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confidence and leadership that will spur rise of Gen Z athletes in global tournaments, he further said.

The Lieutenant Governor called upon the athletes to act as brand ambassadors for 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' and share the warm hospitality and priceless culture of Diu with their respective regions.

"Khelo India Beach Games are not just about winning medals; they are a platform to project India's 'soft power' and showcase our coastal tourism potential to the world," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He said the Beach Games also remind us of our shared responsibility towards environmental sustainability and the preservation of our coastal ecosystems.

"Sports unite people beyond caste, religion, and region. Let us make these games a success through the power of unity and work towards making India a world-class sporting power," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor congratulated Shri Praful Patel, Administrator, UT of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, and the people of the Union Territory for successfully hosting the India's first-ever multi-sport Beach Games in 2024 and the inaugural edition of the Khelo India Beach Games in 2025. He also extended his best wishes to all the athletes.

The 2026 edition follows the historic success of the inaugural games. Over the next five days, more than 1,300 athletes from 31 states and UTs will be participating in eight disciplines (6 competitive and 2 demonstration) including Beach Soccer, Beach Volleyball, Beach Sepak Takraw, Beach Kabaddi, Beach Pencak Silat, & Open water Swimming as Competitive and Beach Mallakhamb & Beach Tug of war as Demonstration.

Eminent sports personalities, senior officials, prominent citizens from different walks of life, sports enthusiasts and youth in large number attended the opening ceremony.

PRAGATI driving timely...

years. However, after being taken up under PRAGATI for close monitoring, the project gained substantial momentum due to enhanced inter-departmental coordination and direct intervention at the highest level by the Prime Minister himself.

He informed that all projects with an outlay of more than Rs 500 Cr are monitored by the Prime Minister's Group (PMG) headed by the Cabinet Secretary, while the most critical among them are directly reviewed by the Prime Minister through PRAGATI meetings.

Elaborating further, the Chief Secretary stated that the PMG is currently monitoring 61 projects in Jammu & Kashmir, with a cumulative investment of over Rs 4.12 lakh crore, spanning key sectors such as connectivity, energy, and social infrastructure. Out of these, 15 projects with an outlay of Rs 69,000 Cr have already been completed, while the remaining projects are at various stages of execution.

He specifically pointed out that 15 major projects in J&K are under direct monitoring of the Prime Minister through the PRAGATI platform, enabling swift resolution of issues related to land acquisition, financial and physical constraints, and ensuring timely and fair compensation to affected families.

Highlighting the high effectiveness of the mechanism, the Chief Secretary revealed that out of 59 issues pertaining to J&K taken up in earlier PRAGATI meetings, 57 have already been resolved on merit, placing the Union Territory among the top performers nationally, supplemented by robust district-level follow-up by the administration.

On the tangible outcomes achieved, he said that six high-impact projects worth approximately Rs 53,000 Cr have been completed in Jammu & Kashmir under PRAGATI monitoring. These include the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link, Kishanganga Hydroelectric Project along with its transmission line, AIIMS Jammu, the challenging Banihal stretch of NH-44, and the Alsteng-Kargil-Khaltsel-Leh transmission line.

He further informed that nine additional projects being monitored under PRAGATI are progressing at a satisfactory pace. These include the Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway Corridor, AIIMS Awantipora, Pakul Dul Hydroelectric Project, 4G mobile connectivity under USOF, and several other energy and connectivity projects across different parts of the UT.

Concluding the briefing, the Chief Secretary reaffirmed the government's commitment to fully implement the directions issued through the PRAGATI mechanism at

the Union Territory level. He emphasized that by leveraging this platform, J&K is poised to sustain the current momentum, ensuring that all developmental initiatives are outcome-oriented and completed within approved deadlines for each of them.

Bhagwat discusses Hindu...

said, "Actually, discussions at that level haven't taken place yet."

He said that on Saturday morning, the RSS chief will visit the Vrindavan Chandrodaya Temple (undergoing construction), which is claimed to be the world's tallest at 700 feet once completed.

The next day, he will open a celebration event of the 100th year of the arrival of Sant Sudama Das Ji in Vrindavan.

According to the administrators of Sudama Kuti Ashram, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has also been invited to the event.

Union Power Minister...

Project. He also visited the Ratle Hydroelectric Project on reaching Kishtwar, where he laid the foundation stone for dam concreting works and encouraged the project team to complete works in an effective and time-bound manner.

In a post on X in Hindi, Lal said he inspected the Pakal Dul Power Station on the second day of his Jammu and Kashmir tour.

"During the inspection, an in-depth observation and detailed review of the power station's operational status, safety arrangements, production capacity, and technical activities was carried out in the company of senior officials.

