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The Lieutenant Governor further highlighted that it is the responsibility of people at the helm of affairs to ensure that different segments and sections have a stake in Viksit Bharat.

He said the prestigious Maharaja Hari Singh Awards are the recognition of the work done for promoting peace, inclusive development, achievement in different sectors and a feeling of oneness between communities.

"As India moves forward on the path of rapid economic growth, your work in literature, social services, sports, education and business strengthens the fabric of our society. It is your duty to ensure that weaker sections of society and empowerment of women are given top priority," the Lieutenant Governor told the Awardees.

Speaking on India's emergence as an economic super power, the Lieutenant Governor said the progress we achieved in the last 10 year, have assured that the nation will certainly accomplish the goal of Viksit Bharat by 2047.

He emphasised that the government alone cannot achieve its goals and the citizens need to work together.

"It is true that despite all the differences, people share a common origin and a common destiny. I urge the people from all sections of the society to lead India into a developed nation and become the active partners in this development journey," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He said the J&K Government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has fulfilled the long pending demand of declaring holiday on the birthday of Maharaja Hari Singh.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor was conferred with 'Maharaja Hari Singh Award in Reforms and Planning'.

Jugal Kishore Sharma, Member of Parliament; Sham Lal Chaudhary, former Minister; Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; members of Gulistan News Network; senior officials and prominent citizens from different walks of life were present.

HIGHLIGHTS...

of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat becomes a reality. Entire life of Maharaja Hari Singh Ji was a great saga of courage and conviction for betterment of society.

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Modi will do...

different rallies in Houston in September 2019 and in Ahmedabad in February 2020.

Modi was among the top three world leaders to speak with Trump after his stunning electoral victory in November 2024.

In a readout of the call, the White House said the two Trump sought India to increase in US-made security equipment and move towards a fair bilateral trading relationship.

"Today, President Donald J Trump held a productive call with Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India. The two leaders discussed expanding and deepening cooperation. They also discussed a range of regional issues, including security in the Indo-Pacific, the Middle East, and Europe," it said.

"The President emphasised the importance of India increasing its procurement of American-made security equipment and moving toward a fair bilateral trading relationship," the White House said.

"The leaders discussed plans for Prime Minister Modi to visit the White House, underscoring the strength of the friendship and strategic ties between our nations," it added.

Both Modi and Trump emphasised their commitment to advance the "US-India strategic partnership and the Indo-Pacific Quad partnership, with India hosting Quad Leaders for the first time later this year."

The US, India, Japan and Australia compose the Quad, a four-way grouping. They have been stepping up cooperation in various fields such as defence and energy, amid China's increasing military and economic clout in the region.

Like in many countries, there have been some concerns in India as well over the Trump administration's approach to immigration and tariffs.

Trump has already talked about slapping "100 per cent tariffs" on the BRICS grouping, a bloc that includes India as well.

Speaking during a weekly press briefing, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal referred to India's ongoing dialogue with the US on matters related to trade and immigration and expressed hope that both sides will be able to address any issue.

Trade occupies a special place within the strong and multi-faceted India-US relationship, and the two sides reached a record level of trade in goods and services worth USD 190 billion in 2023, Jaiswal said.

On January 23, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, who represented India at the inauguration ceremony of Trump, said that India has always been open to the legitimate return of undocumented Indians to their country.

"As a government, we are obviously very much supportive of legal mobility because we do believe in a global workplace... At the same time, we are also very firmly opposed to illegal mobility and illegal migration," Jaishankar had said.

"So, with every country, and the US is no exception, we have always maintained that if any of our citizens are there illegally, and if we are sure that they are our citizens, we have always been open to their legitimate return to India."

He was responding to a query on news reports that India is working with the Trump administration for the deportation of some 1,80,000 Indians in the US who are either undocumented or have overstayed their visas.

