

!! Continuations from Page 1 !!

Centre's development projects...

polls in Delhi, which is expected to be held in February. The BJP has been locked in a bitter political confrontation with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which has been in power in the city since 2013, and is making all-out efforts to end its reign. Recalling the dark days of the Emergency in the past, Modi said he and many other party workers like him who were part of the underground movement against the Emergency stayed at Ashok Vihar.

He said the central government is handling major projects in Delhi, such as roads, metro systems, hospitals and college campuses. However, he added, the state government has failed to fulfil its responsibilities, especially in areas like the cleaning of the Yamuna River. The PM said neglecting the Yamuna River has led to a crisis where people are left with dirty water. He emphasised that his goal is to ensure that the benefits of good national schemes reach Delhi.

He said the central government's plans have provided the poor and middle classes with financial benefits and savings. He said the government is also making electricity bills zero and offering opportunities for families to produce electricity.

Modi said with the central government offering Rs 78,000 to help install solar panels, families are becoming electricity producers through the Pradhanmantri Suryaghar Muft Bijli Yojana.

At the event, the prime minister announced the construction of nearly 3,000 new houses in Delhi. In the coming year, thousands of new houses would be made available for the city's residents, he said.

He said the central government is further accelerating the development of Delhi's infrastructure by speeding up the construction of the Narela sub-city.

About the 1,675 flats inaugurated on Friday, the government said for every Rs 25 lakh spent on the construction of a flat by the central government, the eligible beneficiaries pay less than seven per cent of the total amount, comprising Rs 1.42 lakh as a nominal contribution and Rs 30,000 for five years of maintenance.

He also interacted with beneficiaries before inaugurating the flats. Modi inaugurated two urban redevelopment projects -- the World Trade Centre at Nauroji Nagar and the General Pool Residential Accommodation (GPRA) Type-II quarters at Sarojini Nagar.

The World Trade Centre at Nauroji Nagar has transformed the area by replacing over 600 dilapidated quarters with state-of-the-art commercial towers, offering around 34 lakh square feet of premium commercial space with advanced amenities.

The project incorporates green building practices, with provisions such as a zero-discharge concept, solar energy generation, and rainwater harvesting systems.

Modi expressed confidence that 2025 would be a year of immense opportunities for India's development, propelling the nation towards its goal of becoming the world's third-largest economy.

"Today, India stands as a global symbol of political and economic stability," the PM said, adding that the country's image would be further strengthened in the coming year.

The prime minister outlined the vision for 2025, emphasising it as the year for India to become the world's largest manufacturing hub, empower youth for start-ups and entrepreneurship, set new agricultural records, promote women-led development and improve the quality of life for every citizen by focusing on ease of living.

He also inaugurated the GPRA type-II quarters which include 28 towers that house over 2,500 residential units, offering modern amenities and efficient use of space.

The project's design incorporates rainwater harvesting systems, sewage and water treatment plants, and solar-powered waste compactors encouraging eco-conscious living.

Modi virtually inaugurated the CBSE's integrated office complex at Dwarka built at around Rs 300 crore. It includes offices, an auditorium, an advanced data centre and a comprehensive water management system, among others.

The eco-friendly building has been constructed to high environmental standards and was designed according to Platinum Rating standards of the Indian Green Building Council.

Among other initiatives, the prime minister also laid the foundation stone of three new projects worth over Rs 600 crore in the Delhi University.

It includes an academic block in the Eastern Campus at Surajmal Vihar in East Delhi and an academic block in the Western Campus at Dwarka. It also includes building Veer Savarkar College at Roshanpura in Najafgarh, having state-of-the-art facilities for education.

"Every family dreams that their children will receive the best education, and the central government is working towards providing top-tier schools, colleges and universities across the country," he said.

Modi likens AAP...

has to be removed and the BJP brought in," he said. Due to the city government not allowing the Centre's signature health insurance scheme, Ayushman Bharat, and other programmes in the national capital, Modi said he was unable to fully help the people living here despite his efforts.

If highways are being built in the capital and the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has been able to make houses for the poor, it is because "aapda" does not have much role in these sectors, he added.

