



Security operations keep J&K violence at historic low in 2025

- » In 2025, 46 terrorists killed in 35 incidents across UT
- » Op Sindoor destroyed terror camps across LoC, neutralised 100 terrorists
- » 26 civilians killed in Baisaran Valley, 21 in cross-border shelling
- » Nowgam blast unsettled Valley;
- » HM Shah, LG Sinha hail J&K Police for Delhi blast probe



Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Dec 30: Forty-six terrorists were killed in 35 violent incidents across Jammu and Kashmir in 2025, while overall violence remained near a 25-year low.

According to the details collected by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) among the key operations, security forces eliminated the perpetrators of the Pahalgam

attack — Suleiman Shah alias Hashim Musa, Hamza Afghani and Zibrain — in an encounter on July 28, 2025.

The most significant military action during the year was Operation Sindoor, launched on May 7, 2025, to avenge April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that left 25 tourists and a local guide dead. The attack was the deadliest attack on civilians in J&K since the 2008 Mumbai attacks.

Officials said the strikes were time-bound and aimed at preventing escalation while reinforcing deterrence. Pakistan retaliated with heavy shelling along the Line of Control (LoC) from May 7 to May 10, particularly in Poonch district, killing at least 21 Indian civilians.

During the | More on P6

Indian Army marks transformative 2025

Highlights 10 pivotal milestones

Yogesh

Jammu, Dec 30: As year 2025 draws to a close, the Indian Army has highlighted ten pivotal milestones including decisive 'Operation Sindoor', a calibrated military response after April's Pahalgam attack that reinforced deterrence and reshaped security dynamics in Jammu and Kashmir.

As per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the year was also marked by decisive action in response to cross-border terrorism, significant capability enhancements, and a strong push towards indigenisation and innovation which has solidified its position as a future-ready force.

'Operation Sindoor'

'Operation Sindoor' launched by the Indian Armed Forces in May 2025, stands as one of the most significant military responses to terrorism in recent decades. Executed with precision and restraint, the operation targeted terrorist infrastructure across the border, directly addressing the brutal Pahalgam attack that shook the nation and highlighted the persistent threat of Pakistan-backed terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir.

Pahalgam Terror Attack

On April 22, 2025, terrorists carried out a horrific attack in the scenic Baisaran meadows near Pahalgam in Anantnag district. At least three to five armed terrorists targeted tourists killing 26 of them.

The attack | More on P6

Jammu symbol of India's national unity: LG Sinha

Pays tributes to Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, hoists tricolour at flag point

Yogesh

Jammu, Dec 30: Describing Jammu as symbol of India's national unity, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday lauded the people of the region for their indomitable spirit and unwavering resilience.

Addressing a function organized to mark 82nd anniversary of the hoisting of Tricolour on Indian soil by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose in Andaman and Nicobar Islands in 1943, LG Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Jammu is a symbol of India's national unity and an unbroken cultural stream. The indomitable spirit of the people of Jammu kept the flame of complete integration of J&K burning through several



generations." The Lieutenant Governor also hoisted the Tricolour and inaugurated the Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Flag Point at JDA Park, Ram Vihar here in the winter capital. "Our unity is the strength and crucial for success.

and gave all countrymen the resolve for Independence. "Today's initiative aims to commemorate the glorious contribution of Netaji to the freedom struggle," he added.

The Lieutenant Governor highlighted that the "Jai Hind" slogan given by Netaji remains a symbol of national valour that once united the Azad Hind Fauj and continues to inspire 140 Crore Indians today.

"Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's patriotism was unparalleled. His extraordinary valour provided India with a vital

2025 records highest weather fatalities in J&K in 15 years

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Dec 30: Weather-related fatalities in Jammu and Kashmir witnessed a sharp rise in 2025, making it one of the deadliest years in the Union Territory over the last decade, according to official disaster management data.

Data comparing extreme weather events (EWE) and deaths from 2010 to August 2025 shows that while the number of weather events has remained broadly consistent over the years, fatalities surged significantly in 2025, mainly due to floods, cloudbursts and landslides.

Nearly one out of every four people who lost their lives to extreme weather events in Jammu and Kashmir over the last 15 years died in 2025 alone.

Official data accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) shows that between 2010 and August 2025, the Union Territory recorded 856 weather-related deaths, of which 199 occurred this year.

This means 2025, though only one year in the 15 years, accounts for almost a quarter of all fatalities caused by floods, cloudbursts, landslides, avalanches and other extreme weather events, underscoring a sharp rise in the severity and impact of such disasters.

Between 2010 and 2024, annual deaths due to extreme weather events ranged between 25 and 72. The highest toll during this period was recorded in 2014, when 72 people died, followed by 2012 with 68 deaths and 2023 with 53 deaths.

In contrast, 2025 recorded 149 deaths | More on P6

J&K's 2025 weather calamity: 199 lives lost, over 8,000 homes damaged

Nearly 12,000 livestock lost; crops affected; 38 missing, many presumed dead

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Dec 30: Jammu and Kashmir faced one of its deadliest years for weather-related disasters in 2025, as monsoon rains, cloudbursts, flash floods, and landslides claimed lives, destroyed property, and left numerous families searching for missing loved ones.

The Jammu division was worst affected, while the Kashmir Valley reported comparatively milder impacts, according to official data obtained by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).



Mid-August cloudburst kills 68 in Kishtwar

A major cloudburst struck Chasoti village in Kishtwar

district along the Machail Mata Yatra route on August 14. Flash floods swept away homes, vehicles, and people,

Year Ender 2025: Around 30% decline in road accident deaths in Kashmir

Umaisar Gull Ganie

Qazigund, Dec 30: Kashmir Valley has witnessed a huge decline of nearly 30 per cent in road accident fatalities during the year, with 202 deaths reported so far, compared to 279 fatalities in the previous year.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Traffic Rural Kashmir, Ravinder Paul Singh, shared the details with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO). He said the reduction was due to intensified enforcement, improved coordination among departments, and growing public awareness. "Our deployment is primarily focused on traffic management.



Any violator found committing a traffic offence is booked strictly as per the provisions of law," Singh said.

The SSP said that the mission undertaken this year would continue with the same zeal and enthusiasm in the coming year as well.

He said the people in Kashmir are largely educated and aware,

and their cooperation has played a crucial role in bringing down the number of accidents. "With just two days remaining in the year, we hope that people will continue to abide by traffic rules and regulations in the future as well," he said.

SSP Singh further said that efforts would be intensified to further curtail the death toll due to road accidents. "Our vision and mission are clear—to minimise accidents and save precious lives," he added.

He said the Traffic Police would also strengthen its outreach programmes. "We will reach out to schools, colleges, sumo stands, and other public places to spread awareness and

LG Sinha unveils J&K Bank's 2026 Wall & Table calendars

KT News Desk

Jammu, Dec 30: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday unveiled J&K Bank's Wall and Table Calendars for the year 2026, at Lok Bhawan.

The Wall Calendar for 2026 is themed "Rivers of J&K and Ladakh", while the Table Calendar showcases the region's "Historic Places", reflecting the diversity of human heritage and natural wonders of UT of Jammu & Kashmir and UT of Ladakh.

The Lieutenant Governor appreciated the J&K Bank for selecting unique themes which will raise awareness about preserving ancient monuments, archaeological sites



and traditions for future generations. He said society must come together to safeguard these priceless treasures. The Lieutenant Governor also emphasised on protecting earth's vital ecosystems. He said rivers in J&K UT are source of fresh water and they are also ensuring food security and supporting biodiversity conservation.

The Lieutenant Governor called for community efforts to protect rivers and water bodies to build resilience against climate impacts in the future. Amitava Chatterjee, Managing Director and CEO, Jammu & Kashmir Bank Limited briefed that the 2026 edition of J&K Bank's calendars honour the rivers that sustain

life across the regions and the historic sites that define their shared legacy. The calendar also features important public welfare initiatives such as Mission YUVA and PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, alongside J&K Bank's key products including Housing Loan, Car Loan, Personal | More on P6

CIK tightens noose around anti-national propagandists

Special NIA Court issues proclamation against 3 accused, including female

Srinagar, Dec 30: In a major crackdown on anti-national propaganda and secessionist misinformation, the Special Judge designated under the NIA Act, Srinagar, has issued a proclamation against three accused, including a female.

In a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), a CIK spokesman said that the proclamation notice was issued against the three accused, Mubeen Ahmad Shah, son of late Ali Mohammad Shah, Azizul Hassan Ashai @ Tony Ashai, son of Nazir Ahmad Ashai, both

residents of Dock Wali Colony, Jawahar Nagar, Srinagar and Rifat Wani, daughter of Ghulam Mohammad Wani, of Trehgam, Kupwara.

The spokesman said that the notice was issued under Section 82 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973 against the accused in connection with FIR No. 07/2020 of Police Station Counter Intelligence Kashmir (CIK).

"The case relates to serious offences under Sections 153-A and 505 of the IPC and Section 13 of the Unlawful Activities

(Prevention) Act (UAPA). It was registered following credible intelligence inputs that revealed a well-orchestrated conspiracy by anti-social and anti-national elements acting at the behest of secessionist forces operating within and outside the Valley," the spokesman said, adding, "Investigations have uncovered that the accused were masquerading as news portals, journalists and freelancers, while allegedly misusing social media platforms including Facebook, X (formerly Twitter) and WhatsApp | More on P6

CS launches online NDC service, releases annual calendar, ARI reforms handbook

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, DECEMBER 30: In a significant move towards strengthening transparency, efficiency and citizen-centric governance, the Administrative Reforms, Inspections & Trainings Department (ARI & Trainings) Tuesday organised a special programme to mark the launch of key administrative initiatives aimed at modernising public service delivery in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

The event, as per an official statement, was presided over by the Chief Secretary, Jammu and Kashmir, Atal Dullo, and was attended by several administrative secretaries and senior officers. On the occasion, the Chief Secretary formally launched the Online Service for Issuance of No Demand Certificates (NDCs) pertaining to Educational Loans.

The newly introduced digital service has been designed to simplify and expedite the process for retiring government employees seeking No Demand Certificates from the concerned departments. By eliminating manual procedures, the initiative is expected to significantly reduce delays, enhance accountability and ensure greater ease of access for beneficiaries.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Secretary underscored the importance of undertaking further administrative



reforms to eliminate redundant and time-consuming processes. He emphasised that the adoption of digital platforms across departments would substantially reduce turnaround time and improve the overall quality of service delivery to citizens.

During the event, the Chief Secretary also unveiled the Jammu and Kashmir Government Annual Calendar-2026, which outlines important official events, observances and milestones for the forthcoming year. The calendar depicts significant events, projects and holidays, presented month-wise for ease of reference.

Further strengthening the reform agenda, the Handbook on Administrative Reforms was also released on the occasion. The handbook serves as a comprehensive reference document highlighting best practices, reform initiatives and procedural improvements undertaken by the government

to enhance efficiency, transparency and responsiveness in public administration.

The event, as detailed by the Commissioner Secretary, ARI & Trainings Department, Shabnam Shah Kamili, highlighted the pivotal role played by the department in driving governance reforms and capacity building across the UT. She elaborated on the utility and impact of the initiatives launched and lauded the guidance and leadership of the Chief Secretary in steering the department towards consistent success.

She further stated that the initiatives launched Tuesday mark another important milestone in the ongoing efforts of the government to modernise administration, promote good governance and deliver services in a more effective, transparent and citizen-friendly manner.

DC Kulgam reviews Republic Day 2026 preparations

KT NEWS DESK

KULGAM, DECEMBER 30: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan, on Tuesday reviewed preparations for the smooth conduct of Republic Day-2026 celebrations during a meeting of officers held here at the new Conference Hall, Mini Secretariat, Kulgam.

Threadbare discussions were held at the venue, including security, seating arrangements, parking, transportation, illumination of buildings, refreshments and accommodation for participants.

During the meeting, the DC, as per an official statement, directed all concerned departments to put in place elaborate and well-coordinated arrangements to ensure the successful conduct of the national function.

