

!! Continuations from Page 1 !! First successful trial...

construction companies, was onboard.
The USBRL project aims to provide rail connectivity between the Kashmir Valley and the rest of the country.
The Anji Khad Bridge, featuring a single pylon rising 331 m above the riverbed, is another engineering milestone achieved under the USBRL project.
Described as a "true engineering marvel", the bridge has 48 cables on its lateral and central spans. Construction of the pylon began in 2017, with the structure now standing 191 m above its foundation level.
It is the second-highest railway bridge after the iconic arch bridge over the Chenab at Kauri, which is the world's highest railway bridge at 359 metres above the riverbed - 35 m taller than the Eiffel Tower in Paris.
The Anji Khad Bridge has a total length of 473.25 m, with the viaduct spanning 120 m and the central embankment measuring 94.25 m.
In November, Minister of State for Railways Ravneet Singh announced that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to inaugurate the Vande Bharat train connecting Kashmir to New Delhi on the USBRL project in January.
With the expected commissioning of train services in phases, the Railways will complete 255 km of the 272-kilometre USBRL project, leaving only a small stretch between Katra and Reasi to be finished by December.

Non-appearance in...

Section 82 of the erstwhile Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) deals with proclamation for person absconding.
Section 174A of the erstwhile Indian Penal Code (IPC) pertains to non-appearance in response to a proclamation under section 82 of the CrPC.
"The purpose of section 82 CrPC, as can be understood from a bare reading of the statutory text is to ensure that a person who is called to appear before a court, does so," the bench said, adding that the object and purpose of section 174A of the IPC was to ensure penal consequences for defiance of a court order requiring a person's presence.
It noted what happens if the status under section 82 of the CrPC was nullified, that is, the person subjected to such proclamation, by virtue of subsequent developments was no longer required to be presented before a court of law.
"Then, can the prosecution still proceed against such a person for having not appeared before a court during the time that the process was in effect. The answer is in the affirmative," it said.
While referring to the language of section 174A of the IPC, the bench said this implies that the "very instance at which a person is directed to appear, and he does not do so, this section comes into play".
"So, while proceedings under section 174A IPC cannot be initiated independent of section 82, CrPC, that is, can only be started post the issuance of proclamation, they can continue if the said proclamation is no longer in effect," the bench said.

Three soldiers martyred...

and solace during this difficult time.
He also prayed for eternal peace to the departed souls and wished a speedy recovery to the soldiers injured in the accident.

UP Chief Secretary...

4,000 hectares of land. Preparations are underway for the past one-and-a-half years with Rs 7,000 crore spent on upgrading the infrastructure in Prayagraj."
Elaborating the arrangements, Singh said, "We are ready to welcome 40 crore people to the Kumbh over the next 40-45 days. The Uttar Pradesh government has made all necessary arrangements. We invite the people of Jammu and Kashmir, particularly those from Kashmir, to visit the Kumbh."
Talking about tourism in Uttar Pradesh, the chief secretary said 38 crore tourists visited the state last year.
"Our rough estimates show that one tourist spends Rs 4,000 to Rs 4,500. For the Kumbh Mela, where 40 crore people are expected, we anticipate Rs 1.5 lakh crore in trade and business across sectors like transport, hotels, rentals, restaurants, food and lodging," Singh said.
Highlighting the significance of tourism, he added, "Tourism is one of the most important service sectors for employment generation. With a minimum investment of Rs 10 lakh, one job is created in the tourism sector. In comparison, the manufacturing industry creates one job with an investment of Rs 2-3 crore. The UP government recognises this and it is committed to boosting pilgrimage tourism."
He also claimed that Uttar Pradesh has the maximum number of pilgrimage sites for Hinduism and Buddhism, which provide an impetus to pilgrimage tourism.
On Kashmiri Pandits' demand for reservation in medical colleges for the displaced community, Singh assured them that he would take up the issue with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Attack on hotel...

