Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/Death certificate.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoor) / chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Death of ABDUL JABBAR THOKER S/O ABDUL KARIM THOKER R/O WAGOORA Tehsil WAGOORA Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Death as 11/06/2023 and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of death certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

Executive Magistrate
1st Class WAGOORA

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have applied for issuance of pesticides License in this connection if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file his .her objection in the office of concerned PLANT PROTECTION OFFICER LAL MANDI SRINAGAR (PPO) within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name..... SNOBAR MUSHTAQ
D/OMUSHTAQ AHMAD MIR
R/OKREERI

PUBLIC NOTICE

I Mohammad Latif Paul Son of Mohammad Yousuf paul Resident of Ganji bagh Tehsil Chadoora district Budgam have my B class card now I want to upgrade it and apply for A class card. if any body have any objection he/she may contact the Jammu and Kashmir power development corporation Srinagar within seven days after that no objection will be entertained.

Name.....MOHAMMAD LATIF PAUL

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill) power connection is registered on my Husband's name AB AHAD TANTRAY S/L GH RASOOL MAGRAY R/O VIZER .Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 021204002690 wants to be registered on my name HAJRA BEGUM D/O GH RASOOL MAGRAY R/O VIZER .If anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

Name.....HAJRA BEGUM
D/O ...GHULAM RASOOL MAGRAY
R/O VIZER

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE THEHSILDAR WAGOORA
(Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/Death certificate.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoor) / chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Death of ABDUL SAMAD NAJAR S/O GH RASOOL NAJAR R/O WAGOORA Tehsil WAGOORA Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Death as 08/06/2019 and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of death certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

Executive Magistrate
1st Class WAGOORA

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE THEHSILDAR PAHALGAM
(Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/Death certificate.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE PAHALGAM) has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of TABASUM MUKHTAR D/O MUKHTAR AHMAD BHAT R/O GANISHBAL PAHALGAM Tehsil PAHALGAM Distt. ANANTNAG with verified the date of Birth, as 25/05/2007 and event has been to be occurred at Home .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of said registration shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Executive Magistrate
1st Class PAHALGAM

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that I, Umer Ahad Bhat, intend to apply for a Fertilizer Licence for "Bhat Fertilizers" situated at Kalantra Payeen, Kreeri. The application will be submitted to the Office of the Chief Agriculture Officer, Baramulla. Any person having any objection in this regard he/she may file their objections in writing to the Office of the Chief Agriculture Officer, Baramulla, within 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. Objections received after this period will not be entertained.

UMER AHAD BHAT
Son of AB AHAD BHAT
Residen Of Kalantra Payeen, Kreeri, Baramulla.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that I, Shaheen Ahmad Lone, intend to apply for a Fertilizer Licence for "Lone Fertilizers" situated at Harnow Kawchak, Kreeri. The application will be submitted to the Office of the Chief Agriculture Officer, Baramulla. Any person having any objection in this regard he/she may file their objections in writing to the Office of the Chief Agriculture Officer, Baramulla, within 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. Objections received after this period will not be entertained.

Name: Shaheen Ahmad Lone
Son of Gh. Mohd. Lone
Resident of Harnow Kawchak, Kreeri, Baramulla.

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name is wrongly written as SONAULLAH GANIE in Aadhar card while my correct name is SHARIF UD DIN GANIE S/O ABDUL SALAM GANIE which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection he/she may file his/her objection in the office of concerned authorities within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained .

Name.....SHARIF UD DIN GANIE
S/O ABDUL SALAM GANIE
R/O ROSHAN ABAD PINJOORA
Distt.BARAMULLA Contact... 9622722764

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD(R&B) DIVISION ANANTNAG
FRESH NIT No 101(3rd Call of NIT83/2) OF R&B/Anantnag/2024-25/E-TENDERING/11055-64DATED 24-01-2025

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, Union Territory of J&K e-tenders are invited on %age basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K Govt. CPWD, Railway and other State/Centra Governments for each of the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (nrRs)	Earnest Money (nrRs)	Time of Completion	Major Head of Account	Class of Contractor
1.	Construction of drain at Badam Mohalla Bijbehara.	3.00 Lacs Contract Price exclusive of GST: 2.54 + (18% GST Amount 0.46)	200	6000/-	15 Days	M & R 3054	DEE Class & MSME's Only

Project Authority: R&B Department South Kashmir Anantnag.
Position of Authority: Accorded Vide Order No. ARD/SK/29, Dated 26.11.2024.
Position of TS: Accorded Vide Order No. SEA(R&B) 57 of 2024-25, Dated 17.12.2024.

- The NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:

S. No.	Particulars	Dated
1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	24-01-2025
2	Period of Downloading of bidder documents	From 25-01-2025 12:00PM To 30-01-2025 (04:30PM)
3	Bid submission Start Date	From 25-01-2025 (12:00PM)
4	Bid Submission End Date	To 30-01-2025 (04:30PM)
5	Date and time of opening of bid (online)	31-01-2025 (11:00AM)

In the office of Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Anantnag.

- Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender document in shape of Treasury Challan / receipt (Under MH- 0059 PWD) in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Anantnag (Tender Inviting Authority) (NIT No. Name of Work/Item No. to be mentioned on the Treasury Challan / Receipt) (Refer Govt. order No. O.M No. A/24 (2017)-651 Dt 07-06-2018 (The Date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of Start of Bid and Bid Submission End Date) and EMD (2% of advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Anantnag (Tender receiving Authority). (The Date of EMD/CDR/FDR/BG) should be between the date of Start of Bid and Bid Submission End Date and validity of EMD at the time of opening of Bids shall be a period of 45 Days beyond Bid Validity of 120 Days)
- All the Bidders have to submit Earnest Money/Bid Security (EMD@2% of Advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG. Non submission of Earnest Money/Bid Security shall render the bidder as No-responsive.
- Note: a. MSME's are required to pay only 50% of Tender Document Cost of Rs 500/- whichever is lower.
b. MSME's are required to pay only 50% of the amount of EMD/ Bid Security of Rs 5000/- whichever is lower.
- The 1st lowest responsive (Successful) Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 5% of contract as Performance Security in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Anantnag (Tender receiving authority) within 03 Days before fixation of contract and shall be released 60 days after successful completion of Defect Liability Period (DLP) of the work. The Date of Performance Security (CDR/FDR/BG) should be after the date of issuance of letter/LOI to deposit the performance security failure to produce Performance Security shall render the L1 as non-responsive and case for debarment of the Contractor be forwarded to Higher Authorities for a period of 01 Year.
- The Earnest Money Deposit (EMD@2% of Advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG of the successful Bidder shall be released after receiving Performance security @5% of the allotted cost in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG and same shall be released 60 Days after successful completion of Defect Liability Period (DLP) of the work.

DIPK-11241/24
Date: Jan 25 2025

(Er Syed Ishfaq Ahmad)
Executive Engineer,
R&B Division Anantnag

15th National Voters Day celebrated at Srinagar

Div Com, DC Srinagar felicitate ROs, AROs, Nodal Officers and others for ensuring smooth Lok Sabha & Assembly elections-2024

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 25:- On the occasion of 15th National Voters Day, a grand function was organized by the District Election Office, Srinagar here to mark the foundation day of the Election Commission of India, established on 25th January 1950.

The function was presided over by the Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri, while Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat who is also the District Election Officer attended the function as Guest of Honour.

Speaking on the occasion, the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir said that the National voters Day serves as a reminder to all the eligible voters of their responsibilities to participate in the electoral process, to strengthen the democratic setup. He also expressed appreciation for the hard work of the BLO, Electoral Registration Officers, the Election Department staff, Election icons, and all the stakeholders for their unwavering dedication in keeping our democracy vibrant and thriving.

The Div Com also highlighted the contribution of Election machinery and all the stakeholders who exhibited commendable capability in ensuring successful Lok Sabha and J&K Assembly Elections in 2024 with

remarkable increase in voter turnout in both the Elections. He stressed on responsibility to vote besides the right to vote to strengthen the democratic setup. He said responsible voting is the key in the development of any nation and urged the participants, particularly youngsters, to become an active part of the electorate process.



DC/DEO said it is equally important that the newly registered electors are imparted with the knowledge about the importance of their newly acquired power to select the right representatives to fulfil their demands besides address their developmental issues.

The DC/DEO also appreciated the electoral team of District Election Authority Srinagar including Electoral Registration Officers (EROs), Assistant Electoral Registration Officers (AEROs), BLOs and other stakeholders who put in their best efforts by reaching to the last voter for registration during Special Summary Revision to become part of coming elections.

Jal Shakti Minister chairs public outreach camp at Udhampur

Meets scores of public delegations, takes stock of their issues

■ HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, JANUARY 25: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmad Rana, today presided over a public outreach programme at Udhampur to take stock of grievances and demands of people besides reviewing development scenario of the district.

The public meeting witnessed overwhelming response from all sections of the society during which the participants apprised the Minister of issues being faced by them and sought his intervention for redressing them.

Member Legislative Assembly Udhampur West, Pawan Kumar Gupta; Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, Saloni Rai; Senior Superintendent of Police; Additional District Development Commis-



sioner; Additional Deputy Commissioner and other district officers besides large number of general public participated in the public outreach programme. Addressing the gathering, Javed Rana emphasised on unity among the people saying that the people need to remain vigilant against the divisive forces for the public good. He emphasised the collective responsibility of working towards welfare of the people and making India Vishwaguru. He sought cooperation from all stakeholders for successful implementation of various government schemes. With the growing challenges of climate change, Javed Rana said the need for efficient water conservation methods has become paramount. He said that focus should be laid on water channel, check dams and other conservation strategies. While speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that the public meetings are a platform to obtain first hand appraisal from the gross root level besides reducing the communication gap between the public and the government. A delegation from Dudu raised the issue of upgradation of educational infrastructure in their area and complained about the shortage of staff in Dudu. Another delegation of individuals

emphasized the role of the media in educating and empowering citizens to exercise their voting rights responsibly. Dr. Ab Qayoom expressed gratitude for the honor and reaffirmed his commitment to fostering informed participation in democracy. The event concluded with a collective pledge to uphold democratic principles and encourage greater voter turnout in the future.