During the meeting it was shared that the main function will be held at DPL Kulgam, where the National Flag will be unfurled by the Chief Guest, followed by a parade comprising contingents of J&K Police, CRPF, NCC, Police Band, Women Contingent, NCC and other participating units.

The DC issued strict instructions to all departments to complete arrangements well in advance to ensure the smooth and dignified conduct of the celebrations.

Keeping in view the prevailing cold weather conditions, departments were asked to ensure adequate heating arrangements for rehearsals as well as on the final day of the event.



DC Srinagar tours Lal Chowk, reviews development needs

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 30: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, on Tuesday undertook a comprehensive tour of Lal Chowk and adjoining areas to review the developmental needs in the area.

During the visit, the DC, as per an official statement, was accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner Mir Intiyaz Ul Aziz; Joint Commissioner SMC, Nuzhat Khurshid; Chief Planning Officer Fayaz Ahmad Dar; Superintendent Engineer of R&B, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, ARTO, Executive Engineers of City Drainage, UEDD, KPDCL, Jal Shakti, Tehsildar South and other senior officers.

The visit began with a detailed interaction with the Traders Association of Central Lal Chowk, during which various developmental and civic issues faced by the business community were discussed.

On the occasion, the traders highlighted several demands related to infrastructure upgradation, traffic management, drainage, sanitation, and beautification of the area. They also demanded the upliftment of the surrounding area of the old Lower Court.

The Deputy Commissioner gave a patient hearing to the demands put forth by the traders and assured them that their genuine issues would be taken up with the concerned authorities for early redressal. He emphasised that coordinated efforts would be made to ensure timely execution of developmental works while minimising inconvenience to the public and the trading community.

The DC also directed the concerned officers to maintain close inter-departmental coordination to ensure the holistic development of Lal Chowk and its adjoining areas.

DC Pulwama reviews bank performance, stresses priority sector lending

KT NEWS DESK

PULWAMA, DECEMBER 30: District Development Commissioner (DDC), Pulwama, Dr Basharat Qayoom, on Tuesday chaired the District Level Review Committee (DLRC) meeting for the second quarter of the financial year 2025-26 at Circuit House, Pulwama. The meeting, as per an official statement, aimed to assess the performance of banks and line departments under various financial and developmental parameters.

At the outset, the Lead District Manager (LDM), Pulwama, presented a detailed presentation highlighting the district's banking performance.

The DDC reviewed the bank-wise progress under these schemes and directed branch managers to maximise enrolments in a time-bound manner. He further instructed the cluster head to monitor daily progress and ensure priority saturation under these schemes.

Budgam administration suspends mobile VPN services

KT NEWS DESK

BUDGAM, DECEMBER 30: In the interest of public safety, law and order, and data security, the District Administration of Budgam has ordered the suspension of all kinds of Virtual Private Network (VPN) services on mobile phones within District Budgam for a period of two months, with effect from the date of issuance of the order, unless withdrawn earlier.

The order, as per an official statement, has been issued by the District Magistrate, Budgam, Dr. Bilal Mohiud-Din Bhat, under Section 163 of the Bhartiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNS), 2023, following inputs received from the Senior Superintendent of Police, Budgam, regarding unprecedented and suspiciously high usage of VPNs across various parts of the district.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OFFICER POSHAN PROJECT SUMBAL

Phone/Fax: +91-1954-230722

Email ID: Cdpo-icdssumbal@jk.gov.in

Advertisement Notice No: - 03 of 2025

Dated: - 29-12-2025

Subject: - Advertisement for Recruitment of Sanginis (AWWs) and Sahayikas (AWHs) in Anganwadi Centres of POSHAN Project Sumbal.

Reference: 1. Government Order No 222-JK (SWD) of 2022 Dated: 30.11.2022

2. Government Order No.103-JK (SWD) of 2023 dated: 28.04.2023

Approval has been accorded vide letter No: MD/Poshan/47128-34 dated 24-12-2025 for filling up of vacant positions of Sanginis (AWWs) and Sahayikas (AWHs) in AWCs of Poshan Project Sumbal as per below given details.

Sr. No.	Name of Project	Name of Post	No. of Posts
1	Sumbal	AWW (Sanginis)	06
2	Sumbal	AWH (Sahayikas)	04
Total			10

Applications are invited in the Prescribed Performa in Annexure "A" from the eligible candidates for engagement as Anganwadi Worker and Anganwadi Helper on Honorarium basis for aforementioned posts of Anganwadi Centres. The important dates/details with regard to the posts are as under:

- Date of commencement for submission of application from the date of publication of Notice.
- Last date for submission of applications is fourteen Days from the publication of notice
- Annexure B- Name of the Post, Location/Ward ,Qualification and Criteria for selection
- Annexure C- Affidavit

ANNEXURE 'A'

Format of Application

- Name of POSHAN Project Sumbal
- Name of Anganwadi Centre
- Post applied for
- Name of the Candidate
- Father's Name
- Husband's Name
- Residence/Panchayat Halqa
7. Ward No.
- Address for correspondence
- Contact No.
- Date of Birth
- Age as on 01.01.2026
- Academic Qualification:

Space for Photograph

S. No.	Examination passed	Board/University	Year of Passing	Marks Obtained	Total Marks	Percentage

- Do the candidate belong to Retiring AWW/AWH (YES/NO)
- Document Attached:

Date: _____

Signature of the candidate _____

ANNEXURE 'B'

Detail of Vacant Posts (AWWs & AWHs) along with name and location of AWC.

S.No.	Name of Panchayat	WARD NO.	NAME OF ANGANWADI CENTRE	NAME OF POST	NO. OF POSTS
01.	Palhallan F	4	Ghat Palhallan	AWW (Sangini)	01
02.	Palhallan G	3	Rather Mohalla Palhallan	AWW (Sangini)	01
03.	Asham B	8	Ganie Mohalla Asham	AWW (Sangini)	01
04.	Nowgam B	4	Mohalla Balla Nowgam	AWW (Sangini)	01
05.	Gadakhud	5	Najin Gadakhud	AWW (Sangini)	01
06.	Dangerpora	9	Sofi Mohalla Dangerpora	AWW (Sangini)	01
07.	Hilalabad Nesbal	6	Chan Mohalla Nesbal	AWH (Sahayika)	01
08.	Ganastan A	4	Beigh Yousuf Mohalla	AWH (Sahayika)	01
09.	Palhan A	2	Waza Mohalla Palhan	AWH (Sahayika)	01
10.	Syed Mohalla Inderkote (MC Sumbal)	6	Syed Mohalla Inderkote	AWH (Sahayika)	01

Eligibility:

- Anganwadi Workers
 - The candidate must be domicile of the UT of J&K.
 - Women candidates in the age group of 18-37 years as on 01-01-2026 shall be considered for the post.
 - The candidate should be a resident of the electoral ward where AWC is situated. Name in the voter list for the ward shall be considered as the proof of residence of the candidate. In case the name of the candidate appears in voter list along with her parents, then she must provide certificate of being unmarried issued by the concerned Tehsildar.
 - Wherever, there is any dispute as to residence for any reason, then a residence proof certifying the ward of residence from the concerned SDM/ACR shall be considered.
 - Ward certificate from concerned Block Development Officer.
 - Minimum qualification for Aanganwadi Worker shall be 10+2 and maximum graduation. In case no 10+2 candidate is available in the ward, 10+2 pass candidate from the adjoining ward shall be considered which would require prior approval of Mission Director, Poshan.
 - In case suitable candidate is not available from adjoining ward, candidate from the nearest ward within the panchayat can be considered subject to the approval of the MD, Poshan.
 - Weightage shall be given on the basis of marks obtained in 10+2 and selection be done purely on merit basis and no other criterion be considered.
 - In case eligible candidate is available within the family of retiring AWWs/AWHs, the said candidate shall qualify for additional two percent points.
 - Candidates with qualification higher than graduation shall not be considered.
 - The selection shall be made as per Government order no. 222-(JKSWD) of 2022 Dated 30-11-2022.
- Anganwadi Helpers
 - The selection of Helper shall be restricted to the electoral ward where Anganwadi centre is located.
 - Women candidates in the age group of 18-37 years on 01-01-2026 shall be eligible.
 - The candidate must be domicile of the UT of J&K.
 - Minimum qualification for Anganwadi Helper shall be matriculation.
 - In case no matriculate candidate is available in the ward, candidates with qualification not less than 8th standard shall be considered.
 - The committee shall select the most destitute/needly married woman of the ward as helper from amongst those who fulfil the qualification criteria. In case no married candidate is available, unmarried candidate may be considered.
 - Selection shall be made purely as per Govt Order No:- 222-JK(SWD) of 2022 Dated: 30.11.2022 and Government Order No.103-JK (SWD) of 2023 dated: 28.04.2023

Document Verification:

- The candidate who is shortlisted for Document verification will be required to appear for Document Verification along-with the original documents as well as self-attested Photostat copy of each document as per the Advertisement Notification. The candidate must be in possession of the prescribed academic qualification and other document like Domicile Certificate, on or before the last date of submission of application form.

- Marks sheet(s)/Diploma/Degree of the qualification prescribed for the post as per Advertisement Notification.
- Date of Birth/Matriculate Certificate.
- Domicile Certificate & Ward Certificate.
- Unmarried Certificate (where required)
- Candidates have to bring two passport size recent colour photographs and one original Photo ID proof. Photo ID Proof can be:
- Aadhar Card.
- Voter ID card.

3) The candidates, who are supposed to furnish various certificates issued by or before the prescribed cut-off date, shall be required to produce them at the time of Document Verification or as may be sought by the Committee; in case of failure, the committee shall take necessary decision which shall be final.

All applicants to submit affidavit stating following facts:

- All Documents submitted are correct, without any mismatch, scanning, duplicate or fallacious in nature. If found incorrect or in any of the above stated situation the candidature of deponent may be cancelled and liable to action under law.
- Maximum qualification is Graduation for vacancy of Anganwadi worker and Class X for AWH and this is as per facts and onus of proving it to be true lies with the deponent.
- The deponent has read the HR policy no. 222-JK (SWD) of 2022 dated: 30.11.2022 and is well versed with all salient features of the policy and shall be applicable to the deponent in case of selection as Anganwadi worker/ Anganwadi Helper.

No: - CDPO/SBL/ADV/2025-26/
Date:

DIPK-9463/25
DATED:30-12-2025

Child Development Project Officer,
Poshan Project Sumbal Bandipora.

In 2025, North Kashmir sees 5.7% drop in fire calls

- 1,142 fire incidents
- 4 dead
- 49 injured

Srinagar, Dec 30: Marking a modest 5.7% decline, North Kashmir tallied 1,142 fire calls in 2025 compared to 1,212 in 2024 that destroyed property worth crores, with Baramulla still topping at 533 cases amid winter surges.

Data obtained states Baramulla district remained the hotspot with 533 cases—down from 548 last year, while Kupwara saw 380 incidents versus 407 previously, with Bandipora logged the lowest at 228 compared to 357 in 2024.

The 2025 tally reflects a 5.7% reduction overall, with false alarms staying minimal at 11 across districts (5 in Baramulla, 3 each in Kupwara and Bandipora).

Kupwara, as per the official data, reported the starker drop but highest human toll: 30 forest fires, 47 injuries and 4 lives lost, contrasting 2024's broader damage from dry spells and short circuits.



Bandipora achieved near-zero fatalities with just 5 forest fires and 2 injuries, while Baramulla peaked at 158 calls in November-December alone.

Prolonged dry weather, short circuits and gas leaks fueled both years' spikes, with 2025's November-December surge hitting around 190 calls regional, which echoed 2024 patterns but met with swifter responses.

Meanwhile, Deputy Director F&ES, Mir Arif told KNO that the dry spell has significantly contributed to fire incidents alongside common causes like electricity short circuits and gas leaks. "Our 42 stations and 444 personnel across North Kashmir, including 175 in Baramulla, 182 in Kupwara and 87 in Bandipora, managed 1,142 calls in 2025 without any firemen injuries, down from 1,212 last year—yet vigilance remains key."

