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CONSOLIDATION

JAMMU & KASHMIR

**JANUARY
2025**

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15th National Voters' Day

Why in News?

On the eve of the **15th National Voters' Day**, the Chief Secretary administered an oath to officers and officials, including the Administrative Secretaries of the **Union Territory**, during a ceremony held at the Civil Secretariat in **Srinagar**.

Key Points

➤ Pledge by Participants:

- Participants **pledged their commitment to democracy**, vowing to ensure independent, impartial, and peaceful elections.
- They also **took an oath to cast their votes fearlessly**, without bias based on religion, community, or language.

Election Commission of India (ECI)

About

- **Autonomous Constitutional Authority** - Administers Union/state election
 - LS, RS, State LA, the offices of the President and VP
- Estd - **25th Jan 1950** (National Voters' Day)

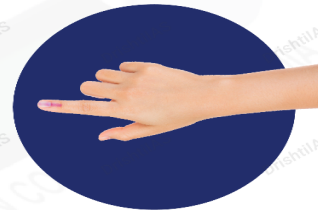


Constitutional Provisions

Part XV - Article 324 to 329

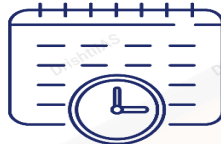
Structure

- 1 Chief Election Commissioner and 2 Election Commissioners **appointed by President**
- **Tenure- 6 years, or up to the age of 65 years**, whichever is earlier
- Retiring ECs – **eligible for further appointment by the govt.**
- **Removal of CEC-** Resolution on the **ground of proven misbehaviour or incapacity**, with majority of 2/3rd members present and voting, supported by more than 50% of the total strength of the house



Major Roles and Responsibilities

- Determining Electoral Constituencies
- Preparing/Revising electoral rolls
- Notifying the schedules and dates of elections
- **Registering political parties and granting them the status of national or state parties**
- Issuing the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) for political parties
- Advising the President on **matters concerning the disqualification of MPs**



Challenges

- Truncated Tenure of CEC
- Executive Influence in Appointments
- Dependence on Centre for Finance
- Lack of Independent Staff



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Note:

- **Theme for the Year:**
 - The theme for 2025 is “Nothing Like Voting, I Vote for Sure”.
 - It aims to encourage greater voter participation, particularly among the youth.
- **Historical Context:**
 - **National Voters’ Day** was first observed in 2011 to promote youth involvement in the electoral process.
 - The year 2025 marks the **75th anniversary of the Election Commission of India.**
 - The primary focus is on **increasing voter enrolment**, especially targeting youngsters who have recently turned 18 and are now eligible to vote.

Chinar Trees

Why in News?

The J&K Forest Department, in partnership with the J&K Forest Research Institute (JKFI), has introduced a unique initiative by assigning Tree Aadhaar numbers to thousands of Chinar trees throughout the region to conserve the iconic Chinar trees of Jammu and Kashmir.

Key Points

- **The Chinar Tree’s Heritage Significance:**
 - The Chinar tree, also known locally as *boonyi*, is a symbol of Jammu and Kashmir’s cultural and natural heritage.
 - These majestic deciduous trees are characterized by their height (up to 30 meters) and vibrant golden-red leaves during winter.
 - The number of Chinar trees has significantly decreased in recent decades.
- **The Tree Aadhaar Project:**
 - Under this project, over 28,560 Chinar trees have been geo-tagged to create a comprehensive database.
 - The trees are assigned unique Tree Aadhaar numbers, and a QR code attached to a digital plate allows anyone to scan and access critical details, including the tree’s location, height, girth, canopy, health status, ecological threats, and pest presence.

- **Conservation Efforts:**
 - The initiative is part of a larger effort to conserve these trees, whose numbers have been dwindling due to various factors.
 - A total of 28,000 trees have been geo-tagged and assigned their Tree Aadhaar IDs between 2021 and 2023.
- **Further Plans:**
 - In addition to this innovative documentation, the J&K Forest Department plans to create a Chinar Atlas, a comprehensive catalog of all Chinar trees across the region.
 - The initiative also focuses on geo-tagging trees in restricted areas, ensuring even the most remote trees are included in the conservation efforts.

Heightened Security in Jammu and Kashmir

Why in News?

Security agencies have intensified measures in Jammu ahead of Republic Day celebrations.

- The security wing of the Jammu and Kashmir Police has taken charge of the Maulana Azad Stadium, where Lieutenant Governor will preside over the Republic Day function, with Chief Minister of the state attending as the chief guest.

