



NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS

Amid surge in tourist arrivals, security enhanced in Kashmir

Visitors throng Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Sonamarg to welcome 2026

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Dec 31: Authorities have beefed up the security across Kashmir as tourists in large numbers have arrived in the Valley to celebrate the New Year.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) popular destinations including Gulmarg, Sonamarg, and Pahalgam are full. "Authorities have made the security arrangements stringent to ensure a safe and orderly festive environment. A tight vigil is being maintained at key entry points, including Qazigund, the gateway to Kashmir, and at other prominent locations," said an official.

He said, "Frisking and vehicle inspections have been intensified to ensure public safety."

"Personnel of Jammu and



Photo: KNO | Shah Jehangir

Kashmir Police, the CRPF, and other forces have been deployed in strength to ensure that celebrations pass off

peacefully," the official said, adding, "Senior officials reviewed the security scenario at Lal Chowk in Srinagar on late

Wednesday evening. They also interacted with tourists and exchanged greetings. They reviewed security arrangements as visitors gathered to welcome the year 2026."

"All forces are on high alert, crowded areas are being monitored 24x7," the official added. Security personnel have been deployed in large numbers along the Gulmarg-Tangmarg road to ensure public safety and maintain law and order.

"Pahalgam, Gulmarg, and Sonamarg witnessed a heavy rush throughout the day, with visitors enjoying the picturesque landscapes and winter festivities. The smooth crowd management, with checkpoints and patrolling are aimed at ensuring minimal disruption," said an official.

Adding to the festive mood, the Meteorological Department forecast light | [More on P6](#)

LG Sinha, CM Omar extend New Year greetings

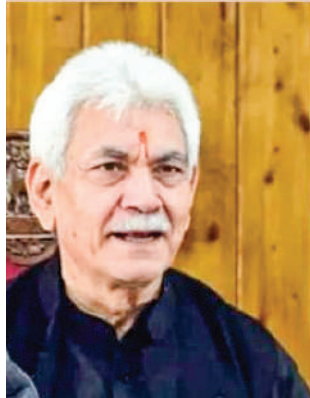
KT News Desk

Jammu, Dec 31: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday greeted the people on the eve of the New Year 2026.

In a message, the Lieutenant Governor said, "On the occasion of the New Year, I extend my greetings and best wishes to all the citizens. The New Year festivity brings new hopes and opportunities in our life. Let us commit ourselves towards building a happier and healthier society and to take J&K to new heights of development and prosperity. Let us also dedicate ourselves to ensure the welfare and progress of Bharat and pledge to take on the future challenges to realise our dreams, preserve our core values to align it with the life goals and give shape to our aspirations."

"May this New Year bring joy and prosperity to everyone," the LG added.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah extended warm New Year greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir and



wished them peace, prosperity and good health in the year ahead. In his message, the Chief Minister expressed hope that the New Year would usher in renewed optimism, harmony and opportunities for progress across Jammu and Kashmir.

The CM said the occasion offers a moment to reflect on shared aspirations and to reaffirm collective commitment towards building a more inclusive, resilient and prosperous Jammu and Kashmir. "May the New Year bring happiness to every household and inspire us

to work together with dedication and mutual respect for the overall development and well-being of our society," the Chief Minister said.

Omar Abdullah also called upon all sections of society, especially the youth, to contribute positively towards peace, unity and sustainable growth, and to play an active role in shaping a brighter future for the region.

The Chief Minister prayed for a year marked by stability, economic growth and strengthened bonds of brotherhood among the people.

On New Year, Gulmarg witnesses huge tourist influx

Waris Fayaz

Gulmarg, Dec 31: The world-famous ski resort Gulmarg is witnessing massive tourist arrivals as New Year celebrations kicked off with grandeur, snow and music on Wednesday.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the destination has registered nearly full occupancy in hotels and guesthouses, turning it into the hub of winter festivities in Kashmir.

"In view of the heavy foot-fall, extensive security and logistical arrangements have been put in place to ensure the smooth conduct of the festivities. Adequate deployment of police and rescue teams, crowd management systems and

medical facilities have been stationed across the resort to cater to the rush of visitors," said an official.

Chief Executive Officer, Gulmarg Development Authority, Tariq Hussain Naik, while welcoming tourists, expressed gratitude to nature and the visitors for making Gulmarg come alive this season. "Nature has always been kind to Gulmarg and this snowfall was much needed for the tourism industry, which is the backbone of the Valley," he said.

The CEO added that the destination has always remained the first choice for tourists across the country. "With prayers for peace, we welcome everyone and assure that we remain committed to maintaining a | [More on P6](#)

In 2025, NIA notches many milestones

Works out probes in Pahalgam, Delhi terror attack cases

Delivers over 92% conviction rate, chargesheets 7 accused

Makes remarkable progress in Red Fort blast case

KNO Desk

Srinagar, Dec 31: As 2025 marks the end, the National Investigation Agency achieved key milestones during the year, including successfully working out deadly Pahalgam and Delhi terror attacks that claimed many innocent lives.

According to details, available with news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the Anti-Terror Agency also maintained an impressive record of over 92 percent conviction rate while achieving major successes, including the extradition of 26/11 mastermind Tahavvur Rana.

The NIA also arrested



several terrorists and their associates involved in the dastardly Pahalgam and the Delhi terror attacks. At least 26 civilians were killed after terrorists opened fire at tourists in the Baisaran Valley

in Pahalgam in April this year, while nearly a dozen people were killed and several others injured after a high-intensity blast ripped through a car near Delhi's | [More on P6](#)

ACB's crackdown in 2025: 78 FIRs, major land scam busted

KNO Correspondent

Srinagar, Dec 31: In the year 2025, the Jammu & Kashmir Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) intensified its anti-graft campaign with registering 78 FIRs, including major trap and land scam cases and securing 13 convictions.

Alongside robust investigations, the Bureau reinforced preventive vigilance through 41 alert notes, 91 advisories and extensive public awareness initiatives, reaffirming its zero-tolerance stance on corruption.

According to the year-end 2025 details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the Jammu & Kashmir Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) sustained its



vigorous campaign against corruption in 2025, reinforcing transparency, accountability and integrity in public administration.

The details say, the Bureau remained unwavering in its mandate to take decisive action against corrupt practices while bolstering public confidence in governance.

"During the year 2025, the J&K ACB registered and

investigated a substantial number of corruption-related cases, including trap cases against public servants for demanding and accepting bribes, as well as matters involving disproportionate assets and misuse of official position."

The details with KNO, also say the Bureau investigated 78 cases, which included 36 trap cases, 18 disproportionate-assets cases, 15 cases of abuse of official position, 08 cases in connection with a major land scam involving the fraudulent alienation of custodian land and 1 case related to illegal appointments. Chargesheets were filed before the competent courts in 43 cases, demonstrating the Bureau's commitment to prompt and professional | [More on P6](#)

Valley may wake up to rain, snowfall on New Year

MET forecasts light to moderate rain, snowfall across most areas

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Dec 31: The Meteorological Department has forecast generally cloudy weather across Jammu and Kashmir, with light to moderate rain and snowfall expected at most places from Wednesday night till Thursday morning or forenoon, officials said.

As per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), snowfall was continuing in several areas of north Kashmir, including ski resort Gulmarg and Sonamarg, and upper reaches of the Valley like Gurez and Tulail, when this report was filed.

According to the MET Centre Srinagar, a western disturbance



Photo: KNO | Shah Jehangir

is likely to affect the Union Territory from the night of December 31 to January 1, bringing light to moderate rain or snowfall to most areas.

A few higher and extremely

high reaches of north and central Kashmir may receive moderate to heavy snowfall during this period.

On January 2, weather conditions are expected to remain

partly to generally cloudy, with brief spells of light rain or snowfall at isolated places, the department said.

From January 3 to January 5, the weather is likely to remain partly cloudy, while January 6 may witness generally cloudy conditions with the possibility of light snowfall over isolated higher reaches of north and central Kashmir.

According to the forecast, the weather conditions are expected to remain partly cloudy from January 7 to January 8, partly to generally cloudy on January 9 and 10, and partly cloudy again from January 11 to January 13.

The department has advised travellers and | [More on P6](#)

Kashmir rural areas see 15% drop in road accidents, 22% fewer fatalities in 2025

1,000 accidents, 210 fatalities this year: SSP Singh

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Dec 31: Kashmir valley's rural areas saw an improvement in road safety in 2025, recording a 15 per cent decline in accidents and a 22 per cent reduction in fatalities compared to the previous year, officials said on Wednesday.

According to official data shared by SSP Traffic Rural Kashmir, RP Singh, during a



Photo: KNO | Shah Jehangir

year-end press conference at the Police Control Room (PCR) in Srinagar, the efforts in enforcement and awareness campaigns

have started to pay off.

The SSP, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said that this year, 1,000

accidents and 210 deaths were reported in rural areas, down from 1,179 accidents and 279 deaths in 2024.

"As compared to 2024, the year 2025 witnessed a 15 per cent decrease in accidents and a 22 per cent decline in deaths. The results show that consistent enforcement and awareness campaigns can save lives," he said.

Singh attributed the improvement to collective efforts between the district police, civil and municipal administration, engineering wings, Beacon authorities, and educational institutions. | [More on P6](#)

CS reviews framework for promoting homestays in J&K

J&K Bank to provide loans up to ₹30 lakh at 8.20% interest

KT News Desk

Jammu, Dec 31: In a major push towards strengthening tourism-led livelihoods and expanding access to institutional credit in rural areas, Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Wednesday favoured the creation of a comprehensive framework aimed at promoting homestays and facilitating loans against SVAMITVA cards across the Union Territory.

The meeting, besides the Principal Secretary, Finance and Managing Director, J&K Bank,



was attended by Secretary, Labour & Employment, Director, Employment, Managing Director, JKTDC and other concerned officers.

While reviewing the initiatives in detail, the Chief Secretary impressed upon J&K Bank to actively support community-based tourism, enhance ease of credit for homestay operators and unlock the economic potential of rural property owners through SVAMITVA-enabled lending. He underscored the need for dedicated systems to give the required impetus to these initiatives across the UT.

The Chief Secretary also urged the Labour & Employment | [More on P6](#)

Div Com Kashmir reviews Natipora junction, Barzulla underpass to ease traffic flow

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 31: To address persistent traffic congestion and ensure smooth vehicular movement on the Rambagh-Natipora-Chanapora road, the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, accompanied by the Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, conducted a spot visit of Natipora junction and Barzulla underpass Wednesday.

During the visit, the Divisional Commissioner, as per an official statement, reviewed the existing traffic scenario and issued slew of directions for implementing strategic interventions.

He instructed the Public Works Department (PWD) to develop a T-junction at Natipora by utilizing available land of the Sasshastra Seema Bal (SSB) to facilitate smoother traffic movement and reduce congestion.

The Div Com further directed the PWD to expedite the removal of structures falling within the alignment of the right-side bund road of Doodh Ganga. He also instructed the department to establish connectivity of the left-side bund road of the Doodh Ganga from Barzulla to the Sanatnagar Flyover.

While inspecting the ongoing



construction of the Barzulla Bridge underpass, the Divisional Commissioner emphasized extending the bund road beyond the underpass to connect it with IG Road, aimed at eliminating wrong-side traffic movement from bridge to Rambagh Chowk. Besides, Garg directed the PWD to take up land acquisition matter with the CRPF required for road widening

and instructed the concerned authorities to prepare detailed drawings showcasing the proposed road layout, including the "before and after" configuration.

The Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, SSP Traffic Srinagar, senior officers of the PWD, and the Commanding Officer of CRPF were present during the inspection.