He urged installing smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, and evacuation plans while avoiding overloaded outlets and unattended flames—(KNO)

Gulmarg ready for New Year winter rush

WARIS FAYAZ

Gulmarg, Dec 30: Gulmarg gears up for a busy winter as the Valley prepares to welcome a surge of tourists during the festive season.

The Tourism Department is all set to host a grand seven-day New Year carnival that promises snow adventures, cultural shows and musical nights, aimed at showcasing the hospitality and spirit of peace.

Director Tourism, Kashmir, Syed Qamar Sajad said the carnival would include several attractions such as snow cricket, snow skiing, and musical evenings designed to offer visitors a seamless experience during their winter holiday.

"We are hosting a week-long carnival to ensure that tourists enjoy the celebrations and take along the message of peace from the Valley across the country," he said.

He extended warm greetings to visitors on behalf of the Department and expressed gratitude for



their growing presence in the region. "We welcome tourists with open hearts. All arrangements have been put in place to make their stay comfortable and memorable. Let them experience the warmth and love themselves—we are humbled by the response and hope peace continues to prevail,"

he added. Acknowledging that the tourism sector had faced a brief setback earlier, the Director said the industry had successfully recovered, with tourists returning to the Valley in significant numbers.

"Tourists are back, and they are enjoying the facilities and services happily,"

he said. "Wherever there are gaps, we are upgrading services continuously, and with every rise in footfall, we remain committed to improving infrastructure for a more seamless visitor experience." Speaking about the upgraded Gulmarg Gondola, one of the world's highest cable cars, Sajad said its carrying capacity had been enhanced. "We have increased the number of cabins to 72, which now operates at full capacity. The system can now carry nearly 9,000 tourists per day," he informed. "We are ensuring a regulated tourist flow through a slot system to prevent any inconvenience. Tourists are requested to cooperate with the process for a smoother experience."

The Director added that the Department is focused on maintaining high service standards and that ongoing improvements in tourism infrastructure will further strengthen Kashmir's position as one of India's most sought-after winter destinations—(KNO)

VPN ban in several districts for 'societal interest': Garg

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Dec 30: Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Anshul Garg, on Tuesday said the ban on Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) in several districts of Kashmir has been ordered in the overall interest of society following security reviews carried out by the respective Deputy Commissioners.

Speaking to reporters in Srinagar, the Div Com said that every DC conducts independent security assessments based on local inputs. "You must have seen that DCs in Kupwara, Kulgam, Shopian and other districts have issued prohibitory orders. Such measures are taken whenever required to prevent misuse by anti-social elements," he said. "Many people get caught up in the misuse of such networks. These decisions are taken in the overall interest of society to safeguard the public."

Preparedness for snowfall and winter advisory

The Divisional Commissioner said the administration is on full alert following the Meteorological Department's advisory of snowfall in the Valley. "Our



Integrated Command and Control Centre works 24x7. Helpline numbers have been widely circulated, and all calls from the public are being responded to immediately," he said.

Garg said that all Deputy Commissioners have established district-level control rooms, also manned round the clock.

"All executing agencies, including the Mechanical Engineering Department, PWD, Beacon, PMGSY, National Highways, SMC and

other urban local bodies have activated and pre-positioned their machinery to ensure prompt snow clearance," he said.

Data-driven readiness

The Div Com said buffer stocks and essential supplies have been arranged across the Valley. "Distribution transformers and transfer oil stocks have been kept in excess capacity to prevent power disruptions," he said.

He added that the Food and Civil Supplies Department completed its dumping by November 30 in all border and remote areas, while 893 snow-bound stations have been stocked with LPG for the next four months.

The Health Department, he said, has also ensured that all medical institutions in hard-to-reach areas are equipped with heating arrangements and adequate medicines. "Vulnerable patients and pregnant women have been mapped and advised to shift to safer zones," he said.

"With the tourist footfall increasing and weather turning favourable, all departments are maintaining round-the-clock preparedness to ensure public convenience," Garg added—(KNO)

'A delayed lifeline for elderly'

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Dec 30: A delay in the release of the monthly old-age pension has left thousands of elderly beneficiaries across Kashmir anxious, with many saying they rely solely on this small amount to meet their daily needs.

For 72-year-old Fatima Begum from Srinagar, the monthly pension of Rs 1,000 is her only means of buying medicines and



elderly citizens echoed similar distress, saying the pension is their only financial support amid rising prices and health challenges.

When contacted, an official from the Social Welfare Department Kashmir told KNO that the delay was due to the year-end financial load and the large volume of transactions being processed.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

essentials. "I keep waiting every month for this money. When it doesn't come on time, I have to borrow from neighbours," she told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) with trembling hands and moist eyes.

Several other

KNO Impact Sopore MC begins Jhelum waste clean-up

WARIS FAYAZ

Sopore, Dec 30: Days after the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), highlighted the shocking state of a dried Jhelum stretch in Sopore being turned into a dumping ground, the Municipal Council (MC) on Tuesday launched a major sanitation drive to clear the heaps of waste choking the riverbed.

Officials informed that the teams from the sanitation wing, equipped with loaders and vehicles, began removing piles of plastic crates, fish residue and mixed garbage from the site in Ward 15—an area that had sparked public fury over unchecked dumping.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

Health ministry mandates prescription for 'Red Line' antibiotics

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, Dec 30: Amid growing global concern over antimicrobial resistance (AMR), the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, has reiterated that medicines bearing a Red Line mark on their packaging must never be consumed without a valid doctor's prescription.

The advisory comes as part of the Ministry's nationwide Red Line Campaign, aimed at curbing the rampant misuse of antibiotics and promoting responsible drug use.

The Red Line Campaign urges citizens to identify medicines marked with a red vertical line—typically antibiotics and certain scheduled drugs—and to strictly avoid self-medication. These medicines fall under Schedule H and H1 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945, which legally mandate their sale only against a prescription issued by a Registered Medical Practitioner.

"Medicines with a red line should never be taken without medical advice. Misuse of antibiotics directly fuels antibiotic resistance, making infections harder and sometimes impossible to treat," the Ministry stated in an official communication.

Health experts in Kashmir have echoed the Ministry's concerns, warning that AMR has emerged as one of the most serious public health threats of the 21st century.

Irfan Gul, Associate Professor at Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar, said antibiotic resistance is no longer a distant threat but a harsh reality being faced daily in hospitals.

"We are increasingly encountering infections that do not respond to commonly used antibiotics. Drugs that once worked as first-line treatment are now failing, forcing doctors to use stronger and more expensive medicines. This is a dangerous trend," Dr Gul said.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

JKCA elections on Jan 16 after 8-year gap

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Dec 30: After nearly eight years, the Jammu & Kashmir Cricket Association (JKCA) is set to hold elections for its office bearers and Apex Council on January 16, at GGM Science College, Jammu.

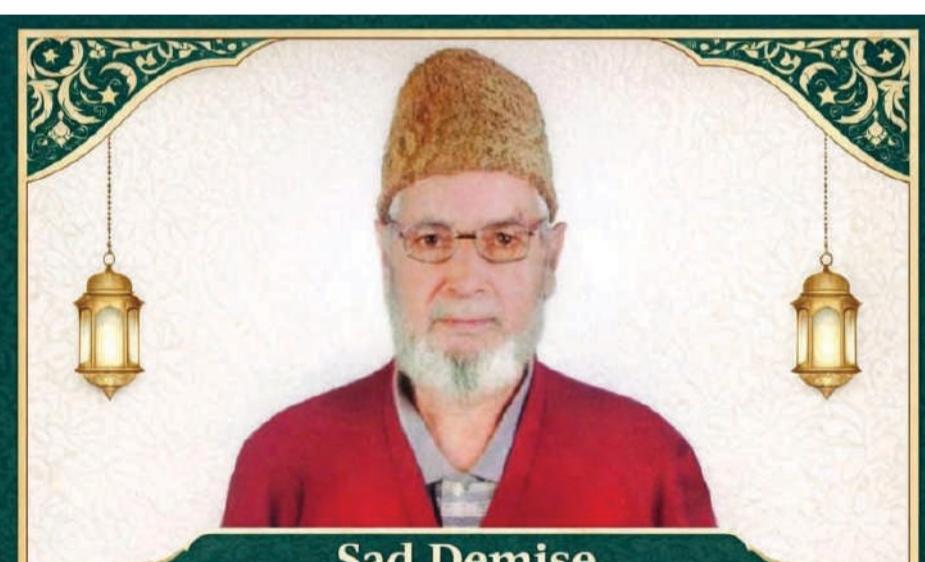
Affiliated members while addressing a news conference here welcomed the move, calling it a long-awaited step toward normalization and the revival of cricket administration in the Union Territory.

"After eight years, JKCA is finally heading towards elections as per

the Supreme Court's directions. We appreciate the personal efforts of BCCI President Mithun Manhas, whose intervention helped pave the way for this democratic process," members said, adding that prolonged litigation had left the Association in administrative limbo.

Earlier attempts to mediate club disputes through the J&K High Court and later by BCCI-appointed Justice L. Narasimha Reddy, helped verify records and finalize the list of representatives eligible to participate in the polls.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in



Sad Demise

With deep sorrow and grief, we inform that our beloved father,

Late Ghulam Ahmad Bangroo,

resident of Reshi Mohallah, Shah Kadal, Srinagar, passed away after a prolonged illness at SMHS Hospital on Monday, 29th December 2025, at 4:00 a.m.

May Almighty Allah forgive his shortcomings, grant him eternal peace, and admit him into the highest place in Paradise.

Collective prayers and condolence gathering will be held on Thursday, 01st January 2026, at 10:30 a.m.,

At our ancestral graveyard, Shah Kadal (Safa Kadal).

All relatives, friends, and well-wishers are requested to attend and pray for the departed soul.

Bereaved Family:

Ishfaq Ahmad Bangroo (Son)

Mobile No.: 788-984-0629

EDITORIAL

Higher Education Must Forge Innovators, Not Just Graduates

The call for higher education institutions to pivot decisively towards innovation, employability, and entrepreneurship is an urgent global imperative. In a world defined by rapid technological disruption, demographic shifts, and evolving industry demands, universities can no longer function as siloed repositories of theoretical knowledge. Their core mission must expand to become dynamic ecosystems that equip students to create jobs, solve complex problems, and thrive in an unpredictable

future. The traditional model, which often produces graduates with degrees mismatched to market needs, is unsustainable. The challenge is two-fold: promoting a culture of critical innovation while ensuring tangible graduate employability. These are not contradictory goals but two sides of the same coin. Innovation is not just about high-tech startups; it is a mindset of creative problem-solving applicable in every field, from the arts to agriculture. Employability is not merely about securing

a first job, but about nurturing the adaptive skills and lifelong learning agility needed for a career spanning decades. To achieve this, a systemic transformation is required. First, curricula must be fluid and interdisciplinary, integrating emerging fields like AI, data analytics, and sustainability across disciplines, as envisioned in reforms like India's National Education Policy 2020. Second, industry-academia integration must move beyond guest lectures to embedded collaborations—joint

research, live projects, and apprenticeship models that provide real-world exposure. Third, entrepreneurial incubation must be central, providing students with the mentorship, funding access, and risk-taking safety net to prototype ideas. Furthermore, success must be redefined. Metrics should include graduate innovation portfolios, problem-solving projects, and successful career transitions, alongside conventional academic benchmarks. Student welfare and holistic development, including

recognition for sports and arts, are essential for nurturing resilient, well-rounded individuals. Universities must evolve from degree-awarding institutions into talent-forging crucibles. They must be the engines of a skilled workforce and the birthplace of groundbreaking ideas. By aligning academic rigour with practical ingenuity and entrepreneurial spirit, higher education can truly fulfil its promise: not just to educate youth, but to empower them to build a better, more prosperous world.