191(2), 115(2), 324(4), 352, and 351(2) of the IPC against Aggarwal brothers, their accomplice Arun Choudhary and others.
This is not the first time the Aggarwal family has faced serious allegations. Name of Rakesh Aggarwal, the father of the accused, was reportedly notoriously surfaced in the Anara sex scandal, a case that rocked Jammu years ago. The scandal involved high-profile individuals and had highlighted issues of power and corruption in the region.
The family's involvement in multiple controversies has drawn the ire of the public. "This family has a history of using its influence to evade justice. First Rakesh Aggarwal, and now his sons-it's time for the law to act decisively," said a local activist.
The attack has sparked widespread outrage across Jammu, with civil society groups and local organisations rallying behind the hotel staff. "The hotel employees were simply doing their jobs, earning an honest living. The aggression they faced is an attack on the dignity of all hardworking individuals," said a representative of a hospitality workers' union.
In a show of solidarity, many organisations have pledged to boycott the Aggarwal family. "This criminal mindset cannot be tolerated. We urge the police to act swiftly and set a precedent that no one is above the law," said a prominent citizen of Jammu.
The police have assured the public of a thorough and impartial investigation. A senior officer supervising the investigations stated, "We are committed to bringing the accused to justice. If necessary, all legal avenues will be pursued to apprehend all of them."
The officer also reiterated the department's zero-tolerance policy toward corruption or undue influence, stating, "Justice will prevail irrespective of the financial standing of the accused. We will not spare whosoever was part of brutal attack on innocent hotel staff members."

Architect of India's...

Singh extended his condolences to Chidambaram's family.
"Saddened to learn about the passing away this morning of eminent nuclear scientist Dr. Rajagopala Chidambaram, who led India's Atomic Energy Commission and played a key role in the development of strategic weapons.
"Dr. Chidambaram's role in the two nuclear tests conducted by India was memorable. He also had the distinction of being Principal Scientific Advisor to the Govt of India for 17 years," Singh said.
Chidambaram held numerous prestigious positions during his six-decade career, including Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India (2001-2018), director of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (1990-1993), chairman of Atomic Energy Commission, and secretary to the government of India, DAE (1993-2000).
He also served as chairman of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) (1994-1995).
"The nation owes greatly to this brilliant scientific mind, and we shall forever cherish his tremendous contributions," Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge said in a post on X.
Ajit Kumar Mohanty, Secretary, Department of Atomic Energy, termed Chidambaram's demise an irreparable loss.
"Dr. Chidambaram was a doyen of science and technology whose contributions furthered India's nuclear prowess and strategic self-reliance. His loss is an irreparable one for the scientific community and the nation," he said.
"The nation mourns the loss of a true visionary. Our heartfelt condolences go out to his family and loved ones during this time of grief," the DAE said in a statement.
It said Chidambaram's unparalleled contributions to India's scientific and strategic capabilities and his visionary leadership in science and technology will forever be remembered.
Born in 1936, Chidambaram was an alumnus of Presidency College in Chennai and Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru.
"Chidambaram played a pivotal role in shaping India's nuclear capabilities. He played an integral role in the nation's first nuclear test in 1974, and led the Department of Atomic Energy team during the Pokhran-II nuclear tests in 1998. His contributions established India as a nuclear power on the global stage," the

statement said.
"As a world-class physicist, Dr. Chidambaram's research in high-pressure physics, crystallography, and materials science significantly advanced the scientific community's understanding of these fields. His pioneering work in these areas laid the foundation for modern materials science research in India," it said.
He championed initiatives in areas such as energy, healthcare and strategic self-reliance and steered numerous projects that significantly advanced India's science and technology landscape, it said.
He was instrumental in initiating India's indigenous development of supercomputers and conceptualising the National Knowledge Network, which connected research and educational institutions across the country.
An ardent advocate of applying science and technology to national development, Chidambaram established programmes such as Rural Technology Action Groups and Society for Electronic Transactions and Security, and emphasised "coherent synergy" in India's scientific efforts, according to the statement.
He was honoured with prestigious accolades, including the Padma Shri in 1975 and the Padma Vibhushan in 1999. He received honorary doctorates from several universities and was a fellow of eminent Indian and international science academies.
The DAE said Chidambaram will be remembered as a "trailblazer, an inspirational leader, and a dedicated mentor to countless scientists and engineers".

Instead of creating...