ADC Handwara reviews Republic Day arrangements

KT NEWS DESK

KUPWARA, DECEMBER 31: Additional Deputy Commissioner, (ADC), Handwara, Javed Naseem Masoodi Wednesday convened a meeting of all concerned officers at Environmental Hall Handwara here, to review the arrangements for celebrations of Republic Day in the Handwara sub division. On the occasion, the ADC stressed upon the officers to ensure elaborated and hassle free arrangements for conduct of the National event. He directed the officers to maintain proper coordination and ensure arrangements well in advance.

The ADC directed the line departments to display Tableaus during Republic Day to showcase developmental activities of their respective departments and government schemes. He said all efforts shall be made to make National functions more attractive and informative. He gave directions that Republic Day celebration functions shall be held at Tehsil headquarters and block headquarters with the same fervour and enthusiasm.

It was given out in the meeting that the main venue of Republic Day celebration shall be held at District Police lines (DPL) Kulangam Handwara for the Sub-Division, where the National flag will be hoisted and the VIP will take salute on the March past.

Air Quality Concerns SMC Commissioner inspects NCAP, SBM projects

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 31:In view of air quality levels in Srinagar remaining higher than normal despite the city being surrounded by lush green forests, the Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Faz Lul Haseeb, conducted an extensive inspection of various parts of the city to review the implementation of projects under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP). The inspection, as per an official statement, also covered works being executed under the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM). The inspection was aimed at strengthening on-ground interventions to address rising air pollution levels and improve overall urban environmental conditions.

Under NCAP, emphasis is being laid on enhancing green cover and reducing dust generation through measures such as plantation on central verges and medians of major city roads, paving of earthen shoulders to prevent re-suspension of dust, and the creation of green spaces through mass plantation and landscaping along the Western Highway and adjoining areas.

At Tulsi Bagh and Bemina, the Commissioner inspected green landscaping and upgradation works being carried out under NCAP and reviewed the

quality of execution on site. He directed the executing agencies to ensure timely completion while strictly adhering to prescribed standards.

During the visit to Bemina, the Commissioner also inspected the Children's Park developed by SMC, assessed the facilities created for safe recreation and community use, and emphasised that well-maintained public spaces are essential for promoting environmental health and urban livability.

The Commissioner further reviewed the construction and upgradation of Community Toilets/Public Toilets (CT/PT) at Bemina and the Parimpore Bus Stand under the Swachh Bharat Mission. He stressed the need for maintaining high standards of hygiene, functionality and regular upkeep, underscoring that clean, accessible and user-friendly sanitation infrastructure at high-footfall public places is vital for improving urban sanitation and enhancing commuter convenience.

The Commissioner was accompanied during the inspection by the Joint Commissioner (Administration), Joint Commissioner (Works), Superintending Engineer (Drainage), Executive Engineers, Divisional Forest Officer (SMC), and other senior officers of the Srinagar Municipal Corporation.

Public Notice

My name is Rutba in all my official documents and certificates. However, in my bank passbook, my name has been mistakenly recorded as Rutba Gaffar Dar.

I am in the process of correcting my name in the bank records to Rutba.

If any person has any objection to this change, they may contact Jammu and Kashmir Bank, Chattabal Branch, or call 99066 11532.

NOTICE

I have lost my HSRP Number plate of my Four Wheeler (MARUTI 800) bearing Reg. No. JK03B-3156 while travelling from Harwan to Shalimar. Now I am applying for new HSRP Number Plate. If anybody having any objection he/she may contact ARTO Anantnag/RTO Kashmir within 07 days after that no objection will be entertained.

MOHAMMAD SALEEM MALIK
S/o ALI MOHAMMAD MALIK
R/o NEW THEED,
HARWAN SRINAGAR

OFFICE OF THE CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OFFICER POSHAN PROJECT NARVAW

ADVERTISEMENT NOTICE

Applications on prescribed proforma (Annexure-I) are hereby invited from the eligible female candidates of the Panch wards/ Municipal Wards shown against the below mentioned Panchayat Halqas/ Municipal Wards, for the engagement of Sahayikas (AWHs) "preferably married" for the Anganwadi Centres of POSHAN Project Narvaw on "Honorarium basis". The applications along with required documents shall be deposited in the Office of the undersigned i.e Child Development Project Officer Narvaw by or before :16-01-2026 against proper receipt.

S.NO	NAME OF THE DISTRICT	NAME OF THE PROJECT	NAME OF PANCHAYAT/ MUNICIPALITY WARD	VACANCY OF SANGINIS (ANGANWADI Helpers)	
				NO. OF PANCH WARD/ MC. WARD	NAME OF AWC
1	Baramulla	Narvaw	Binner-B	Ward No:02	Binner-A
2	Baramulla	Narvaw	Ward No: 5Arapora	Ward No: 05	Sarie-Bazar
3	Baramulla	Narvaw	Ward No: 5Arapora	Ward No:08	Janbazpora-B
4	Baramulla	Narvaw	Ward No: 7 Azadgung	Ward No:07	Gousia Coloney
5	Baramulla	Narvaw	Fathgrah	Ward No:09	Putalwan
6	Baramulla	Narvaw	Fathgrah	Ward No:04	Fathgrah-A
7	Baramulla	Narvaw	Khawajabagh Ward No: 16	Ward No:16	Mir Mohalla Rangwar
8	Baramulla	Narvaw	Badmulla	Ward No:03	Badmulla-A
9	Baramulla	Narvaw	Heevan	Ward No:04	Mukdam Mohalla Heevan
10	Baramulla	Narvaw	Kitchama	Ward No:06	Sheikh Mohalla Kitchama
11	Baramulla	Narvaw	Dangerpora	Ward No:08	Taripora-A
12	Baramulla	Narvaw	Shutloo	Ward No:01	Batpora Shutloo
13	Baramulla	Narvaw	Jadeed Ward No:11	Ward No:11	Jadeed-B
14	Baramulla	Narvaw	Binner-A	Ward No:08	Sheikh Mohalla Binner

Criteria for Selection of Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helpers) shall remain as envisaged in the Govt. Order No: 103 JK (SWD) OF 2023 Dated 28.4.2023 i.e.

- > Women candidates in the age group of 18-37 years shall be considered for the post.
- > The candidate should be a domicile of the UT of J&K.
- > The candidate should be a resident of Electoral Ward where Anganwadi Centre is located.
- > Minimum qualification for Anganwadi Helper shall be Matriculation.
- > In case no matriculate candidate is available in the panch Ward, candidates with qualification not less than 8th standard shall be considered.
- > The committee shall select the most destitute/needly married women of the ward as helper from amongst those who fulfill the qualification criteria. In case no married candidate is available, unmarried candidate may be considered.

Self-attested copies of documents to be attached with the application form: -

- ❖ Panch Ward Certificate /present /continuous, ward residence certificate based on the voter list of the ward certificate issued by BDO concerned as per format enclosed, (in case of any dispute as to residence for any reason then the residence proof certifying the ward of residence from the concerned SDM/ACR shall be considered).
- ❖ Domicile Certificate issued by Tehsildar concerned.
- ❖ Date of Birth Certificate.
- ❖ Academic Qualification Certificates with Marks card of 10th.
- ❖ Non employment Certificate from a Gazetted Officer.

All applicants to submit affidavit stating following facts duly attested by 1st class Magistrate:

- 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 Class 10th for Anganwadi Helper and this is as per the 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 Helper.

Note: Prescribed Application Proforma can be had from the undersigned office "Free of Cost".

No:-CDPO/POSHAN/Adv/2025/ 676-689 **DIPK-9510/25**
DATED: 31-12-2025 Dated:- 30-12-2025

Child Dev. Project Officer
Poshan Narvaw

(ANNEXURE-I)

S.NO:

APPLICATION FORM FOR ENGAGEMENT OF SAHAYIKA (ANGANWADI HELPER)

- Name of the District: - Baramulla
- Name of the ICDS Project: NARVAW
- Name of the Anganwadi Centre for which engagement sought..... Panchayat Halqa.....
- Panch Ward/MC Ward..... Panchayat Halqa.....
- Name of the Candidate (In Block Letters).....
- Fathers Name (In Block Letters).....
- Marital Status: - Married /Un Married
- Husbands Name (if married)
- Place of Permanent Residence.....
- Mohalla.....Village.....
- Panch Ward Constituency & Number.....
- Name of the Panchayat Halqa.....
- House No..... (As per latest Panchayat Ward Electoral)
- Block:.....
- Address for Correspondence.....Mobile No:.....
- Date of Birth.....

D	D	M	M	Y	Y	Y	Y
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Age as on 01-01-2026.....

11. Academic Qualification

S.No	Examination passed	Board/School	Year of passing	Marks Obt.	Max. Marks	%age
1	Matric					
2	Middle					

14. Do candidate belong to family of retired AWH (Yes/No).

15. Documents attached.

❖ Panch Ward Certificate /present /continuous, ward residence certificate based on the voter list of the ward certificate issued by BDO concerned (in case of any dispute as to residence for any reason then the residence proof certifying the ward of residence from the concerned SDM/ ACR shall be considered).

- ❖ Domicile Certificate issued by Tehsildar concerned.
- ❖ Date of Birth Certificate.
- ❖ Academic Qualification Certificates with Marks card of 10th.
- ❖ Non employment Certificate from a Gazetted Officer.
- ❖ If candidate belongs to family of retired AWH, then copy of e-ration card/ any other valid proof.

UNDERTAKING

Signature of Candidate

I.....D/o,W/o.....R/o.....

do hereby certify that the contents of the application given above are correct and true to the best of my knowledge. In case any of the above contents is found incorrect, the selection committee shall have the right to reject my application and similarly revoke my engagement order.

Signature of Candidate.

FORMAT FOR PANCH WARD CERTIFICATE.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

This is to certify that the candidate namely.....D/o,W/o.....R/o..... is residing in Panch Ward.....of Panchayat Halqa.....

It is further certified that her name is enlisted in electoral / voter list of the panch ward at S. No.....

No:

Dated:

Signature of

Block Development Officer.....

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL& HOSPITAL DIVISION SRINAGAR (ERSTWHILE MECHANICAL HOSPITAL & CENTRAL HEATING DIVISION SRINAGAR)

Contact No: 0194-2496089, Email Id: exen-mechospmgr@jk.gov.in

GIST of e-tender (SHORT TERM)

e-NIT No: M&HDS/TS /2025-26/125/e-tendering,
Dated: 30.12.2025

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT e-tenders are invited in two cover system on percentage basis from registered/reputed/experienced firms with J&K State Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the below mentioned work: --

Name of Work	Est. Cost (In rupees)	Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees)	Time of completion	AA Accorded Vide No:	TS No	Earnest Money	Position of Funds
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Supply of winter gear shoes for operational and maintenance staff of Mechanical and Hospital Division, Srinagar	456000/-	200	10 days	M&HED/K/ Acctt/35 of 25-26 Dt:- 08.05.2025	Semhkt/14-60 Dt:-06.12.2025	2% of the estimated cost	Available with intending Department

The bidding document consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions

of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the Govt. website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule given below:-

1	Publish date	30-12-2025 (17:00 hrs)
2	Period of downloading of bidding document	30-12-2025 (17:00 hrs)
3	Bid submission start date	30-12-2025 (18:00 hrs)
4	Bid submission end date	06-01-2026 (13:00 hrs)
5	Date and time of opening of bids	06-01-2026 (15:00 hrs)

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
M&HD, Srinagar

No: M&HDS/TS/7498-7501

DIPK-9527/25
DATED: 31-12-2025

Dated: 30.12.2025

Kashmir handicraft exports boom in 2025

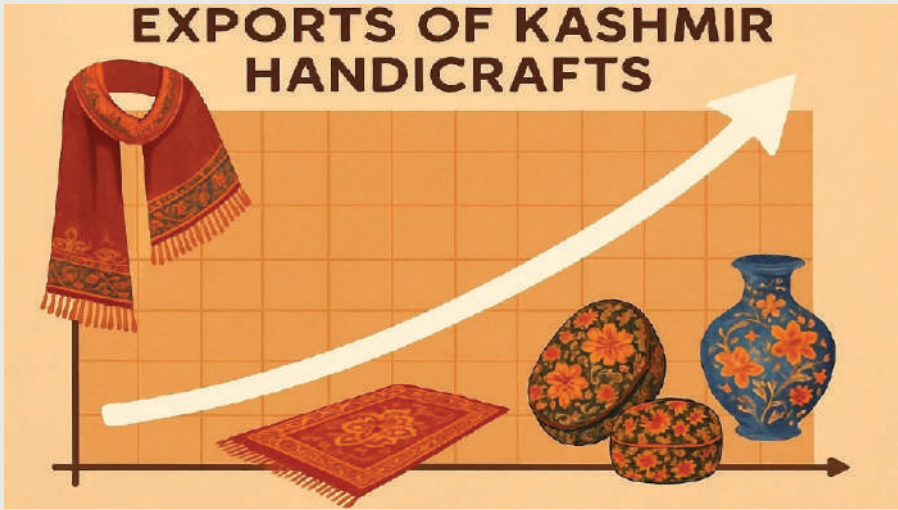
REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Dec 31: As Financial Year 2025–26 comes to a close, Jammu & Kashmir's world-renowned handicraft sector has maintained a steady export performance, reaffirming its role as a key economic and cultural pillar of the Union Territory.