"As one of the ambitious energy infrastructure projects in the region, the Pakal Dul Hydroelectric Project will play an important role in the all-round development of Jammu and Kashmir in the times to come," the minister said.

Earlier in the day, officials said the minister visited and inspected the Dul Hasti Power Station.

Lal, along with Pankaj Agarwal, Secretary (Power), undertook a sapling plantation drive at the Dul Hasti Bhawan premises, they added.

Man held for...

with a case under sections 8/20 of the NDPS Act, registered at Police Station Zainapora," he said.

During the course of investigation, Rs 1.50 lakh has been recovered so far from the accused. The accused has been taken into custody, and efforts are underway to recover the remaining amount, the spokesman said.

LG Ladakh meets...

highlighted efforts being made to strengthen road and air connectivity, improve public infrastructure, and ensure the timely delivery of essential services in the geographically challenging and strategically significant region.

Kavinder Gupta also apprised the Prime Minister of initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable tourism, preserving Ladakh's unique cultural and ecological heritage, and creating livelihood opportunities for local youth. Issues related to education, healthcare facilities in remote and border areas, and the implementation of Central Government schemes were also discussed in detail.

The Lt Governor emphasised the administration's focus on inclusive growth, good governance, and people-centric development, particularly in far-flung areas that face harsh climatic conditions.

He shared feedback from the grassroots regarding public aspirations and developmental needs, underlining the importance of continued Central support for accelerated progress in the Union Territory.

The Prime Minister appreciated the efforts being made for inclusive growth in Ladakh and reiterated the Centre's continued support for the region's all-round development and the welfare of its people.

Six barrels of...

vehicle along with the barrels," the police spokesman said.

He said a case under relevant sections has been registered at Litter police station, and investigation has been taken up.

"Efforts are underway to trace the source of the fuel, its intended destination, and to identify the involvement of other persons, if any," he added.

J&K Bank organizes...

interactive session with Private Enterprises (PEs), at its corporate headquarters, to seek first-hand feedback and enhance coordination among key stakeholders.

Pertinently, the Private Enterprises (PEs) are responsible for providing plantation material and carrying out high-density plantations on the ground.

The session was chaired by General Manager (Retail, Agriculture & MSME) Rakesh Magotra and was attended by Deputy General Manager Aneet Kanwal Singh, representatives of Private Enterprises and senior officers of the Bank. Cluster Heads from across the region joined the deliberations through video conferencing, ensuring wider participation and alignment at the field level.

The interactive meet was aimed at streamlining communication between the Bank's Cluster Offices and Private Enterprises to ensure smooth and effective implementation of the High Density Plantation Scheme on the ground. Emphasising the importance of stakeholder collaboration, the Bank designated two officers as Nodal Officers for the scheme, who will act as single-point contacts to inform, guide, clarify and handhold the Private Enterprises and farmers during various stages of implementation.

The Bank also decided to organise joint awareness and facilitation camps along with the PE's at cluster and zonal levels to sensitise farmers about the significant benefits of the High Density Plantation Scheme and to promote wider adoption of the initiative.

Addressing the participants, GM Rakesh Magotra said, "Our ultimate goal is the growth of the economy, and J&K Bank sees immense potential in the High Density Plantation Scheme. If implemented in its true spirit, Kashmir can even emerge as one of the largest apple-producing regions in the world."

He further emphasised the need for collective efforts, stating, "It is important for all stakeholders to work in tandem to expedite high density plantations on the ground and bring the desired transformation. We believe in a multi-stakeholder approach and welcome inputs and feedback from all concerned to further strengthen the scheme."

Highlighting the critical role of Private Enterprises, he added, "Private Enterprises are the important stakeholders and key drivers of the High Density Plantation initiative, as they are working tirelessly at the grassroots level to make the scheme a success." Assuring them of the Bank's continued support, he reaffirmed the Bank's commitment to facilitate smooth execution of the scheme.

During the session, GM Rakesh Magotra gave a patient hearing to the concerns and suggestions raised by the Private Enterprises and assured them that the feedback would be duly considered to make the implementation of the High Density Plantation Scheme more efficient, farmer-friendly and impactful.

Earlier, while initiating the deliberations DGM Aneet Kanwal Singh said, "The High Density Plantation Scheme is a transformative initiative for J&K's horticulture sector, and close coordination with Private Enterprises is vital to translate its objectives into tangible outcomes on the ground."

The Private Enterprises appreciated the Bank's proactive initiative and expressed their willingness to work in close coordination with the Bank's clusters and branches for successful implementation of the scheme.

Prakash Purab of...

also thanked the media, including IKBani, Hond Digital Media, Aapsi Saanjh, Paigam TV, JK Bulletin for their coverage of the event.