Special Correspondent HT-NEWSNETWORK Dr. Ab Qayoom Honored on 15th National Voters' Day

■ HT News Network

Handwara, Jan, 25: Dr. Ab Qayoom, Special Correspondent for Headlines Today, was honored with a token of appreciation during the 15th National Voters' Day celebration held in Handwara. The recognition was presented by Tehsildar Handwara, Mr. Zeeshan Ahmad Khan, and Deputy Chief Education Officer Kupwara, Mr. Manzoor Ahmad Bhat, in acknowledgment of his efforts in promoting democratic values and active citizenship through his journalism. The event was attended by a host of dignitaries, officials, and community members, who highlighted the importance of voter awareness and participation in the democratic process. The speakers



emphasized the role of the media in educating and empowering citizens to exercise their voting rights responsibly. Dr. Ab Qayoom expressed gratitude for the honor and reaffirmed his commitment to fostering informed participation in democracy. The event concluded with a collective pledge to uphold democratic principles and encourage greater voter turnout in the future.

Crackdown on Illegal Mining in Handwara: JCB, Two Dumpers Seized, 1 Lakh Fine Imposed

■ DR. AB QAYOOM



Langate, Jan, 25: In a significant crackdown on illegal mining and transportation of minerals, a joint team of Handwara Police and the Geology and Mining Department seized two dumpers and one JCB machine in Langate area of North Kashmir's Kupwara district. The seized vehicles were found openly involved in unauthorized mineral extraction and transportation. A fine of 1 lakh was imposed on the spot. The action was taken under the direct supervision of DMO Kupwara and led by area incharge Bashir Ahmad. The team has been actively conducting operations over the past ten days in Langate, Kralgund, and Handwara areas to curb illegal mining activities.

According to the area head of the Geology and Mining Department, a special drive has been initiated to counter illicit extraction and transportation of minerals. "Yesterday, during a joint raid at Nallah Mawar around 1:00 PM, a JCB machine involved in illegal activities near the banks of the Nallah was seized. Today, sudden raids were conducted near Kharou Bridge, leading to the seizure of two dumpers involved in unauthorized mineral transportation," he said.

The seized vehicles have been handed over to Handwara Police, and legal action under the MMRD Act has been initiated. The Geology and Mining Department urged the public to follow the law and comply with the terms and conditions of permits, where applicable. Citizens have been warned against engaging in illicit mining activities that harm the local ecology, with assurances of strict action against violators in the future. This coordinated effort highlights the authorities' commitment to preserving the environment and maintaining legal compliance in mineral extraction and transportation.

DLSA Pulwama organizes awareness programme on 'National Girl Child Day'

■ Farooq Rather

PULWAMA, JANUARY 25: In compliance to the directions of Legal Services Authority UT of J&K, District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Pulwama organized an Awareness programme on 'National Girl Child Day' in collaboration with District Social Welfare office Pulwama at Circuit House Pulwama.

The programme was organized under the chairmanship of Manzoor Ahmad Zargar, (Special Judge NDPS) Incharge, Chairman District Legal Services Authority (Pr. District & Sessions Judge), Pulwama and under the supervision of Mudasar Farooq Secretary DLSA Pulwama.

On the occasion, the main resource person M Sameer Yattoo Advocate from DLSA Pulwama raised awareness

about the schemes pertaining to girl child, and legal rights and protection from discrimination, child marriage and violence.

Furthermore, Waheeda Anjum, Advocate also spoke on the occasion about the importance of education to girl child and laid emphasis on the challenges faced by girls in Indian society. The day is dedicated to raising awareness about the inequalities girls encounter and advocating for equal opportunities in education, healthcare, and nutrition.

A similar programme was also organized at Sub District Hospital Tral in collaboration with TLSC Tral.

The aforesaid awareness programmes were also attended by PLVs of District Pulwama and staff members Social Welfare Officer Pulwama.

Secretary DLSA Ganderbal visits various legal aid clinics/ village legal care

■ HT News Network

GANDERBAL, JANUARY 25: Secretary, District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Ganderbal, Sheikh Babar Hussain today conducted a thorough visit to various legal aid clinics/village legal care and support centers in District Ganderbal.

The visit was conducted as per the calendar of activities for the month of January, 2025 on the directions of Chairman District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Ganderbal and Member Secretary of J&K Legal Services Authority. It aimed to review the functioning and operation of legal aid clinics/village legal care and



support centers and to assess the performance of Front Offices and the effectiveness of Adhikaar Mitras (PLVs) in delivering legal services to the public at large. During the visit, the Secretary reviewed the performance of Adhikaar Mitras (PLVs), front offices, and the overall functioning of legal aid clinics/village

legal care and support centers. He also inspected their case registers, attendance records, and other related registers in order to assess their overall functioning and effectiveness in delivering legal services to the poor and marginalized sections of society. Additionally, Secretary interacted with the teaching staff of

the concerned schools where the legal aid clinics/village legal care and support centers are functioning and also engaged with the general public and enquired about the functioning of the legal aid clinics and the availability of Adhikaar Mitras (PLVs), and gathered firsthand feedback on the services provided to the marginalized sections of society as per the mandate of legal services authorities act, 1987. The Secretary DLSA, made general public aware about NALSA's helpline 15100 toll-free and its role in providing legal assistance and encouraged individuals in need of legal help to use the helpline for legal advice.

DC Kulgam distributes Fishing equipment among beneficiaries

Stresses on need to uplift the marginal community

■ Farooq Rather.

KULGAM, JANUARY 25: In order to boost the morale of fishing community, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan today distributed incentives in the form of fishing equipments including Handle Nets, Covering Nets, Weighing Balances etc among 11 beneficiaries covered under HADP for the year 2024-25.

The event held in the lawns of Mini-Secretariat witnessed participation by a number of beneficiaries.

Interacting with the beneficiaries, the DC emphasized on the importance of generation of employment avenues in the Fisheries sector by way of adopting fish culture practices to achieve gainful employment.

The concerned officials of the Department were



directed to increase the awareness among the masses to create such employment generation units and proper utilization of water resources in the District.

Besides, 02 three wheel-

er vehicles for the transportation of fish stocks were also distributed to the beneficiaries covered under PMMSY during this year. The provision aims to boost fish cultural practices and transportation of

livestock procured from the wild.

It is worth to mention that during 2024-25, 21 fish rearing tanks for culture of Trout stand were established while, 01 Trout Hatchery was also provided to entrepreneurs in the fisheries sector during 2024-25 under PMMSY & HADP.

Being the downtrodden community, under Nutritional and livelihood support a sub component of PMMSY 550 registered fishermen were benefitted and Rs 3000 each were transferred through DBT mode, he added.

The cultural fish production, both in private and government farms stands at 220MTs from 160 units in the district. These units in the private sector have provided employment to 480 families directly or indirectly.

Multi-Event Road Safety and Green Awareness Campaign held at kulgam.



■ Farooq Rather.

Kulgam, Jan 25: The Assistant Regional Transport Office (ARTO) Kulgam Showkat Ahmad (JKAS) spearheaded a multifaceted awareness campaign at Sumo Stand kulgam focusing on road safety and environmental sustainability. The event featured a Driver Awareness Camp, where drivers were educated on safe driving practices. In a gesture of appreciation, the Drivers' Association honored the Motor Vehicle Department (MVD) Kulgam staff for their dedicated services. A Crash Helmet Awareness Drive was conducted in the main town of Kulgam, highlighting the importance of helmet use for rider safety. Additionally, the campaign included a Pollution Checking

Awareness Session, encouraging vehicle owners to utilize pollution-checking centers to promote cleaner air. To recognize responsible road behavior, Certificates of Appreciation were awarded to individuals who consistently followed road rules, including wearing seat belts and helmets. The campaign also emphasized Green Driving Awareness, with special sessions for EV automobile drivers advocating eco-friendly transportation. A Cleanliness Drive was held at the ARTO office, led by the Motor Vehicle Inspector. The event concluded with a vehicle rally flagged off by ARTO Kulgam, symbolizing a commitment to safer and greener roads. This comprehensive initiative aimed to foster a culture of safety and environmental responsibility, leaving a lasting impact on the local community.

DC Doda Harvinder Singh honored by President of India

HT News Network

DODA, JANUARY 25: Harvinder Singh, Deputy Commissioner Doda, has been awarded with the prestigious Best Electoral Practices Award by the President of India during the National Voters' Day celebrations at New Delhi. This recognition brings immense pride to the district and the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, with Doda emerging as the only district from the UT among the top 10 in India for exemplary electoral practices. The award acknowledges the visionary leadership and dedication of Harvinder Singh and his team in ensuring inclu-



sive, accessible and transparent elections during the General Assembly Elections 2024.

The administration under Singh implemented innovative measures to make voting accessible to every section of society, particularly focusing on

marginalized and specially abled voters. Initiatives included mobile polling stations, home voting for senior citizens and persons with disabilities (PwDs), Braille-enabled EVMs, pink polling stations for women, and accessible polling stations equipped with neces-

sary facilities. These steps ensured that no voter, regardless of physical ability or geographic remoteness, was left behind. Special efforts were made to increase participation in Silent Village of India Dhadkai, a remote and underserved area, where tailored voter awareness programs and facilities significantly enhanced voter turnout.

Additionally, youth and women voter registration witnessed a remarkable surge through targeted campaigns, workshops, rallies, and mock polling sessions. These programs educated first-time voters about the electoral process and underscored the importance of democratic participation.

DC Udhampur appeals people to support empowerment of girl child

HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, JANUARY 25: Deputy Commissioner Udhampur Saloni Rai today stressed the importance of empowerment of the girls through education and creation of ample opportunities for them to achieve excellence in life.

Addressing audiences at a function organised by Happy Model Foundation to celebrate National Girl Child Day, the Deputy Commissioner congratulated all participants and emphasized the importance of generating awareness among the masses regarding the rights and empowerment of the girl child.

She highlighted that the primary objective of celebrating this day is to erad-



icate social discrimination and exploitation faced by girls. She further stated that in today's era, girls are excelling in every field and proving that they are equal to their male counterparts. Reflecting on the significance of girls' education, she remarked that education equips young girls

with the necessary skills to become responsible citizens and enable them to raise their voices in society.

The DC urged the participants to sensitize the public about grave consequences of female foeticide, stressing the need for collective efforts to ensure the

empowerment of women through education and equal participation in all professions.

Several other speakers also deliberated on the importance of saving the girl child and elaborated on the provisions of the PC&PNDT Act, which aims to prevent gender-biased sex selection.