Key Points

- **Vigilance and Checks:**
 - Station House Officers (SHOs) and Sub-Divisional Officers (SDOs) have been instructed to conduct area checks and maintain 24/7 vigilance.
 - Vehicle and pedestrian checks have been intensified across Jammu, especially in border regions.
 - ‘Nakas’ and Mobile Vehicle Checkpoints (MVCPs) have been established at key intersections and entry/exit points.
- **Security Along Borders:**
 - Security forces, including the Army, Border Security Force (BSF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), police, and Village Defence Guards (VDGs), have heightened vigilance along the International Border (IB), Line of Control (LoC), and sensitive areas.

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Note:

Republic Day

- **About:**
 - Republic Day commemorates the adoption of the Constitution of India on 26th January 1950, and the country's transition to a republic which came into effect on 26th January 1950.
 - The constitution was adopted by **the Constituent Assembly of India on 26th November 1949** and came into effect on 26th January 1950.
 - The Constitution of India repealed the **Indian Independence Act 1947 and Government of India Act 1935** when it became effective on 26th January 1950. India ceased to be a dominion of the British Crown and became a **sovereign, democratic republic with a constitution**.
- **History:**
 - Declaration of Poorna Swaraj:
 - The **Lahore Session of the INC in December 1929** passed the historic **"Poorna Swaraj" resolution**, calling for total **self-rule/sovereignty and complete independence from British rule**.
 - The Declaration of Independence was officially promulgated on 26th January 1930, and the Congress urged Indians to celebrate **"independence" on that day**.
 - Republic Day in Post-Independence India:
 - From 1930 to 1947, **26th January was celebrated as "Independence Day" or "Poorna Swaraj Day."**
 - India gained independence on **15th August 1947**, leading to a **reevaluation of the significance of Republic Day**.
 - The selection of **26th January for the promulgation of India's new constitution** was ideal due to its existing nationalist significance and alignment with the **"Poorna Swaraj" declaration**.

Key Points

- **Overview of PM SVANidhi Scheme:**
 - PM SVANidhi is a **micro-credit initiative** launched by **the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** under **the Atma Nirbhar Bharat program**.
 - The scheme offers working capital loans, encourages regular repayments, and promotes digital transactions to improve the livelihoods of street vendors.
 - The **vendors are urged to fully utilize the scheme to enhance their income and economic stability**.
- **Guidelines for Street Vendors:**
 - Vendors were advised to **avoid placing carts on footpaths or roads to prevent inconvenience to pedestrians and reduce traffic congestion**.
 - They are urged to **use designated vending zones within municipal jurisdiction** for smoother traffic flow and public convenience.

Street Vendor

- Any person engaged in vending of articles, goods, wares, food items or merchandise of daily use or offering services to the public in a street, footpath, pavement etc., from a temporary built up structure or by moving from place to place.
- The goods supplied by them include vegetables, fruits, ready-to-eat street food, tea, pakodas, breads, eggs, textile, apparel, artisan products, books/ stationery etc. and the services include barber shops, cobblers, pan shops, laundry services etc.
- Around 49.48 lakh street vendors have been identified in India.
 - **Uttar Pradesh has the maximum** at 8.49 lakh, followed by Madhya Pradesh at 7.04 lakh.
 - Delhi has only 72,457 street vendors.
 - **No street vendor** has been identified in Sikkim.

PM SVANidhi Plates Distributed to Street Vendors

Why in News?

Recently, the **Commissioner of Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC)**, distributed **Dogri-language PM SVANidhi plates** to street vendors of Jammu and Kashmir.

Anji Khad Bridge

Why in News?

Recently, **Indian Railways** completed **the Anji Khad Bridge**, India's first **cable-stayed rail bridge**, located in the Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir.

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Note:

- It is a key component of the **Udampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) Project**, designed to enhance regional connectivity and drive economic growth.

Key Points

- **About the Bridge:**
 - The bridge spans **725.5 meters** with a **331-meter-high pylon**, built to withstand winds up to **213 km/h** and support trains traveling at **100 km/h**.
 - It utilizes **96 cables** of varying lengths (82 to 295 meters) and an **innovative hybrid foundation** to stabilize the mountain slopes.
 - It used **DOKA Jump Form Shuttering, Pump Concreting, and a Tower Crane Technique** to improve efficiency, reducing construction time by **30%**.
 - The DOKA Jump Form Shuttering Technique is used for **constructing vertical concrete structures** like high-rises, bridges, and towers.
 - The bridge will enhance **tourism**, **boost local economic growth**, and **improve transportation in the region**.
- **Challenging Terrain:**
 - The **Himalayan location** posed challenges due to complex geology, **seismic activity**, and fragile features like faults, folds, and thrusts.
 - **IIT Roorkee** and **IIT Delhi** conducted site-specific studies to assess conditions and ensure the feasibility of construction.

Promoting Kashmir's Rich Cultural Heritage

Why in News?

The Department of Handicrafts and Handloom, Kashmir, distributed **10 Kani looms** and **25 sets of specialized Namdah (traditional Kashmiri felted carpet)** tools to local artisans free of cost.