According to official data, the first quarter of April–June 2025 recorded 309.62 crore rupees, up from 126.90 crore rupees in Q1 FY 2024–25, a 243 per cent increase.

The second quarter, from July to September 2025, contributed over 100 crore rupees, bringing the H1 total from April to September 2025 to 410 crore rupees, the data reveals, adding, "Third-quarter data for October–December 2025 is currently under consolidation and expected in January 2026. Officials noted that the last two quarters of the financial year are usually more buoyant, often driving year-end export figures higher."

The total handicraft exports in FY 2024–25 stood at 733.59 crore rupees, impacted by



global conflicts and market disruptions. Officials remain optimistic that FY 2025–26 may surpass last year's figures of geopolitical tensions—including the Ukraine–Russia war

and conflicts in the Middle East—ease.

Reviving a heritage economy

Kashmir's handicrafts, including pashmina and Kani shawls, hand-knotted carpets, papier-mache products, wood carvings, crewel embroidery, and chain-stitch items, continue to employ thousands of artisans across Srinagar, Budgam, Ganderbal, and South Kashmir, providing both livelihoods and cultural continuity.

Officials highlighted sustained demand from Gulf, European and North American markets, strengthened by quality improvements, product diversification, and efforts to explore new niche markets.

"Despite global slowdown pressures, our artisans have shown remarkable adaptability, from eco-friendly packaging to modern design innovations, without losing the essence of Kashmir's craft traditions," said Masrat Zia, Director Handicrafts and Handloom. "We are actively exploring new markets to ensure

our crafts reach global buyers directly, strengthening both incomes and the cultural legacy of the region."

Challenges and the road ahead

High logistics costs, competition from machine-made replicas, and the need for further supply chain digitisation remain challenges. The government is working on cluster-based support, artisan insurance, and export facilitation measures to sustain long-term competitiveness, Zia said.

Cultural capital with global reach

Experts said the export figures reflect more than economic numbers; they highlight the endurance of Kashmir's heritage industry, its global appeal and renewed confidence among artisans after years of pandemic and market disruptions.

With third-quarter data due next month, stakeholders remain optimistic that FY 2025–26 will close on a strong note, continuing the positive trajectory of Kashmir's handcrafted legacy in world markets—(KNO)

Kashmir tourism shows strong revival: Director Tourism

WARIS FAYAZ

Gulmarg, Dec 31: Kashmir's tourism industry is witnessing a strong revival and is set for a major leap in the coming years, Director Tourism Kashmir Syed Qamar Sajad said on Wednesday, as the region continues to host a record number of visitors amid the ongoing winter season.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the seven-day Winter Carnival in Gulmarg, the Director, anticipated a "mega upcoming year" for Kashmir's tourism sector and all those associated with it. "We are currently witnessing a major tourist footfall in the Valley, and we hope this momentum continues in the times ahead," he said. The Director also announced the revival and integration of an advanced skiing course across four major destinations—Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Sonamarg, and Doodhpatri (subject to site



opening). "We have started an integrated skiing program covering these main spots, equipped with drag lifts. Around 200 students are being trained to nurture local talent and help Jammu and Kashmir shine at national and

international platforms," he added. The winter carnival, inaugurated with the participation of MLA Gulmarg, Farooq Ahmad Shah and senior officials from the Tourism Department, features a series of recreational and cultural

events, including snow cricket, skiing, musical evenings and local art displays, showcasing the Valley's diverse culture and festive spirit.

Highlighting that tourism in Kashmir has bounced back strongly after a brief slowdown, the Director added that continuous infrastructure upgrades and new initiatives are being implemented to provide tourists with a seamless experience. "Our focus is on quality services, safety and developing sustainable tourism models that benefit both locals and visitors," he said.

Reiterating the department's commitment to promoting peace through tourism, the Director said the Valley's snow-covered peaks and tranquil landscapes send a powerful message of harmony and togetherness. "We urge people across the country to visit and witness the Valley's beauty, peace and the warmth of its people," he added—(KNO)

Pahalgam bounces back on New Year

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Pahalgam, Dec 31: After a prolonged period of subdued tourist activity, the picturesque hill resort of Pahalgam in south Kashmir's Anantnag district has once again come alive with a significant influx of visitors on the occasion of New Year, bringing cheer to the local tourism industry. According to tourism stakeholders, hotel bookings in the town have surged to nearly 60 per cent, marking a welcome turnaround

as the ongoing Tourism Festival reaches its conclusion tonight.

The renewed rush of tourists coincides with the Tourism Festival organised by the Pahalgam Development Authority (PDA) in collaboration with various stakeholders, which kicked off on December 25 to project Pahalgam as a vibrant all-weather tourist destination.

The festival, featuring cultural programmes, local cuisine, music and recreational activities, is set to culminate tonight. Local hoteliers said the

New Year rush has brought much-needed relief after months of uncertainty.

"For a long time, business remained dull after the attack in April 2025. This New Year has brought hope. Around 60 per cent of rooms are booked, and walk-in inquiries are still coming," said a hotelier in Pahalgam. He added that tourists from Maharashtra, Gujarat, Delhi and neighbouring states are arriving in good numbers.

*Continued on
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J&K gets Rs 1430 Cr for disaster, infra rebuild



KNO

Jammu, Dec 31: In a major relief for the UT of J&K, the Central Government, on the recommendations of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), has approved a comprehensive allocation of over Rs 1430 Cr for reconstruction of damaged public infrastructure and implementation of

disaster mitigation measures across affected districts of the UT.

This significant development came to light during a high-level review meeting chaired by Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, which was attended by all Administrative Secretaries.

The meeting was convened to assess the progress of key

reform-oriented financial initiatives such as Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI) and SNA SPARSH, being monitored by the Finance Department and implemented across various departments of the UT Government.

*Continued on
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Govt mulls regularising daily wagers: Minister Dar

KNO

Srinagar, Dec 31: In a significant development, the National Conference-led government on Wednesday said it is contemplating the creation of a mechanism for the regularisation of daily wagers.

Speaking to reporters, cabinet minister Javid Ahmad Dar said the government is actively considering such a mechanism to address the issue.

"You should know that after several SROs were abolished through the Jammu & Kashmir Reorganisation Act, our efforts are now focused on creating a mechanism for the regularisation of daily wagers,"

Dar said. He added that the matter was discussed in the last council of ministers meeting. "It would be premature to comment further, but our efforts are directed towards taking positive steps for daily wagers," he said.

In the last budget session, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah constituted a high-level panel headed by the Chief Secretary to examine the regularisation of employees working as casual, seasonal labourers, and other workers.

The previous PDP-BJP government had enacted a regular engagement policy-SRO-520 of 2018—but only 577 workers were regularised under it—(KNO)

1 lakh jobs promised, only 2 retired relatives hired: LoP Sharma

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Dec 31: Leader of Opposition Sunil Sharma on Wednesday launched an all-out attack on the National Conference (NC) government, labelling it as a regime of nepotism, betrayal, and deception that has "cheated unemployed youth" and "fooled the public with hollow promises."

Speaking to reporters, Sharma slammed the government over re-employment of a retired official. "A retired officer - conveniently a blue-eyed relative of a leader- has been parachuted into service through GAD orders. Earlier, another retired official was appointed in the Tourism Department," Sharma said.

The BJP leader said the "anti-youth policies" of the Omar-led government have "shattered public trust" and "mocked the very promises made during elections."

"Omar Abdullah pledged one lakh jobs for the youth. What did he deliver? A handful of posts to relatives. The BJP strongly condemns this betrayal and warns the government against continuing such corrupt practices," Sharma asserted.

Turning his guns on NC's welfare claims, Sharma dismissed the promise of subsidised electricity as a "fraud



on the poor."

"Tell me, did anyone ever get the 200 free units Omar Abdullah promised in the last budget session? Even under the PM Surya Urja Mufat Bijli Yojana, eight lakh registered families in J&K are still waiting. This government thrives on lies, tricks, and failures," Sharma charged.

He alleged that the NC government has collapsed on every front - employment, governance, and development.

"They only rant about freedom, communalism, and Pakistan-China. But when it comes to actual development, nothing moves."

*Continued on
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Srinagar traffic enforcement improves in 2025

Challan disposal, fine collections surge

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Dec 31: In the year 2025, Traffic enforcement in Srinagar city saw marked improvement, with higher challan disposal rates, reduced pendency, and a sharp rise in fine collections.

Addressing the year-end press conference here, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Traffic City Srinagar, Ajaz Ahmad Bhat said the department recorded a 56 percent disposal rate of traffic challans, up from 30 percent last year, while revenue generation crossed 1 crore rupees.

"Last year there was hue and cry over nearly five lakh pending challans in courts. This year, our disposal rate has improved from 30 percent to 56 percent, and pendencies have come down to 44 percent. That is a major achievement," SSP Bhat said.

He attributed the progress to focused enforcement, closer coordination with courts,

and better public compliance. "This means people are now clearing their dues. We have also forwarded lists of repeated violators to the RTO and Transport Commissioner for license impoundment," he added.

COURT COORDINATION, TECHNOLOGY AND COMPLIANCE

The SSP said the department worked closely with court authorities to streamline pending challans. A dedicated investigator was appointed to verify and update old records, which led to quicker disposal and higher realization of fines.

Another key step, Bhat said, was linking traffic challans with pollution certificate issuance. "Now, violators who haven't cleared previous dues cannot obtain pollution certificates for their vehicles. This linkage has become an effective compliance tool," he said.

CITY-WIDE ENFORCEMENT AND PUBLIC COOPERATION

The SSP said Srinagar's traffic management has



improved visibly, though challenges persist due to limited infrastructure and rising vehicle density. "Our staff works under stress, but enforcement alone cannot solve congestion. Infrastructure and public cooperation are equally critical," he said.

He also acknowledged the

media's constructive criticism, calling it "a mirror that reflects both strengths and shortcomings." "Sometimes media criticism helps us identify gaps. We consider it positive feedback that pushes us to perform better," he said, thanking journalists and citizens for their support.

STRUCTURAL AND

STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS

Highlighting recent interventions, the SSP said E-rickshaws were banned on MA Road and Residency Road, earning positive public feedback.

Several traffic restructuring measures were also introduced in downtown Srinagar: The Rajouri Kadal-Gojwara stretch was made one-way for public transport, easing congestion in the busy Nowhatta hub.

