

!! Continuations from Page 1 !! Infiltration biggest challenge...

persecuted refugees, came amid the political churn over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and ahead of the assembly elections to the 294-member House, due in about three months, with Modi pitching the BJP as both a custodian of national security and a guarantor of the rights of the refugees.

Stepping up his attack, the Prime Minister said the "thuggery" of the TMC and its "politics of threatening and intimidating the poor" would soon come to an end, asserting that Bengal, surrounded by BJP-ruled states, was now ready for a change.

"Bengal is surrounded on all sides by BJP governments that stand for good governance. Now it is time for good governance in Bengal too," he said.

Recalling the BJP's electoral victory in Bihar, Modi said he had then remarked that "it was time for Bengal" and expressed confidence that the state would give the party an overwhelming mandate in the upcoming Assembly elections.

The Prime Minister accused the TMC government of blocking welfare schemes meant for the poor and preventing the benefits of central programmes from reaching people.

"Should Bengal receive the benefits of schemes like free electricity or not?" he asked. "The real welfare of the people of Bengal will happen only when there is no obstructive TMC government here, but a pro-people BJP government instead."

Alleging large-scale corruption, Modi said the "heartless and cruel" TMC government was looting public money and siphoning off central funds meant for the poor.

"I want every poor household in Bengal to have its own permanent home. Those who are entitled should receive free ration. I want the full benefits of the welfare schemes started by the central government for the poor to reach you," he said. "But this is not happening because the money sent by the Centre is being looted by TMC leaders."

The PM also flagged the non-implementation of the Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme in the state.

"Today, Bengal is the only state where Ayushman Bharat has not been implemented. The TMC government is preventing my brothers and sisters in Bengal from availing its benefits. It is essential to bid farewell to such a ruthless government," he said.

Holding out a development pitch, Modi said a BJP government would restore the "old pride and glory" of Malda and West Bengal and create new opportunities for farmers and youth. "We will take Malda's mango economy to new heights," he said.

Earlier in the day, Modi flagged off the first Vande Bharat sleeper train between Howrah and Guwahati and launched multiple rail and road infrastructure projects in Bengal worth about Rs 3,250 crore. The fully air-conditioned sleeper train is expected to reduce travel time between Howrah and Guwahati by around 2.5 hours.

He also virtually flagged off four Amrit Bharat Express trains connecting New Jalpaiguri with Nagercoil and Tiruchirappalli, and Alipurduar with SMVT Bengaluru and Mumbai (Panvel). Referring to recent electoral successes in Maharashtra and Kerala, Modi said the BJP was receiving unprecedented support even in regions where it was once considered weak, reflecting growing trust in its development model, particularly among the youth.

Over 4 kg of...

resident of Batpora, and a case has been registered in the matter, police added.

In a separate operation, a police team set up a naka point at Bonizanigam village, and during checking, two individuals carrying a nylon bag were seen acting suspiciously and attempted to flee, the spokesman said. The accused, identified as Irfan Ahmad Mir and Owais Ahmad Bhat -- both residents of village Hardulatina -- were apprehended by the police and a search of their person led to the recovery of 2.185 kg of ground charas-like substance, the spokesman said, adding, a case has been registered and investigation has been initiated.

Tourist arrivals picking...

and help mitigate seasonal tourism peaks," he said.

The tourism sector in Kashmir was severely impacted after last year's April 22 Pahalgam attack, in which 26 civilians, including 25 tourists, were killed by terrorists.

Following the attack, around 50 tourist spots and resorts were closed for security reasons. Several destinations have recently been reopened, and more will be thrown open to tourists after the completion of security audits.

He said a major project has been conceptualised in this direction and its implementation is being carefully planned, including transportation and other infrastructure arrangements. "Our focus will remain on developing new tourist destinations to ensure sustainable growth of the tourism sector," Dulloo said.

Referring to the SPREAD initiative, the chief secretary said it seeks to decongest overburdened tourist spots by developing eco-sensitive, year-round alternatives while balancing economy, ecology and equity.