Key Points

- **Government's Strategic Initiative:**
 - The initiative is part of **ongoing efforts to sustain Kashmir's centuries-old craft traditions**.

- It ensures artisans have **access to essential resources** while opening **opportunities to expand into global markets**.

Benefits for Artisans:

- The distribution of Kani looms and Namdah tool kits **aims to improve artisans' craftsmanship quality and efficiency**.
- It empowers artisans to create high-quality traditional products and boosts their competitiveness.

Namdah

Origin and Introduction:

- Namdah Art **began in the 16th century** when **Mughal Emperor Akbar** desired **protective coverings** for his horses.
- It was **introduced to Kashmir** by Sufi saint **Shah-e-Hamdan**.

Creation and Materials:

- Namdah is a type of traditional **Kashmiri felted carpet** made using **sheep wool**.
- The wool is compressed and matted together; a process known as **felting**, giving it a distinct texture.

Manufacturing Process:

- Namdah carpets are typically created by layering multiple wool layers on top of each other.
- Each layer is sprinkled with water and pressed using a tool called a **'pinjra' (woven willow wicker)**.
- The layers are compressed to create a solid and durable carpet.

PM to Inaugurate Z-Morh Tunnel

Why in News?

The Prime Minister is going to **inaugurate the Z-Morh tunnel** on **13th January 2025**, marking the **first major milestone** in establishing a year-round **strategic corridor** between Kashmir and Ladakh.

Key Points

- **Strategic Importance of the Z-Morh Tunnel:**
 - Year-Round Access:

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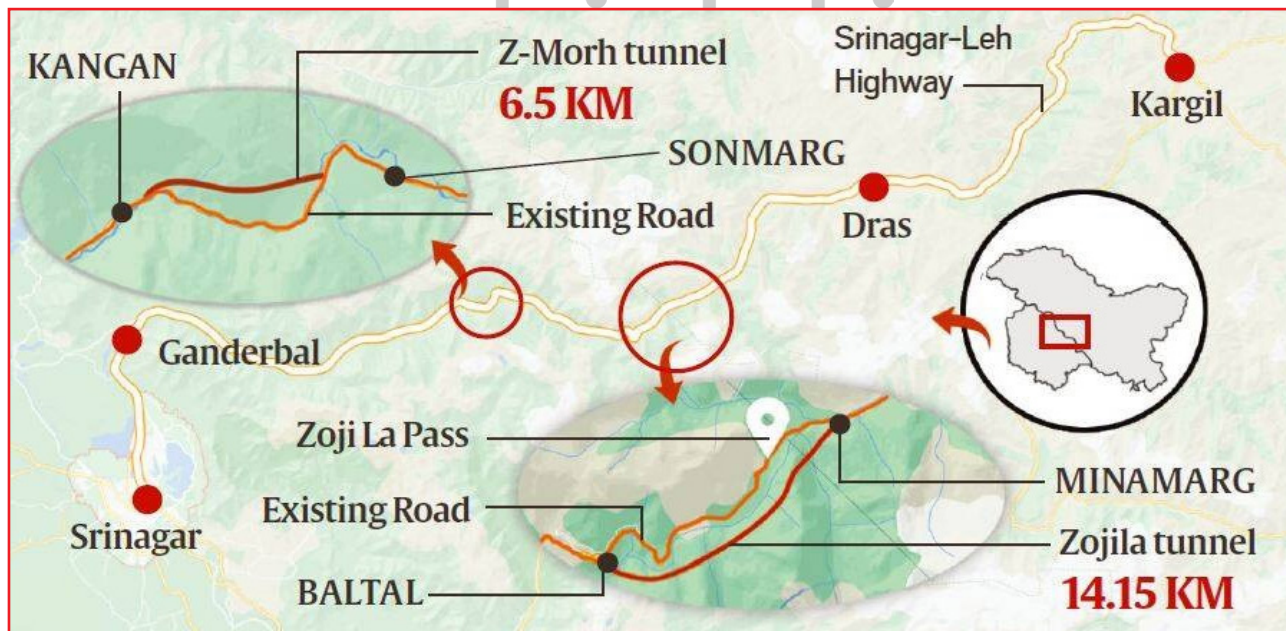


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Note:

- The Z-Morh tunnel, located in **Ganderbal district of central Kashmir**, is crucial for keeping Sonamarg open to tourists throughout the year.
 - It addresses the previous issue where **snowfall and avalanches** would block access to the tourist spot in winters.
- **Tunnel Features:**
- The Z-Morh tunnel, located **under the Thajiwas Glacier**, **bypasses** areas prone to **landslides** and **avalanches**.
 - An **intelligent traffic management system** will help regulate vehicle flow and will also facilitate adventure tourism at Thajiwas Glacier and **the Sindh River**.
- **Cultural and Tourism Boost:**
- The tunnel was praised as a **major infrastructure asset for central Kashmir**, with significant potential to **boost winter tourism** in the region.
- **Details of the Tunnel Project:**
- Cost and Length:
 - The Z-Morh tunnel, built at a cost of Rs 2,680 crore, is 6.5 km long and features a two-lane passage.
 - It includes a 10.8-meter main tunnel, a modified horseshoe-shaped escape tunnel, and several culverts.
 - Connectivity:
 - The Z-Morh tunnel is part of the larger strategic route to Ladakh, linking to the Zojila tunnel.
 - **The Zojila tunnel**, Asia's longest, will reduce travel time between Ganderbal and Kargil from three hours to just 20 minutes.
- **Geopolitical and Strategic Significance:**
- The Zojila and Z-Morh tunnels are **vital for the movement of goods and personnel**, especially for security forces stationed in Ladakh.
 - **The Zojila Pass** is currently the **only road linking Kashmir to Ladakh** but is often closed during the winter months due to heavy snow.
 - Both tunnels are located in **seismic Zone IV**, necessitating the implementation of robust safety measures to prevent structural damage.



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Note:

Vande Bharat for Katra-Srinagar Route

Why in News?

Recently, the **Railway Board** unveiled a **Vande Bharat Express train**, specially designed to operate seamlessly in the challenging winter conditions of Jammu & Kashmir, for the upcoming **Katra-Srinagar rail route**.

Key Points

- **Climate-Specific Features:**
 - The Vande Bharat Express, stationed at Shakurbasti coaching depot in New Delhi, has been **specially designed for Jammu & Kashmir's extreme winter conditions**.
 - It features **advanced heating systems** to prevent the freezing of water and bio-toilet tanks, ensure the vacuum system and laboratories remain warm, and **optimize air-brake system** functionality in sub-zero temperatures.
- **Passenger Amenities:**
 - The train also **includes all amenities** found in existing Vande Bharat Express trains, such as fully air-conditioned coaches, automatic plug doors, and mobile charging sockets.
- **Symbol of Connectivity:**
 - The train connects the Kashmir Valley more effectively to the national railway network, symbolizing India's commitment to bridging geographical and economic gaps.

Vande Bharat Trains

- It is an **indigenously designed and manufactured semi high speed**, self-propelled train that is touted as the next major leap for the Indian Railways in terms of speed and passenger convenience since the introduction of Rajdhani trains.
- The first Vande Bharat was **manufactured by the Integral Coach Factory (ICF), Chennai** as part of the **'Make in India' programme**, at a cost of about Rs. 100 crore.
- The Vande Bharat was **India's first attempt at adaptation of the train set technology** compared with conventional systems of passenger coaches hauled by separate locomotives.

- The train set configuration, though complex, is faster, easier to maintain, consumes less energy, and has greater flexibility in train operation.

About Indian Railways

- It was **established in 1853** and is **one of the largest railway networks globally**.
- The **first train in India** ran over a distance of 21 miles, connecting **Bombay and Thane**.
- India has the **3rd largest metro-rail network** in the world after **China and the US**. By 2050, India is projected to account for **40% of the global rail activity**.

Technology to Combat Cyber Threats Across Border

Why in News?

Recently, **Lieutenant Governor (LG)** of Jammu and Kashmir urged police officials to **adopt innovative tools** to strengthen their capabilities in **addressing cross-border cyber threats**.

Key Points

- **Addressing Disinformation and Modern Security Challenges:**
 - Speaking at the passing-out parade of **Probationer Deputy Superintendents of Police (DSPs)** at the **Police Academy in Udhampur**, the Lieutenant Governor stressed the **need to counter disinformation campaigns originating from across the border**, facilitated by advanced technology.
 - Highlighting the impact of modern tools like **artificial intelligence**, he noted that **deep fakes and disinformation are significant threats** to security.
 - He urged officers to **adopt technological tools for maintaining law and order**, staying vigilant, and responding swiftly.
 - He also emphasized the **importance of anticipating and analyzing changes in criminal behavior** to stay ahead.

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Note:

➤ Enhancing Coordination and Tackling Emerging Threats:

- The LG reaffirmed the **commitment to a terror-free and fear-free Jammu and Kashmir**, highlighting improved coordination between police and security agencies to **dismantle terrorist and separatist networks**.
- He identified **narco-terrorism, weaponization of social media, and disinformation campaigns as major internal security threats**, urging officers to lead **efforts against drug trafficking, cybercrime, and radicalization** using innovative ideas and tools.

➤ Strengthening Investigation and Prosecution:

- The L-G emphasized the need for robust **investigation and prosecution to ensure every crime reaches its logical conclusion**.
- He urged the police force to focus on **neutralizing terrorists** and eliminating divisive elements threatening societal harmony.