Taking a swipe at former Delhi chief minister and AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal, Modi said he could also have built a "sheesh mahal" for himself but his dream was to ensure homes for everyone in the country. "These people commit corruption and then glorify it," he said, accusing AAP of shamelessness and making false promises.

The BJP has been targeting Kejriwal for allegedly spending a huge amount of money on his official residence when he was chief minister, and described his erstwhile home as "sheesh mahal".

The country knows very well that he never built a home for himself, Modi said. "But in the past 10 years, (my government) has built four crore houses for the poor and fulfilled their dreams. I could have also built a 'sheesh mahal'. But my dream was to give a pucca house to my countrymen," he said, stressing his vision to provide a concrete house to those living in slums.

He said 2025 would bring many new possibilities for India, asserting that the country had become a symbol of political and economic stability in the world.

Prakash Parv of...

Bhai Satinder Singh and other Sikh religious personalities were part of the Nagar Kirtan and recited Vaars, recited Kavita. Parcharaks threw light on the life of Guru Gobind Singh Ji who made unparalleled sacrifices in the history.

The district administration Jammu had made elaborate security arrangements for the smooth conduct of Shobha Yatra.

The traffic had also been diverted to the other alternative routes. Despite diversions, traffic jams were witnessed at several city points, specially, Canal Road, Bakshi Nagar, Railway Road, Satwari and some other parts of the old city.

Chanting religious slogans and sermons, the 'Shobha Yatra' kept on moving slowly through the traditional route, via Dogra Chowk, Main Tawi Bridge, Bikram Chowk, Asia Crossing, Green Belt Gandhinagar, Gole Market and then towards Nanak Nagar. It finally, culminated at Gurdwara Singh Sabha at Nanak Nagar at around 5:30 PM.

Display of martial art (Gatka) by the Sikh youth was the main attraction of the procession. Many Sikh youth were displaying different feats, during the display of martial art.

The members of other communities had also established stalls of drinks/sweet water and tea besides fruits and other eatables for the Sikh Sangat en-route 'Nagart-Kirtan', depicting a true picture of secular India, besides erecting welcome gates at many places.

At Gole Market, Gandhi Nagar, several DGPC Jammu members including president, Ranjeet Singh addressed the Sangat and threw light on the great sacrifices made by Guru Gobind Singh.

President also thanked both Civil and Police administration for extending their full cooperation for the smooth conduct of Nagar Kirtan.

Balvinder Singh, Vice President DGPC, while addressing the Sangat stated that no doubt PM Narendra Modi took great initiative to organize various programmes to commemorate the martyrdom of Chaar Sahibzada's of Guru Gobind Singh but on the other hand number of incidence reported from different states where Sikh aspirants were debarred from carrying Kirpan and Kada in the examination Centres so there is a great resentment among the Sikh Community. Surjit Singh General Secretary coordinated the stage.

Normalcy not fully...

the electricity supply situation in the valley, the chief minister said whatever could be done was being done and the power situation this year was better than the previous years.

"(Power) cuts are taking place but attempts are being made to provide electricity to people according to the schedule. When there is a problem in the system, it is rectified at the earliest," he said.

Follow-Up: Aggarwal...

this heinous act will be spared." The assault, which stemmed from a bill payment dispute on New Year's Eve, escalated when the Aggarwal brothers called in goons led by Arun Choudhary to unleash a brutal attack on the hotel staff. The violence left the hotel manager with severe head injuries and another staff member with facial fractures, both requiring extensive medical treatment.

The police have reiterated their commitment to justice, assuring the public that no external influence or power will deter their efforts. "Our investigations remain uncompromised, and all those responsible for this horrific attack will face the full force of the law," the senior police officer said.

NIA seizes land...

Superintendent of Jammu and Kashmir Police Humayun Bhat, and a soldier were killed in the violent confrontation. Forces gunned down LeT terrorist Uzair Khan in the operation that went on for a week.

In connection with a case related to the attack, the NIA attached a 19-marla land parcel in Halpora area of Kokernag in the south Kashmir's Anantnag district, the agency said. The property belongs to Halpora resident Mohammad Akbar Dar.