The DC lauded the efforts of the Happy Model Foundation for organizing such an impressive event and spreading awareness on this significant issue.

The highlight of the event was the formal inauguration of the newly constructed Saina Nehwal Badminton Hall by the Deputy Commissioner as the chief guest.

Govt Departments, Educational Institutions celebrate National Voters' Day

HT News Network

JAMMU, JANUARY 25: The National Voters' Day was celebrated by departments and educational institutions by hosting solemn pledges and public engagement activities.

Directorate of Agriculture Jammu: The Directorate of Agriculture Production and Farmers Welfare Jammu hosted a pledge ceremony which was led by Director S. Arvinder Singh Reen. The event was attended by senior officers and staff of the Agriculture Department.

Director highlighted the importance of National Voters' Day in reinforcing the democratic fabric of India.

Sheep Husbandry Department Jammu: On the occasion of National



Voters' Day, a pledge taking ceremony was organized at Sheep Husbandry Department, Jammu. Director Dr. Syed Moin-ul-Haq administered the National Voters' Day Pledge to all officers/officials.

Jammu Municipal Corporation: Jammu Municipal Corporation organized a function to celebrate 15th National Voters' Day in its premises here under the aegis of the JMC Commissioner Dr. Devansh Yadav.

Speaking on the occasion, the Commissioner highlighted the importance of vote and massive participation of voters in the democratic process. He said that the primary objective of National Voters' Day is to raise awareness about the significance of voting and encourage citizens, especially the younger generation, to exercise their right to franchise.

AYUSH Department Warns Unregistered Hakeems in North Kashmir: Legal Action Looms Over Unauthorized Practices

UMAR RASHID

Baramulla, 24 Jan : The AYUSH department has initiated a strict crackdown on unregistered Hakeems who have been operating as Unani and Ayurvedic doctors across North Kashmir. Recent inspections in Baramulla uncovered several unauthorized practitioners running clinics without proper certification, endangering public health.

During the inspections, officials warned these practitioners to immediately cease their illegal operations or face strict legal consequences. A senior AYUSH official remarked, "We are committed to stopping these unlawful practices. Those found violating the law will be dealt with severely to protect public health and uphold the credibility of traditional medicine."

The crackdown comes in response to widespread complaints about unqualified Hakeems exploiting the system. Citizens have called for stricter regulations to ensure only qualified individuals can practice, while highlighting the plight of unemployed Unani and Ayurvedic graduates. Public health advocates are urging



the authorities to maintain the momentum and bring lasting reforms to the field.

Many unregistered Hakeems are reportedly running clinics in North Kashmir, posing as certified Unani and Ayurvedic doctors. Many of these practitioners lack the necessary qualifications but have established large-scale operations, exploiting the public's trust in traditional medicine.

During the inspections, AYUSH officials discovered several instances where unqualified Hakeems were dispensing medicines and offering treatments without proper certifications.

A senior official stated, "These unregistered practitioners are jeopardizing public health. They have been warned to close their operations immediately, failing which strict legal action will be initiated."

The issue has been linked to alleged lapses in the AYUSH department's certification processes before 2019. Under Article 16 2(A) of AYUSH law, individuals with 10 years of experience as Hakeems and a basic education could obtain Hikmat certifications. However, this provision has been misused by many who now present themselves as Unani and Ayurvedic doctors without adequate training or expertise. This malpractice has had a severe impact on qualified graduates of Unani and Ayurvedic medicine. Many young professionals, despite earning degrees in these fields, remain unemployed as unqualified individuals dominate the profession.

Umar Rashid, a resident of Kanispora, Baramulla, expressed his concerns, saying, "It's heart-breaking to see how unqualified Hakeems and even religious figures like Molvis and Imams are running clinics, while qualified graduates struggle to find opportunities. This exploitation must end."



Ab Hamid Khan dedicated and best ALMT was today felicitated by District administration Baramulla on eve of National voters day for his excellence & Contributions during Parliament & assembly elections of JK

Awareness camp on PM Vishwakarma, other Govt Schemes held in Kanga

Farooq Rather

RAMBAN, JANUARY 25: The District Industries Centre (DIC), Ramban today organized an awareness camp at Panchayat Ghar, Kanga.

The camp, led by General Manager DIC Ramban, Ravinder Kumar Anand aimed to inform unemployed youth from Kanga and nearby areas about the PM Vishwakarma Scheme and other government initiatives.

Project Manager Kuldeep Singh welcomed participants and emphasized the importance of support-

ing rural entrepreneurship and preserving traditional crafts. The program showcased the government's commitment to economic growth through financial assistance, skill development, and market access.

Participants were briefed on the eligibility criteria, application process and benefits of schemes like PMEGP and PM Vishwakarma, fostering community interest in sustainable livelihood opportunities. RAMBAN, JANUARY 25: The District Industries Centre (DIC), Ramban today organized an awareness

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Healthy Baby competition organized at Thathri to mark National Girl Child Day

HT News Network

THATHRI, JANUARY 25: Under the direction of the District Development Commissioner Doda, the Department of ICDS organized a Healthy Baby Competition at Dak Banglow Thathri.

The event was inaugurated by District Programme Officer Paramjeet Singh in the presence of Child Development Project Officer Thathri, Pankaj Sharma Tehsildar Thathri, Satish Rana, BMO Thathri, Dr. Varsha Kotwal; BDO Thathri, Bhushan Kumar and field functionaries from the ICDS and Health Departments.

The event featured



health check-ups conducted by experts from the Health Department, along with weight and height measurements of children, who were categorized into normal and underweight groups.

A series of activities, such as games promoting physical, cognitive and social development, as well as poetry recitation, songs, dances, and a ramp walk,

added vibrancy to the program. The ramp walk by children emerged as the highlight of the event. Gifts were presented to all participating children, while two children were selected as "Healthy Babies" and received special prizes.

To commemorate the 10th National Girl Child Day, a cake-cutting ceremony involving young girls was also held.

Gaiety, Fervour marks National Voters' Day celebration across Jammu Division

HT News Network

JAMMU, JANUARY 25: Gaiety and Fervour marked National Voters' Day celebration across Jammu Division featuring voter's pledges, Information, Education and Communication events, besides scintillating cultural events.

At Udhampur: Like other parts of the country, the 15th National Voters' Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm here today with the theme "Nothing Like Voting, I Vote For Sure." An impressive function was organized by the District Administration Udhampur, where Deputy Commissioner Saloni Rai was the Chief Guest and Senior Superintendent of Police Amod Ashok Nagpure was the guest of Honour.

Deputy District Election Officer Malvika Sharma, delivered the welcome address and emphasized the significance of National Voters' Day in fostering electoral participation.

The National Voters' Day Pledge was administered by the chief guest to all participants, reaffirming their commitment to strengthening democracy. A captivating cultural program and a skit presented by students highlighted the importance of active participation in elections, leaving a lasting impression on the audience.

The chief guest distributed EPIC cards to first-time voters and presented certificates of appreciation to individuals and stakeholders for their excellent contributions to the election process.

Additional District Development



Commissioner Rajinder Singh, Additional Deputy Commissioner Dr. Gurvinderjeet Singh, PO Poshan, Subash Dogra and other officers were present.

At Doda: The 15th National Voters' Day was celebrated today at Community Hall Doda, commemorating the foundation day of the Election Commission of India (ECI).

The event was organized by the District Election Officer (DEO), with the theme "Nothing Like Voting, I Vote for Sure" and saw enthusiastic participation from students, teachers, and officers of the district.

ADDC Pran Singh was the Chief Guest and SSP Sandeep Kumar Mehra was the Guest of Honour. Other

present included ADC, Deputy DEO, ACR, PO ICDS, ACD, ACP and other officers.

The celebrations commenced with a rally which started from Government Boys Higher Secondary School and passed through Main Bazar and Nagri Road, culminating at Community Hall Doda.

At the Community Hall Doda, the event began with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp, followed by the administration of the Voter's Pledge, reiterating the importance of voting in strengthening democracy. A vibrant cultural programme was also presented by students, adding to the celebratory spirit of the occasion.

Similarly, National Voters' Day was celebrated with enthusiasm at Bhadarwah in which students from various schools and local youth took

out a rally carrying placards.

At Kathua: The District Administration Kathua hosted a grand celebration at the Auditorium Hall of Government Degree College to mark the 15th National Voters' Day. The event, presided over by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Ranjit Singh, witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, district officials, and the general public.

The event featured a signature campaign aimed at promoting responsible voting and empowering citizens with knowledge to become informed voters.

As part of the celebrations, several engaging activities were organized, including Debate Competition and Nukkad Natak wherein students from various educational institutions participated enthusiastically.

Youth will play major role in making India Viksit Bharat by 2047: Rajnath Singh

■ HT News Network

NEW DELHI, Jan 25: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday said that the youth was the 'future heroes of India' and they will play a major role in making India 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047.

Explaining the true meaning of a 'hero', Singh asserted that "a hero works for the upliftment of the nation, whose work gives a new direction to the society".

The Defence Minister and Minister of Education Dharmendra Pradhan felicitated the Super-100 winners of Veer Gatha 4.0 here.

Among the 100 winners, 66 are girls from different parts of the country. During the felicitation ceremony, each winner was presented with a cash prize of Rs 10,000, a medal and a certificate. These Super-100 are among the 10,000 special guests, who will be witnessing the Republic Day Parade at Kartavya Path on Sunday, a Defence Ministry statement said.

In his address, Rajnath congratulated the winners and appreciated the joint efforts of Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Education towards achieving Veer Gatha's objective of connecting the youth with the glorious history of the country's bravehearts.

He acknowledged the pan-India participation of over 1.76 crore students in this fourth edition of the Project, stating that it is providing recognition to the bravehearts through education. He commended the intelligence, enthusiasm and patriotism of the students who participated in the competition.

Expressing delight over the fact that 2/3rd of the Super-100 winners of Veer Gatha 4.0 are girls, he made special mention of a Class 10 student named 'Nemneineng' from Manipur, who had lost her



parents when she was a child.

He commended her perseverance for not giving up her studies despite numerous difficulties and securing a place among the winners.

"India's stature has grown on the global stage due to the Prime Minister's dynamic leadership. Today, when we speak on any international forum, the whole world listens. This has been made possible due to the hard work of every Indian, including our brave soldiers, scientists and young ignited minds. We have a major young population of about 50 crore youth. How can a country with such creative minds not develop," Rajnath asked the students.