Lieutenant Governor (LG)

➤ About:

- The LG is the administrator of the Union Territory, appointed **under Article 239** of the **Constitution of India (COI)**.
- Under **Article 239AA (4) COI**, the Lieutenant Governor is required to act on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers, except in matters where he is required by law to act at his discretion.
- The Lieutenant Governor's powers and functions are derived from the Constitution, particularly Article 239AA of COI.
- The office of the Lieutenant Governor represents the Union government in the administration.

➤ Seats of Lieutenant Governors in India:

- Andaman and Nicobar Island
- Chandigarh
- Ladakh
- Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu
- Puducherry
- Lakshadweep
- Jammu and Kashmir
- Delhi

Governor	Lieutenant Governor
Governors are appointed for states	Lieutenant Governors are appointed for Union Territories.
Governors have authority over states with more autonomy	Lieutenant Governors oversee Union Territories under more central control.
Governors generally have more ceremonial roles	Lieutenant Governors, especially in Delhi, play a more active administrative role.
Governors act mostly on state cabinet advice	Lieutenant Governors have more extensive discretionary powers.
Governors' roles are defined under Articles 153 to Article 162 of the COI.	Lieutenant Governors roles under Articles 239 to Article 239AA of the COI.

Special HMPV ICU Ward Set Up in Jammu

Why in News?

Recently, the Jammu and Kashmir health department has established a **specialized ICU ward** in Jammu to address concerns about a potential outbreak of **Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) cases** detected in the country.

Key Points

➤ Preparedness for Potential Outbreak:

- The ward is centrally heated, equipped with eight ventilator-supported beds, and provides a 24x7 oxygen supply.
- Doctors have reassured the public that **HMPV is not a new pathogen** and is **not causing a widespread outbreak**.
- Describing it as a **mild upper respiratory disease**, Doctors highlighted that only six cases have been detected in the country so far, and there is no cause for panic.

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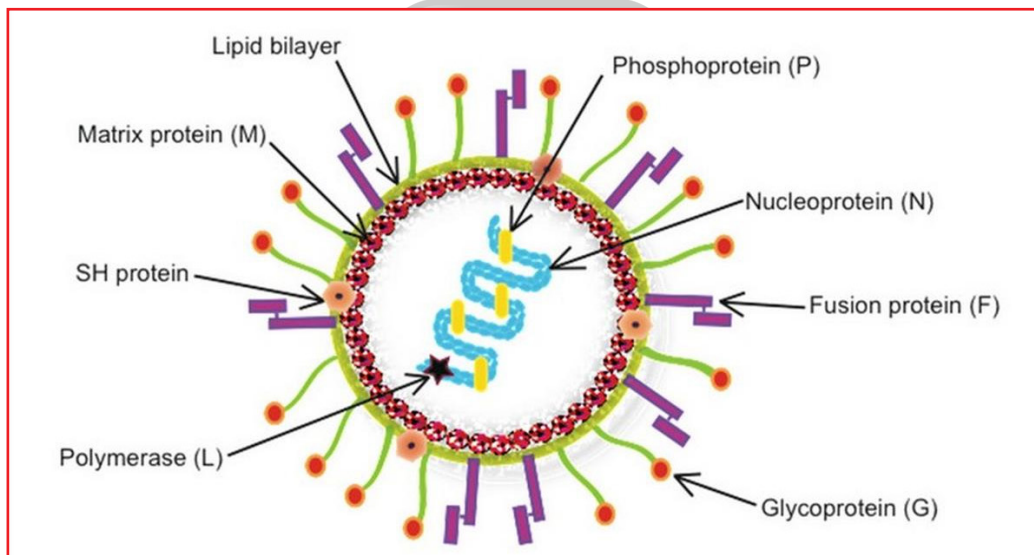
Note:

➤ **Enhanced Readiness Measures:**

- The administration has held meetings to review the situation and ensure sufficient facilities are in place.
- The Gandhinagar government hospital's **fully operational oxygen plant**, with a **capacity of 22,000 liters per minute**, supports preparedness.
 - In addition to the ICU ward, the hospital offers 100 oxygen-supported beds, sufficient concentrators, and various types of oxygen cylinders.

Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV)

- **Discovery:** It was **discovered in 2001** by researchers in **the Netherlands**. It causes acute respiratory infections, similar to **flu** and **Covid-19**.
- **Presence:** It is not limited to **China** and is found **all over the world**. It is clubbed as a **common respiratory pathogen**. It does **not have a vaccine**.
- **Symptoms:** **Cough, fever, sore throat, runny nose, and wheezing**, which typically resolve within **2-5 days**.
- **Vulnerable Groups:** **Children, the elderly, and those with weakened immune systems** are most at risk of complications like **pneumonia**.
- **Transmission:** HMPV spreads through **close contact** or by **touching contaminated surfaces**.
- **Seasonality:** It commonly circulates during **winter and spring**, along with other respiratory infections like **Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)** and **influenza**.
 - HMPV belongs to the **Pneumoviridae** family, which includes **RSV, measles, and mumps viruses**.
- **Severity:** While most HMPV cases are mild, a **small percentage (5-16%)** may develop into severe conditions like **bronchiolitis or pneumonia**.