The Barbar Shah bridge, too narrow for two-way flow, was converted into a one-way corridor.

Targeted drives were intensified at Chhatti Padshahi and Kanyar, where frequent bottlenecks were reported.

"These small but significant measures have brought visible improvement in movement," Bhat said, adding that similar area-specific interventions would continue in 2026.

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EDITORIAL

2026: A New Year Of Resolve For A Viksit Bharat

As the first dawn of 2026 breaks, it illuminates an India standing at a pivotal moment in its history. The past year has been a testament to the nation's formidable resilience and ambition. We have cemented our status as the world's fastest-growing major economy, a beacon of stability in a turbulent global landscape. The country achieved many milestones, which demonstrate the nation's transition from aspirational to operational excellence. Our digital public infrastructure,

from UPI to Aadhaar, continues to be a global benchmark for inclusive technology, empowering millions. Yet, as we celebrate this progress, the New Year must be a springboard for deeper, more inclusive transformation towards the goal of a Viksit Bharat—a Developed India by 2047. The path forward demands that we convert macroeconomic strength into microeconomic security for every citizen. The first critical step is to future-proof our human capital. Our demographic dividend will only

pay off with a radical upgrade in education and healthcare. The National Education Policy 2020 must be implemented with urgency, shifting focus from rote learning to critical thinking, innovation, and vocational skills aligned with Industry 4.0. Simultaneously, strengthening the Ayushman Bharat ecosystem to provide quality, affordable healthcare is essential for a productive workforce. Second, we must decouple economic growth from ecological degradation. India's leadership in renewable

energy must be accelerated, but true sustainability requires a circular economy mindset. Incentivising green industries, investing in climate-resilient agriculture, and protecting our biodiversity are non-negotiable investments for the future. Third, bridging the last-mile gap in governance is paramount. Technology must be leveraged further to ensure transparent, leak-proof delivery of welfare schemes and to empower local governments. True development will be achieved only when benefits

consistently reach the smallest village and the most marginalised citizen. The journey to a Viksit Bharat is a collective marathon, not a sprint. It requires the continued partnership of a proactive government, a responsible private sector, and an engaged citizenry. Let 2026 be defined by a shared national resolve: to build not just a wealthier India, but a healthier, smarter, greener, and more equitable India for all. Our actions today will define the century we inherit tomorrow.

2025: A Defining Year For India's Growth

India's Goldilocks Moment: High Growth, Low Inflation

- India's real GDP grew 8.2% in Q2 FY 2025-26, up from 7.8% in Q1 and 7.4% in Q4 of FY 2024-25.
- In November 2025, the unemployment rate reduced to 4.7% vs. 5.2% in October 2025, making it the lowest level since April 2025 (5.1%).
- CPI inflation progressively softened to 0.71% in November 2025 from 4.26% in January 2025
- Merchandise exports expanded to US\$ 38.13 billion in November, 2025 compared to US\$ 36.43 billion in January 2025.

Press Information Bureau

Growth, Stability, Confidence: The Tripod Stand of Indian Economy

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.

As per IMF's World Economic Outlook Report of April 2025, India with a GDP of USD 4.18 had 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 projected GDP of USD 7.3 trillion by 2030. 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. Domestic drivers-led by robust private consumption-played a central role in supporting this expansion.

High-frequency indicators point to sustained economic activity: 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.

Growth Momentum Strengthening

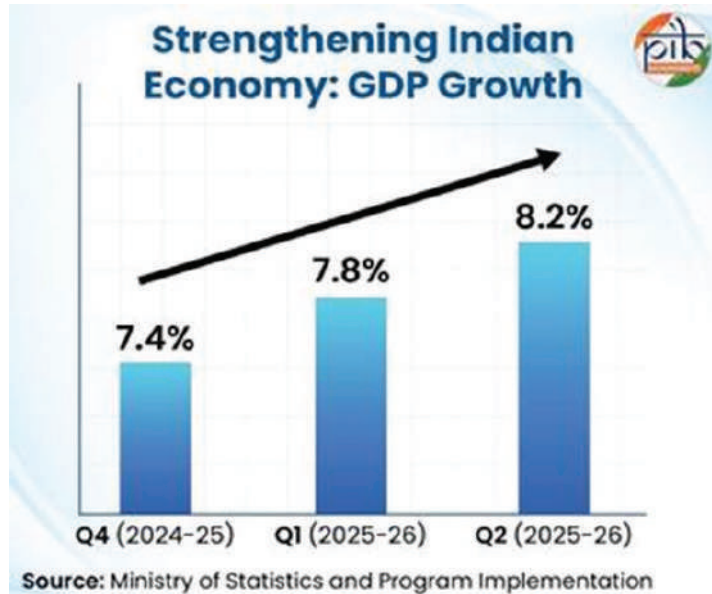
India's real GDP grew 8.2% in Q2 FY 2025-26, up from 7.8% in the previous quarter and 7.4% in Q4 of 2024-25, led by resilient domestic demand amidst global trade and policy uncertainties. Real gross value added (GVA) expanded by 8.1%, catalysed by buoyant industrial and services sectors.

The RBI revised India's GDP growth forecast for FY 2025-26 upwards to 7.3% from the earlier estimate of 6.8%. India's domestic growth is on an upward trajectory owing to multiple factors such as- robust domestic demand, income tax and goods and services tax (GST) rationalisation, softer crude oil prices, front-loading of Government capital expenditure (CAPEX), along with facilitative monetary and financial conditions, supported by benign inflation.

Looking ahead, domestic drivers- favourable agricultural prospects, the sustained effects of GST rationalisation, benign inflation, and the strong balance sheets of corporates and financial institutions- coupled with supportive monetary and financial conditions, are expected to continue bolstering the economic activity. External factors such as services exports are projected to remain robust, while the swift conclusion of current trade and investment negotiations offers additional upside potential. Ongoing reforms are likely to further enable growth prospects. Present macro-economic situation presents a rare "goldilocks period" of high growth and low inflation.

Falling Unemployment Rates

Employment is the critical bridge between growth and prosperity. In India,



where ~26% of the population is aged 10-24, this demographic moment presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity. As one of the world's youngest nations, India's growth story is being shaped by its ability to generate quality employment that productively absorbs its expanding workforce and delivers inclusive, sustainable growth.

Tracking employment trends is central to effective policymaking. To this end, the National Statistics Office launched the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) in 2017-18, offering timely insights into key labour indicators such as Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR), Worker Population Ratio (WPR), and Unemployment Rate (UR). Notably, the 2025 PLFS shows a sharp decline in unemployment alongside marked improvements in participation and worker population ratios, signalling strengthening employment conditions.

Unemployment on a Downward Trajectory

Unemployment rate (UR) is the proportion of the labour force that does not have employment and is seeking and/or available for work.

Declining unemployment trends have persisted in India, indicating stronger workforce absorption into productive employment.

Unemployment closely mirrors the pace of economic activity- two sides of the same coin. As growth accelerates, higher production of goods and services creates greater demand for labour, leading to more job opportunities and lower unemployment. In this context, India's declining unemployment reflects the strength of its economic momentum. With growth set to remain robust, India's improving employment outcomes underscore the virtuous cycle between sustained growth and job creation.

In November 2025, the UR for persons aged 15 and above (following CWS) reduced to 4.8% vs. 5.4% in October 2025, making it the lowest level since April 2025 (5.1%). The decline is largely driven by a sharp fall in UR among women. UR among urban women declined from 9.7% to 9.3% while for rural women, it declined from 4.0% to 3.4%.

Overall, Rural UR fell to a new low of 3.9%, while the urban UR decreased to 6.5%.

Rising Labour Force and Worker Participation

With unemployment levels at record lows, the other two major indicators- LFPR & WPR (following CWS) also show promise of a strengthening and inclusive labour market.

LFPR is the percentage of persons in labour force (i.e. working or seeking or available for work) in the population. A rising LFPR signals improving labour market engagement, as more people are entering the workforce. The overall LFPR for persons aged 15 & above rose to a seven-month high of 55.8% in November 2025 (54.2% in June

2025).

WPR is the percentage of employed persons in the population. An increasing WPR is a key indicator of how many people are actually working and not unemployed. The overall WPR for persons aged 15 & above improved to 53.2% in November 2025, up from 52.5% in October and 51.2% in June 2025.

These trends indicate strengthening labour market conditions, supported by gains in rural employment, rising female participation, and a gradual recovery in urban labour demand.

Inflation Eases Significantly in 2025

Consumer price index (CPI) is the change in the price of a basket of goods and services that are typically purchased by specific groups of households. In 2025, India experienced an overall benign inflation environment. CPI inflation at the starting of the year was 4.26% in January and progressively softened through mid-year, before easing further to multi-year lows in the second half of the year. In June, CPI inflation was reported at 2.10%, well within the RBI's medium-term inflation target of 4% Consumer Price Index (CPI), with a tolerance band of +/- 2%. Headline CPI tracked a downward trajectory and reached historic lows around 0.25 % in October. The faster than anticipated decline in inflation was led by correction in food prices¹⁵, contrary to the usual trend witnessed during the months of September-October. By November, CPI inflation edged up to 0.71 %, underscoring sustained price stability across broad consumption baskets.

RBI has also lowered its CPI inflation forecast for FY 2025-26 to 2.0%, down from 2.6%.

CPI inflation for FY 2025-26 is projected at 2%, comfortably within the RBI's target range of 2-6%. The quarterly inflation path for FY26 indicates 0.6% in Q3 followed by 2.9% in Q4. For FY27, it is projected at 3.9% in Q1 and 4.0% in Q2.

In the backdrop of evolving macroeconomic and financial developments, RBI has reduced the policy repo rate by 25 basis points to 5.25% with a neutral stance. It signals growth-inflation balance, owing to a benign inflation outlook on both headline and core level, that continues to provide the policy space to support the growth momentum. The overall inflation path in 2025 reaffirmed the effectiveness of India's inflation-targeting framework, with CPI outcomes remaining comfortably within the RBI's prescribed band throughout most of the year.

Wholesale price dynamics in 2025 also mirrored this trend of moderated inflation. The WPI inflation which is a measure of average wholesale price movement for the economy, started the year positively at 2.31% in January, supported by higher prices of manufacture of food products, food articles, other manufacturing, non-food articles and manufacture of textiles etc. From April's low inflation of 0.85%, WPI inflation

oscillated between mild positive readings, culminating in a provisional -0.32% annual WPI inflation rate in November 2025. These developments underscore the overall softening of price pressures at both retail and wholesale levels, contributing to a conducive macroeconomic environment for policy calibration and growth.

Trade Performance Improves

In January 2025, India's foreign trade started the year on a solid footing with total exports (merchandise and services combined) estimated at US\$ 74.97 billion, registering a growth of 9.72 % over January 2024. By June 2025, cumulative exports (April-June 2025) reached US\$ 210.31 billion (up 5.94%), while non-petroleum exports also maintained a positive momentum. These early and mid-year trends demonstrated steady export expansion and diversified external demand. By November 2025, the year's trade trajectory reflected sustained external sector engagement.

India's merchandise export performance in 2025 strengthened across major product groups and global markets. In the beginning, with exports valued at US\$ 36.43 billion in January 2025, Indian exporters built on diversified demand conditions to sustain outward shipments throughout the year. Supported by strong contributions from sectors such as engineering goods, electronic goods, pharmaceuticals, gems & jewellery, and petroleum products, merchandise exports maintained a positive momentum, reflecting competitiveness of Indian manufacturing and trade linkages with global value chains. By November 2025, merchandise export value rose to US\$ 38.13 billion, illustrating a consistent uptrend in external sector performance even during global trade disruptions.

The merchandise commodities which contributed to the resilient export growth in 2025 were cashew, marine products, other cereals, electronic goods, engineering goods and petroleum products, experiencing more than 10% growth in 11 years.