S. Surjit Singh, Secretary, who coordinated the stage proceedings, stated that the celebration not only honoured the spiritual legacy of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji but also addressed contemporary Sikh concerns, fostering unity and devotion among the Sangat. He expressed gratitude to the devotees and Sevadars for their invaluable contributions, emphasizing the collective effort behind the successful function.

Among others present on the occasion were DGPC members including S. Ranvir Singh (Joint Secretary), S. Harjit Singh, S. Jagpal Singh (Cashier), S. Tejinder Singh, S. Avtar Singh, and several prominent personalities such as Vikram Randhawa (MLA), S. Harbans Singh (Ex-Minister), Satish Sharma (Transport Minister), Ajay Sadotra, Rattan Lal Gupta (Provincial President, NC), Jatinder Singh Lucky, S. Tejinder Singh Aman, S. Gurmit Singh Jimmy, Rakesh Singh Raikka, S. Gurjit Singh Honey, Varinder Singh Sonu (Spokesperson, PDP), S. Surinder Singh Shingari, S. Narinder Singh Khalsa (President, Shiromani Akali Dal - Amritsar), S. Ranjeet Singh (President, Tankers Union), R.K. Kalsotra (President, DOM), and Sh. Ramesh Kumar (Retd. ADDC), among others.

Sr DCM Jammu...

passenger services in the Jammu division, which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in January last year, the northern railway's Jammu Division said in a statement.

Coldest night of year in Himachal's Tabo, Kashmir's Gulmarg resort; snowfall predicted

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Tabo in the Lahaul and Spiti district of Himachal Pradesh and the Gulmarg tourist resort in Jammu and Kashmir witnessed the coldest night of the year with the temperatures at both places closer to 10 degrees below freezing point, officials said on Monday.

While cold wave conditions gripped most parts of Himachal Pradesh, Koksar received 2 cm of fresh snowfall; Kalpa and Gondla too saw traces of snow.

While no official data is available for the remote tribal belts and inaccessible high-altitude terrains of the hilly state, minimum temperatures are presumed to be at least 10-12 degrees below freezing point, resulting in the freezing of natural water sources like lakes, springs, and rivulets and tributaries of snow-fed rivers.

However, the weather remained dry in the rest of

the state. Snowfall at higher altitudes of Lahaul and Spiti has been reported, while some parts of Pangi in Chamba district are under a thin blanket of snow since the New Year.

The local meteorological station has predicted light rain or snowfall at isolated areas in the higher hills on January 6 and issued a yellow alert for dense fog at isolated places in Solan, Sirmaur and Kangra districts on January 6 and 7, and in Bilaspur, Hamirpur and Mandi districts from January 6-9.

Thick ground frost occurred at several places in lower and mid hills, making the roads slippery during the morning hours.

In Kashmir, the popular ski resort in north Kashmir's Baramulla district recorded a minimum temperature of minus 8.8 degrees Celsius after receiving another spell of snowfall on Sunday, the officials said.

They said the minimum

temperature in Gulmarg for the past two nights was minus 6.5 degrees Celsius. In Srinagar, the minimum temperature dipped slightly to minus 3.6 degrees Celsius on Sunday night, compared to minus 3.2 degrees Celsius on Saturday night.

The tourist resort of Pahalgam in south Kashmir recorded a low of minus 4.8 degrees Celsius.

The region is currently in the midst of 'Chilla-e-Kalan', the 40-day period of extreme cold, during which night temperatures often drop several degrees below the freezing point.

During this period, the chances of snowfall are most frequent and maximum as well. However, the plains of the valley have not received any snowfall so far this season.

The India Meteorological Department forecast light rains or snow at isolated places in the high-reaches of north and central Kashmir on January 5 and 6.

Meanwhile, in the national capital, the maximum temperature on Monday settled at 18.5 degrees Celsius, which was 0.8 notch below normal, while the minimum temperature was recorded at 6.6 degrees Celsius, 0.3 notch below the seasonal average.

The minimum temperature on Tuesday is expected to hover around 7 degrees Celsius, while the maximum may settle near 19 degrees Celsius, with moderate fog likely during the morning hours in Delhi.

"There was no significant fog recorded on Monday; however, dense fog may occur at isolated places and moderate fog at several places over the next two days. Minimum temperatures are likely to fall after the western disturbance moves away and may range between six and eight degrees Celsius over the next five days," an IMD official said.

Biting cold weather conditions also prevailed at

many places in Haryana and Punjab, with Narnaul recording at 3 degrees Celsius.

Narnaul in Haryana was the coldest place in the state.

At 4.5 degrees Celsius each, Bathinda and Faridkot in Punjab also reeled under intense cold, recording similar minimum temperatures.