Death by Asphyxiation in Kashmir

Why in News?

Recently, six people **died due to asphyxiation** in Kashmir valley. The chief minister conveyed his condolences and **urged people to exercise utmost caution** while using heating gadgets.

Key Points

➤ **Wider Concerns in the Valley:**

- The incident highlighted the **widespread use of heating gadgets** in Kashmir during harsh winters.

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Note:

- Kashmir has already experienced two to three major spells of snowfall in 2025.
- **Health Advisory and Expert Recommendations:**
 - The Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences warned against **carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning**.
 - CO is a **colourless, odourless gas** that can be deadly in large amounts.
 - **Rising cases of CO poisoning** require emergency interventions in critical care units.
 - Doctors explained how **gas, charcoal, and wood-based appliances deplete oxygen in poorly ventilated spaces**, producing harmful gases like CO and CO₂.
 - **Symptoms** of CO poisoning include dizziness, headache, fatigue, shortness of breath, confusion, chest pain, and unconsciousness.
 - CO **binds with haemoglobin**, impairing oxygen transportation in the body.
 - It is suggested to distribute **Carbon Monoxide Sensors** to households at subsidized rates through local bodies.
 - It is a **device that detects the presence of the carbon monoxide (CO) gas** to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT) in Jammu and Kashmir

Why in News?

Recently, **the Supreme Court** proposed setting up Benches of **the Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT)** in **Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh** to address the rising backlog of defence-related cases from these regions.

Key Points

- **Current Burden on AFT Chandigarh:**
 - The SC noted that AFT Chandigarh is handling cases from Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh.
 - Setting up **circuit benches in Jammu and Kashmir, Shimla, and Dharamshala** would help reduce the backlog.
- **Supreme Court's Directions to the Centre:**
 - The **court instructed the Centre to compile data** on the total sanctioned strength and vacancies in **tribunals**.

- The Centre was asked to **propose a systematic mechanism for filling these posts**.
- **Details of ongoing recruitment processes** for tribunal posts must be submitted within four weeks.

Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT)

- It is a military tribunal in India. It was established under the **Armed Forces Tribunal Act, 2007**.
- It has provided the power for the adjudication or trial by AFT of disputes and complaints with respect to commission, appointments, enrolments and conditions of service in respect of persons subject to **the Army Act, 1950, The Navy Act, 1957 and the Air Force Act, 1950**.
- The Judicial Members are retired **High Court Judges** and Administrative Members are retired Members of the Armed Forces who have held the rank of Major General/ equivalent or above for a period of three years or more, **Judge Advocate General (JAG)**, who have held the appointment for at least one year are also entitled to be appointed as the Administrative Member.

Banihal Bypass Completion Boosts Connectivity and Security

Why in News?

Union Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari recently announced the completion of a significant stretch of the **Banihal Bypass** in **Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district**, which is expected to enhance both **national security logistics** and **tourism** prospects in the region.

- This **four-lane bypass**, measuring **2.35 kilometers**, was constructed at a cost of **₹224.44 crore**.

Key Points

- The bypass is seen as a **crucial infrastructure upgrade**, reducing congestion and travel time, benefiting both tourists and defense vehicles and route to the **Kashmir Valley**.
- It is part of the **broader initiative to improve the National Highway (NH) - 44**, the completion of the **Banihal Bypass** is expected to significantly enhance the region's connectivity.