2025 Economic Reforms: Building A Future-Ready India

Press Information Bureau

Setting the Stage: India's 2025 Economic Vision

Economic reforms in 2025 reflect a maturing phase of India's governance, where the emphasis shifted decisively from "expanding regulatory frameworks" to "delivering measurable outcomes". The focus moved towards simplifying systems, reducing compliance burdens, and improving predictability for citizens and businesses. Across taxation, GST, labour regulation, and business compliance, reforms were designed to make every day economic interactions smoother, faster, and more transparent, strengthening trust in institutions and policy certainty.

The year's initiatives emphasized ease of living, ease of doing business, and inclusive growth, aligning regulatory structures with India's evolving economic aspirations. From simplified tax regimes and Next-Generation GST to modern labour codes and expanded MSME definitions, the Government ensured that reforms not only reduced friction in everyday economic activities but also empowered youth, women, small businesses, and rural communities. Collectively, these measures illustrate a governance approach rooted in outcome-driven policymaking, fostering trust, predictability, and long-term economic resilience.

Key Reforms Shaping Growth and Opportunity

Income Tax Reforms

In a major relief for Indian families and individual taxpayers, the Union Budget 2025-26 introduced substantial reforms in direct taxation, ensuring that annual incomes up to

12 lakh are exempt from income tax under the new regime, with the effective exemption rising to 12.75 lakh for salaried taxpayers on account of the standard deduction. This change reaffirmed the Government's commitment and left millions of middle-class households with higher disposable income, boosting consumption, savings, and investment.

In July 2024, the Government announced a comprehensive overhaul of the Income-tax Act, 1961 leading to New Income Tax Act, 2025 - a landmark development to simplify language, remove obsolete provisions and consolidate & restructure provisions. An internal Departmental Committee, constituted by Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) for comprehensive review of the existing Act, undertook the reform with three guiding principles:

Textual and structural simplification, improved clarity and coherence.

No major tax policy changes, ensuring continuity and certainty.

No modifications of tax rates, preserving predictability for taxpayers.

The Income Tax Act, 2025 modernizes India's direct tax framework by simplifying and streamlining tax legislation, making it more accessible, transparent, and less prone to litigation. A key reform is the introduction of a unified "Tax Year - the twelve-month period of the financial year commencing on the 1st April", replaces the earlier concepts of Assessment Year and Previous Year. It not only improves clarity and makes it easier for taxpayers to understand the financial period their income and tax filings, but also reduces ambiguity in compliance and interpretation.

The Act strengthens digital-first enforcement, faceless tax administration, consolidates compliance provisions such as Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) under a single section, empowers the Government to introduce technology-enabled schemes, and enhances dispute-resolution mechanisms.

Labour Reforms

In a landmark reform, the Government of India consolidated 29 existing labour laws into four Labour Codes- the Code on Wages, 2019, the Industrial Relations Code, 2020, the Code on Social Security, 2020 and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020.



The new framework enhances ease of doing business while expanding wage security, social protection, and workplace safety for workers, including women, migrant, gig, and platform workers.

Wages: It aims to strengthen workers' rights while promoting simplicity and uniformity in wage-related compliance for employers. Uniform definition of wages and statutory minimum wages across sectors, improving income security and reducing disputes.

Industrial Relations: Simplification laws related to trade unions, conditions of employment in industrial establishment or undertaking, investigation and settlement of industrial disputes.

Social Security: Extension of social security to all workers- including unorganized, gig, and platform workers-covering life, health, maternity, and provident fund benefits, while introducing digital systems and facilitator-based compliance for greater efficiency.

Occupational Safety & Health: Safeguarding worker rights and safe working conditions, and creating a business-friendly regulatory environment.

The reforms expand the safety net for India's workforce, with nearly 10 million Gig and Platform workers receiving annual social security support. Women workers benefit from assured leave provisions, maternity benefits and improved workplace safety. Overall, the Labour Codes mark a decisive shift from rule-heavy regulation to outcome-based governance, creating one unified framework for over 50 crore workers across sectors. Additionally, the codes lay a strong foundation for a future-ready workforce and resilient industries aligned with India's long-term growth aspirations.

Rural Employment Reforms

Rural employment reforms anchored in the enactment of the Viksit Bharat - Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, 2025, replaces the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) with a modern statutory framework that enhances livelihood security and integrates employment with community development.

Extended Employment Guarantee: 125 days of wage employment per rural household in a financial year.

Integrated Provision for Agriculture and Rural Employment: facilitate adequate availability of agricultural labour during peak sowing and harvesting seasons while ensuring a calibrated balance that supports both agricultural productivity and worker security.

Timely Wage Payments: timely payment of wages on a weekly basis or, in any case, within fifteen days of completion of work, reinforcing wage security and protecting

workers from delays.

Asset Creation Focus: Work contributes creation of durable public assets across four priority thematic domains - water security & related works, rural infrastructure, climate-resilient projects, and livelihood enhancement.

Decentralized Planning: All works flow from Viksit Gram Panchayat Plans (VGPPs), prepared through participatory processes at the Gram Panchayat level and approved by the Gram Sabha. These plans are digitally integrated with national platforms including PM Gati Shakti, enabling convergence across Ministries while retaining decentralised decision-making.

Financial Architecture: The Act is implemented as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, notified and operationalised by State Governments in accordance with its provisions.

Strengthened Administrative Capacity: The administrative expenditure ceiling has been increased from 6% to 9%, strengthening staffing, training, technical capacity, and field-level support to improve institutional delivery and outcomes.

Ease of Doing Business Reforms

To ensure that Quality Control Orders (QCOs) do not disrupt domestic production, the Government has implemented them in a phased and MSME-friendly manner through the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS).

Quality Control Orders (QCOs) - Key Relaxations: Additional compliance time was given to Micro (6 month) and Small (3 months) enterprises, exemptions were provided for export-oriented and R&D imports (upto 200 units), and legacy stock could be cleared within six months, easing the transition for businesses.

Under BIS Support Measures for MSMEs, enterprises received concessions on annual marking fees, the in-house laboratory requirement was made optional with access to accredited or shared labs, inspection and testing processes were made more flexible, and product certification guidelines were made publicly accessible to simplify compliance.

Under Improving Credit Flow to MSMEs: loans have been linked to external benchmarks with shorter reset periods (3 months), the Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme for MSMEs (MCGS-MSME) now provides cover up to 100 crore for equipment and machinery, Priority Sector Lending targets are enforced, collateral-free loans up to 10 lakh are available for micro and small enterprises, and working capital requirements for MSEs are set at a minimum of 20% of projected annual turnover for credit limits up to

5 crore.

Other MSME Reforms

Under the Next-Generation GST reforms, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) reforms, represent another landmark step in reshaping India's indirect tax framework to align with the aspirations of a young, entrepreneurial, and consumption-driven economy. The latest Next-Generation GST reforms, mark a decisive step towards simpler taxation, lower burden on citizens, and improved ease of doing business. They significantly strengthen GST's role as a citizen-centric, business-friendly, and growth-oriented tax system.

Simpler Tax Structure: The move to a two-slab GST regime (5% and 18%) reduces complexity, classification disputes, and compliance costs, improving ease of doing business, especially for MSMEs and small traders.

Lower Cost of Living: Wide-ranging rate reductions on essential goods, household items, healthcare products, education materials, housing inputs, and services directly reduce inflationary pressures and enhance household affordability.

MSME and Startup Enablement: Faster refunds, simplified registration and returns, and lower input costs aim to boost the present businesses and startups and incentivise the youth to enter into businesses and initiate startups.

Wider Tax Base and Revenue Stability: Simpler rates and improved compliance have expanded the GST taxpayer base to over 1.5 crore, while gross collections reached 22.08 lakh crore in FY 2024-25, reinforcing fiscal sustainability.

Overall, the Next-Generation GST reforms reinforce GST as a simpler, fairer, and growth-oriented tax system, delivering ease of living for consumers and ease of doing business for enterprises, while supporting consumption-led growth and long-term fiscal sustainability.

The Budget 2025-26 expanded the MSME definition, raising investment and turnover limits to enhance confidence and generate employment for our youth, while credit guarantee cover for Micro and Small Enterprises doubled from 5 crore to 10 crore, improving access to formal finance for expansion and modernization, with higher limits and term loans for startups and exporters boosting growth and competitiveness.

Revised Thresholds:

Micro: Investment up to 2.5 crore, turnover up to 10 crore

Small: Investment up to 25 crore, turnover up to 100 crore

Medium: Investment up to 125 crore, turnover up to 500 crore

GST 2.0 Reforms

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) reforms, represent another landmark step in reshaping India's indirect tax framework to align with the aspirations of a young, entrepreneurial, and consumption-driven economy.

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Export Promotion mission

Key Takeaways

- 2025 Economic reforms focused on outcome-driven governance, simplifying systems, and boosting growth, inclusivity, and ease of doing business.
- Labour reforms unified 29 laws under four Labour Codes, extending social security and workplace safety.
- Next-Gen GST simplified taxation, expanded the taxpayer base to 1.5 crore.
- The Export Promotion Mission (₹25,060 crore) strengthens MSME and first-time exporter support with finance, compliance, and market access.
- Rural employment reforms provide 125 days of guaranteed paid work.

In a major boost to India's trade competitiveness, the Union Cabinet approved the Export Promotion Mission (EPM) as a flagship structural reform with an outlay of ₹25,060 crore for FY 2025-26 to FY 2030-31. Announced in the Union Budget 2025-26, EPM marks a strategic shift from fragmented export support schemes to a single, outcome-based and digitally driven framework, aimed at empowering MSMEs, first-time exporters, and labour-intensive sectors. The Mission integrates financial support (Niryat Protsahan) including affordable trade finance and credit enhancement with non-financial enablers (Niryat Disha) such as quality compliance, branding, logistics, and market access.

The Mission

Facilitates access to affordable trade finance for MSMEs, Enhances export readiness through compliance and certification support.

Improves market access and visibility for Indian products, Boosts exports from non-traditional districts and sectors, and Generates employment across manufacturing, logistics, and allied services.

It aims to position India's export ecosystem for sustained, inclusive, and globally competitive growth in line with Viksit Bharat @2047.

Other Trade Reforms

During the year, trade and ease of doing business reforms focused on simplifying procedures, digitising interfaces, and reducing transaction costs, especially for MSMEs. Key measures included digital integration of trade systems (National Single Window, Trade Connect, ICEGATE, e-Commerce Export Hubs), Next Gen GST 2.0 with risk-based reforms, District Business Reform Action Plan (D-BRAP 2025) launched by DPIIT to decentralise approvals and inspections EoDB reforms, and MSME/start-up support across 154 targeted reforms. Enhanced market access through GeM and MSME-SAMBANDH has strengthened MSME participation in Government procurement. Additionally, export incentives under the Foreign Trade Policy and disbursal of ₹58,000 crore under Remission of Duties and Taxes on Export Products scheme (till March 2025) have provided a further boost.

Driving Outcomes: Towards a Future-Ready Economy

Taken together, the year's economic reforms reflect a clear shift towards outcome-based governance, reducing friction for citizens and businesses, enhancing transparency and efficiency, and laying the foundation for sustained, inclusive growth. By simplifying taxation, modernizing labour laws, strengthening MSMEs, boosting rural employment, and advancing digital payments, these measures collectively foster trust, resilience, and global competitiveness in India's economy.

The views expressed by contributors on this page are their own and do not necessarily reflect the policies or positions of the newspaper

Javid Ahmad Dar reviews RDD Kashmir performance, lauds record MGNREGA gains

KT News Desk

Srinagar, December 30: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development Department (RDD) and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar, Tuesday conducted a comprehensive review of performance of the Rural Development Department, Kashmir, focusing on flagship schemes and key development initiatives.

The Minister, as per an official statement, while chairing the review meeting, issued a series of directions to strengthen the delivery and accountability at the grassroots level. He directed that all pending IAY dues be reviewed and cleared on priority and PMAY-G installments be released expeditiously after due verification to ensure no eligible beneficiary is deprived.