Merchandise Export Growth in 2025 (In USD Million)

India's merchandise exports showed strong growth for several key commodities in 2025. Leading the surge was Cashew, with exports rising by 64.39%, from USD 34.93 million in January to USD 57.42 million in November.

Close behind were Marine Products, which grew by 62.30% from USD 540.75 million to USD 877.65 million, and Other Cereals, which increased by 32.33% from USD 28.36 million to USD 37.53 million.

Moderate growth was seen in high-value sectors such as Electronic Goods, which expanded by 17.25% to reach USD 4,813.66 million, and Engineering Goods, which grew by 16.93% to USD 11,012.20 million. Coffee exports also rose by 16.50% to USD 134.83 million.

More modest increases were recorded

for Petroleum Products (10.38% growth to USD 3,931.52 million), Ceramic Products and Glassware (8.80% growth to USD 355.17 million), Spices (4.50% growth to USD 358.46 million), and Fruits and Vegetables (3.73% growth to USD 314.47 million).

By strengthening trade partnerships with the United Kingdom, Oman, and New Zealand in 2025, India broadened its global export footprint and enhanced access to emerging markets for its exports. Since January, 2025 India boosted its trade with China, Hong Kong, Brazil, Italy, France, Australia, United Arab Emirates, Belgium, Germany and many others, while focusing on trade diversification.

Services exports remained a major pillar of resilience, expanding by 8.65% to an estimated USD 270.06 billion in April-November 2025 from USD 248.56 Billion in April-November 2024, underscoring India's growing global competitiveness in computer services and business services. Overall, the export sector continues to reinforce India's economic stability and growth outlook.

External Sector Shows Resilience

As on November 28, 2025, India's foreign exchange reserves stood at US\$ 686.2 billion, providing a robust import cover of over 11 months.

India's external sector remains resilient. With robust services exports and strong remittances, the current account deficit (CAD) moderated from 2.2% of GDP in Q2: FY 2024-25 to 1.3% in Q2:2025-26. Additionally, inward remittances increased by 10.7% (y-o-y) in Q2:2025-26. The positive outlook of services exports coupled with rising inward remittances are expected to keep CAD modest during 2025-26.

On the external financing side, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) captured great momentum during the first half of the year. For the time frame April to September 2025-26 vis-à-vis the same period a year ago; while Gross FDI grew by 19.4% to US\$ 51.8 billion from US\$ 43.4 billion, Net FDI increased by 127.6% to US\$ 7.7 billion from US\$ 3.4 billion. The significant increase is attributed to a decline in repatriation, despite a rise in outward FDI.

Foreign portfolio investment (FPI) to India recorded net outflows of US\$ 0.7 billion in 2025-26 so far (April-December 03), due to outflows in the equity segment.

Besides, flows under external commercial borrowings and non-resident deposit accounts moderated to US\$ 6.2 billion during April-October 2025-26 from US\$ 8.1 billion a year ago. Non-resident deposits recorded net inflows of US\$ 6.1 billion in April-September 2025-26, lower than US\$ 10.2 billion in the same period last year.

Broad-Based Momentum Reinforces India's Growth Story

India's growth outlook remains buoyant, with global and domestic institutions upgrading their assessments on the back of strong economic fundamentals. Reflecting broad-based momentum across key sectors, the Reserve Bank of India revised its GDP growth projection for FY 2025-26 upward from 6.8% to 7.3%.

International agencies have echoed this optimism: the World Bank projects 6.5% growth in 2026; Moody's expects India to remain the fastest-growing G20 economy with growth of 6.4% in 2026 and 6.5% in 2027; the IMF has raised its projections to 6.6% for 2025 and 6.2% for 2026; the OECD forecasts 6.7% growth in 2025 and 6.2% in 2026; S&P anticipates growth of 6.5% in the current fiscal and 6.7% in the next; the Asian Development Bank has lifted its 2025 forecast to 7.2%; and Fitch has raised its FY26 projection to 7.4% on stronger consumer demand.

Together, sustained international confidence along with robust domestic demand, falling unemployment, and easing inflation, position the country well to advance steadily towards its 2047 development goals.

Sakeena Itoo reviews cleanliness, sanitation in Kashmir health facilities

Stresses on proactive, people-centric approach for accessible, quality healthcare services

KT News Desk

JAMMU, DECEMBER 31: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo Wednesday chaired a comprehensive review meeting regarding cleanliness and sanitation measures in Government Medical Colleges (GMCs), District Hospitals and Sub-district hospitals of Kashmir division as well as other facilities at Civil Secretariat here, with special focus on preparedness for the upcoming winter season.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Secretary Health and Medical Education, Dr Syed Abid Rasheed; Managing Director, JKMSCL, Tariq Hussain Ganai; Director Family Welfare and Immunization, Director Planning Health and Medical Education, Principals of all GMCs of Kashmir, Medical Superintendents of all hospitals, Chief Medical Officers of all Kashmir districts and other concerned officers of health department, either in person or through video conferencing.

During the review, the Minister assessed the availability of healthcare services, patient care mechanisms, manpower deployment and infrastructure status in major healthcare institutions as well as sanitation and cleanliness measures across these health facilities.

The Minister emphasized on the need for improved sanitation and cleanliness in the



hospitals. "Everyone has role in management and cleanliness of hospitals, not just medical superintendents or Principals", Minister Sakeena said. She directed the Medical Superintendents not to allow any kind of food or eatables inside the hospitals from outside. She also called for complete ban on polythene bags inside the hospital premises.

The Minister directed the Principals and Medical Superintendents to form Committees at their levels who would carry inspection regarding cleanliness in their respective hospitals on daily basis. She further directed them to carry out awareness among the attendants regarding Dos and Don'ts in the hospital premises.

She also called upon the Secretary Health to establish a



Central Control Room on which people can report feedback or any issues related to cleanliness of hospitals and health facilities.

The Minister also directed Principals and Medical Superintendents to establish an appreciation mechanism like certificates or cash rewards for people involved in cleanliness of hospitals.

Regarding management of hospitals, the Minister directed the officers to devise a proper plan for management of attendants in hospitals and GMCs. She asked them to allow not more than two attendants with the patients.

The Minister also directed the Principals and Medical Superintendents to install signages inside the hospital premises so that the attendants and patients are facilitated

regarding tests and other facilities available at the hospital.

The Minister further directed the Health Secretary to carry out a detailed audit regarding all utilities available in the hospitals.

In view of the winter season, the Minister directed the officers to make all kind of medical supplies and equipments available in all far flung and snow prone areas beforehand. She asked the health authorities to undertake meticulous and time-bound planning for the stocking and distribution of essential medicines, medical equipment, and consumables, particularly in far-flung and snow-prone areas. She stressed that no lapse should occur in the supply chain during periods when connectivity is disrupted due to snowfall.

The Minister also asked the Director Health to carry out a detailed survey in snow prone areas regarding expecting mothers in view of inclement weather forecast and make all arrangements for their smooth facilitation to the nearby hospitals.

The Minister also underscored the importance of strengthening emergency services, ensuring the functionality of critical care units, and maintaining adequate availability of doctors, paramedics, and support staff. She called for regular monitoring of healthcare institutions and prompt redressal of gaps affecting patient services.

Reiterating the government's commitment to accessible and quality healthcare, Sakeena Itoo urged the concerned officials to adopt a proactive and people-centric approach, ensuring that healthcare delivery remains uninterrupted even in the most challenging terrains and weather conditions of the Kashmir division.

She also directed the Principals and Medical Superintendents to submit progress reports on utilisation of Hospital Development Funds as well as on maintenance of lifts and other essential equipments in their respective health facilities.

During the meeting, the Principals and Medical Superintendents briefed the Minister about measures in places regarding sanitation and as well as over functioning of their respective hospitals.

Deputy CM Surinder Choudhary extends New Year greetings



KT News Desk

JAMMU, DECEMBER 31: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, Wednesday extended warm greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the occasion of New Year 2026, wishing them peace, prosperity and happiness.

The Deputy Chief Minister, as per an official statement, said that the government remains firmly committed towards sustaining the developmental agenda with renewed vigour, ensuring that the benefits of growth and progress reach every section of the society.

He emphasised that the focus will continue to be on improving ease of living, strengthening the basic infrastructure and delivering citizen-centric services in an efficient and transparent manner.

The Deputy Chief Minister, as per an official statement, stated

that the resolve to provide equitable opportunities, inclusive growth and social justice will guide the government's policies not only in 2026 but in the years to come. He added that special emphasis will be laid on youth empowerment, employment generation, infrastructure development and welfare initiatives aimed at uplifting the marginalized sections of the society.

Highlighting the rich social fabric of J&K, he said that Jammu and Kashmir has always stood as a shining example of secularism, harmony and mutual coexistence.

On the occasion, the Deputy Chief Minister called upon the people to extend their wholehearted support and cooperation to the administration in its efforts to revitalise all sectors, strengthen peace and work collectively towards building a peaceful, progressive and developed Jammu and Kashmir.

Div Com Kashmir reviews SMRDA projects, urges timely completion



KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 31: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, on Wednesday directed executing agencies to expedite the completion of projects under the Srinagar Metropolitan Region Development Authority (SMRDA) scheme and ensure that all pending works are completed before the end of the current financial year.

Emphasising adherence to timelines, the Divisional Commissioner, as per an official statement, urged agencies to fast-track projects that are nearing completion, keeping in view the expenditure cap of the allotted funds.

During the review meeting, the Divisional Commissioner assessed the physical and financial progress of several

projects, including Transport Nagar at Parimpora; community facilities at Bemina, Chattabal, and Noorbagh; development of Bairam Hills; and the Shopping Complex-cum-Marriage Hall at Nowhatta.

He also reviewed a few projects in Bandipora and Ganderbal, which, as informed by the concerned authorities, are being taken forward for completion with revised expenditure approvals.

He further directed the concerned departments to formally close projects that could not be taken up due to feasibility constraints.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Akshay Labroo; Commissioner Srinagar, Municipal Corporation; Chief Engineer R&B, Chief Town Planner, officers of SDA and SMRDA.

Deputy Accountant General visits SPS Library

Calls for technological upgradation

KT News Desk

Srinagar, December 31: Deputy Accountant General, J&K, Ankush Kumar (IA&AS), visited SPS Library Complex Wednesday, as a part of the general audit process, for on spot assessment of the library infrastructure there. He was accompanied by Khurshid Ahmad Qazi, Sr Audit Officer, Vinay Bhalothia, Assistant Audit Officer & Mr Khalid Mukhtar Bhat, Supervisor.

The Deputy Accountant General, as per an official statement, visited various sections of the library including Senior Citizens section, Children's Section, Manuscript section, Book Stacks section and the General Reading Halls.

He was informed that established in 1898, SPS Library has a collection of around 80000 books and the library is witnessing regularly a huge footfall of library users while its Reading Halls remain jam-packed.

During his visit to the Manuscript section, the Deputy Accountant General was informed that the Oriental Research Library established in 1904, is a repository of around 6000 centuries old manuscripts and rare books in 17 languages encompassing varied fields.

He was informed that the



manuscript collection of ORL is a treasure-trove of religious, philosophical, historical, literary and scientific writings in classical languages like Persian, Sanskrit and Arabic.

While interacting with the students present in the Reading Halls of the library, the Deputy Accountant General called for augmenting reading spaces with adequate facilities to facilitate mentoring of students for various competitive examinations as a part of the overall Youth Development Initiative.

Kumar expressed great satisfaction over a large number of students using the centrally located and well-maintained library facility to prepare for various competitive exams.