Dar was an associate of Uzair Khan and had provided logistical support, shelter, food and intelligence to him, the NIA said.

The attachment was carried out under Sub-section (1) of Section 25 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, it said.

Dar was arrested on September 20, 2023, after 40 live rounds of AK-47 ammunition and other incriminating material were recovered from his residence, the NIA said. He was chargesheeted in March 2024 before the NIA Special Court, Jammu, under various sections of IPC, Arms Act, and UAPA, the agency said.

BJP youth leader...

on Kanav have stated that his condition is stable, though he remains under close observation.

J&K High Court Bar Association President Advocate Nirmal Kotwal also visited the hospital to enquire about Kanav's health. He condemned the incident and called for stern action against the accused. "This kind of violence over a trivial matter is unacceptable. We urge the authorities to take strict measures," Kotwal said.

BJP leader and former President of J&K High Court Bar Association, Abhinav Sharma, has also condemned the shocking attack on Kanav Sharma.

Expressing his outrage, Abhinav termed the attack as "an act of cowardice aimed at intimidating those who are actively working for the welfare of society." He demanded swift action against the culprits and called upon the police to ensure the culprits face strict punishment as per the law.

"This is not just an attack on an individual but on the democratic values we stand for. Kanav Sharma has been at the forefront of the fight against drugs and has inspired many youth in Jammu to join the cause. Such incidents only strengthen our resolve to work for a better society," he added.

The senior BJP leader urged the authorities to expedite the investigation, emphasizing the need for stricter measures to curb rising crime in Jammu City.

Corps commander visits...

Spades Division, visited forward posts along the LoC in Poonch and Rajouri to review security and operational preparedness," the White Knight Corps stated on X. Lieutenant General Sachdeva lauded the troops for their commitment to peace and urged them to maintain vigilance.

PM Surya Ghar...

and timely installations in favour of each of them. He also fixed a target for the Discoms to achieve installation of around 30,000 solar rooftops across the districts of the UT. He advised for intensifying the outreach campaign till the desired outcomes are achieved.

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

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

The Chief Secretary, later, reviewed Solarisation of government buildings through J&K Energy Development Agency (JAKEDA). He asked the department to bring further improvement in implementation of this scheme so that the necessary wattage is achieved before its sunset date.

Commissioner Secretary, Science & Technology, Saurabh Bhagat, while informing the meeting about the overall progress of this scheme revealed that 4108 buildings had been covered thereby installing a capacity of 35.2 MW. In addition, the vendors had installed capacity of 13.6 MW till date.

Regarding the overall quantum of work, it was informed that under Capex a total of 70 MW capacity of grid connected solar rooftops would be installed on government buildings with additional 238 MW under RESCO mode by NIIPC and JAKEDA cumulatively.

NIA chargesheets narco...

registered the case originally in June 2020 when, during checking of vehicles on Kairo Bridge, one Abdul Monim Peer was intercepted while coming from Baramulla in his Hyundai Creta car, it said.

A search of the vehicle had led to the seizure of around Rs 2 crore in cash and 2 kgs of heroin.

Peer's questioning had led to further recovery of 15 kg of heroin and Rs 1.15 crore in cash, the statement said.

NIA, which had taken over the case in June 2020, found during investigation that Andrabi was part of a deep-rooted conspiracy related to procuring and selling of narcotics and generating funds in J-K and other parts of India.

He was working in close association with operatives of Pak-based banned terrorist outfits LeT and Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM), it said.

The funds so generated were used for furtherance of terrorist activity in J&K through a network of over ground workers, as per the NIA investigations.

Indian music teaches harmony, synergy and discipline: Bhagwat

■ STATE TIMES NEWS INDORE (MP): Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat on Friday said Indian music teaches synergy, harmony and discipline.

Bhagwat was speaking at the 'Swar Shatak Malwa' programme in Indore city where 870 Sangh volunteers played traditional musical instruments in a group performance. "Some of the participants in this programme would be expert players. But they do not perform as per their own whim. They match their tune and rhythm with that of others," he said.

When a person becomes part of a group, he restrains himself and matches his steps with others, the RSS chief added.