Stressing inclusive growth, the Minister said MG-NREGA works must focus on economically weaker and vulnerable households for maximum livelihood support. He instructed that local PDD Junior Engineers be engaged for electrical works in DDC and BDC office buildings and the technical sanctions of all approved projects be shared with the concerned ACDs, ACPs and BDOs to ensure transparency. Emphasis was laid on speedy utilisation of SASCI funds, timely submission of next financial year work plans



by 31 March 2026 and prioritisation of water conservation projects, especially in water-scarce and upper reaches.

Regarding the Solid and Liquid Waste Management under SBM-G, the Minister called for incorporating ground-level inputs from BDOs. He underlined that the work plans must be prepared in consultation with the elected representatives, particularly MLAs. He further stressed timely completion of projects with strict adherence to quality standards.

He directed the officers to maintain professional conduct, administrative discipline and responsive public interaction while addressing public grievances.

During the meeting, Director RDD Kashmir presented a detailed overview of department's achievements, with special emphasis on MG-NREGA, under

which Kashmir Division has delivered exceptional results. Against an annual target of 1.34 crore person-days, the Division has already generated 1.87 crore person-days, marking a significant milestone.

The Minister was informed that over 82 percent e-KYC of job card holders has been completed. Notably, more than 98 percent of MGNREGA wage payments have been released within the stipulated 18 days timeframe, reflecting improved efficiency in service delivery.

The review also covered progress under PMAY-G 2.0, where a massive survey drive has resulted in 1.91 lakh households being identified as potential beneficiaries for upcoming phase of the programme. Besides, progress under CD and Panchayati Raj works, ADP, Capex and RGSA was also discussed in detail.

Mega women entrepreneurship, SHG mela held in Budgam

KT News Desk

BUDGAM, DECEMBER 30: A day long women entrepreneurship mela was Tuesday organised by District Employment and Counselling Centre (DE&CC) Budgam in coordination with NRLM Budgam at Govt degree College Magam.

Principal GDC Magam, Dr Taseelma graced the occasion as chief guest. The programme received a good response from the participation of hundreds of Self Help Group Members of NRLM Budgam.

At the outset, Assistant Director Employment, DE&CC Budgam, Shabnam Arif Mir, along with the Chief Guest, visited various stalls set up by SHGs and different line departments. The SHGs showcased a wide range of products reflecting their entrepreneurial skills, while stalls of line departments provided information on livelihood and self-employment schemes.

To encourage entrepreneurship and motivate participants towards self-employment, success stories of Model SHGs were presented during the mela, highlighting inspiring journeys of women entrepreneurs from the district.

On the occasion, representatives from line departments including Animal Husbandry, Handicraft and Handloom, Horticulture, and Agriculture briefed participants about various self-employment schemes and support mechanisms available to aspiring entrepreneurs.

DC Bandipora attends career counselling session at Kaloosa

KT News Desk

BANDIPORA, DECEMBER 30: A career counselling session was organised Tuesday, at the Auditorium Hall, Kaloosa, Bandipora by Mindwire Academy Bandipora to guide students towards informed career choices and personal growth.

The session, as per an official statement, was attended by the Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, Registrar, University of Kashmir, and Deputy Superintendent of Police Bandipora, who interacted with students and shared valuable insights from their professional journeys.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner encouraged students to be active participants in life, advising them to work hard, be players rather than spectators, and learn from people who have faced setbacks.

Emphasising the importance of vision, she urged students to "dare to dream," stating that dreams and goals are essential to give direction to life and career. She noted



that once a dream is firmly absorbed in the mind, half the journey towards success is achieved, and those who frame clear strategies eventually succeed.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner further said that while society offers numerous career suggestions, students must ultimately listen to their own mind and heart, adding that choosing a career is a

personal decision and the absence of a defined career path is not the end of life.

The speakers highlighted the need for self-belief, discipline and informed decision-making in an increasingly competitive environment.

The session was well received by students, who actively participated and benefited from the guidance shared by the distinguished guests.

42nd NCORD meeting held in Budgam DC stresses enforcement, rehab measures

KT News Desk

BUDGAM, NOVEMBER 30: The 42nd District-Level NCORD (Narcotic Coordination) Committee Meeting was Tuesday convened at the DC Office Budgam under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat, along with SSP Budgam Nikhil Borkar to review ongoing measures against drug abuse and to formulate fresh strategies for achieving a drug-free Budgam.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by ADC Budgam, all SDMs, ACD, CMO, DSWO, Medical Superintendent DH Budgam, Principals of all Government Degree Colleges, Executive Officers of Municipal Committees, and other concerned officers.

At the outset, the action taken on previous NCORD decisions was reviewed. It was informed that 192 kanals of land have been reclaimed and made agriculturally viable by the Agriculture Department through the destruction of wild cannabis during the last three years.

The chair was also apprised that 58 cases have been registered under the NDPS Act, 17 detentions made under PIT-NDPS, and 83 persons arrested so far in the district.

Addressing the meeting, the DC said that drug abuse is not merely a law-and-order issue but a grave social challenge impacting families, youth and the overall fabric of society.

He emphasised that the



administration will adopt a strict, zero-tolerance approach towards drug peddlers, traffickers and cultivators, while simultaneously ensuring care, treatment and rehabilitation for victims of addiction.

The DC stressed that a multi-pronged strategy encompassing enforcement, deterrence, treatment, rehabilitation and mass awareness is indispensable to effectively combat the menace. He directed all line departments to intensify coordinated action against narcotics cultivation and peddling, adding that road sides, embankments, forest fringes and Panchayat areas must be kept completely free of cannabis and poppy cultivation.

While appreciating the progress achieved so far, the DC remarked that continuous, visible and proactive enforcement is essential to sustain public confidence and deter offenders. He further stated that community participation and timely intelligence sharing are critical pillars in breaking the drug supply chain.

On regulation of drugs, the DC underscored the need for 100 percent CCTV coverage and Computerised Billing Systems

(CBS) in all chemist shops. It was informed that Budgam has 630 retail and 225 wholesale chemist outlets, all under strict monitoring.

The DC directed that regular inspections must continue and stringent action be taken against any violations. He further instructed the Drug Inspector to ensure wide publicity of enforcement actions, including cancellation of licences, to promote transparency and deterrence.

It was informed that 72 calls have been received on the Tele-MANAS mental health helpline, reflecting its growing role in providing psychological support.

The DC directed that such facilities be widely publicised to enable people to seek confidential and timely assistance.

The DC directed the Excise Department to work in close coordination with Revenue and Police authorities for destruction of illicit crops and prompt registration of FIRs.

SDMs were asked to engage religious scholars and community leaders to encourage sermons against substance abuse and promote the concept of "Nasha-Mukt Panchayats."

The meeting was informed

that the Rural Development Department shall organise special Gram Sabhas focusing on drug abuse awareness, while the DSWO shall conduct large-scale IEC campaigns across villages, towns and educational institutions.

The chair was apprised by ARTO budgam that 18 licenses of the drivers involved in narcotic drug trafficking have been suspended in the district.

The DC directed that the Addiction Treatment Facility (ATF) at District Hospital Budgam must remain functional round-the-clock, and noted that the Drug De-Addiction Centre is now fully ready for intake of patients requiring treatment and rehabilitation.

He also instructed that all Government Degree Colleges in the district ensure installation of CCTV cameras within campuses to strengthen preventive monitoring.

Reiterating the administration's zero-tolerance policy, the DC stated that Budgam must emerge as a model district by dismantling drug networks and safeguarding the future of its youth through collective action. He stressed that this mission requires active involvement of government departments, civil society, parents, teachers, religious scholars and community elders.

He added that a holistic, community-driven and sustained approach is the only way to permanently eradicate the drug menace from the district.

Mega women entrepreneurship, SHG mela held in Kishtwar

KT News Desk

KISHTWAR, DECEMBER 30: The District Employment and Counselling Centre Kishtwar Tuesday organised a Mega Women's Entrepreneurship and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) Mela under Mission YUVA here in the Conference Hall DC Office.

Deputy Commissioner, Pankaj Kumar Sharma, as per an official statement, attended the event as the chief guest and inaugurated the mela by lighting the ceremonial lamp.

Around 500 women entrepreneurs, SHG members and aspirants hailing from different parts of the district took part in the event.

Officers from different departments provided direct guidance to the women participants regarding government schemes, financial assistance, skill training and market linkage support.

Women entrepreneurs and SHG members displayed a wide range of products, including handicrafts, embroidery work, handloom items, tailoring products, processed food items and other micro-enterprise outputs. The stalls reflected the creativity, skill and entrepreneurial potential of women in district Kishtwar.

DC Kathua reviews progress of PWD sector schemes

KT News Desk

KATHUA, DECEMBER 30: Deputy Commissioner Kathua, Rajesh Sharma reviewed the progress of the Public Works Department (PWD) sector schemes at a meeting held Tuesday.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Chief Planning Officer, Ranjeet Thakur; Superintendent Engineer PWD, Executive Engineer PWD, AEEs, Technical Officer and other concerned officers.

Executive Engineer PWD apprised the chair about the physical and financial progress of the works being executed under District Capex, NFB, Untied funds, Urban Development, Seema Suraksha Yojana, CDF, NABARD, UT Capex, CRF and City & Town schemes.

It was informed that out of 32 NABARD funded projects, 21 have been completed and the work on the rest is in progress.

Similarly, work has been completed on six out of 16



projects taken up under UT Capex. Taking a serious view of the slow pace of execution under the City & Town scheme, the DC directed the officers to ensure adherence to timelines and quality standards. He emphasized fixing accountability and avoiding delays at all levels.

The Deputy Commissioner

Women entrepreneurship, SHG mela held in Kupwara

KT News Desk

KUPWARA, DECEMBER 30: District Administration Kupwara, in collaboration with the District Employment & Counselling Centre (DE&CC) Kupwara and JNRLM Kupwara, Tuesday organized a Women Entrepreneurship and Self-Help Group (SHG) Mela at Town Hall, Kupwara.

The event, as per an official statement, witnessed an overwhelming response from Self-Help Groups, aspiring women entrepreneurs, established women entrepreneurs, and a large number of participants from across the district. Several successful SHG entrepreneurs set up stalls to showcase and market their unique products. Line departments including the Agriculture Department, Fisheries, District Industries Centre (DIC), Handicrafts and Handloom Department, and the Mission YUVA Helpdesk also installed informative stalls on the occasion.

The stalls showcased a wide range of handmade apparel, handicrafts, dairy products, and agri-allied products, reflecting the diverse livelihood initiatives promoted under JKRLM-Umed and Mission YUVA.

The programme was presided



over by Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDCC) Kupwara, Mufti Fareed-Din as the Chief Guest. He visited various stalls, interacted with women entrepreneurs, and appreciated their efforts towards self-reliance and economic empowerment.

During the programme, several successful women entrepreneurs shared their inspiring entrepreneurial journeys, highlighting challenges, opportunities, and the role of government initiatives in their growth.

The stalls showcased a wide range of handmade apparel, handicrafts, dairy products, and agri-allied products, reflecting the diverse livelihood initiatives promoted under JKRLM-Umed and Mission YUVA.

The programme was presided

members and local women entrepreneurs representing different blocks of the district. The Mela served as an important marketing platform, providing direct customer interaction to women entrepreneurs, enabling them to enhance their income, improve product quality through customer feedback, and build confidence as independent business owners.

The District Administration Kupwara, in collaboration with Mission YUVA and JKRLM, is utilizing this initiative to strengthen women-led enterprises, encourage branding and formalization of SHG products, and motivate more rural women to join SHGs and adopt sustainable livelihood opportunities.

To further engage and motivate budding women entrepreneurs, Mission YUVA songs and informative videos were played during the programme.

On the sidelines of the event, Ishfaq Ahmad Wani, Employment Officer, DE&CC Kupwara, briefed the participants about the financial support and assistance available under Mission YUVA.

Certificates of appreciation were distributed among the successful women entrepreneurs by the Chief Guest in recognition of their achievements and contributions.