The Defence Minister exhorted them

to continue taking inspiration from bravehearts such as freedom fighters Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekhar Azad, Ashfaqulla Khan and courageous soldiers, whose bravery and sacrifice will never be forgotten. He termed the sense of national pride as the most crucial aspect for the development of any country.

Singh encouraged students to not feel afraid in the face of challenges and continue moving forward towards their goals with confidence and good intent. He urged them to never allow the feeling of ego creep into their hearts, even when they touch greater heights. Always remaining polite and modest is the key, he said.

Speaking on the occasion, Dharmendra Pradhan emphasised that initiatives like

Veer Gatha educate school students about the valour and sacrifices of the brave-gallantry award winners while nurturing the creativity of young minds.

He highlighted the record-breaking participation of 1.76 crore students from over 2.5 lakh schools who engaged in activities such as drawing, painting, and essay writing, paying heartfelt tributes to the heroes for their immense service and sacrifice to the nation.

Pradhan also noted that this initiative would help instil values of patriotism, grit, and national pride, inspiring students to contribute to the nation's progress.

Congratulating every student who participated with enthusiasm and respect for the gallantry award winners, he lauded the Super-100 awardees for their success. Wishing them a bright future, he remarked that their enthusiasm and creativity would serve them well in life.

During the event, Param Vir Chakra Awardee Subedar Major Sanjay Kumar shared his inspiring experience from the 1999 Kargil War, urging students to embody the values of bravery, selflessness and integrity in their lives.

"True bravery lies not only in combat but in standing up for what is right in everyday life," he said, inspiring the young participants.

Minister of State for Defence Sanjay Seth, Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Dinesh K Tripathi, Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal AP Singh, Secretary, Department of School Education & Literacy Sanjay Kumar, Secretary (Defence Production) Sanjeev Kumar, Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman DRDO Samir V Kamat, Vice Chief of the Army Staff Lt Gen NS Raja Subramani and other senior officials attended the event. (UNI)

Voters Should Rise Above Discrimination, Allurements, Says President Murmu

■ HT News Network



NEW DELHI, Jan 25: Voters should have the resolve to rise above narrow mindedness, discrimination and inducements while exercising their franchise, besides having faith in democracy, President Droupadi Murmu said on Saturday.

Enlightened voters make democracy stronger, she asserted while addressing a 15th National Voters' Day event in the national capital.

Delivering her address in the presence of Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar, Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and SS Sandhu, and representatives of political parties, she lauded the poll panel for using new technologies and the latest software to improve and make more transparent the poll process.

The president said she was confident that Indian democracy would continue to set examples for the global community.

"Besides having faith in democracy, voters should have firm resolve that they will rise above narrow-mindedness, discrimination and inducements while exercising their franchise... Enlightened voters make democracy stronger," she asserted.

An impressive glimpse of India's inclusive democracy is visible in elections. The increasing participation of women is an important sign of the overall development of society and the country, the president said.

She noted that the Election Commission (EC) made special efforts to facilitate the voting process for citizens aged 85 and above, differently-abled voters and the tribal electorate living in remote areas.

In his address, Meghwal pointed out that seeking to make the EC impartial and transparent, a law was passed on the appointment and service conditions of the chief election commissioner and the election commissioners.

He recalled that the first law to be passed in the new Parliament building was on 33 per cent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies.

He said another reform pushed by the Narendra Modi government was the Bill on simultaneous polls. The EC first dealt with the issue as far back as 1983 in its first annual report.

Kejriwal vows to resolve sewage issues across Delhi if AAP retains power

■ HT News Network

NEW DELHI, Jan 25: AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday vowed to address all sewer-related problems in Delhi on a priority basis if his party is re-elected in the upcoming Assembly polls.

In a video message, the former Delhi chief minister highlighted the development work undertaken by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in the city's unauthorised colonies, stating that significant progress has been made in providing basic infrastructure in these areas. "When we formed the government in Delhi, there was no development work in unauthorised colonies. No government worked for these colonies. We started the development work and today, almost all such colonies have sewer pipelines and other facilities," he said.

Kejriwal acknowledged that several areas in the city are grappling with issues of sewage water contaminating drinking water.

"I have decided that all sewer-related issues across the city will be solved on a war-footing after the AAP forms its government," he said.

Govt's requisite support to India's tourism and hospitality sector lacking: Kharge

■ HT News Network



NEW DELHI, Jan 25: Alleging that the Government's requisite support to India's tourism and hospitality sector is lacking, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday called for a collective effort to reform the sector, including filling the infrastructure gaps and aggressively promoting inbound tourism. On National Tourism Day, Kharge said the country boasts of a rich diversity of natural beauty, ancient monuments, multitude of culinary traditions and multi-faceted cultures, making it an ideal destination for global travellers. However, the true potential of India's tourism industry is far from being fully realised and foreign tourist arrivals in the country have remained well below the pre-COVID-19 levels, he said, adding that this is "extremely worrying". Despite the Centre's stated commitment to revitalising this crucial economic segment, the requisite support and impetus have been lacking, a situation that demands immediate attention, Kharge said. "Therefore on #NationalTourismDay, we urge for a collective effort to reform the sector, including filling the infrastructure gaps and aggressively promoting inbound tourism," he said. (PTI)

Delhi polls: BJP promises to clean Yamuna in 3 yrs, welfare schemes for gig workers and labourers

■ HT News Network

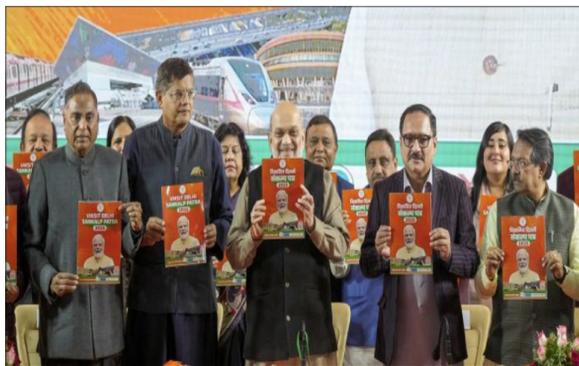
NEW DELHI: With less than two weeks left for the Delhi Assembly polls, senior BJP leader Amit Shah on Saturday promised to clean Yamuna in three years, provide complete ownership rights in 1,700 unauthorised colonies, and welfare measures for gig workers and labourers.

Shah slammed AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal, accusing him of "lying" and not fulfilling his promises and asserted that "getting rid of liars and betrayers" is the biggest poll issue in the national capital.

The BJP manifesto also promised free travel of up to Rs 4,000 annually for needy students in Delhi Metro under the National Common Mobility Card scheme.

The Union minister, who released the final part of BJP's 'Sankalp Patra' for the February 5 Delhi polls, said people living in 1,700 unauthorised colonies will get full ownership rights of properties, which will pave the way for sale, purchase and construction if the BJP comes to power.

He also reiterated that the BJP will



not stop any ongoing welfare measures for the poor in Delhi.

The BJP leader promised various new schemes and welfare measures for the gig workers and labourers. The BJP will form a gig workers welfare board and provide Rs 10 lakh insurance and Rs 5 lakh accident cover, he said.

He also promised to fill 50,000 govt posts in a transparent manner, create 20 lakh self-employment opportunities and develop a grand Mahabharat

corridor. Shah said the Centre has spent Rs 41,000 crore on building roads, Rs 15,000 crore on laying railway lines, and Rs 21,000 crore on airports in Delhi.

He said that Delhi would not have been livable if the central government hadn't invested in its infrastructure.

Shah alleged the level of corruption was never so high as it is under Kejriwal-led AAP, citing alleged scams. (AGENCIES)

Election campaigns should not be divisive, says CEC Kumar

■ HT News Network

NEW DELHI, Jan 25: Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar on Friday pushed for poll campaigns that are neither disruptive nor divisive and spoke against building unfounded narratives as it tends to disillusion and distance youngsters from the electoral process.

In his message on the eve of the 15th National Voters' Day, he said the world was witnessing "an era of polarised campaigns" during elections, possibilities of external interference, and growing challenges in cybersecurity.

National Voters' Day is being celebrated for the past 15 years to mark the inception of the Election Com-



mission (EC) on January 25, 1950, a day before India became a republic.

"It is everyone's duty that election campaigns are not disruptive or divisive and, unfounded narratives are not built as it tends to disillusion and distance our youth from the electoral process," Kumar said.

He said misinformation and fake narratives spread instantaneously

and with alarming speed.

A dangerous trend is emerging where baseless allegations are made against the electoral process that can damage the confidence of voters and the national fabric, he added.

Social media algorithms are designed in a way that content is aligned with whatever is viewed and, thus, viewpoints get hardened without adequate exposure to the other side of the argument, Kumar noted.

"Democracy belongs to all of us. Indian democracy is our shared heritage, nurtured and strengthened over the past 75 years — a legacy in which voters rightfully take pride. This legacy is proudly shared by political parties that, after voters, are critical stakeholders in strengthening democracy," he said in his message.

BJP does not need Rahul Gandhi's certificate on Constitution: Union Minister Kishan Reddy

■ HT News Network

HYDERABAD, Jan 25: Alleging that Congress was never democratic during its long rule in the country, Union Minister G Kishan Reddy on Friday stated that the BJP does not need Rahul Gandhi's certificates on safeguarding the Constitution and its values.

Speaking after paying homage to Bharat Ratna Karpooi Thakur on his birth anniversary, he claimed that Jawaharlal Nehru became the country's first Prime Minister, despite the majority of Congress members favouring Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

When the Janata government was formed, Indira Gandhi came to power again by splitting the Janata Party and making conspiracies, he claimed. "Congress wants to prove that no one other than the Nehru family has



the ability and the right to govern," he alleged.

Congress had "insulted and harassed" B R Ambedkar, the chief architect of the Constitution, during his lifetime, including defeating him in elections and removing him from his ministerial post, he claimed.

While such is the history of Congress, its leader Rahul Gandhi talks about safeguarding the Constitution,

he added.

"A person who does not understand the Constitution or the country's political history, a person who has not read the Constitution—Rahul Gandhi does not have the moral right to criticise the BJP or talk about the Constitution," Reddy said.