Department of Homeland Security in April 2024 said there were about 11 million illegal immigrants in the US in the year 2022. Mexico topped the list with 4.81 million illegal immigrants, followed by Guatemala (750,000), El Salvador (710,000), Honduras (560,000), Philippines (350,000), Venezuela (320,000), Colombia (230,000) and Brazil (230,000).

The DHS said there has been a sharp decline in illegal immigrants from India between 2018 and 2022.

It says 220,000 Indians were living in the US illegally at the end of 2022. "The Indian population fell by 54 per cent, or 260,000 people, from 480,000 in 2018 to 220,000 in 2022, while the Chinese population declined by 47 per cent, or 180,000, from 390,000 to 210,000," DHS said.

17-year-old...

the identification of few suspects and police parties carried out raids at various

locations within Jammu and adjacent districts to nab the culprits and finally succeeded in arresting Anmol Sharma (aged 24 years), son of Ganesh Dass, resident of Jakh, Samba; Nikhil Sharma (aged, 29 years), son of Bawa Ditta Sharma, resident of Jakh, Samba and Nishant Choudhary (aged 23 years), son of Parshottam Pal, resident of Vijaypur, Samba.

During sustained questioning, the accused confessed to the crime, revealing that the murder stemmed from a personal rivalry. According to their statements, Nikhil Sharma launched a fatal assault on the victim using a sharp-edged Toka, while Anmol Sharma & Nishant Choudhary were actively involved in executing the crime, which they had planned to avenge the personal rivalry over altercation which had happened between the accused Anmol Sharma and other party.

As part of the ongoing investigation, police have recovered the weapons used in the crime-a Toka and a Khukri-further solidifying the case against the accused. Moreover the V.W. Polo vehicle, bearing registration number JK21H 0505 involved in the commission of the offence has also been seized.

With all three suspects in custody and key evidence secured, the investigation is progressing towards a watertight prosecution.

Migrant workers' killing...

The Resistance Front, it said.

"The suspects were involved in harbouring, sheltering, and providing logistical assistance to terrorists. NIA investigations in the case so far have revealed that masterminds of LeT and TRF were in touch with youth in the Kashmir Valley to orchestrate attacks on non-locals as part of a conspiracy to wage war against the government of India," the statement said.

The criminal conspiracy was reportedly planned both physically and through cyberspace, using encrypted social media applications, the agency said.

Vaishno Devi Ropeway...

projects initiated by the shrine board, including the passenger ropeway, while emphasising the need for continuous and sustainable development, the statement said. It said the participants encouraged the shrine board to implement such projects that enhance infrastructure, amenities and the overall experience for pilgrims and locals. However, they also underscored the importance of considering the concerns, needs and aspirations of the local population during the planning and execution of these projects for maintaining a delicate balance between fostering development and preserving the region's unique religious, social and cultural heritage, the board said. Former Jammu and Kashmir Director General of Police and Shrine Board member Ashok Bhan, who heads the committee, expressed his satisfaction over the meeting's outcome, stating that it concluded on a positive note, with the stakeholders committing to collaborative efforts for the region's overall development.

He said two groups were unable to attend the meeting but the committee is open to further discussions and consultations, ensuring that all stakeholders are heard before any final decisions are made. The statement said representatives from key panchayats surrounding Katra, including Garn, Aghar Jitto, Kanjili, Akhali Button, Hutt and Bhaga, expressed their heartfelt gratitude for the priority "darshan" provision at the shrine, announced by Chief Executive Officer Anshul Garg on Republic Day, which extends to the residents of Katra town and all 41 villages in Katra subdivision. The representatives also applauded the construction of four temples along the Trikuta hills Parikrama Marg, describing the initiative as a visionary move by the board aimed at enriching the spiritual experience of devotees and showcasing the region's rich cultural heritage.

Parliament to take...

chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq met the committee and put forth his view point. "Let the committee completes its work, then Parliament will discuss its report," the chief minister said.