Chief Secy reviews prospects for eco-tourism promotion, MAP cultivation in J&K

KT News Desk

Jammu, Dec 30: Chief Secretary Atal Dullo on Tuesday chaired two separate high-level meetings to review the initiatives undertaken for promotion of eco-tourism by the Forest Department and the commercial cultivation of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAP) across J&K.

The meeting on eco-tourism was attended by the Commissioner Secretary, Forests; Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF); Chief Wildlife Warden; Managing Director, Forest Development Corporation; Director, Remote Sensing and other senior officers of the Forest Department.

During the deliberations, the Chief Secretary emphasised the need for a more comprehensive and well-planned approach to eco-tourism development. He advised the department to identify destinations that can offer multiple eco-tourism options, enabling visitors to choose activities based on their interests and the duration of their stay.



The role of the Forest Development Corporation in strengthening eco-tourism infrastructure and services was discussed in detail. The PCCF, Suresh Kumar Gupta, highlighted successful eco-tourism models adopted in other states, including the Ranjat Sagar Lake initiative in Punjab and similar models in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, which were examined for possible replication in J&K.

Commissioner Secretary, Forests, Sheetal Nanda, stated that eco-tourism plan is still at a formative stage, with significant scope for improvement in planning, institutionalisation and execution. She underscored that the initiative aims at sustainable utilisation of the region's rich natural resources while ensuring conservation of forests and wildlife, community

participation, livelihood generation and preservation of local culture.

The presentation by the Managing Director, Forest Development Corporation, outlined a structured roadmap for strengthening eco-tourism across identified destinations. The plan includes identification and selection of suitable eco-tourism sites and land parcels, development of environmentally compliant camping infrastructure, and capacity building through creation of Master Trainers for various eco-tourism activities.

The roadmap also envisages development of quality hospitality services through outsourcing and engagement of professional service providers at each eco-tourism site to ensure high standards of service delivery.

Noorkash Foundation, Smile Foundation organise free medical camp for orphans at Bijbehara

KT News Desk

Bijbehara (Anantnag): In a significant humanitarian initiative aimed at reaching the most vulnerable sections of society, Noorkash Foundation in collaboration with Smile Foundation organised a free medical camp at the Yateem Trust, Pazal Pora, Bijbehara.

The camp was held at Bostanul-Banat Orphanage, where dozens of orphaned children and locals received much-needed medical attention and health consultations.

A team of experienced doctors from Ayush department and healthcare workers attended the camp and conducted comprehensive medical check-ups of the children.

The doctors examined the orphans for common ailments, assessed their overall health status, and provided free medicines wherever required. Special attention was given to nutritional deficiencies, seasonal illnesses, and general well-being, ensuring that each child received personalised care and guidance.

Speaking on the occasion, Chairperson of the Smile



Foundation, Ms Rasrat Jan, said that organising such medical camps is a continuous effort by the foundation to ensure healthcare reaches every corner of Kashmir. "We believe that access to basic healthcare is a fundamental right, especially for children who are orphaned and living in institutional care. Smile Foundation has been organising free medical camps across different parts of Kashmir, and we will continue to extend these services to underserved and neglected

communities," she said. Chairman of Noorkash Foundation, Waqar Fayaz, said that the initiative reflects the organisation's commitment to social welfare and inclusive development.

"Our aim is to reach every down-trodden and marginalised section of society. Orphans and underprivileged children deserve care, dignity, and proper medical attention. This camp is part of our broader mission to serve humanity without

discrimination," he said, adding that Noorkash Foundation will continue to collaborate with like-minded organisations to maximise its outreach.

The management of the Yateem Trust appreciated the efforts of both foundations. Trustee Noor Mohammad Vaid expressed gratitude to the organisers and medical team for their selfless service.

"We are thankful to Smile Foundation and Noorkash Foundation for holding this medical camp at our orphanage. Such initiatives not only address immediate health concerns but also bring comfort and hope to these children," he said.

Local residents and staff of the orphanage also welcomed the initiative, terming it a timely and much-needed intervention. They stressed that regular medical camps are essential for the holistic development and healthy upbringing of orphaned children.

The organisers said similar welfare programmes, including health awareness drives and support services, will be organised in the future to ensure that no vulnerable section of society is left behind.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Security operations

same period, Pakistan also attempted drone attacks on four consecutive nights.

Indian Army air defence units intercepted and neutralised all incoming drones, officials said.

Along the LoC, Indian forces destroyed more than a dozen terror launch pads using ground-based weapons, disrupting infiltration routes and logistics networks.

On May 10, the Director General of Military Operations of the Indian Army was approached by his Pakistani counterpart, following which an understanding was reached to halt firing and military action.

The Border Security Force reported that eight terrorists were killed while attempting to infiltrate across the LoC in four separate foiled bids.

It said infiltration attempts along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Kashmir Frontier have declined this year, with only four attempts reported so far. Of these, two occurred before Operation Sindoar and two afterward.

A total of 13 terrorists were involved in these attempts, of whom eight were neutralised by security forces and five were pushed back.

The Government has strengthened intelligence, inter-agency coordination, and border management, enhancing detection of infiltration attempts, neutralization of terror networks, and monitoring online radicalization, Minister of State for Home Affairs Nitin Rai told the Lok Sabha during Winter session.

Measures include upgraded Multi-Agency Centres, AI-enabled analysis, improved CAPF and State police capabilities, advanced surveillance technologies, and forensic modernization projects, leading to reduced terror threats and better operational preparedness.

Security force casualties were also reported during the year. A soldier was killed in a gunfight with the terrorists in the Basantgarh area of Udhampur in April this year.

Two Army personnel lost their lives in an IED blast near the Line of Control (LoC) in the Akhnoor sector in February this year.

Additional casualties occurred during cross-border firing in May and in action along the LoC in Baramulla district in August 2025.

Further losses were reported in encounters across Kulgam, Kishtwar, Rajouri, and Kupwara.

NOWGAM BLAST

On November 14, a powerful explosion inside Nowgam Police Station on the outskirts of Srinagar killed nine people and injured at least 32 others, unsettling the valley. The deaths were widely mourned across the region.

Jammu and Kashmir Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat said the blast was an accidental explosion.

The J&K government announced ex-gratia of Rs 10 lakh for families of the deceased and Rs 1 lakh for the injured.

In December, the Lieutenant Governor provided government appointment letters to the victims' families.

Officials said counter-terror operations and border management remained the focus through the year as security forces continued efforts to prevent infiltration and dismantle militant networks.

HOME MINISTER AMIT SHAH, LG SINHA HAIL J&K POLICE

Union Home Minister Amit Shah hailed the J&K Police for their role in investigating the November 10, 2025, Red Fort blast in Delhi.

During the Anti-Terrorism Conference-2025 on December 26, Shah described the probe as a "masterclass" and an "outstanding instance of water-tight investigation".

He cited the investigations into both the Pahalgam attack (April 2025) and the Delhi blast as models that intelligence agencies worldwide would study.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha also praised Jammu and Kashmir Police for thwarting many terrorist incidents in the country by dismantling a pan-India 'white-collar' terror module.

Referring to the investigations carried out by J&K Police in Red Fort blast, LG Sinha said that by exposing the pan-India terror network, Jammu and Kashmir Police thwarted many terror incidents in the country and achieved a big success in its fight against terrorism. (KNO)

PM Modi meets

enabler of cross-sectoral productivity and also discussed the continued scaling of India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI).

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Principal Secretaries to Prime Minister P K Mishra and Shaktikanta Das, Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Suman Bery, Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) V Anantha Nageswaran, Niti Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam, and other members of the Aayog were present in the meeting.

Besides, several renowned economists and experts were part of the discussion, including former CEA Shankar Acharya, Ashok K Bhattacharya, N R Bhanumurthy, former RBI MPC member Ashima Goyal, Dharmakirti Joshi, Umakanth Dash, Panki Chakraborty, Indranil Sen Gupta, Samiran Chakraborty, Abhijan Das, Rahul Bajaria, Monika Halan and Siddhartha Sanyal.

2025 records highest

till the end of August, with updated data shared with the Ministry of Home Affairs placing the toll at 199 by late December, the highest for any comparable period in the last 15 years.

The number of extreme weather events reported in 2025 till August stood at 224, comparable to previous years such as 2023 (234), 2021 (220) and 2014 (245).

However, the sharp increase in fatalities indicates a rise in the intensity and impact of such events.

Cause-wise data shows that flash floods and cloudbursts accounted for the highest number of deaths during the period under review, with 250 fatalities recorded between 2010 and August 2025.

Heavy snow and avalanches followed closely, with 241 deaths, while landslides claimed 162 lives.

Heavy rainfall alone resulted in 125 deaths, while thunderstorms and lightning caused 47 fatalities.

Windstorms accounted for 24 deaths, cold wave incidents led to seven deaths, while no deaths were reported due to heatwaves during this period.

District-wise data reveals that Kishtwar and Ramban recorded the highest cumulative fatalities between 2010 and August 2025, with 115 and 106 deaths, respectively.

Reasi reported 74 deaths, while Kupwara recorded 63 fatalities. Other districts with notable death tolls include Anantnag (47), Bandipora (43), Jammu (36), Rajouri (33) and Leh (33).

Samba recorded the lowest number of deaths at four during the period.

Officials said the Jammu division accounted for a disproportionate number of deaths in 2025, particularly during the monsoon months, due to repeated cloudbursts, flash floods and landslides.

Over the 15 years from 2010 to August 2025, Jammu and Kashmir recorded a total of 3,473 extreme weather events, resulting in 856 deaths.

Jammu symbol

policy and emphasis on industrialisation and promotion of small-scale industries played a crucial role in building the foundation of a self-reliant India today," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for ensuring that Netaji's legacy received its rightful place in history.

The Lieutenant Governor appreciated the Jammu Municipal Corporation, Jammu Development Authority, Housing & Urban Development Department and District Administration for their collaborative endeavour to honour Netaji's legacy.

He also called for holding regular commemorative events on December 30th every year.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor visited the photo gallery depicting life history of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. A documentary showcasing Netaji's leadership and his pivotal role in India's independence was screened.

Sham Lal Sharma and Arvind Gupta, Members of Legislative Assembly; Mandeep Kaur, Commissioner Secretary Housing and Urban Development Department; Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Bhim Sen Tuti, IGP Jammu Zone; Shiv Kumar Sharma, DIG Jammu-Samba-Kashmir Range; Dr Devansh Yadav, Municipal Commissioner Jammu; Dr Rakesh Minhas, Deputy Commissioner Jammu; Rupesh

Kumar, Vice Chairman JDA and senior officials of civil and police administration were present. Padma Shri Prof Vishwamurti Shastri; Padma Shri Dr SP Varma, prominent citizens and people from different walks of life also attended the National Flag Hoisting ceremony (KNO)

Indian Army

marked a grim escalation, aiming to disrupt tourism, incite fear, and challenge security gains in the region post the abrogation of Article 370. The incident drew widespread international condemnation and intensified calls for accountability, setting the stage for India's calibrated response.

Planning and Execution

Initiated on the night of May 7-8, 2025, Operation Sindoar was a joint endeavour emphasising precision strikes on terrorist facilities while avoiding escalation into full-scale conflict.

Command and Oversight:

Operational planning was handled by the Indian Army's Military Operations Branch, with real-time monitoring from the Directorate General of Military Operations. Senior leadership, including the Chief of Defence Staff and Service Chiefs, oversaw the execution.

Targets Neutralised:

Nine terrorist camps linked to groups like Jaish-e-Mohammed, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and Hizbul Mujahideen were destroyed. Seven were hit by Army precision artillery and munitions, while the Indian Air Force eliminated the remaining two. Additional strikes along the Line of Control dismantled over a dozen launch pads, disrupting infiltration networks.

ESCALATION CONTROL

India maintained that no Pakistani military or civilian sites were targeted, focusing solely on terror infrastructure. Strikes were time-bound and calibrated to reinforce deterrence without broader provocation. Pakistan responded with drone and missile attacks on May 7-10, targeting Indian assets. These were largely foiled by integrated air defence systems, including the S-400 and indigenous Akash, showcasing advanced counter-UAS capabilities.