Kejriwal. The home minister said the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in Delhi could not build a system to supply water to the residents, but Kejriwal spent "Rs 14 crore on a water plant for his family of four".
"Kejriwal Ji, you will have to give an account to the people of Delhi. They are demanding answers from you," Shah said.
He alleged that over Rs 6 crore was spent on designer marbles, Rs 6 crore on motorised curtains, Rs 70 lakh on automatic doors, Rs 50 lakh on carpets and Rs 64 lakh on smart TVs at the chief minister's residence when Kejriwal occupied it.
Taking a swipe, Shah said he had suggested to Kejriwal on X that he should allow people of Delhi to take a tour of the "sheesh mahal" so that they could see what kind of home their chief minister lived in.
Some young persons had come to see him and when he told them that Kejriwal has done nothing for Delhi, they retorted that he was being unjust as the AAP leader built a "sheesh mahal", the senior BJP leader said in sarcasm.
The Union minister further accused Kejriwal of overseeing a series of corruption scandals, including in Delhi's liquor policy, Mohalla Clinics, CCTV installations, and bus purchases.
Shah also invoked the legacy of late BJP leader Sushma Swaraj, whom he described as a "fighting opposition leader" remembered for her service in various key ministries.
Shah emphasised that while Swaraj's contributions to the foreign and health ministries would be remembered in Indian parliamentary history, Kejriwal's legacy would be tainted by corruption and self-interest.
"People of Delhi are smart, and they will not be deceived. Kejriwal must answer for his actions," Shah said, adding that the BJP was committed to providing "honest and accountable" governance in the national capital.
As the Delhi elections approach, the battle for control of the city is expected to intensify, with both the BJP and AAP pulling no punches in their campaign rhetoric. The Assembly elections in Delhi are expected to take place in February.

Karan Singh calls...

of Article 370 of the Constitution.
He noted that before this constitutional change, the entire debate used to revolve around how much autonomy was to be accorded to the state.
"The whole game has changed after the abrogation of (Article) 370," Singh said.
He said Jammu and Kashmir's transition to a union territory is a diminution of the erstwhile state and it is "unacceptable".
Singh noted that a former Indian ambassador to the US said that the current status of Jammu and Kashmir has put it behind states like Himachal Pradesh and Haryana in terms of governance efficiency.
"(Hum) toh mukut hai Hindustan ke (We are the crown of India)," he said.
Asked about statehood restoration, the former Union minister said, "Definitely. Full statehood."
He also advocated for domiciliary laws similar to those in Himachal Pradesh, which restrict land ownership to locals.
"These are the domiciliary laws that we want," he said.
However, Singh feels not everything about the abrogation of Article 370 is negative.
He said the abrogation scrapped a law that took away the property rights of women from the state who married outsiders and also enabled many people who migrated from Pakistan to exercise their franchise.
"So I took a very nuanced view. Some things are positive in it," he said.
Decades ago, Singh had proposed trifurcation of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir. He proposed that Jammu should be merged with Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh should be made a union territory and Kashmir should remain a state.
"Everyone jumped at me and the proposal was rejected. Today things are different. Jammu has its own personality now," he said.
Asked if he had any such radical proposal now, he said, "I think that now the only radical suggestion is the reinstatement of statehood plus domiciliary laws to safeguard the people of the state and a genuine attempt to strike a fair balance between Jammu and Kashmir regions."

The only way to do this is to have a peaceful relationship between the Centre and the Jammu and Kashmir government, he underlined.
On August 5, 2019, the Centre revoked Article 370 of the Constitution, stripping Jammu and Kashmir of its special status and dividing it into two union territories - J&K and Ladakh. While the former has a legislative assembly with limited authority, Ladakh operates without one.
In December 2023, the apex court upheld the Centre's decision but reiterated the need for the swift restoration of statehood.
During the interview, Singh also reflected on his relationship with the Abdullah family, particularly with Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, the first chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir.
He described Sheikh Abdullah as a "remarkable" Kashmiri leader who significantly influenced the region's political landscape, but acknowledged the complexities of their interactions given the historical tension between the monarchy and the emerging democratic forces.
Recalling the time when Jammu and Kashmir's first assembly was constituted, Singh said his father Maharaja Hari Singh and many of his loyalists thought that he should not take up the role of 'Sadr-i-Riyasat' because Sheikh Abdullah had insulted the Dogras and the Maharaja.
"So that was where the tension in a way began. I suppose it was an inevitable fallout of politics. You see, I realised that the monarchy had lost its importance. That the future lay in democracy. I wanted to be part of that democracy," he said.
Singh credited National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah for bringing him back into politics after a 12-year hiatus.
"After the four elections that I won from Udhampur, I changed my constituency, went to Jammu and lost. After that I really gave up politics. I was out of politics for 12 years... he got me back into politics," he said.
He also recalled the NC's support in his election to the Rajya Sabha.
Singh described Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, the third generation of the Abdullah family to occupy the office, as a "balanced individual" with the potential for a successful political future.
"I think he'll go far. I hope he will because, you know, he has got a second chance now," the former minister said.