Termining Public Libraries as key social institutions, Mr Kumar said the libraries have the potential to make a dramatic difference in the empowerment of people, especially the

youth. "In the fast-changing knowledge scenario, there is a pressing need for implementing a new vision through technological intervention for public library revitalization to transform them from collection-oriented institutions to service-based institutions," he said and asked the Department to make continuous efforts towards improvement of library services for every section of the society including youth, senior citizens, women and children.

The Deputy Accountant General was informed that during the past 4 years, the reading space in SPS Library has been increased from 90 seats to the existing 350 seats with a dedicated reading hall being established for the girls and free study material made available in Public Libraries to help students prepare for various competitive examinations like Civil Services, NEET, JEE, CAT

and CLAT etc.

He was informed that new library buildings have been constructed during this period for District Library Baramulla, Tehsil Library Aishmuqam & Tehsil Library Kreeri while additional accommodation has been constructed for existing libraries including District Library Pulwama, District Library Budgam, District Library Kupwara, Tehsil Library Chrar-e-Sharief, Tehsil Library Kulgam and Tehsil Library Handwara.

New library buildings are under construction for Gani Memorial UT Central Library at Rajouri Kadal, Srinagar; Tehsil Library Ganderbal, Tehsil Library Bandipora; Tehsil Library Tral; Tehsil Library Bijbehara; Tehsil Library Gurez & Tehsil Library Tangdhar.

After visiting various sections of the SPS Library Complex and interacting with the students present in the Reading Halls of the Library, the Deputy Accountant General held a marathon meeting with the officers and officials of the Department of Libraries & Research to discuss issues like physical infrastructure, financial matters, new initiatives and need for digital transformation of public libraries in J&K.

The Deputy Accountant General expressed satisfaction over the facilities available in the SPS Library for the library users.

DC Kishtwar chairs NCORD meeting, reviews anti-drug measures

KT News Desk

KISHTWAR, DECEMBER 31: A meeting of the District-Level NCORD (Narco Coordination Centre) was convened on Wednesday under the chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar, Pankaj Kumar Sharma.

The meeting, as per an official statement, reviewed the enforcement measures against drug abuse, the working of de-addiction framework and the progress of the Information, Education & Communication (IEC) campaign under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan.

At the outset, District Social Welfare Officer, Tariq Parvez Qazi apprised about the action taken about the decisions taken in the previous meeting. The Deputy Commissioner took a comprehensive review of the prevailing drug abuse scenario in the district and sought detailed inputs regarding vulnerable areas, affected age groups and identified hotspots.

He also reviewed the preventive and enforcement measures launched by the stakeholder departments.

Emphasizing the crucial role of community participation, the DC called for active involvement of all stakeholders in the UT-wide IEC Campaign 2.0. He directed the nine nominated resource persons from the line departments to ensure wider outreach and effective public awareness on drug abuse prevention.

The DC directed CMO to keep a check on medical shops to ensure that the Schedule H drugs are sold strictly on valid prescription with computerized billing.

Noting that the internet facilities have been started in the Marwah-Warwan area, the DC directed the Drug Control functionaries to enforce the implementation of computerized billing and installation of CCTV cameras at all medical establishments there.

The Tehsildars were directed to conduct joint market checking drives regarding Schedule H drugs to curb the illegal sale of such medicines.

The DC issued directions to the Tehsil Level & Sub Division Level Committees to declare panchayats as Nasha Mukht as per the Standard Operating Procedure (SoP).

DC Pulwama chairs 29th District NCORD meeting

KT News Desk

PULWAMA, DECEMBER 31: Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, Dr Basharat Qayoom Wednesday chaired the District Level NCORD (Narco Coordination Centre) meeting to review the overall efforts being undertaken to combat drug abuse and illicit trafficking in the district.

During the meeting, Additional Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, Dr. S. M. Ashraf gave a detailed presentation highlighting the initiatives taken under Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan, including IEC activities, treatment and rehabilitation measures, enforcement actions, and best practices adopted by various departments.

Taking stock of the situation,

the Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, directed all stakeholder departments to devise a comprehensive year-long action plan as the district heads into the new year, with special emphasis on identified hotspots. He stressed that efforts should be proactive, coordinated and outcome-oriented.

Dr. Qayoom appreciated the efforts of department in achieving saturation in CCTV coverage and implementation of Computerised Billing Systems (CBS) in chemist shops to ensure transparency, accountability and effective monitoring of the sale of scheduled medicines and directed to complete the CBS in remaining establishments.

While acknowledging and appreciating the concerted efforts put in by various departments during the current calendar



year, the DC highlighted the importance of adopting a three-pronged strategy focusing on Information, Education and

Communication (IEC), treatment and rehabilitation, and strict enforcement to effectively address the menace of drug

abuse.

He further called for enhanced inter-departmental coordination and sustained

community engagement to achieve the objectives of a drug-free Pulwama.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner also reviewed the status of NDPS cases in the district, including cases under investigation, prosecution and trial before the Special NDPS Court, Pulwama.

The DC directed the concerned agencies to strengthen coordination between investigation and prosecution to bridge procedural gaps and ensure effective legal follow-up in NDPS cases, with a view to improving conviction rates and deterrence.

Among others, the meeting was attended by SSP Pulwama, Tanushree; SSP Awantipora, Sajad Ahmad Bhat; Chief Medical Officer, Pulwama; Chief Education Officer, Pulwama and officers from other sectoral departments.

High Court of J&K and Ladakh concludes advanced mediation training

KT News Desk

Jammu/Srinagar, Dec 31: Under the patronage of Justice Arun Palli, Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, the Mediation and Conciliation Committee of the High Court of J&K and Ladakh, in collaboration with the Jammu & Kashmir Judicial Academy and the J&K Legal Services Authority, on Wednesday concluded the three-day "Conduct of Mediation - Advanced Course (Capsule Course), Training of Trainers Programme", conducted simultaneously at the Jammu and Srinagar campuses of the J&K Judicial Academy.

The programme marked the



successful culmination of a 20-hour advanced mediation training course. Designed for mediators and advocates, the programme focused on strengthening advanced mediation skills through a blend of theoretical inputs, roleplay exercises, and reflective practice.

The concluding day's sessions were conducted by Ms. Puneeta Sethi, Advocate, Punjab and



Haryana High Court, and Ms. Rita Das Mouzumdar, Advocate, Gauhati High Court, both accredited Mediation Trainers with the Mediation and Conciliation Project Committee (MCPC) of the Supreme Court of India.

On the final day, participants engaged with advanced aspects of mediation practice. The sessions opened with a detailed

module on Negotiation, covering negotiation styles, core negotiation skills, barriers to effective negotiation, cognitive biases, and the role of the mediator in facilitating principled and effective negotiations. The session included a roleplay exercise followed by discussion and reflection.

Subsequent sessions focused on Impasses in Mediation, examining the nature and causes of impasse and the stages of impasse. Participants were guided through the mediator's role in managing deadlocks, including assessment strategies, option generation, lateral thinking, reframing, and the appropriate use of external resources.

Mushtaq Ahmad Bhat retires after 39 years of service

Colleagues bid emotional farewell

KNO Correspondent

Srinagar, Dec 31: Mushtaq Ahmad Bhat, Private Secretary to the E.P. Department Kashmir, retired on Wednesday after dedicating 39 years to public service.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), a farewell ceremony was held in his honour at the Sir Mohammed Iqbal Mini Convention Centre, Sanat Nagar. The event was attended by officers and employees of the E.P. Department, who praised Bhat's long-standing commitment and wished him



good health and a fulfilling life post-retirement.

Speakers highlighted Mushtaq Bhat's valuable contributions, saying his services will be missed. His colleagues and senior officials bid him an emotional farewell, extending their best wishes for his future endeavours. (KNO)

LG condoles demise of JKAS officer Sunil Angral

KT News Desk

Jammu, Dec 31: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has expressed grief over the untimely passing of Shri Sunil Angral, an officer of the Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Service (JKAS).

In a condolence message, the Lieutenant Governor said: "I am deeply pained to learn of the untimely demise of Shri Sunil Angral. I offer my heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and pray for peace of the departed soul. Om Shanti!"

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Amid surge in tourist

to moderate rain and snowfall over most parts of the Valley from Wednesday night to Thursday morning, with moderate to heavy snowfall expected in higher reaches including Gulmarg, Sonamarg, and parts of North Kashmir.

Snowfall in the Valley, which had largely been absent in recent New Year periods, is expected to enhance the winter tourism experience.

"Considering the weather predictions and the tourist rush, all agencies, including security forces along the Line of Control in North Kashmir are vigilant. Safety and smooth movement are our top priorities," said another senior official.

"TOURISM SECTOR WITNESSING REVIVAL"

Meanwhile, Director of Tourism Kashmir Syed Qamar Sajad said that the Kashmir's tourism sector is witnessing a revival, with snowfall and renewed confidence attracting visitors back to the Valley.

He said tourist footfall had returned to near-normal levels after a brief dip earlier this year, providing relief to thousands of families dependent on tourism.

He credited the revival to coordinated efforts by the tourism department, hoteliers, transporters and service providers, along with improved perceptions of safety and stability.

"Fresh snowfall has been decisive in encouraging tourists to travel. The Valley looks festive, and people did not want to miss this moment," Sajad said.

He invited visitors from the country and abroad to experience Kashmir firsthand, saying, "Every visitor who leaves happy becomes an ambassador for Kashmir."

Meanwhile, MLA Gulmarg, Farooq Ahmad Shah said that Gulmarg has strong potential to revive Kashmir's tourism sector, noting the resort's scenic appeal and arrangements for visitors.

He added that skiing in the area is affordable and hotels have made preparations to welcome tourists.

Shah said the destination plays a vital role in restoring tourism, which faced setbacks earlier this year, and that security and hospitality measures have been implemented ahead of New Year celebrations.

Tourist numbers have surged, with hotels fully booked, signalling growing confidence in the Valley's winter tourism, he added.

SP BARAMULLA EXTENDS GREETINGS

Meanwhile, Superintendent of Police (SP) Baramulla Gurinderpal Singh extended New Year greetings to people, especially people of Baramulla, and urged them to act responsibly.

He urged motorists to drive carefully during adverse weather conditions and said security arrangements have been strengthened to ensure peaceful celebrations.

The SSP said sanitisation and coordinated search operations have been underway for the past one month and security deployment has been doubled compared to routine arrangements.

He said a special verification drive was conducted covering over 4,500 service providers in Gulmarg.

Singh said comprehensive measures are in place for safety, security, traffic management and maintenance of law and order to prevent any untoward incident during New Year festivities. (KNO)

In 2025, NIA notches

iconic Red Fort area in November this year.

Tahawwur Rana was successfully extradited from the United States to India in April to face justice for plotting the horrific 2008 Mumbai terror attacks and other attacks across the country. The extradition marked a significant breakthrough in NIA's investigation into the 26/11 terror attack conspiracy that left 166 people dead.

In another noteworthy achievement, the NIA secured the deportation of gangster Anmol Bishnoi from the US. Brother and close aid of gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, Anmol had been absconding since 2022. The agency said it is making all out efforts to ensure speedy trial against him in a case relating to the conspiracy by criminal syndicates/gangs based in India and abroad, to carry out terrorist activities in Delhi and other parts of the country.

With its chargesheet filed against seven accused, including the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and its affiliate 'The Resistance Front (TRF)' as a terrorist organisation, the NIA wrapped up the year with a major success in its investigation into the deadly Pahalgam terrorist attack that had shocked the nation in April.

Among those chargesheeted were the three terrorists who had carried out the religion based targeted killings and were subsequently killed by the security forces.

The NIA also made remarkable progress in its ongoing probe in the Delhi Red Fort area car blast case, in which as many as nine accused were arrested in less than two months of the terrorist attack that killed 11 persons and left several others injured.

The year further saw the counter-terror agency make major strides in its action against Left Wing Extremism (LWE). The central government has set a goal to make India completely Naxal-free by 31st March 2026, and the NIA, along with state police forces and central armed police forces such as the CRPF, has been actively pursuing the Naxal cadres in the country.