Amritsar recorded a low of 10.2 degrees, Ludhiana 8 degrees, Patiala 7 degrees, while Gurdaspur recorded a minimum of 7.8 degrees Celsius, according to the India Meteorological Department.

In Haryana, Hisar reeled under intense cold, recording a low of 3.6 degrees Celsius.

Ambala recorded a low of 9.2 degrees, Rohtak 7.6 degrees, Bhiwani 4.8 degrees, while Karnal registered a low of 7.2 degrees Celsius.

According to the IMD, Chandigarh, the common capital of the two states, recorded a minimum temperature of 7.8 degrees Celsius.

US allies, adversaries use UN meeting to blast Venezuela intervention as America defends action

■ AGENCY

UNITED NATIONS: The UN Security Council held an emergency meeting Monday after an audacious US military operation in Venezuela over the weekend to capture leader Nicolas Maduro, with the United Nations' top official warning that America may have violated international law.

Before the UN's most powerful body, both allies and adversaries blasted President Donald Trump's intervention and him signalling the possibility of expanding military action to countries like Colombia and Mexico over drug trafficking accusations. He also reupped his threat to take over the Danish territory of Greenland for the sake of US security interests.

In a statement, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said he is "deeply concerned that rules of international law have not been respected with regard to the 3 January military action." He added that the "grave"

action by the US could set a precedent for how future relations between nations. Denmark, a fellow member of NATO with jurisdiction over the vast mineral-rich island of Greenland, echoed Guterres' concerns, saying the "inviolability of borders is not up for negotiation."

"No state should seek to influence political outcomes in Venezuela through the use of threat of force or through other means inconsistent with international law," said Christina Markus Lassen, Danish ambassador to the UN.

Colombian Ambassador Leonor Zalabata said the raid was reminiscent of "the worst interference in our area in the past."

"Democracy cannot be defended or promoted through violence and coercion, and it cannot be superseded, either, by economic interests," Zalabata said.

Russia's ambassador to the UN went further. Vasily Nebenzya called the US

intervention in Venezuela and capture of Maduro is "a turn back to the era of lawlessness" by America.

"We cannot allow the United States to proclaim itself as some kind of a supreme judge, which alone bears the right to invade any country, to label culprits, to hand down and to enforce punishments irrespective of notions of international law, sovereignty and nonintervention," he said.

But US envoy Mike Waltz defended the action as a justified and "surgical law enforcement operation," calling out the 15-member council for criticising the targeting of Maduro.

"If the United Nations in this body confers legitimacy on an illegitimate narco-terrorist with the same treatment in this charter of a democratically elected president or head of state, what kind of organisation is this?" said Waltz, who is Trump's former national security adviser.

Israel strikes Hezbollah, Hamas targets in Lebanon ahead of key disarmament meeting

■ AGENCY

BEIRUT: Israel's air force struck areas in southern and eastern Lebanon on Monday, saying they are home to infrastructure for the militant groups Hezbollah and Hamas.

The strikes came a few days before Lebanon's army commander is scheduled to brief the government on its mission of disarming Hezbollah in areas along the border with Israel.

The strikes took place nearly two hours after Israel's military Arabic language spokesman Avichay Adraee posted warnings on X that the military would strike targets for Hezbollah and the Palestinian Hamas groups in two villages in the eastern Bekaa Valley and two

others in southern Lebanon.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency said a home struck in the village of Manara in the Bekaa Valley belonged to Sharhabil al-Sayed, a Hamas military commander who was killed in an Israeli drone strike in May 2024.

The Lebanese army last year began the disarmament process of Palestinian groups while the government has said that by the end of 2025 all the areas close to the border with Israel - known as the south Litani area - will be clear of Hezbollah's armed presence.

The Lebanese government is scheduled to discuss Hezbollah's disarmament during a meeting

Thursday that will be attended by army commander Gen. Rudolph Haikal.

Monday's airstrikes were in villages north of the Litani river and far from the border with Israel.

The disarmament of Hezbollah and other Palestinian groups by the Lebanese government came after a 14-month war

between Israel and Hezbollah in which much of the political and military leadership of the Iran-backed group was killed.

The latest Israel-Hezbollah war began October 8, 2023, a day after Hamas attacked southern Israel, when Hezbollah fired rockets into Israel in solidarity with Hamas.

Committee formed to scrutinise U-14 Cricket League Selections

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Directorate of Youth Services and Sports, Jammu and Kashmir, has constituted a five-member committee to scrutinise score sheets and related records of the Inter-District UT-level Under-14 Cricket League matches, which led to the selection of the team for participation in the 69th National School Games. The committee has been tasked with verifying whether the selection process was carried out as per the prescribed norms and guidelines. It will examine all relevant documents and submit its report by January 5, 2026.