Some people trying...

the service of rural India.
"Ensuring a dignified life for the people of rural India is the priority of my government," the Prime Minister said and added that the vision of the government is to ensure an empowered rural India, provide ample opportunities for villagers, reduce migration and ensure ease of life to the people of villages.
Talking about the schemes to provide basic amenities in villages, Modi said toilets have been made as part of Swachh Bharat Mission, and crores of people in rural India have been given pucca houses as part of PM Awaas Yojana.
He said safe and clean drinking water is also being provided through Jal Jeevan Mission.
"Today, healthcare facilities are being provided in more than 1.5 lakh Ayushman Arogya Mandirs to the people," said the Prime Minister.
He added that telemedicine, assisted by digital technologies, has ensured the option of best doctors and hospitals to villagers. Crores of people in rural areas have benefited from the telemedicine through e-Sanjeevini, he further added.
The Prime Minister highlighted the importance of creating economic policies to strengthen the rural economy.
He said the vision of his government is to empower rural India by transforming villages into vibrant centres of growth and opportunity.
"Our government's intentions, policies and decisions are empowering rural India with new energy," he said.

He noted that through the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, farmers have received approximately Rs 3 lakh crore in financial assistance. Noting that over the past 10 years, the amount of agricultural loans has increased by 3.5 times, he mentioned that now livestock and fish farmers are being provided with Kisan Credit Cards.
In addition, more than 9,000 Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) in the country are receiving financial assistance. He further underlined that the government has consistently increased the MSP for several crops over the past 10 years.
"When intentions are noble, the results are satisfying," Modi said and added that the country is now reaping the benefits of the hard work done over the past 10 years.
Citing a recent large-scale survey that revealed several important facts, the Prime Minister noted that compared to 2011, consumption in rural India has nearly tripled, indicating that people are spending more on their preferred items.
He noted that previously, villagers had to spend more than 50 per cent of their income on food, but for the first time since independence, the expenditure on food in rural areas has fallen below 50 per cent, and are now spending on other desires and needs, improving their quality of life.
Highlighting another significant finding from the survey, which revealed that the gap in consumption between urban and rural areas has decreased, the Prime Minister remarked that it was previously believed that urban individuals could spend more than those in villages, but continuous efforts have reduced this disparity.
He noted that these achievements could have been realized during previous governments' tenures, but for decades after independence, lakhs of villages were deprived of basic necessities.
He pointed out that the majority of SC, ST, and OBC populations reside in villages and were neglected by previous governments. This led to migration from villages, increased poverty, and a widening gap between rural and urban areas.
In his speech, Modi also mentioned a recent study by the State Bank of India, which revealed that rural poverty in India has decreased from approximately 26 per cent in 2012 to less than 5 per cent in 2024.
In an apparent jibe at opposition parties, Modi said that while some people have been chanting slogans to eradicate poverty for decades, the country is now witnessing a real reduction in poverty.
Speaking at the occasion, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said banks have undertaken saturation drive for 16 government schemes including Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, PM Mudra and PM SVANidhi.
Celebrating Rural India's entrepreneurial spirit and cultural heritage, the Grameen Bharat Mahotsav 2025 is being organised from January 4 to 9 with the theme 'Building a Resilient Rural India for a 'Viksit Bharat 2047'.
The Mahotsav, through various discussions, workshops and masterclasses, aims to enhance rural infrastructure, create self-reliant economies, and foster innovation within rural communities.

Kashmir braces for...