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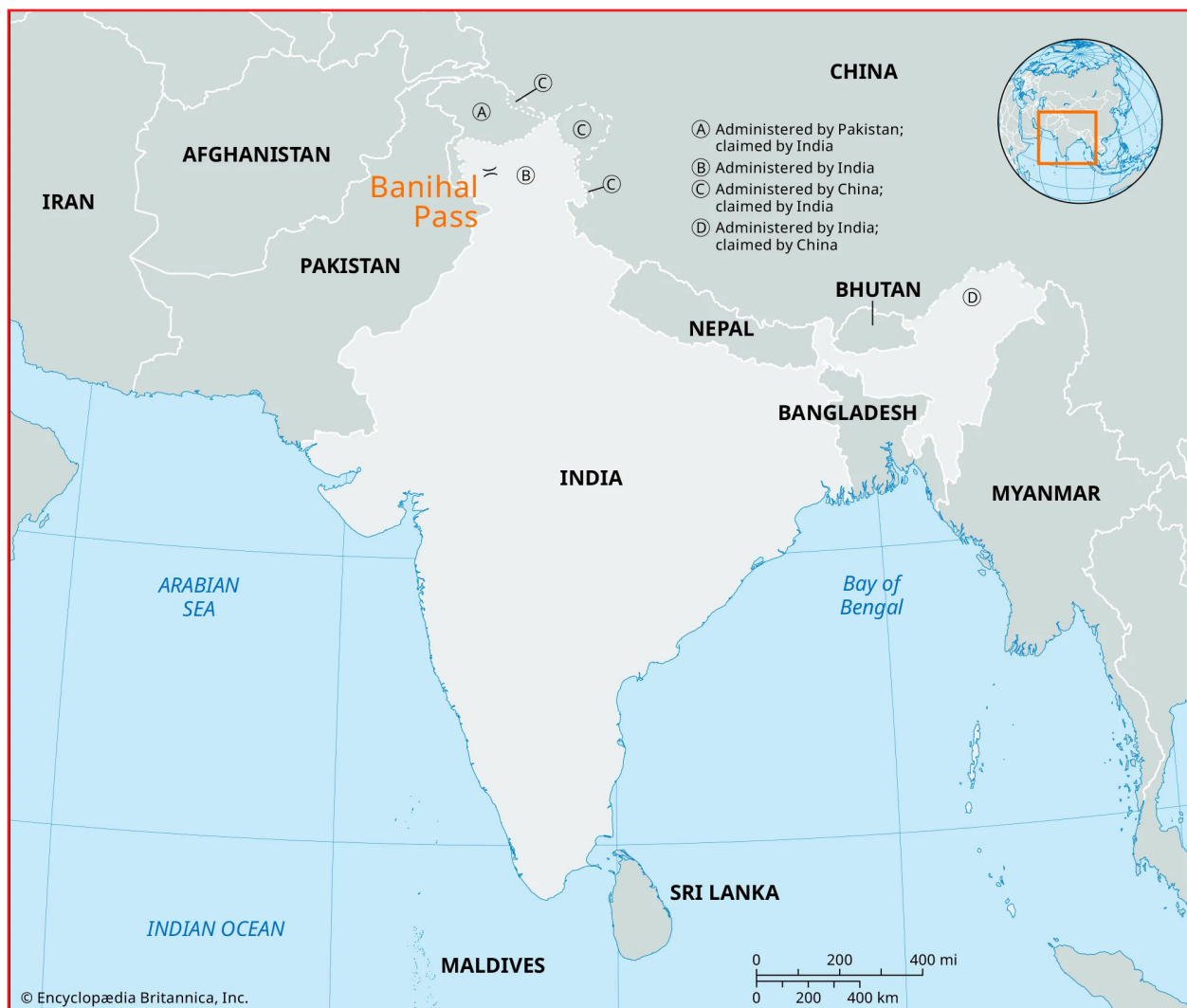
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- Travel time on the **Jammu-Srinagar highway** has already been reduced through various infrastructure upgrades, including tunnels. Further developments, such as the construction of a **14-kilometer tunnel** between Ramban and Banihal, will contribute to further ease of travel.
- Travel time on the **290-km-long Jammu–Srinagar National Highway**, which is part of **NH-44**, has reduced from **nine hours to around six hours** after significant upgrades such as tunnels.
- The **NH-44** is a major highway and longest in the country, it stretches from **Srinagar** in the north to **Kanyakumari** in the south.
 - The Centre has embarked on a major mission in J&K to ensure that the **NH-44** remains an all-weather road connecting the **Kashmir Valley** with the rest of the country.

Banihal Pass

- Banihal Pass is a high mountain pass located in the **Pir Panjal range** in the **Jammu and Kashmir region** of India.
- It connects the **Jammu region** to the **Kashmir Valley**, serving as an important route for travel and transportation.
- The pass is situated at an elevation of approximately **2,832 meters (9,291 feet)** above sea level and is known for its **rugged terrain and scenic beauty**.
- The **Banihal Pass** is historically significant and is a key point for travelers crossing between the two regions.



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Note:

Improved Security in J&K

Why in News?

According to the Ministry of Home Affairs annual report **counter-terrorist operations** in Jammu & Kashmir have **declined since 2018**, with 338 security personnel killed in 676 encounters by March 2024.