Congress alleges that the Constitution is in danger, but it will survive as long as there is democracy in the country, he said.

Pointing out how Congress had destabilised governments and "hurt" press freedom, he stated that the BJP does not need Rahul Gandhi's certificate on the Constitution or respect for Ambedkar.

Paying glowing tributes to Karpooi Thakur, Reddy charged that Congress never respected non-Congress leaders and also leaders within the party who were not part of the Nehru family.

India, Indonesia Decide To Boost Defence And Trade Ties

■ HT News Network

NEW DELHI, Jan 25: India and Indonesia on Saturday agreed to give a new momentum to the overall bilateral ties and especially concurred on working jointly in the areas of defence manufacturing and supply chains, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi hosted Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto for wide-ranging talks.

Subianto, on a three-day visit to India, will be the chief guest at the Republic-Day celebrations at Kartavya Path on Sunday.

In his media statement following the talks, Modi described Indonesia as an "important partner" of India in the 10-nation ASEAN bloc as well as in the Indo-Pacific, noting that both countries are committed to a rules-based order in the region.

"We agree that the freedom of navigation should be ensured in line with international law," Modi said amid growing global concerns over China's increasing military muscle-flexing in the Indo-Pacific region.

"We held extensive discussions on various aspects of our bilateral ties," the



prime minister said, adding that India and Indonesia have agreed to work jointly on defence manufacturing and supply chains.

An agreement signed between India and Indonesia on Saturday in the maritime security sphere will further strengthen cooperation in crime prevention, search and rescue and capacity building, Modi said.

He said both sides talked on the need to diversify the trade basket and market access to boost the overall economic ties.

"We decided to strengthen cooperation in areas like FinTech, artificial intelligence, internet of things and digital public infrastructure," the prime minister noted.

He also said that both sides laid stress on cooperation in maritime security, cyber

security, counter-terrorism and de-radicalisation.

In the talks, the Indian side also welcomed Indonesia's BRICS membership.

In his remarks, the Indonesian leader described the talks as "very frank" and said both sides have agreed to expand cooperation in many key sectors of common interest.

"I have given directions to our officials that we need to accelerate the economic partnership with India," Subianto said. He said both sides talked on the need to diversify the trade basket and market access to boost the overall economic ties.

"We decided to strengthen cooperation in areas like FinTech, artificial intelligence, internet of things and digital public infrastructure," the prime minister noted.

He also said that both sides laid stress on cooperation in maritime security, cyber security, counter-terrorism and de-radicalisation. In the talks, the Indian side also welcomed Indonesia's BRICS membership.

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Mumbai terror accused Tahawwur Rana loses last legal battle in US, apex court clears extradition to India

■ HT News Network



WASHINGTON, Jan 25: The US Supreme Court has turned down a review petition by terror accused Tahawwur Rana, dismissing his last legal challenge against his extradition to India in connection with the 2008 Mumbai attacks that killed 166 people.

"Petition DENIED," the Supreme Court said. The apex court's order came on January 21, a day after Donald Trump was sworn in as the US President.

Earlier, Rana lost legal battles in several federal courts, including the US Court of Appeals for the North Circuit in San Francisco.

Rana, a Canadian national of Pakistani origin, on November 13 filed a "petition for a writ of certiorari" before the US Supreme Court to review the lower court's ruling.

Rana, who is currently detained at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Los Angeles, is known to be associated with Pakistani-American terrorist David Coleman Headley, one of the main conspirators of the 26/11 Mumbai attacks.

Headley obtained Rana's consent to open an office of First World Immigration Services as a cover for his activities in India.

Earlier, the US government had argued in the court that the petition for a writ of certiorari should be denied. US Solicitor General Elizabeth B Prelogor said this in its filing before the Supreme Court on December 16.

She said Rana was not entitled to relief from extradition to India in this case.

In his 'petitions for a writ of certiorari to review the judgment of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, Rana argued that he was tried and acquitted in federal court in the Northern District of Illinois (Chicago) on charges relating to the 2008 terrorist attacks on Mumbai.

Chinese nationals move Pakistani court against police harassment

■ HT News Network

KARACHI, Jan 25: Six Chinese nationals in Pakistan petitioned a high court against police harassment, including demanding money and putting restrictions on their movement in the name of security. They filed the plea in the Sindh High Court in Karachi on Friday, where a two-judge bench heard the case. The bench issued notices to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and others, including the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan and its consulate in Karachi and relevant federal and provincial law officers. Xu Hui, Deng Huan and four other Chinese nationals filed the petition through their counsel, submitting that they came to Pakistan after fulfilling all required legal formalities and invested a significant amount of money and resources in various business ventures and sectors in the country. It is the first time Chinese nationals have approached a high court against harassment by police in Pakistan. The petitioners cited Sindh's chief secretary, the provincial home secretary, the inspector general of police, and other senior police officers as respondents. They maintained it was the responsibility of the respondents to protect and provide a secure environment for all foreign nationals legally residing and investing in the country. Counsel for the foreign nationals Rehman Mehsud told the media that his clients had decided to approach the court after being subjected to harassment, bribery demands, invasion of privacy and other problems in the name of security.

Israel, Hamas set to swap more hostages for prisoners in another test of Gaza ceasefire

■ HT News Network

DEIR-AL-BALAH (Gaza Strip), Jan 25: Israel and Hamas were expected to swap more hostages for Palestinian prisoners on Saturday, the second such exchange since a ceasefire began in the Gaza Strip last weekend and another test for the deal.

The truce is aimed at winding down the deadliest and most destructive war ever fought between Israel and the militant group. The fragile deal has so far held, quieting airstrikes and rockets and allowing for increased aid to flow into the tiny coastal territory.

When the ceasefire started Sunday, three hostages held by the militants were released in exchange for 90 Palestinian prisoners. On Saturday, four hostages are expected to be freed for 200 prisoners, including 120 who are serving life sentences after being convicted of deadly attacks on Israelis. They will likely be released into Gaza or sent abroad.

The four Israeli soldiers, Karina Arie, 20; Daniella Gilboa, 20; Naama Levy, 20; and Liri Albag, 19, were captured in Hamas' Oct 7, 2023 attack that ignited the war.

They were taken from Nahal Oz base near the border with Gaza when Palestinian militants overran it, killing more than 60 soldiers there. The female abductees had all served in a unit of lookouts charged



with monitoring threats along the border. A fifth female soldier in their unit, Agam Berger, 20, was abducted with them but not included in the list.

After the swap, Israel is expected to begin pulling back from the Netzarim corridor - an east-west road dividing Gaza in two - and allowing displaced Palestinians in the south to return to their former homes in the north for the first time since the beginning of the war.

Palestinians will only be allowed to move north on foot, with vehicular traffic restricted until later in the ceasefire.

What happens after the deal's initial six-week phase is uncertain, but many hope it will lead to the end of a war that has leveled wide swaths of Gaza, displaced the vast majority of its population, and left hundreds of thousands of people at risk of famine.

Yemen's Houthi rebels unilaterally release 153 war detainees, Red Cross says

■ HT News Network

DUBAI, Jan 25: Yemen's Houthi rebels unilaterally freed 153 war detainees Saturday, the International Committee of the Red Cross said, one of several overtures in recent days to ease tensions after the ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip.

Previous prisoner releases have been viewed as a means to jumpstart talks over permanently ending Yemen's decade-long war, which began when the Houthis seized the country's capital, Sanaa, in 2014.

However, the Houthis' release comes just after they detained another seven Yemeni workers from the United Nations, sparking anger from the world body.

Those released previously had been visited by Red Cross staff in Sanaa and received medical checks and other assistance, the organisation said while announcing the release. The Houthis had signalled Friday night they planned a release of prisoners.

The Red Cross said it "welcomes this unilateral release as another positive step towards reviving negotiations."

"This operation has brought much-needed relief and joy to families who have been anxiously waiting for the return of their loved ones," said Christine Cipolla, the ICRC's head of delegation in Yemen.



"We know that many other families are also waiting for their chance to be reunited. We hope that today's release will lead to many more moments like this."

Abdul Qader al-Murtada, the head of the Houthis' Committee for Prisoners' Affairs, said in a statement carried by Houthi media that those released were "humanitarian cases" that included the sick, wounded and the elderly.

"The goal of the initiative is to build trust and establish a new phase of serious and honest dealing," al-Murtada reportedly said.

The Red Cross has helped oversee other prisoner releases, including one that saw some 1,000 prisoners swapped in 2020, over 800 detainees exchanged in 2023 and another release in 2024.

Archbishop Anastasios, who revived Orthodox Church in Albania, dies at 95

■ HT News Network

TIRANA (Albania), Jan 25: Albania's Archbishop Anastasios, who revived the country's Orthodox Church after the fall of the communist regime in 1990, has died, the church said on Saturday. He was 95.

Anastasios, the Archbishop of Tirana, Durres, and All Albania and head of the

Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Albania, died in the intensive care unit of a hospital in Athens due to "polyorgan deficiency," the church said.

He had been hospitalised in Tirana on December 30 with a viral infection but was transferred to Athens a few days later after his condition deteriorated.

"His Grace, Archbishop Anastasios, was

the builder and revitalizer of the Albanian Orthodox Church, which was literally raised from the ruins after the fall of the atheist regime," the church said in a statement.

"He rebuilt church life from the ground up, built hundreds of churches, established educational and charitable institutions, and formed a new generation of clergy,

providing unending and sacrificial service for more than 33 years."

Albanian President Bajram Begaj said that Albania had lost its "spiritual leader and a distinguished personality."

"His Grace's legacy will remain alive in the hearts of those honouring and loving him," Begaj said.

Over 400,000 people displaced in 2025 in eastern DR Congo: UN

■ HT News Network

KINSHASA, Jan 25: Over 400,000 people have been displaced since the beginning of 2025 in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), as conflict intensifies and rebellion advances toward major townships, the United Nations refugee agency said on Friday.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said in a release that it is "gravely concerned" about the safety and security of civilians and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in eastern DRC.

According to the statement, persistent clashes between bel-

ligerents in these areas continue to worsen the protection environment for civilians in South Kivu and North Kivu provinces, which are already home to 4.6 million IDPs.

Violent clashes have been ongoing since Friday morning between government troops and the March 23 Movement (M23) rebels in the town of Sake and its surrounding areas in North Kivu province. Loud explosions were heard around the town, which is the last barrier for the government to defend Goma, the capital of North Kivu province.