15 Mata Vaishno...

Immediately after the incident, the injured were rushed to Government Medical College Jammu hospital for treatment, where their condition is stated to be stable. Road accidents have become a bigger killer than militancy in Jammu and Kashmir and according to official records, 9,070 deaths were reported in a decade due to "rash or negligent driving" which is five times more than the toll from terrorism. J&K's difficult terrains and rapidly increasing vehicle numbers exacerbate road safety risks. In Jammu and Kashmir, successive governments have laid ambitious plans to better road connectivity. However, old timers say they have seen the same roads with the same dimensions in the last 50 years, despite an ever-increasing traffic volume.

Union Minister inaugurates...

the 108th position to 46th out of 112 districts, achieving a composite score of 59.3 as on September 2024.

The Minister was further informed that the education sector in Baramulla has witnessed wholesome progress, with a substantial increase in student enrolment, especially among girls, a significant decrease in the dropout rate, with efforts to improve the quality of education through skill upgradation for teachers, upgrading school infrastructure, and promoting digital learning with the implementation of smart classrooms.

The Union Minister had a comprehensive review of district under Agriculture and Financial Inclusion besides Skill Development and Infrastructure. She expressed her appreciation over the progress achieved by Baramulla administration.

Speaking during the meeting, the Union MoS directed the officers from the Health Department to conduct comprehensive research to identify the underlying causes of infant and maternal mortality in the district. She asked for implementing targeted interventions to ensure further reductions in mortality rates, thereby improving overall healthcare outcomes.

The Union Minister instructed the administration to plan for implementation of food processing units in the region through various government schemes. This will ensure efficient utilisation of locally produced apples and prevent any wastage during transportation over long distances, thereby boosting the local economy and benefiting the farmers.

Shobha Karandlaje asked the officials to accelerate the execution of developmental projects, particularly those that support MSMEs, employment generation and livelihood enhancement. She reaffirmed the Government of India's commitment to holistic development in Aspirational Districts through data-driven governance and targeted interventions.

During the meeting, Shobha Karandlaje distributed various essential resources including computers, smart boards and other amenities to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and schools, aimed at enhancing their overall functionality for betterment of the community.

During the visit to Baramulla, Shobha Karandlaje inaugurated a hi-tech poly-greenhouse with a total area spanning 500 square meters at Chakloo, which was sanctioned to the local farmer Dr. Mudasir Ali through HADP scheme at an estimated subsidy of 95%.

Later, the Union Minister visited Government Medical College Baramulla, where she inaugurated the Endo-Urological Equipment at the Associated Hospital as part of the Aspirational District Programme. The newly introduced equipment will support advanced urological procedures, enhancing healthcare options for patients in the region.

The Union Minister also inaugurated the newly constructed Medical Registration Department's (MRD) Registration Centre at GMC Baramulla, aimed at streamlining the patient registration process.

During her visit, the Minister interacted with the attendants and sought feedback on the healthcare facilities being provided to the patients.

Meanwhile, Javed Beigh also raised several concerns related to water scarcity and other developmental challenges in the region and sought the intervention of the Union MoS for their timely resolution.

Earlier, Deputy Commissioner Minga Sherpa, presented a comprehensive overview of the district's performance under 5 key indicators of ADP including Health and Nutrition, Education, Agriculture and Water Resources, Financial Inclusion and Skill Development besides Infrastructure.

DC Baramulla highlighted significant improvements in health and nutrition, including upgradation of existing facilities and establishment of new health centres, maternal and child healthcare, reduction in infant and maternal mortality rates, reduction in TB cases, and effective implementation of Poshan Abhiyan in combating malnutrition.

Search operations underway...

considerable drop in the terror activities in 2024 compared to the previous years, the series of incidents in Reasi, Doda, Kishtwar, Kathua, Udhampur and Jammu



from April-May onwards came as a concern for the security agencies.