He said that with support from the Department of Economic Affairs and implementation through the Economic Reconstruction Agency, the SPREAD project will focus on infrastructure development, waste management, ecological conservation and livelihood generation. "Community engagement and private sector participation are central to this initiative, which envisions holistic development across both Jammu and Kashmir regions in line with global best practices," he added.

Dulloo also underlined the need for a targeted strategy to convert the rising pilgrim footfall in Jammu into longer tourist stays. "A focused approach is required to promote the region's wider leisure, heritage, adventure and spiritual attractions beyond the main pilgrimage routes," he said.

He stressed proactive use of digital platforms and social media, including collaboration with influencers, to expand outreach and attract national and international tourists. "We need a comprehensive strategy to convert the massive influx of pilgrims into multi-day tourists by encouraging them to explore experiences beyond traditional pilgrimage circuits," Dulloo said.

Highlighting J&K's potential as a year-round tourism destination, he said that the introduction of adventure activities such as rafting, paragliding, bungee jumping, and water sports would transform the region into a tourism hub while creating significant employment opportunities for local youth.

Technology must be...

said Indian farmers often describe farming as their duty rather than merely an occupation.

"This noble thought is rarely seen elsewhere. It reminds us that our work should be society-centric," Bhagwat pointed out.

He said modern technology should be adapted to India's social and economic conditions, adding there is need to ensure technology does not harm society or reduce employment opportunities.

Northern Army Commander...

with troops and staff at the Joint Control Centre, emphasising close coordination and unified synergy to counter the emerging threats.

"He highlighted that enhanced inter-agency synergy will enable dynamic operational control, real-time intelligence sharing and enhanced situational awareness," the Northern Command said.

JK BJP holds ...

filed on January 19, and the name of the new party chief will be announced the next day.

Addressing the gathering, JK BJP president Sat Sharma said the election of the national president is not a symbolic exercise but a well-defined, transparent, and participatory process in which party workers from the grassroots to the national level play an active role.

"The entire organisational election process has been carried out systematically, beginning from the primary membership drive, reflecting the party's commitment to discipline, inclusiveness, and democratic values," he said.

Op Sindoor testament...

PM Modi Ji's resolute political will, decisive striking power of our armed forces and precision intelligence. Visited the Operation Sindoor Pavilion at the New Delhi World Book Fair. The pavilion inspires young generation with patriotism and commitment to the nation," a government statement quoting him said.

The home minister also visited the special exhibition on Sardar Patel at the fair.

"By uniting a country that was fragmented into pieces and building one united India, Sardar Sahib's 150th birth anniversary year is being celebrated, and the Modi government is making his great personality and monumental work immortal in the new generation. This exhibition will further strengthen the resolve among the youth to protect the country and its integrity," he said on X in Hindi.

Woman booked for...

police said on Saturday.

Meena Sharma, wife of Mohan Lal, has been booked under the relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) at the Majalta police station for allegedly violating the order of the district magistrate, issued on January 3, prohibiting the use of VPN services within the district, a police spokesperson said.

He said Sharma is a resident of Palnoo village in Majalta and her mobile phone number was found to be using VPN services.

Further investigation in the matter is on, the police spokesperson said, urging the public to refrain from using VPN and other prohibited apps on mobile phones.

Theft case solved; accused arrested, stolen property recovered

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

AWANTIPORA: Police in Awantipora has solved a theft case by arresting an accused person involved in the commission of crime and recovered stolen property from his possession.

On 15-01-2026, Police Post Toll Plaza received a written complaint from Nisar Ahmad Khanday son of Gh. Hassan Khanday, resident of Cherso, stating therein that during the intervening night of 14/15-01-2026, unknown persons had stolen sheep from his cowshed. Accordingly, a case FIR No. 22/2026 under relevant provisions of law was registered at Police Station Awantipora, and investigation was taken up.