Underlining the importance of discipline further, he said when a particularly melodious piece of music is played during an RSS program, both the performers and audience feel there should be a repeat. But "with one wave of the baton in the hand of the conductor of the RSS's music program, all the instruments fall silent," he said.

Indian music frees one of useless attractions, leading the person on the righteous path, he further said. While music from other parts of the world "excites the mind", Indian music brings joy by calming the mind, Bhagwat observed.

"Listening to Indian music redeems a person from worldly attractions and develops a tendency to do good deeds, which brings joy in abundance," he added.

The RSS chief also said that Sangh volunteers, inspired by patriotism, have composed traditional tunes and martial music using different instruments, and the idea behind this endeavour was to ensure that the country does not lack the art rest of the world possesses. "Our Bharat is not a backward or poor country. We can sit in the front row in the congregation of the world's nations, and tell them we have varied arts," he said.



Dense fog engulfs parts of Kashmir, hits flight operations

■ STATE TIMES NEWS SRINAGAR: Dense fog engulfed large parts of Kashmir, affecting flight operations at Srinagar airport, as visibility fell to about 300 metres, officials said on Friday. The minimum temperatures rose in most places of the valley, they said. They said the thick layer of fog that engulfed Kashmir hit air traffic to and from the valley. Several flights were delayed while one was diverted as the visibility fell to about 300 metres.

The visibility required to run flight operations is around 1,100 metres. However, operations resumed around noon after visibility improved at the airport. The morning's first flight landed in Srinagar at 11:48 am, the officials said.

They added that people also faced difficulties while commuting due to the fog. The Met office said light snow at isolated higher reaches was possible on Friday.

On Saturday, a moderate to strong western disturbance is likely to affect Jammu and Kashmir and light to moderate snow at most places is possible, with the peak activity from Saturday night till Monday morning.

In a related development, the night temperature rose at most places in Kashmir. Gulmarg, a tourist resort town known for skiing activities in north Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 4.5 degrees Celsius, up from the previous night's minus 8.6 degrees, the Met office said.

Pahalgam, one of the base camps for the annual Amarnath Yatra in south Kashmir, registered a minimum temperature of minus 4.6 degrees Celsius.

In Srinagar, the mercury settled at a low of minus 2.2 degrees Celsius against the previous night's minus 2.6 degrees.

Qazigund, the gateway town to Kashmir, logged a minimum temperature of minus 7.3 degrees Celsius and was the coldest place in the valley, while Konibal in Pampore town recorded a low of minus 4.6 degrees.

Kupwara in north Kashmir registered a minimum temperature of minus 1.6 degrees Celsius while Kokernag in south Kashmir recorded minus 5.5 degrees.

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

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

Over 400 arrested in bovine smuggling cases in Jammu last year: Police

■ STATE TIMES NEWS JAMMU: Police arrested 408 people in connection with bovine smuggling in Jammu district last year.

Eight such smugglers were detained and jailed under the Public Safety Act (PSA) in the district, police said.

"As many as 378 FIRs were registered, and 408 accused were arrested during the last year in the district," a police spokesperson said.

In these cases, 354 vehicles were seized and a total of 3,408 bovines were rescued, he said.

The arrests were made under a drive named Operation Kamdhenu. Police have opened history sheets and personal files for notorious smugglers and initiated the cancellation of registration certificates, route permits, and licenses of vehicles repeatedly involved in bovine smuggling, the spokesperson said.

"A comprehensive database of offenders has also been created to strengthen future enforcement measures," he said.

Jammu Senior Superintendent of Police Joginder Singh said police is resolute in its mission to protect public sentiments and uphold animal rights.

"Our strict measures under Operation Kamdhenu aim to dismantle the bovine mafia and eliminate this menace from the region," he said.

Army detects, defuses IED in Reasi

■ STATE TIMES NEWS JAMMU: The Indian Army detected and safely defused an improvised explosive device (IED) in Reasi district on Thursday evening, Army officials said.

"Alert troops of the Rashtriya Rifles detected an IED on the Mahore-Gulabgarh road near Angrala in Reasi," the White Knight Corps posted on its social media handle X. The area was secured in coordination with the police, and the IED was neutralised, ensuring the safety of civilians and troops, it added.