By May 10, Pakistan's DGMO requested a ceasefire, leading to an agreement halting military actions. The Operation Sindoar delivered a severe setback to cross-border terrorism, significantly degrading terror logistics and reducing infiltration attempts throughout 2025. Security forces reported fewer incidents, enhanced operational dominance, and a decline in active launch pads.

Security Gains:

The operation bolstered counter-insurgency efforts, allowing greater focus on development and normalcy. Follow-up actions, including joint operations like Operation Mahadev, neutralised key perpetrators linked to Pahalgam. The year's achievements have had a profound impact on security in Jammu and Kashmir while strengthening overall deterrence along India's borders.

CAPABILITY ENHANCEMENTS

The Army this year also focused on technology up gradations which significantly bolstered its stand-off strike capabilities. On December 1, a BrahMos unit under Southern Command, in coordination with Andaman & Nicobar Command elements, conducted a successful combat missile launch that validated high-speed manoeuvrability and terminal precision. Parallel development of extended-range BrahMos variants progressed steadily.

In rocket artillery, two additional Pinaka regiments became operational in June, enhancing rapid fire concentration. A major breakthrough came on December 29 with the successful test of the Pinaka Long Range Guided Rocket achieving approximately 120 km range, paving the way for future variants targeting up to 300 km.

Strengthening Army Aviation, long-awaited induction of the AH-64E Apache attack helicopters reached completion this year. The first three platforms arrived in July, followed by the final three in December, providing the Army Aviation Corps with advanced all-weather precision strike and anti-armour capabilities.

The new organisational concepts transitioned from planning to field deployment. A high-profile capability demonstration in Rajasthan in October showcased the integrated operations of Bhairav Battalions (specialised light commando units) and Ashni Platoons equipped for drone-based

intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and precision strikes. Accelerated plans aim to raise 25 Bhairav Battalions, alongside specialised Shaktiabha Regiments and Divyastra Batteries incorporating unmanned systems and loiter munitions.

Building on the declaration of 2024-2025 as the "Years of Tech Absorption," the Army achieved 91 per cent indigenisation of ammunition in service. Major inductions included a wide array of unmanned aerial systems – around 3,000 remotely piloted aircraft, 150 tethered drones, swarm systems, high-altitude logistics drones, and kamikaze variants.

Defence Acquisition Council approvals in August and December prioritised thermal imager-based night sights for BMP vehicles, medium-altitude long-endurance RPAs for tri-service roles, counter-drone technologies, and enhanced precision munitions.

STRATEGIC DISCOURSE THROUGH CHANAKYA DEFENCE DIALOGUE

The Army's flagship strategic forum featured a Young Leaders Forum on October 31, a curtain-raiser podcast by Chief of Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi on November 17, and the main dialogue in late November centred on the theme of reform-to-transform for national security and development.

FOSTERING INNOVATION FROM WITHIN

The Inno-Yoddha initiative for 2025-26 received a record 89 submissions, with 32 innovations selected for further development and potential fielding, underscoring the Army's commitment to grassroots ideas and Atmanirbhar Bharat. As 2025 concludes, the Indian Army stands taller – operationally assertive, technologically advanced, and strategically aligned – ready to meet emerging challenges while contributing decisively to India's security and prosperity. (KNO)

LG Sinha unveils

Consumption Loan and Online Account Opening, reinforcing the Bank's role as a development partner and facilitator of people's aspirations.

Santosh D.Vaidya, Principal Secretary, Finance Department; Dr. Mandeep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor; Sudhir Gupta, Executive Director, Sunit Kumar and Imtiyaz Ahmad, Chief General Managers J&K Bank attended the unveiling ceremony. (KNO)

CIK tightens noose

to create and circulate fake, motivated, exaggerated and out-of-context content."

India surpasses Japan to become world's 4th largest economy, says govt

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 30: India has surpassed Japan to become the world's fourth-largest economy with a size of USD 4.18 trillion, and is poised to overtake Germany to become the third-largest by 2030, the government said.

With continuing good growth numbers, India is also the world's fastest-growing major economy.

India's real GDP grew 8.2 per cent in the second quarter of 2025-26, up from 7.8 per cent in the first quarter and 7.4 per cent in the fourth quarter of the last fiscal.

"With GDP valued at USD 4.18 trillion, India has surpassed Japan to become the world's fourth-largest economy, and is poised to displace Germany from the third rank in the next 2.5 to 3 years with a projected GDP of USD 7.3 trillion by 2030," according to a government release providing a snapshot of reforms in 2025. The US is the world's largest economy, and China occupies the second spot. The growth momentum



further surprised on the upside, with GDP expanding to a six-quarter high in Q2 of 2025-26, reflecting India's resilience amid persistent global trade uncertainties, it said.

Domestic drivers, led by robust private consumption, played a central role in supporting this expansion.

The release further said international agencies have echoed this optimism and cited projections made by various entities. The World Bank

has projected a 6.5 per cent growth in 2026; Moody's expects India to remain the fastest-growing G20 economy with a growth of 6.4 per cent in 2026 and 6.5 per cent in 2027.

The IMF has raised its projections to 6.6 per cent for 2025 and 6.2 per cent for 2026; the OECD forecasts 6.7 per cent growth in 2025 and 6.2 per cent in 2026.

Also, S&P anticipates a growth of 6.5 per cent in the current fiscal and

6.7 per cent in the next; the Asian Development Bank has lifted its 2025 forecast to 7.2 per cent; and Fitch has raised its FY26 projection to 7.4 per cent on stronger consumer demand.

"India is among the world's fastest-growing major economies and is well-positioned to sustain this momentum. With the ambition of attaining high middle-income status by 2047- the centenary year of its independence, the country is building on strong foundations of economic growth, structural reforms, and social progress," the government said.

The release also highlighted that inflation remains below the lower tolerance threshold, unemployment is on a declining trajectory, and export performance continues to improve.

Furthermore, financial conditions have stayed benign, with strong credit flows to the commercial sector, while demand conditions remain firm, supported by a further strengthening of urban consumption.

Defence ministry inks Rs 4,666 cr contracts for battle carbines, torpedoes

PIB

New Delhi, Dec 30: Ministry of Defence, on December 30, 2025, signed contracts worth a total cost of Rs 4,666 crore for the procurement of Close Quarter Battle (CQB) Carbine and Heavy Weight Torpedoes. The contracts were inked in the presence of Defence Secretary Shri Rajesh Kumar Singh at South Block, New Delhi.

CQB Carbine

The contract for over 4.25 lakh CQB Carbine along with accessories, worth Rs 2,770 crore, for the Indian Army and the Indian Navy were signed with Bharat Forge Ltd and PLR Systems Pvt Ltd. This achievement marks the culmination of an extraordinary, persistent effort to equip Indian soldiers with world-class lethality, replacing legacy systems with cutting-edge indigenous technology under the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' vision.

As a cornerstone of the modern infantry arsenal, the CQB Carbine provides a critical edge in close combat through its compact design and high rate of fire, ensuring rapid, decisive lethality in confined spaces. The contract highlights the synergy between the Government and the private sector which will further give impetus to the Make-in-India initiative. This project will also play a

pivotal role in boosting overall economy, increasing employment avenues and will also empower indigenous defence industries by encouraging Indian MSMEs through components' manufacturing and raw material supply.

Heavy Weight Torpedoes

Google users can now change Gmail ID without losing existing data

Feature to roll out gradually

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 30: Google account holders can now change their primary '@gmail.com' email addresses to a new address while retaining all data from their existing account, as the tech giant begins a gradual roll-out of the feature.

The update, which is currently appearing on select language versions of Google's official support page, confirms that data saved in the account—including photos, messages, and emails—will remain completely unaffected when a user switches to a new Gmail ID.

"The email address associated with your Google Account is the address you use to sign in to Google services. This email address helps you and others identify your account. If you'd like, you can change your Google Account email address that ends in gmail.com to a new email address that ends in gmail.com."

"The ability to change your Google Account email address is gradually rolling



set as an alias...Data saved in your account, including photos, messages, and emails sent to your old email address, will not be affected," the website showed.

Users will be able to sign in to Google services such as Gmail, Maps, YouTube, and Drive using either the old or the new email address.

While the feature simplifies account management, Google noted that the option is being rolled out in phases and may not be available to all users immediately.

"The old email address in your Google Account that ends with gmail.com will be

out to all users," it said.

Google also noted that once a new Gmail address is created, users cannot create another new one for the next 12 months, though the old address can be reused at any time. To see if the feature is active, users can check the email section of their Google Account settings under the 'personal information' category.

Despite the data safety guarantee, Google advised users to back up their information before initiating the change, as some app settings may be reset during the process.

Mamata abetting infiltration for poll benefits; Bengal's demography changed, alleges Shah

PTI

Kolkata, Dec 30: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday alleged that West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee was abetting the infiltration of Bangladeshi, which has "dangerously altered" the state's demography over the past few years.

Addressing a press conference in Kolkata with months left for elections in the state, Shah said people of West Bengal were anxious over infiltration, which the BJP would end after coming to power in the state with a "two-thirds majority in 2026".

He said the assembly elections would take place in April, and the issue of "driving infiltrators out of the country" would be the key agenda.

Claiming that "a new BJP government will be formed in the state after April 15, 2026, as people have made up their minds", Shah announced that a "strong national grid" would be set up to end infiltration in Bengal.

"Insaan chhod dijiye, parinda bhi pur nahi maar paye, is prakar ki mazboot grid ki rachana hum karenge (forget humans, even birds won't be able to breach the grid we intend to build)," Shah said.

"Na keval ghoospet rokenge, saare ghoospetyon ko chun chun ke Bharat ke bahar nikalne ka kaam bhi BJP ki Bangal sarkar karegi (The BJP-led government in Bengal will not only stop the infiltrators, but it will also identify them one by one and drive them out of the country)," he added.

Shah alleged the Centre has not been able to complete fencing of the India-Bangladesh border because the West Bengal government was not providing the required land.

"Mamata Banerjee blames the BSF for not stopping infiltration. I am asking her from this public platform, which is the only state government bordering Bangladesh that doesn't provide land to erect border fences. It is your government which



doesn't provide land, which is why the task of border fencing doesn't get completed," he said.

Shah maintained that CM Banerjee must answer why the infiltration problem is more acute in Bengal than in BJP-ruled Assam, Tripura or in the country's western states like Rajasthan and Gujarat, besides Punjab and Kashmir.

"Why does it happen only in Bengal? That's because infiltration happens here under your direct monitoring, resulting in slow but steady change of the state's demography to strengthen your vote bank," he said.

Shah said the party will stop infiltration from the eastern borders and ensure revitalisation of Bengal once it comes to power in the state.

"BJP will form a government in West Bengal with a two-thirds majority," he said.

Shah said members of the Matua community have no reason to fear because of the SIR exercise.

"It is our pledge that all religiously persecuted refugees will be accommodated in the country. Even Mamata Banerjee cannot cause harm to the Matuas," he said.

Coming down heavily on the TMC government on corruption and women's safety, Shah alleged that the TMC has surpassed the Left in establishing the politics of fear and violence.

"There is no safety for women in Bengal. The incidents at RG Kar Medical College, Sandeshkhali and at the South Calcutta Law College stand testimony to how unsafe this state has become for women," he said.

Shah said top TMC leaders have been to jails on

charges of swindling public money, with machines to count cash recovered from their homes malfunctioning because of overheating.

"Bengal's development has come to a complete halt under this corrupt regime. TMC is now synonymous with corruption. Its top leaders have been to jail on charges of swindling public money," he alleged.

The BJP leader claimed that West Bengal's economy has witnessed an unprecedented slide, with more than 7000 industries fleeing from the state.

"The state has sunk to its lowest during the Trinamool's rule; there is no place left for it to slide further," he alleged.