During the course of investigation, a police team headed by Incharge Police Post Toll Plaza, under the overall supervision of SHO Police Station Awantipora, employed modern investigative techniques, including the examination and analysis of CCTV footage from multiple locations. These efforts led to the identification and subsequent arrest of the accused namely Mohd Khalid Bargat son of Mohd Akbar, resident of Gondhawas Khass, Rajouri. During sustained questioning, the accused confessed to his involvement in the commission of the offence. On his disclosure, five stolen sheep were recovered.

Additionally, the vehicle bearing registration number JK13G-6966, used in the commission of the crime was also seized. The accused is presently in police custody. Further arrests and recoveries are expected as the investigation progresses.

6 drug peddlers arrested, contraband recovered

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Continuing its sustained drive against drug trafficking, Police have arrested 06 drug peddlers in Anantnag and Budgam in separate actions and recovered contraband substances from their possession.

A police party of Police Station Anantnag at a checkpoint established at Bangidar Bridge near the Filtration Plant intercepted a suspicious person. During search, charas powder-like substance weighing about 384 grams and charas-like sticks wrapped in corn husk weighing about 54 grams was recovered from his possession. The total quantity recovered is 438 grams. He has been identified as Faizan Ahmad Bhat @ Gafoor, son of Nazir Ahmad, resident of Bangidar.

Moreover, on receiving specific information, a

police party of Police Station Utrasoo at a checkpoint established at Chattergill intercepted & apprehended two individuals. They have been identified as Mehboob Gojjer son of Mum Shakoor Gojjer and Rafiq Ahmad Gojjer son of Bashir Ahmad Gojjer, both residents of Chontihal, Utrasoo. During search, Charas-like substance weighing approximately 1.150 kilograms was recovered from their possession. The contraband was seized on the spot as per legal procedure.

In Budgam, a police team from Police Station Magam, led by SHO Police Station Magam, during routine patrolling at Batpora Crossing intercepted and apprehended a suspicious individual carrying a nylon bag. Upon search, approximately 2 kg and 100 grams of charas-like substance in powder form was recovered. The accused was identified as Rouf Ahmed Hajam, son of Mohd Ramzan Hajam, resident of Batpora, Kanihama.

Meanwhile, a police team of Police Post Hardpanzoo, established a checkpoint at Bonizanigam village intercepted and apprehended 02 suspicious persons. They have been identified as Irfan Ahmad Mir, son of Mohd Yousuf Mir, and Owais Ahmad Bhat, son of Gh Mohd Bhat, both residents of village Hardulatina. Upon search, 2 kg and 185 grams of charas-like substance in powder form were recovered from their possession.

Accordingly, cases under relevant sections of law have been registered at respective police stations. Further investigation in all the cases is in progress.

Missing girl traced, reunited with family

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Police on Saturday traced a missing girl and reunited her with family.

An information was received at Police Post Pargwal regarding a missing girl (name withheld), resident of Hamirpur Kona, Tehsil Pargwal District Jammu. Accordingly, a missing report was entered at Police Post Pargwal on 15/01/2025.

Acting swiftly on the report, a police team of Police Post Pargwal, led by IC PP Pargwal made strenuous efforts and, with the help of technical assistance and human intelligence, successfully traced the missing girl.

After completing all legal formalities, the lady was safely handed over to her legal heirs, and the missing report was accordingly closed.

'Khair' wooden logs stolen from state land recovered

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SAMBA: Samba Police has recovered and seized 'Khair' wooden logs which were illegally cut and stolen from the State land at village Saurara falling

under the jurisdiction of Police Station Ghagwal. Acting on information received from reliable sources, a team of Police Station Ghagwal has recovered wooden logs in village Saurara which were illegally cut and stolen from the State land and the Shamlat land by some unknown persons. The police has seized all the 'Khair' wooden logs on the spot. A case FIR No. 07/2026 has been registered at Police Station Ghagwal under relevant sections of law and investigation started.

Drug peddler nabbed with heroin

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

REASI: In its continuous drive against drug menace, District Police Reasi achieved significant success by arresting a drug peddler and recovering a banned narcotic substance from his possession.