The NIA took up a total of nine investigations against LWE members and top leaderships, and chargesheeted 34 of them, during the year.

The total arrests made by the NIA across key categories of crimes in the 55 cases registered during the year stood at 276 (67 accused in Jihadi cases, 74 in LWE cases, 37 in NEI cases, 28 in Khalistani cases, 11 in Gangster cases and 59 accused in Other cases).

The agency notched a record 66 convictions and chargesheeted 320 accused in 2025, which witnessed a slew of property and asset attachment actions as part of its crackdown against absconding terrorists, criminals and gangsters. A total of 12 properties/assets were attached during the year.

Nationwide searches at the premises of accused and suspects in major terror and organised crime networks through the year saw a total of 200 accused arrested. These searches and arrests, which included clampdowns in cases related to designated Khalistani terrorists like Goldy Brar, were part of NIA's concerted efforts to dismantle such networks.

The NIA further made substantial progress in cases related to human trafficking networks that have perforated in several states in recent years. A large number of vulnerable youth have been duped by these transnational syndicates, including via the notorious 'dunk' route, and NIA made several arrests in connection with the latter.

The agency also made significant progress in cases of cross-border human trafficking, involving Bangladeshi and Myanmar nationals, as well in cases of Indian youth being forced into cyber slavery in the Golden Triangle region in Laos and Cambodia.

During the year, the NIA continued to intensify its actions against ISIS, Al-Qaeda, HuT and other Jihadi organisations involved in various radicalisation, recruitment and terror attack cases. These included the Red Fort Delhi blast case, terrorist attack on tourists in Pahalgam, and other cases of conspiracy/radicalisation of youth.

The agency also focused concertedly on investigation against pro-Khalistani elements and their nexus with organised criminal syndicates, with 10 such cases intensively investigated during the year.

Other important investigations during 2025 included cases against various insurgent groups, such as ULFA-I and NSCN-IM, in the North East.

Several instances of recovery of arms & ammunitions and explosives were also reported by the agency from various states. These included the seizure of illegal arms and ammunition following searches across three states, leading to the arrest of four accused, in the last month of the year. This was preceded, in November, by the arrest of a wanted accused involved in the smuggling of sophisticated illegal weapons including AK-47 rifles, along with ammunition, into Bihar as part of a major anti-national conspiracy.

Major breakthroughs were made during 2025 in many cases relating to the targeted killings of Praveen Nettaru, Ramalingam, Kerala Professor TJ Joseph, Ratan Dubey, Sreenivasan, Suhas Shetty Dinesh Pusu Gawade and Priyangu Pandey.

A series of convictions secured in the Pakistan-linked Vishakhapatnam Navy espionage case of 2019 added another feather to NIA's cap. The NIA also arrested/chargesheeted several accused in various Fake Indian Currency Notes (FICN) cases across states.

Keeping pace with the changes in the terror and crime landscape in the country, NIA made some major technical and operational advancements aimed at strengthening its investigation and modernising its capabilities.

A 'Lost/Looted Recovered' Government Weapons Database and an Organised Crime Network Database were developed to improve the anti-terror capabilities not just of the NIA but of all the key security and investigative agencies across states through real-time information sharing.

In a significant step towards fostering inter-agency collaboration and empowering law enforcement officials to fight the growing

challenges posed by cryptocurrency-related criminal activities, the NIA conducted advanced workshop on cryptocurrency investigations at the start of the year.

Infrastructural development and expansion remained an ongoing focus area of the agency's efforts to augment its capacity in its fight against terror, in line with its commitment to securing the nation against major terrorist and criminal networks. (KNO)

J&K Govt plans

Omar Abdullah from abroad.

In that meeting, the cabinet is expected to make a recommendation to the Lieutenant Governor for convening the Assembly to hold the budget session.

It is worthwhile to mention that the Finance Department had started preparations for the 2026–27 budget in October 2025 by asking departments to submit budget estimates for the next fiscal year and revised estimates for the current fiscal.

The Finance Department has also completed budget discussions with all departments.

The budget for 2025–26 was presented by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah in the J&K Assembly on March 07, 2025. (KNO)

On New Year

united, vibrant and secure Gulmarg."

He said that the local community's warmth and hospitality transform visitors into ambassadors of Kashmir's positive image. "With love, care and positivity, tourists carry the message of harmony wherever they go. We thank them for choosing Gulmarg and assure that we will always be here to serve them," he said.

Earlier, the Department of Tourism, along with the Gulmarg Development Authority (GDA), inaugurated a seven-day Winter Carnival that features a lineup of snow sports, skiing events, musical evenings, and cultural shows.

The initiative aims to celebrate Gulmarg's winter charm while promoting the message of peace, hospitality and unity from Kashmir to the rest of the country. (KNO)

Valley may wake

transporters to follow traffic and administrative advisories, particularly in view of the likelihood of snowfall in higher reaches. It warned of moderate fog over the plains of the Jammu division, with dense fog at isolated places during the next 48 hours.

Meanwhile, minimum temperatures across Kashmir remained a few degrees above the freezing point at most places, officials said.

Srinagar recorded a low of 2.3 degrees Celsius, while Qazigund recorded 1.4 degrees and Pahalgam 1.8 degrees.

Gulmarg, however, continued to remain below freezing at minus 3.0 degrees Celsius. Pulwama and Shopian recorded sub-zero temperatures at minus 0.2 degrees and minus 1.1 degrees, respectively.

In the Jammu region, minimum temperatures were relatively higher, with Jammu city recording 10.4 degrees Celsius, Katra 10.0 degrees and Reasi 10.8 degrees.

Banihal recorded a low of 5.9 degrees Celsius, while Bhaderwah recorded 4.0 degrees.

In Ladakh, Leh recorded a minimum temperature of minus 6.0 degrees Celsius.

Several flights at Srinagar International Airport were cancelled due to adverse weather and operational issues, officials said.

According to airport authorities, the cancelled flights include IndiGo flight 6E-6164/6165, Air India flights AI-3423/3421 operating between Delhi and Jammu, AI-3422/3424 between Jammu and Delhi, and AI-2431/2434 operating from Leh.

A SpiceJet flight SG-160/161 from Delhi was also cancelled.

Officials said one Air India flight was cancelled due to bad weather conditions in Delhi, while the SpiceJet flight was cancelled for operational reasons.

Passengers have been advised to check with airlines for the latest updates before proceeding to the airport. (KNO)

ACB's crackdown

investigation. Among the cases adjudicated before the Courts, 7 cases ended in conviction in the year 2025, culminating in the conviction of 13 accused persons.

It says, the Anti-Corruption Bureau also laid strong emphasis on preventive vigilance and systemic reforms. These efforts included verification of complaints, scrutiny of suspicious transactions and issuance of advisories to plug procedural loopholes vulnerable to corruption. During the year, 703 verifications (including Miscellaneous and Ors) were carried out in the Bureau leading to successful disposal of 764 amidst them, including matters pending from

the previous year.

"During the year 2025, ACB issued 41 alert notes and 91 advisories to the Government, targeting significant systemic deficiencies, procedural lapses, and corruption-prone areas revealed during verifications, surprise checks, and complaint examinations. These communications sought to strengthen internal controls, enhance transparency, and improve accountability in public administration, thereby curbing opportunities for corruption," it says.

"District Vigilance Officers (DVOs) played a crucial role in reinforcing the anti-corruption architecture of the Jammu & Kashmir Anti-Corruption Bureau at the departmental level. Serving as the primary interface between the public, government departments, and the ACB, they referred 15,197 matters over the course of last five years, of which 12,406 were disposed of, reflecting a disposal rate of about 90%, while 3,960 matters were disposed off in the year 2025."

It further says, in the year 2025, the J&K Anti-Corruption Bureau carried out 18 new Joint Surprise Checks (JSCs), successfully concluding 19 such checks (including backlog) during the year. It also registered 25 Preliminary Enquiries (PEs), of which 20 were finalized and disposed of within the same period.

"Public outreach and awareness continued to be a major priority for the ACB throughout 2025. In this regard, the Bureau organized Vigilance Awareness Programmes on two occasions during the year to sensitize stakeholders and promote a culture of integrity in public life."

The details of further added, these programmes comprised workshops and interactive sessions with citizens, students and government employees, designed to highlight the ill effects of corruption and to underscore the importance of ethical conduct, integrity, and transparency in public life. During these interactions, citizens were also encouraged to actively report instances of corruption through the Bureau's established, accessible, and confidential complaint mechanisms.

"Capacity building of officers and staff remained a key priority for the Bureau, with a strong emphasis on enhancing skills, knowledge, and professional competence. Regular training programmes for investigating officers were conducted throughout the year, including expert sessions by professionals from universities, banks, and other specialised institutions."

It further says, these workshops also incorporated case study-based discussions to provide practical insights into complex investigative scenarios. In addition, the Bureau has initiated planning for future training sessions, including specialised courses for newly inducted officers in coordination with the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and other investigative agencies.

"These initiatives aim to ensure that staff are well equipped to handle complex investigations while maintaining the highest standards of integrity and efficiency. The J&K Anti-Corruption Bureau reaffirms its commitment to a zero-tolerance policy towards corruption and assures the public that all complaints are dealt with fairly, confidentially, and professionally."

The Bureau said it remains committed to creating a corruption-free environment and looks forward to sustained cooperation from citizens in this collective effort. This collaborative approach is intended to strengthen public trust and reinforce a culture of transparency and accountability across Jammu and Kashmir. (KNO)

CS reviews framework

Department to seek technical assistance from BISAG-N for developing an end-to-end digital solution that would make SVAMITVA cards a ready and seamless platform for availing bank finance through a simplified and time-bound process.

Briefing the meeting, Managing Director, J&K Bank, Amitava Chatterjee, informed that the Bank, as recommended earlier, has rolled out a dedicated loan product for homestays registered with the Tourism Department, offering affordable finance with simplified procedures and minimal collateral requirements. He elaborated that financial assistance is available for up to six rooms per homestay, with a maximum loan of 5 lakh per room and an overall ceiling of 30 lakh per unit.

He further stated that the interest rate is linked to the RLLR, currently at 8.20 percent, with a repayment period of 60 months and a moratorium of up to six months. Loans up to 10 lakh are collateral-free and supported by simplified documentation to facilitate easy access to credit.

The MD apprised the Chief Secretary that 81 homestays have already been financed, with a total outstanding credit of 5.50 crore, indicating steady traction under the scheme. He added that nearly 80 percent of registered

homestays have been digitally onboarded on banking platforms, while the remaining units are being covered in mission mode to achieve complete digital inclusion.

It was further informed that the homestay loan product has recently been revised to make it more attractive and customer-friendly, thereby facilitating higher credit off-take. Bank branches, particularly those located in and around prominent tourist destinations, have been directed to proactively reach out to homestay operators for credit linkage. To enhance uptake, lists of registered homestays have also been shared with zonal and cluster offices to strengthen customer engagement, while digital platforms are being leveraged to ensure hassle-free lending with minimal turn-around time.

The Chief Secretary was also briefed on J&K Bank's initiatives to promote credit access through SVAMITVA cards, aimed at monetising rural properties by enabling their use as formal financial assets and strengthening the rural credit ecosystem.

Chief Secretary Atul Dulloo appreciated J&K Bank's proactive alignment with the government's priorities of tourism promotion, rural empowerment and economic formalisation. He emphasised the need for intensified outreach, faster onboarding of eligible beneficiaries and close coordination among the Bank, Tourism Department and district administrations to ensure that the benefits of homestay financing and SVAMITVA-based lending reach the grassroots level.