Key Points

- **Improvement in Security Situation:**
 - Organised stone pelting and protests have ceased.
 - The region has experienced significant improvement in overall security and development.
- **Measures to Curb Cross-Border Infiltration:**
 - Strengthened border infrastructure and multi-tiered security along **the Line of Control (LoC)**.
 - Changed infiltration routes and installed floodlights along the International Border.
- **Youth Mainstreaming and Employment Opportunities:**
 - Policies introduced to provide jobs and deter youth from militancy.
 - Government efforts include employing 5,720 **Kashmiri migrants** in government jobs.
 - Approval of 6,000 secure transit accommodations for government-employed migrants.
- **Online Grievance Portal for Kashmiri Migrants:**
 - It was launched in August 2021 to address grievances related to encroachment, title changes, mutations, and distress sales.
- **Financial Assistance to Displaced Families:**
 - Under the **Prime Minister's Development Package (PMDP)-2015**, Rs 5.5 lakh is being disbursed to 36,384 displaced families from **Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK)** and Chhamb.
 - Since 2016, Rs 1,452.34 crore has been disbursed to 33,636 beneficiaries.
- **Focus on Development and Integration:**
 - These measures collectively aim to enhance security, provide **social justice**, and foster the integration of displaced communities into the region's socio-economic fabric.

Line of Control

- The Line of Control (LoC) **emerged from the 1948 ceasefire line negotiated by the United Nations (UN)** after the Kashmir War.
- It was designated as the LoC in 1972, **following the Shimla Agreement** between the two countries.
- LoC is **demarcated up to the Siachen Glacier (Point NJ9842)**- the world's highest battlefield.
- LoC is delineated on a map signed by the Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) of both armies and has the international sanctity of a legal agreement.

Winter Carnival in Jammu and Kashmir

Why in News?

Recently, the Chief Minister **inaugurated the 'Winter Carnival' at Pahalgam**, celebrating Jammu & Kashmir's rich **cultural heritage**.

- It will **continue through the winter season**, offering ongoing entertainment and cultural experiences.

Key Points

- **Celebration of Culture and Beauty:**
 - The event highlighted the **region's picturesque beauty and vibrant cultural landscape**, providing a magical experience for both tourists and locals.
 - The Winter Carnival serves as a platform for **showcasing the talent of local artists and performers**.
- **Focus on Cultural Heritage:**
 - The 2025 edition emphasizes **traditional music, dance, handicrafts, and culinary delights** unique to the region.
 - The carnival aims to **promote J&K's cultural fabric to a broader audience**, boosting the visibility of local artisans and fostering economic growth.
- **Tourism and Economic Impact:**
 - The Winter Carnival plays a key role in boosting J&K's tourism industry, positioning Pahalgam as a major tourist destination.
 - The event is **expected to boost local businesses, including hotels, restaurants, and souvenir shops, benefiting the local economy**.

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Book on Jammu Kashmir Inaugurated

Why in News?

Union Minister for Home Affairs presided over the book release event on 2nd January 2025. He released the book 'Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh: Through the Ages'.

Key Points

- **About the Book:**
 - The book seeks to **narrate the story of Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh** in a format accessible to both subject specialists and general readers.
 - Divided into seven sections, the **book spans over 3,000 years of the region's history**, presenting a comprehensive view.
 - Each illustration has been carefully chosen to represent an age, highlighting its **significance and contribution to India's historical narrative**.
 - The book is available in **both Hindi and English language**.
 - The **National Book Trust, India**, and the **Indian Council of Historical Research** jointly worked on this publication.

National Book Trust (NBT)

- NBT, India is an apex body established by the Government of India (**Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development**) in the year 1957.
- **The objectives of the NBT are:**
 - to produce and encourage the production of **good literature in English, Hindi and other Indian languages**.
 - to make such literature available at **moderate prices to the public**.

- to bring out **book catalogues, arrange book fairs/ exhibitions and seminars** and take all necessary steps to make the people book minded.

Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR)

- ICHR is an autonomous body of the **Ministry of Human Resource Development (Ministry of Education)**, established in the year 1972 under the **Societies Registration Act, 1860**.
- It provides **financial assistance to historians and scholars** through fellowships, grants, and symposia.

Northern Command Chief Visits Kashmir

Why in News?

Recently, **Army's Northern Commander Lt General MV Suchindra Kumar** visited Kashmir to review the **operational preparedness of the troops** in the valley.

Key Points

- **Appreciation of Counter-Terrorism Success:**
 - Lt General **commended the troops** for their successful **anti-terrorist operations** in the valley.
 - He also praised all ranks for their professional execution of **counter-terrorism** tasks.

The Northern Command

- It is a **command of the Indian Army**, with its **headquarters in Udhampur**.
- The current **General Officer Commanding-in-Chief** of the Northern Command is **Lieutenant General M. V. Suchindra Kumar**.
- The Northern Command was **originally formed in 1908** as the Northern Army of the British Indian Army.
- It was **disbanded in 1947** after India gained independence, but was **re-established in 1972**.

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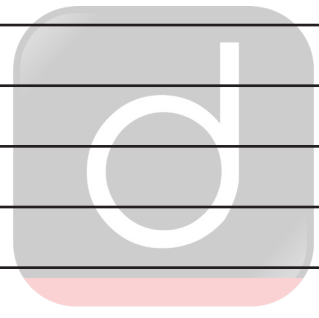
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Summary

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Summary