At about 20:30 hours, a police party deployed at Panthal Naka, Police Post Kakryal, intercepted and checked one person identified as Manohar Lal S/O Shongu Ram R/O Saroon Aghar Jitto, Tehsil Katra, District Reasi. During the search, 6,030 grams of heroin-like substance was recovered from his possession.

Accordingly, a case FIR No. 22/2026 U/S 8/21/22 NDPS Act has been registered at Police Station Katra and further investigation has been taken up to ascertain the source and backward/forward linkages of the contraband.

Crackdown on Illegal Khair smuggling, two vehicles loaded with woods seized

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Jammu Forest Range Team of the J&K Forest Department, under the direct supervision of Shri Anurag Arya, IPS, Divisional Forest Officer, Jammu, successfully intercepted and confiscated two Mahindra Scorpio vehicles (Registration Numbers JK02AD-0333 and JK02AF-0159). These vehicles were discovered to be transporting significant quantities of illegally harvested Khairwood billets, a commodity of considerable market value. The confiscation proceedings for the seized vehicles and the illicit timber have been initiated in accordance with the pertinent sections of the Indian Forest Act. This operation represents a substantial disruption to timber smuggling activities within the region. The meticulous execution of this operation was led by a dedicated team, including Kailash Choudhary, Range Forest Officer, Jammu, Vikram Singh, Block Officer Manawar, and other diligent Forest officials. The Forest Department encourages the public to report any suspicious activities related to illegal logging or timber transportation to aid in the preservation of the region's forest resources.

Cold condition intensifies in Kashmir

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Cold conditions tightened its grip in Kashmir with a drop in minimum temperatures as the meteorological department forecast spells of wet weather, especially in the higher reaches of the valley over the next few days.

Srinagar recorded a low of minus 3.2 degrees Celsius on Friday night, down from minus 1.5 degrees Celsius the previous night. Shopian in south Kashmir was the coldest recorded place in the valley, with the mercury settling at a low of minus 5.6 degrees Celsius.

Pahalgam recorded a minimum temperature of minus 2.6 degrees Celsius, same as the previous night, while Gulmarg in north Kashmir's Baramulla district registered a low of minus 4.2 degrees Celsius, down from the previous night's minus 2.3 degrees Celsius.

Sonamarg in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district, which received moderate snowfall on Friday, recorded a low of minus 2.9 degrees Celsius, officials of the meteorological department said.

Qazigund, the gateway town to the valley, saw the mercury settle at minus 3.4 degrees Celsius. Kokernag recorded a low of minus 2 degrees Celsius, and Kupwara recorded a minimum temperature of minus 2.2 degrees Celsius, they added.

The Kashmir Valley is currently in the midst of 'Chilla-i-Kalan', the 40-day harshest winter period, during which night temperatures frequently plunge several degrees below the freezing point, and chances of snowfall are the highest.

'Chilla-i-Kalan', which began on December 21 last year, will end on January 30, followed by 'Chilla Khurd' and 'Chillai Bachha'.

Andamans to be developed as hub of India's Blue Economy: Dr Jitendra

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRI VIJAYA PURAM: Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Saturday said the Andaman and Nicobar Islands will be developed as a hub of India's Blue Economy.

The Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology and Earth Sciences said India's future economic value addition will increasingly come from untapped marine resources as the country moves rapidly towards becoming one of the world's top economies.

He highlighted the government's strong focus on blue economy reflects Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision that India cannot develop in isolation by focusing only on the mainland while leaving behind island territories and coastal regions.

Addressing scientists and officials while on a visit to Atal Centre for Ocean Science and Technology for Islands (ACOSTI) to launch and review key marine technology initiatives aimed at strengthening the blue economy and livelihoods in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, he said the deep ocean mission will play a decisive role in India's journey towards becoming a developed nation by 2047, as

vast marine resources remain largely underexplored despite the country's long coastline.

Singh recalled that Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the Deep Ocean Mission from the ramparts of the Red Fort on Independence Day in both 2023 and 2024, underlining its strategic importance.