improving and the first flight landed at 11:13 am, the officials said.
The Met office said a moderate to strong western disturbance was likely to affect Jammu and Kashmir and light to moderate snow at most places was possible, with the peak activity from Saturday night to Monday morning.
There is a possibility of heavy snow over the middle and the higher reaches of Kashmir and the Chenab valley from Saturday night to Sunday late night or Monday morning.
The Met has issued a 'yellow' alert for Saturday. An 'orange' warning has been issued for Sunday when there is a possibility of widespread snowfall with heavy snow at isolated places.
There could be temporary disruption of surface and air transportation, particularly on Sunday, it warned.
In wake of the Met forecast of moderate to heavy snowfall, the authorities asked people to exercise caution and avoid unnecessary travel during adverse weather conditions to ensure safety and minimise disruptions.
District administrations have set up control rooms to assist the public, the officials said. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah had on Friday said the government was ready to deal with the snowfall.
"We will deal with it. We are prepared, we have had several meetings and we also have experience after the last snowfall. If there were any lacunae last time, we will correct that this time," he had told reporters.
Meanwhile, the night temperature rose at most places in Kashmir.
In Srinagar, the mercury settled at a low of minus 1.6 degrees Celsius, slightly up from the previous night's minus 2.2 degrees, the Met said.
Gulmarg, a tourist resort town known for skiing activities in north Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 2.2 degrees Celsius, up from the previous night's minus 4.5 degrees.
Pahalgam, one of the base camps for the annual Amarnath Yatra in south Kashmir, registered a minimum of minus 2.6 degrees Celsius.
Qazigund, the gateway town to Kashmir, logged a minimum temperature of minus 6.6 degrees Celsius and was the coldest place in the valley, while Konibal in Pampore town recorded a low of minus 2.6 degrees.
Kupwara in north Kashmir registered minus 2.2 degrees Celsius while Kokernag in south Kashmir recorded minus 5.8 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-Khurd (small cold)' and a 10-day 'Chillai-Bachha (baby cold)'.

Can PM Modi...

Mughals or the British. Disguised in various forms-pseudo-secular political parties, rights activists, urban intellectuals, communists, or religious zealots with Jihadist mindsets-they perpetuate narratives that vilify Hindus.
Pseudo-secular groups, often led by Hindus, amplify divisive narratives such as "the Constitution is in danger" or "Dalits are being subjugated by Hindus," while ignoring atrocities committed by urban Naxals and Jihadis. These groups selectively highlight incidents involving Muslims, turning minor events into national issues, while disregarding the persecution and marginalization of Hindus in regions like Bangladesh and Pakistan. They remain silent on the genocide of Hindus in Kashmir and the violence in places like Sandeshkhali and Muzaffargarh.
Prime Minister Modi must urgently counter these narratives, especially those rooted in caste-based divisions. He must address the infiltration of divisive ideologies like Ghazwa-e-Hind, which target marginalized segments of society through leaders from privileged sections. Redefining reservation quotas and ensuring welfare schemes reach the poorest segments within these communities is essential.
Socio-economic disparities among marginalized castes demand focused attention to prevent exploitation by the privileged sections within these groups. Often, these privileged individuals manipulate the system to retain reservation benefits for themselves, sidelining the truly needy. Countering this exploitation is crucial to limiting the influence of anti-national elements and divisive forces, ensuring that India's future is not jeopardized by internal betrayals.
The challenges Hindus face are deeply rooted in history and require wisdom, unity, and decisive action to overcome.

Drive intensified against illegal mining in Rajouri ; Several vehicles seized, heavy penalties imposed on perpetrators

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
RAJOURI: In a concerted effort to curb illegal mining activities and ensure the preservation of the natural environment, a team led by the District Mining Officer (DMO) Rajouri, in coordination with the Deputy Superintendent of Police (DySP) Headquarters, on Saturday conducted a series of raids in identified illegal mining zones. The raids resulted in the seizure of multiple vehicles involved in unauthorized mining operations and imposition of fines amounting to several lakhs of rupees on the perpetrators.
This exercise was part of an ongoing and rigorous campaign initiated by the district administration to uphold the law and safeguard the region's ecological balance.
The District Mining Office, in collaboration with law enforcement agencies, is leaving no stone unturned in tackling the menace of illegal mining that poses significant risks to the environment and the sustainable management of natural resources.
Earlier in the day, the Mining Department issued multiple notices to violators, including stone crushers and leaseholders, who were found in breach of their legal obligations. These notices are a prelude to strict legal action that will be initiated against the offenders in accordance with the relevant provisions of law.
The DMO emphasized that the department is committed to maintaining transparency and accountability in mining operations while enforcing the compliance to the regulations by all stakeholders. He also reiterated that the district administration is determined to take strict punitive actions against individuals and entities involved in illegal mining, without exception.
This joint action by the Mining Department and law enforcement agencies demonstrates the administration's unwavering commitment to upholding the rule of law and protecting the region's natural heritage. Such operations will continue in the future to ensure that the district's resources are utilized responsibly and in adherence to all legal norms.