The officials said a search operation is underway at 23 places - highest 10 in the Chenab valley districts of Kishtwar, Doda and Ramban, seven in Rajouri-Poonch belt and three in Udhampur; two in Reasi and one in Jammu district.

The relentless operations by the army in the vulnerable areas, especially in the dense forests in close synergy with police and central armed police forces is meant to counter the terrors and thwart attempts of Pakistan-based handlers to spread terrorism to Jammu region, they said.

They said the search operations along with area domination will be intensified further in the coming months before the onset of the summer.

According to official data, Doda, Kathua and Reasi districts recorded nine killings each followed by Kishtwar (five), Udhampur (four), Jammu and Rajouri (three each) and Poonch (two) last year.

The dead included 18 security personnel and 13 terrorists, the officials said, adding among the 14 civilians killed by the terrorists, seven were pilgrims returning from Shiv Khouri temple and three Village Defence Guards.

While the pilgrims were killed in an attack on their bus which also claimed the life of the local driver and conductor, the VDGs were shot dead in Udhampur and Kishtwar districts.

Drug trafficking network...

He said a Srinagar police team conducted extensive operations in Uttar Pradesh and Delhi over 10 days with the assistance of local police.

"Raju Gupta was apprehended on January 23 in Bareilly, and Mohammad Abrar was arrested on a day later in Bhajanpura. Both suspects were presented before the respective courts, transit remands were obtained, and they are now in police custody," the official added. A suspicious courier parcel linked to the accused has been identified in Loni, Ghaziabad, and steps are being taken to retrieve it with the court's approval. The financial transactions and properties of the accused are under scrutiny for potential attachment under the NDPS Act, the police official said.

The case pertains to the arrest of three drug peddlers at a check-point on November 8 last year at Tarbal Chowk here. "During routine checking, a motorcycle was intercepted, leading to the arrest of three drug peddlers Aijaz Ahmad Ganie, Owais Ahmad Gojri, and Mir Roman. Police had seized 140 bottles of a banned drug, Rs 38,530 in suspected drug proceeds, three mobile phones, and a drone camera allegedly used to monitor drug buyers," the police said. The backward linkage that emerged during investigation of this case led police to the two drug dealers from Delhi and Uttar Pradesh, it said. The police official said investigations in the case are ongoing, with more arrests and seizures expected in the coming days.

Maha Kumbh: 5...

surpassing all previous records, it said.

Earlier figures from the festival reveal 3.5 crore bathers on Makar Sankranti, 1.7 crore on Paus Purnima, 1.74 crore on this Sunday, and 1.55 crore on Monday. The attendees included 10 lakh 'kalpvasis', along with devotees and saints from across India and abroad, it added. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath extended his greetings to devotees nationwide on the eve of Mauni Amavasya. Taking to social media platform X, he wrote: "Heartfelt greetings and best wishes to all revered saints, devotees and pilgrims participating in the great festival of Sanatan Dharma, Maha Kumbh 2025, on the occasion of Mauni Amavasya.

"My warm regards to the 'kalpvasis', saints and devotees who have come to Prayagraj for the divine, grand, and digital Maha Kumbh 2025 to attain the supreme purity of 'Amrit Snan'. May the blessings of Mother Ganga and Lord Bhaskar remain with you all. I pray for unity among all countrymen."

'Kashmir witnessing unusual weather pattern'

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Kashmir is going through an unusual weather pattern this winter with maximum and minimum temperatures in Srinagar witnessing a cumulative deviation of nearly 10 degrees over the past 24 hours, meteorological department data revealed on Tuesday.

Srinagar city recorded a low of minus 4.3 degrees Celsius on Monday night, which was 3.4 degrees below the expected minimum temperature for this time this year, the Met said.

It said the summer capital had recorded a maximum temperature of 14.2 degrees Celsius which was 6.4 degrees higher than the expected day temperature for this time of the year.