The blue economy may not be visible to people in the northern parts of the country, but it makes one of the largest contributions to the national economy," the minister said.

He said India, which has rapidly climbed global economic rankings, must now focus on value addition from resources that have not been fully explored. "To move from the fourth-largest economy to the top, we must tap areas like the deep sea and marine biodiversity," he said.

During the visit, he reviewed and announced initiatives, including open sea cage culture demonstrations for marine fishermen and seaweed cultivation, aimed at boosting livelihoods and promoting sustainable marine practices. He said technology transfer for these projects has already been completed.

"Every citizen, industry and institution has a role in nation-building," the minister said.

Highlighting the role of biotechnology in blue economy, Singh said India's dedicated biotechnology policy, Bio-E3 - Biotechnology for economy, environment and employment, supports innovations such as biodegradable alternatives to plastic derived from marine resources.

"Biodegradable marine-based products fulfil all three objectives: they generate jobs, protect the environment and build a new bio-economy," he said, adding that the Department of Biotechnology and the Ministry of Earth Sciences are working together on such projects.

The union minister said Andaman and Nicobar Islands offer unique marine species and ecological conditions that cannot be replicated elsewhere, making the region ideal for advanced marine research. He also announced the launch of a coral fish development project, aimed at both domestic consumption and export markets.

DIG UR Range decorate newly promoted selection grade constables



■ STATE TIMES NEWS

UDHAMPUR: DIG Udhampur-Reasi Range Ms. Sarah Rizvi, IPS, along with SSP Udhampur Sh. Amod Ashok Nagpure, decorated newly promoted Selection Grade Constables (SGCs) of J&K Police Udhampur during a pipping ceremony held at District Police Lines

(DPL), Udhampur. A total of 18 police personnel were promoted from the rank of Constable to Selection Grade Constable and were formally decorated with their new ranks during the ceremony. The pipping ceremony was attended by senior officers and officials of District Police Udhampur.

While congratulating the promoted officials and their families, DIG U-R Range and SSP Udhampur expressed confidence that the promoted personnel will continue to discharge their duties with enhanced responsibility, dedication, discipline and professionalism in the service of the people.

Treaties should be driven by national interest, not pressure from foreign Govts or corporations: SC

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Treaties should be driven by national interest, not pressure from foreign governments or corporations, the Supreme Court has said while asserting that India must safeguard its tax sovereignty, ensure fairness, and prevent abuse while entering into international tax pacts.

The observations by Justice JB Pardiwala came while a judgment in which the apex court upheld the decision of the domestic revenue authorities that capital gains arising from a US-based investor firm Tiger Global's exit from Flipkart in 2018 are taxable in India.

Justice Pardiwala wrote a separate but concurring opinion, spelling out broader principles on how India should approach international tax treaties.

"Tax treaties, international agreements, protocols and safeguards should be very engaging, transparent and capable of periodic reviews with the power to renegotiate with strong exit clauses to avoid unfair outcomes, safeguarding the nation's strategic and security, preventing erosion of tax base and loss or weakening of democratic control and

introducing explicit carve outs safeguarding the sovereign's right of taxation.

"Treaties should be driven by national interest, not pressure from foreign governments or corporations," Justice Pardiwala said.

The top court laid down detailed safeguards to ensure that tax treaties protect the country's economic sovereignty, revenue base and public interest.

Justice Pardiwala suggested a comprehensive set of safeguards that India should adopt while negotiating or renewing international tax treaties, including incorporating limitation of benefits clauses to prevent treaty shopping by shell companies, allowing domestic anti-avoidance laws such as the General Anti-Avoidance Rule.

He said treaties should reflect broader economic and public interest, not just bureaucratic or diplomatic goals.

Flipkart Global exited from Flipkart in 2018, when Walmart Inc. acquired a controlling stake in the Indian e-commerce company. Tiger Global approached the Income Tax Department in February 2019 for an Advance Authority Ruling to adjudicate on the matter.