Rural poverty declines sharply in FY24 at 4.86 pc: SBI research

■ STATE TIMES NEWS NEW DELHI: Rural poverty has declined significantly to 4.86 per cent in the fiscal ending March 2024 from 25.7 per cent in 2011-12 mainly driven by government support programmes, said a SBI research released on Friday.

Urban poverty too is estimated at 4.09 per cent, down from 13.7 per cent in 2011-12.

"The sharp decline in rural poverty ratio is on account of higher consumption growth in lowest 0-5 per cent decile with significant government support and such support is important as we also find that change in food prices has a significant impact on not just food expenditures, but overall expenditure in general," said the SBI research on consumption expenditure survey.

The latest Household Consumption Expenditure Survey, released by the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation, showed that consumption inequality in rural as well as urban areas declined during the August 2023-July 2024 period as compared to a year ago.

The SBI research said that the Consumption Expenditure Survey reveals a remarkable decline in rural poverty estimated at 4.86 per cent in 2023-24 (7.2 per cent in FY23 and 25.7 per cent in FY12) and urban poverty estimated at 4.09 per cent (4.6 per cent in FY23 and 13.7 per cent in 2011-12).

It is possible that these numbers could undergo minor revisions once the 2021 census is completed and the new rural-urban population share is published, the research report said.

"We believe urban poverty could decline even further. At an aggregate level, we believe poverty rates in India could now be in the range of 4-4.5 per cent with almost minimal existence of extreme poverty," it said.

Enhanced physical infrastructure is scripting a new story in rural mobility, it said and added that one of the reasons for the increasingly shrinking horizontal income gap between rural and urban and the vertical income gap within rural income classes," SBI said.

"The difference between rural and urban monthly per capita consumption expenditure/ Monthly Per Capita Consumption Expenditure (MPCE) to rural MPCE is now at 69.7 per cent, a rapid decline from 88.2 per cent in 2009-10...mostly due to the initiatives the government has taken in terms of DBT transfers, building rural infrastructures, augmenting farmer's income, (and) improving the rural livelihood significantly," it said.

The research estimates that food inflation dampens consumption demand more in lower-income states as compared to higher-income states, reflecting that rural people are comparatively more risk-averse in low-income states than in high-income states. Most of the high-income states delineate a savings rate greater than the national average (31 per cent).

Uttar Pradesh and Bihar show low savings rates possibly due to higher outward migration, the SBI report said. The new estimated poverty line is Rs 1,632 in rural areas and Rs 1,944 in urban areas in 2023-24.

Govt cuts gas allocation for LPG, diverts to city gas retailers

■ STATE TIMES NEWS NEW DELHI: The government has slashed allocation of natural gas used for LPG production, and diverted the low-priced fuel to city gas retailers like Indraprastha Gas Ltd and Adani-Total Gas Ltd to meet a part of their requirement for CNG/piped cooking gas supplies, according an official order.

The government had in October and November last year cut supplies of low-priced natural gas coming from old fields such as Mumbai High and Bassenin fields in the Bay of Bengal, to city gas retailers by as much as 40 per cent in view of limited output.

This led to city gas retailers hiking CNG prices by Rs 2-3 per kg and threatening more increases as they replaced lost volumes with higher-priced input fuel.

The price hike made CNG less attractive when compared to alternate fuels like diesel. To resolve this, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas in a December 31 order rejiggered some allocations of gas produced from below ground and undersea.

The ministry ordered a cut in gas supplied to state-owned GAIL and Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) for production of LPG and diverting those volumes to city gas entities.

Out of a total 2.55 million standard cubic meters per day of gas usage for LPG production, 1.27 mmscmd (0.637 mmscmd each for GAIL and ONGC) has been ordered to be diverted for consumption in the CNG/piped cooking gas segment in January-March quarter, according to the order reviewed by PTI.

GAIL and ONGC will have to use either higher-priced gas produced from new fields or rely on imported liquefied natural gas (LNG) to replace the lost volumes. The LPG they make is supplied to fuel retailers like Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) for sale to households as domestic cooking gas LPG in cylinders.