Pahalgam, one of the base camps for the annual Amarnath Yatra in south Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 6.6 degrees Celsius, 1.1 degrees below normal, it added.

The maximum temperature in the south Kashmir base camp was 11.6 degrees Celsius, more than six degrees above normal.

The tourist resort of Gulmarg in north Kashmir, known for skiing, recorded a minimum temperature of minus 5.0 degrees Celsius against expected temperature of minus 7.6 degrees Celsius.

The minimum temperature was minus 4.1 degrees Celsius in Qazigund, which was 1.6 degrees below the normal. The maximum temperature was 15 degrees Celsius, almost eight degrees above average.

According to the meteorological department, the weather is expected to remain dry over the next 24 hours.

Kashmir is currently in the grip of 'Chillai-Kalan' -- the harshest period of winter. During the 40 days of 'Chillai-Kalan', which began on December 21, the chances of snowfall are the highest and the mercury drops considerably.

'Chillai-Kalan' ends on January 30, followed by a 20-day 'Chillai-Khurd' (small cold) and a 10-day 'Chillai-Bachha' (baby cold).

Jammu-based online genocide institute appoints new chairperson

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Jonaraja Institute of Genocide and Atrocities Studies, an online venture by a group of Kashmiri Pandit intellectuals launched in December 2022, on Tuesday appointed Sunanda Vashisht as its new Chairperson.

She will replace Titu Ganju, who has completed his two-year term.

Vashisht, a noted scholar and advocate for justice, will also continue in her roles as head of the academic council and editor-in-chief of Pavak, the institute's flagship publication. During Ganju's tenure, the institute said it made remarkable strides in advancing its mission, including the completion of four batches of its postgraduate diploma course in genocide and atrocities studies, publishing groundbreaking research on the ancient Indian concept of 'jatividhwans (genocide)', and advocating for justice for Kashmiri Hindus and other victims of historical atrocities.

"It has been an honour to lead this institution, and I am confident that Vashisht's leadership will propel the institute into its next phase of growth. Her expertise, passion and commitment to truth and justice make her the ideal person to take the helm," the institute quoted Ganju as saying in a statement.

Under Ganju's leadership, the institute achieved several milestones, including revitalising the Indic perspective on genocide through the concept of 'jatividhwans', fostering global collaborations, and amplifying the voices of victims of cultural and spiritual annihilation, it said. The institute has also played a critical role in raising awareness about the Kashmiri Hindu genocide and other atrocities, it added.

Vashisht, known for her eloquent advocacy and deep understanding of genocide studies, aims to build on this foundation by furthering academic excellence, fostering a global discourse on non-Western experiences of genocide, and advocating for justice and accountability.

Amritsar grenade lobbying incident: Two operatives of US-based terrorist held

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

CHANDIGARH: Punjab Police on Tuesday said it has arrested two persons allegedly involved in the grenade lobbying incident outside the Guntala police post in Amritsar.

Police said Bagga Singh and Puskaran Singh are operatives of US-based terrorist Happy Passia.

A hand grenade and two pistols have been recovered from their possession.

"In an intelligence-based operation, State Special Operation Cell (#SSOC) Amritsar, busts a narco-terror module and apprehends two operatives, Bagga Singh r/o Sirsa & Puskaran Singh @ Sagur r/o Amritsar Rural, of #USA-based terrorist Happy Passia and Sarwan Bhola a smuggler," Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav said in a post on X.

"They were involved in grenade lobbying on Guntala Police Post in Amritsar on January 9, 2025," he said.

"Preliminary investigation reveals arrested accused Bagga Singh is a relative of Sarwan Bhola arrested from Sirsa, Haryana. Sarwan Bhola is the brother of smuggler Ranjit Singh @ Cheeta who is currently lodged in Bathinda jail in 532 Kg Heroin case," the DGP said.

On January 9, a loud boom was heard outside the Guntala police post in Amritsar district.