All humanitarian routes between Goma, Sake and Kalehe, three zones experiencing intense violence, have been cut off due to ongoing hostilities, the UNHCR



reported on Friday. The report also noted that an influx of injured individuals has overwhelmed hospital emergency capacities.

A widespread sense of panic has gripped displaced residents in Goma and its surrounding neighborhoods amid ongoing shelling

by the M23. Several foreign embassies have issued alerts, advising their citizens to leave North Kivu while airports and borders remain operational.

Guillaume Njike Kaiko, spokesperson for the DRC military in North Kivu, said on Friday that the effort to liberate Sake, now occupied by the M23, is still underway.

"We have already halted the enemy's advance toward Goma, and at this moment, we urge the population to remain calm because our armed forces are fully engaged on the front lines against the enemy. We assure you that the army will restore order on the ground," he told Xinhua over the phone.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressed concern over the resumption of hostilities by the M23. In a statement issued by his spokesperson, Stephane Dujarric, on Thursday, Guterres condemned M23's renewed offensive since the beginning of this year and its expansion into North Kivu and South Kivu provinces.

As the offensive has caused devastating losses among the civilian population and increased the risk of a broader regional conflict, Guterres called on the M23 to immediately cease its offensive, withdraw from all occupied areas, and respect the ceasefire agreement implemented last August. (UNI)

FROM THE FRONT PAGE...

REPUBLIC DAY ADDRESS OF LG MANOJ SINHA TO THE PEOPLE OF J&K ON 76TH REPUBLIC DAY

to democracy, justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. Let us honor our freedom fighters and martyrs who made the supreme sacrifice to protect and preserve our motherland. I extend my deepest tribute to the valiant soldiers of the Indian Army, Para Military Forces, and Jammu and Kashmir Police, whose relentless dedication and sacrifices ensure the unity, integrity, and security of our nation. Beyond safeguarding our borders, they stand as pillars of peace and stability for the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Their extraordinary valor and service inspire us to work towards a united, secure, and prosperous India.

On this momentous occasion, I would like to express my gratitude to every individual contributing to the progress of our Union Territory - farmers, artisans, teachers, healthcare workers, security forces, sportspersons and government officials. Your dedication and hard work are the cornerstone of our collective success. Jammu and Kashmir has always been a land of unity in diversity. We take immense pride in our composite culture and centuries-old traditions of brotherhood. It is our collective responsibility to maintain peace and harmony, ensuring that the dreams of our youth are not hindered by divisive forces. Our journey has been one of resilience and determination, marked by unparalleled achievements in every sphere. Jammu and Kashmir, with its rich heritage, natural beauty, and vibrant culture, has always been a vital part of this journey.

The successful conduct of Assembly Elections underscores the positive change and this achievement is credited to all the citizens who participated in this democratic exercise, demonstrating their faith in our democratic values and future of Jammu and Kashmir. The people now look to the Government with renewed expectations, aspiring for an environment that promotes meaningful employment, sustainable development, social inclusivity, and robust economic growth - paving the way for an enhanced quality of life for all. For further strengthening and ensuring peoples' participation at a broader level, elections for Local Bodies will be conducted for establishing 3-Tier Governance structure.

Good governance is the cornerstone for a prosperous and harmonious future and is pivotal to fostering peace, development, and inclusivity in the region. By focusing on transparency, accountability, and citizen-centric policies, the government has prioritized empowering local communities through participatory decision-making and equitable resource distribution. Initiatives like digital governance, streamlining public services, and promoting socio-economic programs aim to bridge developmental gaps and strengthen public trust.

J&K has taken lead in making 1,166 online public services available on e-Unnat portal and 501 e-services have been integrated with Rapid Assessment System (RAS). 387 services are covered under the Public Services Guarantee Act (PSGA), and 104 Government services have been integrated with DigLocker for enhanced document security and accessibility. J&K is targeting to achieve 100% compliance of reforms for ease of doing business. Jammu and Kashmir has created JK SAMADHAN platform, for online redressal of public grievances. About 300 grievances are processed per day. Another initiative launched by the Government, Raabta, is a landmark program aimed at fostering stronger connections between the government and the people.

Jammu and Kashmir's economy has recorded a growth rate of 9.5% which is driven by sustained government initiatives and strategic policy measures. GDP of J&K is estimated at Rs 2.45 lakh crore for 2023-24, up from Rs 2,20 lakh crore in 2022-23. This positive trajectory highlights the effectiveness of ongoing economic development strategies, infrastructure advancements, and business-friendly policies.

We have made remarkable strides in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) implementation and rank 2nd among UTs in the SDG India Index 2023-24. Specific policy interventions by the Government have enabled to improve the overall score and ranking of Jammu and Kashmir. Data-driven monitoring and policy intervention ensures effective resource allocation and decision making. Alignment of SDGs with the budget and facilitating Outcome-Based Monitoring is being planned as a next phase.

For enhancing legal and judicial consistency and for establishment of robust and unified criminal justice system, ensuring fairness, equality, and the rule of law, three criminal laws have been implemented in Jammu and Kashmir.

The implementation of these Criminal Laws are backed by technological upgradation, capacity building of investigators/prosecutors, data analysis, evidence collection, cyber security and procurement of new technological devices for giving effect to various provisions of the new criminal laws.

Our Union Territory has witnessed remarkable progress in various sectors of development. From infrastructure development to social welfare, from education reforms to healthcare advancements, our administration has been relentless in its pursuit of growth and equity.

Significant strides have been made in road connectivity. Work on Jammu-Akhnoor-Poonch National Highway, Srinagar-Baramulla-Uri National Highway and Chenani-Sudmahadev-Khelani-Kishtwar-Khanabal National Highway is under progress. Work on Banihal bypass on Srinagar-Jammu NH has recently been completed and opened for traffic. Work on Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway is under progress, which will reduce the distance between Delhi and Katra to 6 hours only. Srinagar and Jammu Ring Roads are in advanced stages of completion. Z-Morh tunnel has been completed and is being dedicated to the nation soon. Construction of Zojila tunnel is also under progress.

Works on development of Baramulla-Kupwara-Trehgam National Highway, Baramulla Uri NH, Pattan Bypass and Baramulla Bypass have been started. 8 tunnel projects are in the advanced stages and are likely to be completed by December 2025. Sudmahadev Dranga tunnel and Singhpora Vailoo tunnel are being taken up. Unconnected habitations having population more than 250 as per 2011 census are being taken up under the newly launched PMGSY-IV programme. 144 Road and Bridge projects are being taken up under NABARD.

In a historic stride towards progress, the Railway is set to connect the Kashmir Valley with the rest of the nation, heralding a new era of development, economic growth, and unity.

J&K is witnessing rapid development in hydropower generation. Mega hydro projects like Pakal Dul, Kiru, and Ratle shall be ready by 2026 and Kwar by December 2027 collectively adding 3,014 MWs generation capacity. Another four hydropower projects having 1818 MWs generation capacity (Dulhasti-II, Kirithai-I, Kirithai-II and Uri-II) are in pipeline. Sawalkote HEP is in the techno economic study phase which is being conducted by NHPC. In the transmission sector, a total capacity addition of 310 MVA has been achieved at 220 kV & 132 kV voltage level. In the distribution sector also, 28 No. of Receiving Stations and 503 Sub-stations with capacity addition of 211.44 MVA have been created/augmented. Holy shrine of Shri Amarnathji Baba shall be provided Grid connected uninterrupted power supply through underground cabling during this year.

3266 water supply schemes are under execution under Jal Jeevan Mission with the objective of providing 100% piped water connections to each and every rural household. 81% households have already been covered with household tap water connections and the remaining 19% (3.71 lakh) households shall be covered during the mission period. Work on Shahpur Kandi Dam Project is in advanced stage and J&K is likely to add irrigation potential of more than 32,000 hectares which will benefit catchment areas of Samba and Kathua Districts. Work on Tawi Barrage (Artificial Lake) conceived for tourism purpose in the heart of the Jammu city, is expected to be commissioned this year.

Major steps have been taken to improve and strengthen agriculture in Jammu & Kashmir, focusing on creating a sustainable and strong farming economy. The government has introduced the Holistic Agriculture Development Program (HADP), an ambitious initiative aimed at mitigating the challenges faced by our farmers and creating a robust and diversified agricultural economy. This comprehensive program covers all key aspects of agriculture, including horticulture, livestock, fisheries, sericulture, and medicinal & aromatic plants, among others. A significant development in the agriculture sector is the notable boost in investment and credit flow. Government will also implement JK Competitiveness of Agriculture & Allied Sectors Project (JKICP) focusing on four key components: Climate-smart and market-led production, Agri-business ecosystem development support, Support to vulnerable communities, and Project Management. This initiative will benefit about 3 lakh Households.

The Kisan Khidmat Ghars (KKGs) is

empowering our farmers, boosting productivity, and laying the foundation for sustainable agricultural growth. More than 2 lakh farmers are part of this growing ecosystem, benefiting from seamless access to services, schemes, and expert advisories. This initiative is further being carried forward to bring more farmers under the ambit. Under DAKSH KISAN, 93 thousand farmers have enrolled in



skilling courses across agriculture and allied sectors. A major milestone was achieved with the implementation of the PM Fasal Bima Yojana which covers important crops such as paddy, maize, wheat, and oilseeds, ensuring financial security and resilience against crop losses. Over 1.45 lakh farmers have been registered under this scheme, covering 60,200 hectares, providing much-needed protection to our farmers in times of adversity.

For the preservation and promotion of region-specific agricultural heritage, G.I. tags have been secured for 07 agricultural products, including Solai Honey from Ramban, Rajma from Bhadarwah, Kalari from Ramnagar, Anardana from Ramban, Basmati from Jammu, Muskudji and Saffron from Kashmir. 64 patents have also been registered over the past four years by the Agriculture Universities.

Under the Horticulture sector, the government aims to enhance the coverage under high-density, a project that will significantly increase the production and productivity of fruit crops. With this initiative, Government aims to raise yields from 10 metric tons per hectare to an impressive 60 metric tons per hectare, setting a new benchmark for horticultural output in the region.