Shah also took on the TMC regime over the law and order situation.

"It was believed that the politics of violence and revenge would end once the Communists were defeated, but they have surpassed even the Left in matters of failure to maintain peace. So far, more than 300 BJP workers have been killed. Over 3,000 BJP workers have still not been able to return to their homes. They are being pressured that they will be allowed there only if they carry the TMC flag," he alleged.

Shah appealed to the voters, who have "given Congress, Left, TMC opportunities to govern", to provide the BJP a chance.

"The people of Bengal have firmly resolved to replace the environment of fear, corruption, misgovernance and infiltration by reestablishment of its heritage, development and uplifting of the poor, which can only be brought about by a strong and focused BJP government," he declared.

Rajnath to attend 'Pran Pratishtha Dwadashi' at Ram temple today

PTI

Ayodhya, Dec 30: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will offer prayers to Ram Lalla and participate as the chief 'yajman' (host) in the 'Pran Pratishtha Dwadashi' programme at the Ram temple here on December 31, a senior official said on Tuesday.

He will also hoist a flag at the Annapurna temple, one of the seven located in the temple complex. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will also be present at the event. Ayodhya District Magistrate (DM) Nikhil Tikaram Funde said.

While the main programmes will be held on Wednesday and Thursday, the 'Pran Pratishtha Dwadashi' will continue till Friday. Rituals have been underway in the temple complex since Saturday. It is estimated that 5 to 6 lakh devotees will reach Ayodhya for Ram Lalla's darshan, an office bearer of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teertha Kshetra Trust said.

In anticipation of the heavy rush of devotees, Ayodhya town has been divided into five zones and 10 security sectors. Venue-wise nodal officers have been nominated who will monitor every activity. A high alert has been issued, he said.

Entry of vehicles into the city has been restricted and a total of 36



parking spots have been created. Holding areas have also been identified where devotees will be stopped, if needed, and sent for 'darshan' in a phased manner, Superintendent of Police rank officers have been made nodal officers in each zone and inspectors in sectors, the SP said.

Security has been tightened for VVIP visits.

Ayodhya town has been divided into five zones and 10 security sectors. Venue-wise nodal officers have been nominated who will monitor every activity. A high alert has been issued, he said.

Besides the Ram temple, police force has been deployed at

Nageshwarnath, Hanumangarhi, Kanak Bhawan, Rampath and ghats. Additional Superintendent of Police rank officers have been made nodal officers in each zone and inspectors in sectors, the SP said.

Companies of PAC and para-military forces have also been deployed and CCTV and drone cameras have been deployed to monitor things, he said.

Anti-drone systems have been activated at various places. Every activity will be monitored from the control room, he said.

An idol of Ram Lalla was consecrated at the temple on January 22, 2024, during a grand ceremony led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He called on people to go beyond the grand temple's construction to build the foundation of a "strong, capable and divine" India over the next 1,000 years.

Study finds anti-cholesterol drugs may reduce risk of death in diabetes patients



PTI

New Delhi, Dec 30: Statins, which help treat high cholesterol, may significantly reduce risk of death and major cardiovascular events in adults with type 2 diabetes, including among those considered at low cardiovascular risk, according to a study.

The findings published in the journal Annals of Internal Medicine challenge a long-standing uncertainty about whether patients at the lowest risk benefit from preventive statin therapy, and suggest that the drugs may have a broader protective value than previously assumed, researchers said.

"Statin use in T2DM (type 2 diabetes) for primary prevention was associated with reductions in all-cause mortality and major CVD (cardiovascular disease) across the full spectrum of predicted cardiovascular risk," the authors wrote.

Statins were found to lower the chances of dying from any cause and reduced the risk of major cardiac events for all patients, even those considered at low risk, they said.

Bangladesh's former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia dies

PTI

Dhaka, Dec 30: Bangladesh's first woman prime minister Khaleda Zia, who played a major role in restoring democracy after a period of tumultuous military rule and dominated the country's politics for decades, died on Tuesday after a prolonged illness. She was 80.

"My mother is no more," Zia's elder son and Bangladesh Nationalist Party's (BNP) acting Chairman Trique Rahman said.

Zia was a three-time prime minister and held the position of chairperson of BNP.

Her personal physician, Dr AZM Zahid Hossain, said she breathed her last early on Tuesday while receiving treatment at Evercare Hospital in Dhaka.

Zia's family members, including her elder son Tarique Rahman, his wife Zubaida Rahman, and their daughter Zaima, were present at the hospital. BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul



Islam Alamgir was also at the hospital.

Her party said she passed away at 6:00 am local time, "just after Fajr prayer".

Zia's funeral will be held on Wednesday after Zohr prayers at Parliament's South Plaza and the adjoining Manik

Mia Avenue, Law Advisor Asif Nazrul said.

She will later be laid to rest with full state honours beside the grave of her husband, former president and BNP founder Ziaur Rahman, at Zia Udayan in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in Dhaka, Nazrul

told reporters after a special meeting of the interim government's Advisory Council at the state guest house Jamuna.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alangir attended the meeting as a special invitee.

In a televised address to the nation, Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus announced a three-day state mourning and a one-day general holiday.

"At the death of former prime minister Begum Khaleda Zia, I declare three days of state mourning and a one-day general holiday tomorrow on the day of her Namaz-e-Janaza (funeral prayers)," he said.

Yunus urged people to maintain discipline and order during the funeral prayers and the observance of mourning across the country.

Zia had been suffering from multiple complex and chronic health conditions, including liver and kidney complications, heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, arthritis and infection-related problems.

Jaishankar to attend funeral in Dhaka today

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 30: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will attend Bangladesh's first woman Prime Minister, Khaleda Zia's funeral on Wednesday, according to a statement from the ministry of external affairs.

"The External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar will represent the

Government and people of India at the funeral of Begum Khaleda Zia, former Prime Minister of Bangladesh and chairperson of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party. He will accordingly visit Dhaka on 31 December 2025," the statement read. Begum Khaleda Zia died in the early morning today at the age of 80, while she was undergoing treatment at Evercare Hospital in

Dhaka.

According to a BNP statement on Facebook, Zia died at around 6 am (local time), shortly after the Fajr prayer. "Khaleda Zia passed away at around 6:00 am, just after Fajr prayer," the BNP statement read.

"We pray for the eternal peace of her soul and ask everyone to pray for her departed soul," it added. Zia was

admitted to the capital Dhaka's Evercare Hospital on November 23 with a lung infection. The former Prime Minister has been suffering from various physical ailments, including heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, liver cirrhosis, and kidney complications, for a long time, and earlier this month, she was sent to London for advanced medical treatment for her ailments.

Sri Lanka appoint Lasith Malinga as fast bowling consultant to aid T20 World Cup preparations

IAN

Mumbai, Dec 30: Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) has appointed Lasith Malinga, one of their greatest bowlers in white-ball cricket, as Consultant- Fast Bowling Coach for the national men's team on a short one-month term to support their preparations for the upcoming Men's T20 World Cup 2026 to be jointly hosted with India.

Malinga, one of the few sling bowlers, has represented Sri Lanka in 30 Tests, 226 One-Day Internationals, and 84 Twenty20 Internationals, claiming 101, 338, and 107 wickets, respectively, in each category. He was a key member of the Sri Lanka team that won the ICC T20 World Cup in 2014 in Bangladesh and

finished as runners-up twice -- in 2009 in England and 2012 at home. He had also finished as a runner-up twice in the 50-over World Cup -- in 2007 and 2011.

"Sri Lanka Cricket wishes to announce the appointment of Lasith Malinga as the Consultant – Fast Bowling Coach for the National Men's Team. His appointment is on a short-term basis for a period of one month, effective from December 15 to January 25, 2026. "Malinga will support the preparation and development of Sri Lanka's national fast bowlers as part of the build-up to the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026," the SLC informed in a release on Tuesday. The Sri Lanka Cricket aims to leverage Malinga's vast international experience and renowned

expertise in death bowling, particularly in the shortest format of the game, to strengthen Sri Lanka's preparations for the upcoming World Cup, the release said. The ICC Men's T20 World Cup, co-hosted by Sri Lanka and India, will commence on February 7, 2026, with the opening match scheduled to be played at the SSC, Colombo. The 42-year-old Malinga has vast experience in T20 cricket, having played franchise cricket all over the world besides international matches in the shortest format.

Malinga has played for Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise Mumbai Indians from 2008 till 2017 and then from 2019-2020. Besides, he has represented Melbourne Stars in the Big Bash League, Guyana Amazon Warriors in Caribbean Premier League (CPL), Dhaka Gladiators, Rangpur Riders and Khulna Titans in Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) and Ruhuna Royals and Southern Express in the domestic Sri Lanka Premier League.

Harmanpreet, Paes, Gopichand to be part of Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue

ANI

New Delhi, Dec 30: The Department of Youth Affairs is set to host the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue (VBYLD) 2026, a flagship initiative aimed at giving India's youth a meaningful role in shaping the vision of a Viksit Bharat. Harmanpreet Kaur, Leander Paes, and Pullela Gopichand, among other icons, will be part of the event, as per the VBYLD release.

According to a VBYLD release, in the 2026 edition, over 50 lakh youth from across the country participated in a nationwide quiz conducted through the MY Bharat and MyGov platforms. Based on their performance in the quiz, around 2.5 lakh youth were shortlisted for the essay round, where they were encouraged to articulate their ideas and solutions for building a Viksit Bharat in any of the 10 tracks of VBYLD.

After a detailed evaluation process, 12,219 young participants advanced to the state-level PPT rounds, presenting solution-oriented ideas before expert panels. So far, 34 States and Union Territories have completed their state championship rounds, ensuring representation from every region of the country. From these rounds, around 2,000 youth have been selected to participate at the national level. The selected contingents



from each State and Union Territory will be formally flagged off to New Delhi by Governors, Chief Ministers and UT Administrators.

The national-level Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue will be held from January 9 to 12, 2026, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. During the four-day programme, participants will engage in mentoring sessions, policy discussions, group activities and structured presentations. Young leaders will interact with a distinguished

Show TIMINGS

WEDNESDAY, 31ST DECEMBER

DHURANDHAR

HINDI - 11:00 AM, 02:10 PM, 04:40 PM, 06:15 PM

TU MERI MAIN TERA MAIN TERA TU MERI

(U/A 16+) HINDI - 11:15 AM, 06:50 PM

AVATAR : FIRE AND ASH

(UA 16+) ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES - 12:30 PM
3D HINDI - 03:00 PM

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Israel defends Somaliland move at UN amid concerns over Gaza motives



REUTERS

United Nations, Dec 30: Israel defended on Monday its formal recognition of the self-declared Republic of Somaliland, but several countries at the United Nations questioned whether the move aimed to relocate Palestinians from Gaza or to establish military bases.

Israel became the first country to recognize Somaliland as an independent and sovereign state on Friday.

The 22-member Arab League, a regional organization of Arab states in the Middle East and parts of Africa, rejects "any measures arising from this illegitimate recognition aimed at facilitating forced displacement of the Palestinian people or exploiting northern Somali ports to establish military bases," Arab League UN Ambassador Maged Abdelfattah Abdelaziz told the UN Security Council.

"Against the backdrop of Israel's previous references to Somaliland of the Federal Republic of Somalia as a destination for the deportation of Palestinian people, especially from Gaza, its unlawful recognition of Somaliland region of Somalia is deeply troubling," Pakistan's Deputy UN Ambassador Muhammad Usman Iqbal Jadoon told the council.

Israel's UN mission did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the remarks or address any of them in its statement at the council meeting. In March, the foreign ministers of Somalia and Somaliland said they had not received any proposal to resettle Palestinians from Gaza.

US President Donald Trump's peace plan for Gaza states: "No one will be forced to leave Gaza, and those who wish to leave will be free to do so and free to return." Israel's

Slovenia's UN Ambassador Samuel Zbogar disputed her argument, saying: "Palestine is not part of any state. It is illegally occupied territory ... Palestine is also an observer state in this organization."