Jammu and Kashmir has made significant strides in industrial development, investment, and employment generation in recent years. New policies, including the J&K Export Policy, J&K Logistic Policy, and J&K Procurement Preferences Policy for Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs), are under preparation to further boost economic growth. The Government of India launched a New Central Sector Scheme in 2021 with an outlay of Rs 28,400 crore to boost industrial development in J&K. New Central Sector Scheme package which offers Capital Investment Incentive, Capital Interest Subvention and Working Capital Interest Subvention has encouraged the industrial investment in the UT. 889 units have commenced groundwork out of which 324 industrial units are expected to begin production this year. 46 New Industrial Estates with all the modern facilities are being developed to attract industries and enhance job opportunities.

The government is also exploring establishment of business units in new sectors such as Information Technology (IT) and IT-enabled Services (ITES), renewable energy, biotechnology and incubation centers, with the goal of creating technology parks to foster innovation. The J&K Startup Policy 2024-27, notified in February 2024, aims to establish 2,000 startups in the UT by 2027 and includes the creation of a Rs. 250 crore Venture Capital Fund, with an initial infusion of Rs. 25 crore.

For the first time, startups from J&K have begun receiving equity funding from institutional investors. PM Ekta Malls are coming up at Srinagar and Jammu for empowering local artisans and providing forward market platforms/linkages. A significant GoI initiative called Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMPM) aims to improve the access of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises to finance, technology and markets shall be implemented in J&K for the welfare of MSME entrepreneurs. Handicraft and Handloom Sector provides direct and indirect employment to nearly 4.22 lakh individuals, primarily from economically weaker sections. Srinagar has been recognized as a 'World Crafts City' by the World Crafts Council and designated as

part of the Creative City Network in the field of Crafts and Folk Arts by UNESCO.

Efforts are being made to promote 'Brand J&K', focusing on products like pashmina, saffron, and other handicrafts. Emphasis shall be further laid on facilitating the Geographical Indication (GI) tagging of traditional products. 13 crafts are in advanced stage for GI registration during current financial year viz: Crew-

el, Chain Stitch, Namdha, Willow Bat, Gabba, Shikara, Tweed, Wagoo, Samba Calico Printing, Kishtwari Loi, Jammu Phulkari and Kishtwari Binna (Wheat Straw). Besides, 07 New Crafts are targeted to be registered namely Houseboat, Jammu Copper Ware, Jammu Dogri Suit, Jammu Brass Ware, Doda Bhaderwah Narsingha, Doda Dadli, Doda Wooden Racksack. A comprehensive package for the development of handicrafts is currently under discussion with the Ministry of MSME, the Ministry of Textiles, shall be further taken ahead. Under Vishvakarma, J&K is ranked 7th in registrations and 2nd leading performer among States/UTs in trainings and effective implementation of the Scheme. 1.24 Lakh artisans have been trained and assessed, leveraging a robust network of 74 Government Training Centers and 117 centers affiliated with National Skill Development Corporation.

J&K is an all-weather tourist destination, offering a diverse range of experiences that cater to every type of traveler. One of the most exciting milestones in our tourism journey was the successful launch of the first edition of the Kashmir Marathon, held on 20th October, 2024. With over 1800 runners from across the globe, the event has firmly placed Jammu & Kashmir on the map of international marathons. The participants included from a common man to Chief Minister of the UT. The tourism sector holds the potential to transform our entire economy, as it plays a pivotal role in generating employment and boosting local businesses. This year, J&K has witnessed a record-breaking 2.36 crore tourist visits till November, 2024. Gulmarg Gondola has witnessed 7.68 lakhs tourists and earned a revenue of Rs. 103 Crore during 2024.

To further build on this momentum and enhance the tourism experience, several significant projects are underway. A state-of-the-art water park is being constructed at Dwara Village, near the Sidhra Golf Course, under Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode. Basohli is also being developed as an adventure tourism hotspot. A vertical lift project is being installed to connect Peerkho to the Mubarak Mandi Complex, enhancing accessibility and making it easier for tourists to visit this historic site. Our winter sports infrastructure has also seen significant improvements. Drag lifts are now operational in Sonamarg and Gulmarg, two of our premier winter sports destinations. In line with our vision to distribute tourist traffic more evenly across the region and ensure sustainable tourism growth, the Government is working to secure Multilateral funding under the Sustainable Promotion of Emerging Alternate Destination (SPREAD) initiative to develop alternate tourism destinations across J&K, adhering to international standards and easing the pressure on our most popular locations.

To preserve and promote the rich cultural legacy of Jammu & Kashmir, 'Writers & Artists Welfare Fund' has been created with a seed money allocation of Rs. 50 lakhs, aimed at reaching out to artists and their dependent family members who find themselves in distress. For preservation of cultural heritage, new archival repository is being operationalized and a fresh survey of heritage monuments and sites will be conducted. Modernization of the SRS Library in Jammu and the construction of the Library-cum-Café building and Dogra Art Museum in the Mubarak Mandi Heritage Complex are in the final stages

of completion. SPS Museum will be made fully functional, adding to the region's cultural offerings. Moreover, the Sufiyana School in Srinagar and the Culture Centre in Kathua are both set to be completed soon, further enhancing our cultural and artistic infrastructure. 1.50 crore saplings have been planted this year under the scheme 'Maa ke naam ek ped'. 36 Nagar Vans are being established. 5 KMs of critically silted Wular Lake has been restored. Second phase of Jambu Zoo is under progress which will have more enclosures enriching the wildlife experience for visitors.

Dear brothers and sisters, there has been remarkable progress in strengthening the healthcare infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir. AIIMS Jammu is now providing services to the people, and work on AIIMS Kashmir is progressing rapidly. Seven new medical colleges and two cancer hospitals have been established. A Bone and Joint Hospital in Jammu and a 500-bed Pediatric Hospital in Srinagar have been inaugurated. The number of MBBS seats has increased from 500 to 1,300. Additionally, 297 PG seats, 344 DNB seats, 143 M.Sc. Nursing seats, 1,485 B.Sc. Nursing seats, and 1,660 B.Sc. Paramedical seats have been added. Furthermore, 26 new B.Sc. Nursing Colleges and 19 B.Sc. Paramedical Colleges have been started. To provide financial assistance to needy patients for terminal surgeries, the Mukhyamantri Swasthya Trust will be established.

Government will focus on increasing MBBS, PG and Nursing seats and will add new tertiary care services and advanced courses for strengthening the health care facilities at tertiary level. Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) screening initiatives shall be further strengthened for early detection and treatment of diseases. 10 districts are expected to be TB free by the end of year 2025.

31. The Government of India is implementing a Whole of Government Approach to eliminate co-terror networks and drug syndicates, ensuring that future generations are freed from the vicious cycle of drug addiction. For this purpose, the National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR) and the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan have been implemented. To make J&K Nasha Mukht, various initiatives are being taken up through monitoring and counselling to combat drug menace which includes Aadhaar-based dispensing systems, enhance surveillance, and ensure strict enforcement to prevent misuse of medicinal preparations in coordination with NGOs and other stakeholders. Drug De-addiction infrastructure has been created in all 20 districts with availability of anti-drug treatment facilities. 377 Panchayats have been made Nasha Mukht. Drug awareness camps are being organized in villages, schools and colleges. Strict action is being taken against drug peddlers and contraband substances are being seized, FIRs registered and property of peddlers seized. Recognizing Telemedicine as a solution to geographical challenge, Government aims to integrate Telemedicine services across various medical specialties, enhancing health care access for residents. Government will create a Chief Minister's Medical Trust for providing financial assistance to the needy for terminal diseases.

Under the School Education, the government is promoting collaboration for research and quality education by embracing technology and digitization. Key initiatives include the establishment of smart classrooms, tinkering labs and the integration of digital resources to enhance the learning experience. To improve teaching standards and educational outcomes, there is a strong focus on capacity building for teaching faculty. The 'School Complex' System will be implemented across 746 schools, fostering collaboration and better resource sharing.

Under the PM Schools for Rising India (PM-SHRI) Scheme, 396 schools have been approved for upgradation, aimed at enhancing educational infrastructure across Jammu & Kashmir. 45 Tinkering Labs and 159 STEM Labs are nearing completion. 600 ICT Labs, 2000 Smart Classrooms, and 500 Atal Tinkering Labs are being further set up to enhance the educational ecosystem and promoting innovation. The government has prioritized the higher education sector to transform Jammu & Kashmir into an educational hub that attracts investment and provides employment opportunities. Key developments include operationalization of IIT, Jammu and IIM, Jammu. Jammu University has been granted A++ status, while the Islamic University of Science and Technology is emerging as a leader in skill

development and innovation. Faculty from University of Kashmir have been recognized among the top 2% of global scientists by Stanford University, and institutions like Cluster University of Jammu and Islamic University of Science and Technology have secured patents which have contributed to high-impact research. 67 degree colleges have received NAAC accreditation, and efforts are being made to ensure that all colleges achieve this standard for quality education. Two architecture colleges are under construction in Jammu and Srinagar, enhancing higher education options. Under the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), 44 infrastructure projects are underway for degree colleges and universities, and 17 new college buildings are being constructed to accommodate the growing student population. As part of the 'Beti Padhao Beti Bachao' programme, 91 female students underwent a month-long internship at IIM, Rohtak, promoting women's education and empowerment.

Under the Smart City Mission, Jammu & Kashmir has successfully completed 260 projects, focusing on key urban infrastructure like the Lal Chowk redevelopment, Jhelum Riverfront and Polo View High Street. Development of Tawi Riverfront, Ranbir Canal Walkway and Heritage Market Upgrades are also underway. Intelligent Traffic Management System has been established for better traffic control and road safety, with features like surveillance, e-Bill Pay, e-challans for violations, GIS-based digital door numbering, etc. To promote green transport initiatives, the government has introduced 200 e-buses which are being supplemented with additional 200 e-buses for better eco-friendly public transport facility. E-rickshaws have been also introduced to provide last mile connectivity.

Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) has been established to regulate the real estate sector, and land has been identified for mass housing colonies, including Shahjar Heights and Satellite Township at Rakh Gundaksha. Under PMAY, 27,793 housing units have been completed, with PMAY-II registration underway for EWS/LIG/MIG families. 33 Urban Local Bodies have been made Solid Waste Management friendly whereas Solid Waste Management Centers are being established in 45 Urban Local Bodies. 153 projects have been taken up under AMRUT 2.0 for improving water supply, sewerage, and water body rejuvenation, benefiting 2.24 lakh households. Pollution abatement projects for Dal Lake, River Devika, Tawi, Jhelum, and Banganga are progressing. 2.68 lakh houses have been completed under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) Scheme whereas work on 68,000 houses sanctioned is under progress. 1.50 lakh works are likely to be completed this year under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Generation Act (MGNREGA). 487 deserving landless families have been allotted 5 marlas of land to support their housing needs. Rs 1,300 crore resource envelope has been made available to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) annually. 25 lakh families (about 99 lakh individuals) are being provided ration under NFSA. Under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), free ration is being provided to 16.62 lakh households, encompassing 66.51 lakh beneficiaries. Pensionary benefits (Old Age, Widow, Specially Aabled) are being provided to 9.09 lakh beneficiaries. About 8.77 lakh individuals (Pregnant Women, Lactating Mothers, Adolescent Girls and 0-6yrs. old children) are provided supplementary nutrition. Under Ladli Beti, 33,591 girls and under Marriage Assistance 25,900 women have been covered during 2024-25, with mandatory Aadhaar authentication. One Stop Centers have been established in all districts of the Union Territory. Jammu and Kashmir has pioneered the establishment of 20 Hubs for Empowerment of Women, which serve as vital centers for supporting women's empowerment by offering comprehensive information on a wide range of women-centric schemes. More than 550 disabled persons have secured employment in the government sector due to change in reservation policy and notification of posts suitable for various benchmark disabilities. 357 SC dominated villages have been selected for development under PM Anusuchit Jaati Abhyudaya Yojana (PMAJAY) to provide various basic services so that the minimum needs of all the sections of the society are fully met and disparities are reduced to a minimum.

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Arshdeep Singh named ICC T20I Cricketer of Year

AGENCIES
DUBAI, JAN 25 (UND)

India's leading wicket-taker of 2024 Arshdeep Singh has been named the ICC Men's T20I Cricketer of the Year at the ICC Awards.

Arshdeep starred as India ended their wait for a major ICC trophy win with victory in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 in the Caribbean and USA back in June, and has gone on to cement his reputation as one of the leading powerplay and death bowlers in the game.

The 25-year-old left-arm has long been tipped for the top, and India put a great deal of faith in his ability since making his full international debut in 2022.

And 2024 was the year when Arshdeep fully established himself as a world-class bowler in T20 International cricket, taking bucket-loads of wickets with the new ball and proving to be consistently economical at the death on a variety of surfaces.

Arshdeep was the leading Indian wicket-taker in T20 Internationals in the year, bagging 36 wickets in just 18 games, an ICC report said.

He played a huge part in steering India to the title at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup and stepped up as leader of the attack as the selectors built a new era for the T20 squad following the triumph in the Caribbean.

Only four players in



the world took more T20I wickets than Arshdeep in the calendar year - Saudi Arabia's Usman Najeeb (38), Sri Lanka's Wanindu Hasaranga (38), UAE's Junaid Siddique (40) and Hong Kong's Ehsan Khan (46) - with all four playing more matches. Of those bowlers, only Hasaranga featured for a full-member nation.

Arshdeep took his wickets at an average of just 15.31 and, despite predominantly bowling in the powerplay and death overs, finished the year with an economy rate of 7.49. He was a constant wicket-taking threat, taking his wickets at a strike rate of 10.80.

Arshdeep had a number of impressive displays in the year, not least when he ripped through the USA in New York during the T20 World Cup group

stage, bagging remarkable returns of 4/9 in his four overs.

But Arshdeep's most significant performance of the year came on the biggest stage of all, as he played a huge part in helping India successfully defend their total of 176 in the World Cup Final in Barbados.

As part of a pace trio with Jasprit Bumrah and Hardik Pandya that effectively won the game for India, Arshdeep's terrific figures of 2/20 from four overs only tell part of the story.

Excellent with the new ball up top, Arshdeep struck in the powerplay to have the dangerous South African skipper Aiden Markram caught behind in just the third over. And when India were in need of a wicket in the middle overs it was Arshdeep

that provided the breakthrough, dismissing a set Quinton de Kock when the Proteas looked to be in control of the chase.

India's collective effort at the death was astonishing as South Africa pulled up seven runs short of their target, and Arshdeep played a huge role in that, returning to the attack to bowl the penultimate over with South Africa requiring 20 from 12 deliveries.

Arshdeep delivered a near-perfect death over under the greatest pressure, conceding just four runs to leave Hardik Pandya with 16 runs to defend in the final over, a job that he spectacularly did.

Brilliance in the powerplay, a wicket in the middle overs, and economical excellence at the death - Arshdeep stepped up when it mattered most.

Match-winners & star performers named in ICC Women's T20I Team of Year

AGENCIES
DUBAI, JAN 25 (UND)

The ICC Women's T20I Team of the Year for 2024 features some standout players from all departments who shone brightly for their respective teams throughout the calendar year.

Indian Batter Smriti Mandhana kicked off the year with a stellar 54 against Australia at DY Patil Stadium, a performance that propelled the left-handed batter to a year of outstanding T20I performances.

In a testament to her consistency, Mandhana closed out the year in similar fashion, making three half-centuries on the trot against West Indies at home, only emphasising her reliability in the format.

Her outstanding performances (23 Matches, 763 Runs, 77 Highest Score, 42.38 Average, 126.53 Strike Rate, Eight Half-centuries) propelled her to the second spot in the ICC Women's T20I Batting



Rankings.

The Indian wicketkeeper-batter Richa Ghosh stands out for her ability to score runs in an extremely aggressive manner, consistently leading the charge with her attacking style of play.

Ghosh was in explosive form whenever she had the chance to bat, smashing a blistering 64 not out off 29 balls at an incredible strike rate of 220.68 against UAE in Dambulla. The right-handed batter maintained an impres-

sive strike rate of 156.65 in 2024, in a year that included another rapid fifty, scoring 54 off just 21 balls against West Indies at DY Patil Stadium, an ICC report said.

Deepthi Sharma proved to be a consistent performer, with her reliable batting and outstanding bowling spells, playing a key role for India.

Her tally of wickets includes 30 scalps at an average of 17.80 and an economy rate of 6.01 across T20I matches in

2024.

The 27-year-old claimed wickets in almost every match, with standout performances such as 3/13 from 4 overs against Nepal in Dambulla and 3/20 from 4 overs against Pakistan in the Women's Asia Cup, solidifying her spot in the team.

South African captain Laura Wolvaardt had an outstanding year, showcasing remarkable consistency in the shortest format of the game, evident from her impeccable numbers.

Wolvaardt began the year by leading her team to a comfortable victory against Australia in Canberra, delivering a blistering knock of 58 not out off 53 balls.

The right-hand batter continued to impress with a stunning century, scoring 102 off just 63 balls against Sri Lanka in Benoni.

After the stellar year, Wolvaardt is positioned as the No.5 ranked batter in the world in the ICC Women's Rankings.

Pakistan confirms schedule of ODI tri-series ahead of Champions Trophy

AGENCIES
KARACHI, JAN 25 (UND)

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) have announced the fixtures for the upcoming tri-nation ODI series featuring Pakistan, New Zealand and South Africa.

The series, which will be played on a single-league basis, is set to take place from February 8 to 14.

Pakistan and New Zealand are scheduled to begin their preparations

ahead of the series at the Gaddafi Stadium on February 6 under the lights while South Africa's first outing at the historic venue will be on the morning of February 9.

The hosts, Pakistan come off a victorious outing in South Africa, whitewashing the Proteas 3-0 in their three-match ODI series in December.

Meanwhile, the Kiwis secured a 2-1 series win over Sri Lanka at home

earlier this month.

These fixtures will provide the three teams with an opportunity to fine-tune their preparations ahead of the upcoming ICC Men's Champions Trophy which begins on February 19, an ICC report said.

The four matches at Gaddafi Stadium and National Bank Stadium will provide the PCB with an opportunity to showcase its redesigned and redeveloped venues to a

global audience ahead of the upcoming ICC event.

Fixtures:
8 February - Pakistan v New Zealand, Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore (D/N)

10 February - New Zealand v South Africa, Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore (D)

12 February - Pakistan v South Africa, National Bank Stadium, Karachi (D/N)

14 February - Final, National Bank Stadium, Karachi (D/N)

Mahato emulates idol Bumrah in perfect send-off

AGENCIES
KUALA LUMPUR, JAN 25 (UND)

Puja Mahato arrived at the ICC Women's U19 T20 World Cup with a huge amount of responsibility as both captain of Nepal and a full international.

The 18-year-old has done so and then some in Malaysia, culminating in a brilliant Player-of-the-Match display against the hosts in the 4th Place Play-off.

Playing in Johor, Mahato set her stall out early after electing to put Malaysia in, taking a wicket with the second delivery of the match.

She took a second before the end of her first spell, before returning to wrap up the Malaysian

innings, finishing with four wickets for nine runs.

That takes her tally for the tournament to nine wickets, two more than any other player so far in 2025, while she has the seventh most runs.

Rather than be intimidated by the pressure, Mahato appears to have thrived under it.

She said: "As a captain, I think you should have to lead from the front. Just the way I am, I want to play every time for my country and contribute something. When I was bowling, I wanted to take wickets very fast. When I was batting, I thought I had to stand for my team."

"My bowling idol is Bumrah, I want to be Lady Bumrah, that is why I con-

tinued like this," Mahato said.

"As captain, I have always thought I have to stay and contribute for my country," she said.

Chasing 46, Nepal found themselves in a little trouble when they slipped to 22 for three, particularly with boundaries proving elusive.

But Mahato held her nerve, taking quick singles when they were on and smashing the odd boundary to ease the tension. A seven-wicket victory was her reward for an unbeaten 23, a fitting way to sign off for the team.

Mahato is a big reason why Nepal qualified for the tournament, having scored a sensational 130 not out and taken five for

eight in a qualifying victory over Kuwait.

She will now turn her focus back to senior cricket, while some of her young teammates will remain part of this team for the next edition of the 2027 ICC Women's U19 T20 World Cup, which will be hosted by Nepal.

Mahato added: "It was our last match, we have won, this is a special moment for us because in a few matches we did our best but results were not in our favour. I want to enjoy this moment."

"This time the players got good experience. In 2027 (at home), they will do their best," she said.

"Our favourite memory is this win," Mahato added.

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