He directed that these initiatives be scaled up in mission mode, particularly in rural and off-beat destinations, to generate sustainable employment and strengthen the tourism ecosystem more effectively across all districts of Jammu and Kashmir.

Kashmir rural

The SSP said strict enforcement drives, continuous monitoring and community participation have significantly contributed to better compliance on the roads.

"The purpose of these drives is to save lives and ensure safer roads. Every life lost in an accident leaves a family devastated. Our mission is to prevent that," he said, adding that the department's strategy focused equally on enforcement and awareness.

Awareness and behavioural change

SSP Singh said that the year 2025 saw major behavioural changes among commuters. Nearly 80 per cent of four-wheeler drivers now wear seatbelts, while 90 per cent of two-wheeler riders use helmets—a noticeable improvement from previous years.

He said that even shopkeepers and pedestrians are cooperating more, by avoiding roadside encroachments and using footpaths, thus contributing to smoother and safer traffic movement.

"The media has also played a vital role in spreading our messages and ensuring compliance. Your encouragement has kept us on track," Singh told reporters, acknowledging the press and civil society's contribution to the safety campaigns.

Partnerships and public involvement

The SSP hailed the role of NGOs, student volunteers, NCC cadets and higher secondary school students who actively participated in awareness campaigns, road safety weeks and traffic discipline drives.

Such initiatives, he said, not only improved compliance but also helped develop a sense of civic responsibility among young people.

"Our partnership with educational institutions and community groups has amplified awareness. People now understand that road safety is a shared responsibility," he said.

Focus on engineering and infrastructure

The Traffic Rural Kashmir, in coordination with Beacon and engineering wings, has also identified and rectified several accident-prone zones. The department focused on improving road engineering, signage, visibility and speed-control measures across critical stretches of rural highways.

Singh said the department continues to engage with local administrations to eliminate black spots and enhance road infrastructure, especially in hilly and snow-prone areas.

Way forward for 2026

Looking ahead, the SSP called for sustaining the gains achieved in 2025 through stricter enforcement, public cooperation, and continuous awareness campaigns.

He said the department's upcoming year plan includes the introduction of technology-based monitoring, smart surveillance tools and enhanced coordination with district-level authorities.

"The mission is not just fewer accidents but building a culture of responsibility on the roads. Every safe journey reflects our success," SSP Singh added. (KNO)

Indian economy likely to maintain strong growth: RBI report

PTI

Mumbai, Dec 31: The Indian economy is likely to maintain strong growth, underpinned by robust domestic demand, benign inflation, and prudent macroeconomic policies despite an uncertain and challenging global economic backdrop, the Reserve Bank said in a report on Wednesday.

The health of commercial banks (SCBs) remains sound with strong capital and liquidity buffers, improved asset quality and robust profitability, the Reserve Bank said in its Financial Stability Report (FSR).

The report reflects the collective assessment of the Sub-Committee of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) on the resilience of the Indian financial system and risks to financial stability.

"The domestic financial system remains robust and resilient, bolstered by strong balance sheets, easy financial conditions, and low financial market volatility. Nonetheless,



there are near-term risks from external uncertainties - geopolitical and trade-related," it said.

Macro stress test results affirm the resilience of scheduled commercial banks to withstand losses under hypothetical adverse scenarios and maintain capital buffers well above the regulatory minimum. It also confirmed the resilience of mutual funds and clearing corporations, the apex bank

added.

Also, non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) remain robust, supported by strong capital buffers, solid earnings, and improving asset quality, the report said.

On insurance, the RBI report said the sector continues to display balance sheet resilience, while the consolidated solvency ratio remained above the minimum threshold limit.

Amit Shah meets BJP public representatives in Kolkata

Invites 'backbencher' Dilip Ghosh for talks



PTI

Kolkata, Dec 31: Continuing on his agenda to take stock of the BJP West Bengal unit's preparedness for the assembly polls scheduled early next year, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday held a meeting with the party's public representatives, past and present, at a hotel in Salt Lake here.

The party's former state president, Dilip Ghosh, who has largely stayed away from the forefront of BJP's activities in the state over the past several months, was also invited to the closed-door meeting attended by the party's MPs, MLAs, civic body councillors and organisational portfolio holders.

The current state president of the party, Samik Bhattacharya, and the state's leader of opposition, Suvendu Adhikari, were also among the leaders present.

Although it wasn't immediately known what transpired in the meeting, a senior party leader said that the invitees are likely to receive tickets for the upcoming elections, and Shah, considered BJP's chief poll strategist, wanted to listen to these leaders about the campaign roadmap and share his thoughts with them.

About inviting Dilip Ghosh, who was perceived to have been pushed to the party's "back bench" after visuals of him meeting Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at the inauguration of the Jagannath Temple complex in Digha earlier this year

were splashed across TV screens, the leader said the so-called "cooling off" period must now be over for the leader and he is likely to play a crucial role for the party in the months ahead. Ghosh, considered to be the most successful state president of BJP under whose leadership the party rose from three seats in the state assembly to over 70 and snatched 18 parliamentary seats in 2019, is also perceived to have a "firebrand" presence, whose aggressive campaign style the party plans to use during its electioneering process.

"Everyone in the party is energised. We will win the 2026 polls and bring about true change in this state," Adhikari told reporters before walking into the

meeting.

On Tuesday, Shah set the tone for the high-stakes assembly polls, and launched a broadside against Mamata Banerjee, accusing her government of "dangerously altering" the state's demography by abetting the infiltration of Bangladeshis for electoral gains and indulging in widespread corruption.

Setting the stage for the BJP's 2026 poll narrative, Shah also declared that the issue of infiltration would acquire the party's campaign centre stage.

Following the party representatives' meet, Shah is scheduled to address a party workers' conference at a city auditorium and visit the Thantania Kali Temple in central Kolkata before departing for Delhi.

Railways complete final high-speed trial of Vande Bharat sleeper train at 180 kmph



PTI

New Delhi, Dec 31: Indian Railways has achieved a significant milestone in its journey towards self-reliant rail technology with the successful completion of the final high-speed trial of the indigenously designed Vande Bharat sleeper train, ministry officials said on Wednesday.

"The trial, conducted under the supervision of the Commissioner of Railway Safety, took place on the Kota-Nagda section, where the train achieved a maximum speed of 180 kmph," it added, without specifying a new date for its launch. The Vande Bharat sleeper train has missed several launch deadlines in the past.

In mid-November, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said that this train would be launched in December 2025.

Vaishnaw shared a video of the safety trial on his social media handle X on December 30, showcasing a water-glass stability demonstration, in which glasses filled with water remained steady without spillage even at high speed.

"Vande Bharat Sleeper tested today by the Commissioner of Railway Safety, ran at 180 kmph between Kota-Nagda section. Our own water test demonstrated the technological features of this new generation train," Vaishnaw said in the post.

Hyundai Motor India to hike prices around 0.6 pc from today

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 31: Hyundai Motor India Ltd on Wednesday said it will increase prices by around 0.6 per cent across its model range, effective from January 1, 2026, citing a rise in the cost of precious metals and commodities.

The company will implement a weighted-average price increase of around 0.6 per cent across its model range due to the rise in the cost of precious metals and commodities, Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL) said in a regulatory filing.

"While the company continuously strives to optimize costs and minimize the impact on its customers, the company is constrained to pass on some of the increased costs to the market through this minor price increase," it added.

At present, the company sells a range of vehicles, from the hatchback i10 Nios to the electric SUV IONIQ 5, priced from Rs 5.47 lakh to over Rs 47 lakh (ex-showroom).

Celebrities, politicians, corporate giants in Delhi HC in 2025 seeking relief

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 31: Several Bollywood stars, senior politicians and corporate giants approached the Delhi High Court in 2025 seeking relief in high-profile legal disputes ranging from protection of their personality to constitutional rights.

The entire judiciary was rocked after burnt wads of huge currency notes were found at the official residence of Justice Yashwant Varma, the then sitting Delhi High Court judge, on March 14. He is currently serving at Allahabad High Court sans judicial work and facing parliamentary inquiry ahead of probable impeachment motion for his removal.

The high court remained in news for suspending the life sentence of expelled BJP leader Kuldeep Sengar, who was convicted for raping a minor girl, and also for denying bail to 10 persons including Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam in the "larger conspiracy" case of February 2020 riots by ruling that "conspiratorial" violence under the garb of demonstrations or protests by citizens cannot be allowed. However, the decision suspending the life term of Sengar was quickly stayed by the apex court amid huge public uproar over the high court order.

Kickstart your health in 2026

New Delhi, Dec 31: As 2026 approaches, many of us will have set ourselves a challenge to become healthier and feel better in the new year. Whether you're aiming to drink less, get more active, quit smoking, lose weight or sleep better there are a wide range of free tools and expert support available to help you feel your best.

Setting small, achievable goals is often the most effective way to create positive change. While new habits can be challenging to maintain, it's important not to let any setback discourage you. Remember that everyone is different. Progress may take longer or feel more difficult for you but avoid comparing your progress with others.

Get active
Being active does more than just improve physical health; it boosts your energy, helps manage stress, and lifts your mood. You don't need a gym to make a change—start with small, manageable steps. This could be a 10-minute daily walk, a bit of winter gardening, or simply choosing a parking spot further from the entrance. The key is to do what you can, at your own pace. Every bit of movement counts toward a healthier you.

Lose weight
Small, simple changes to what and how much you are eating and drinking can help you to lose weight. There's lots of ideas on the NHS Better Health website and on eating healthier when trying to lose weight.

If you live in Knowsley or are registered with a Knowsley GP and think you would benefit from some support and advice to help you lose weight, call the Healthy Knowsley Service on 0800 0731 202. Or if you would prefer someone to contact you, simply complete the referral form.

Quit for good
Stopping smoking is one of the best things smokers can do for their health, and with the right support you're up to four times as likely to quit for good.

You can get support at www.smokefreeknowsley.org.uk, call the Knowsley Stop Smoking Service on 0151 426 7462 or text quit to 61825 (normal network charge).

Try something new
Trying new experiences—no matter how small—can make



your daily routine feel more lively and interesting. Why not switch up your usual habits? You could try a different walking route, or rediscover the joy of reading by visiting one of our five local libraries to borrow books for free. We also know that giving back is a fantastic way to boost your own wellbeing. If you'd like to build new connections and find a sense of purpose, explore the volunteering roles and community groups listed on the Knowsley Offer.

Sleep better
Good quality sleep is important for physical and mental health. It helps us to feel energised and rested, improving our ability to cope better with daily challenges and ups and downs. Most adults need between seven and nine hours of sleep a night, though individual needs vary (and often lessen slightly with age).

While the occasional sleepless night is harmless, persistent sleep issues – like difficulty getting to sleep or staying asleep, or not waking up feeling refreshed – can start to have a negative impact on health. Poor sleep can cause low mood, irritability, difficulty concentrating and reduced ability to do daily tasks.

Sleep problems are often triggered by worry, anxiety or underlying physical health issues. If sleep difficulties persist, it is important to seek help from your GP.

Cllr Christine Bannon, Knowsley Council Cabinet Member for Health, said: "The start of a New Year is a great time to think about getting healthier and feeling better. It's worth remembering that most lasting changes usually come from small adjustments to our daily routines. "It is never too late to improve your health – make a start today!"

Source: knowsleynews.co.uk

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) DIVISION TANGMARG.

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER (CIVIL WORKS)

NIT No:117/R&B of 2025-26

Dated:- 31-12-2025

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, UT J&K, e-tenders (In single cover system) are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rupees)	Earnest money (In Rupees)	Time of completion	M.H of Account	Class of Contractor	Project Authority	Tender call
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Providing/ fixing and installation of various items for celebration of Republic Day (26 Jan 2026) at Town Hall Kunzer.	1.11	200/-	2220/-	2 days	Overall contingency/ 3054	DEE	R&B	1 st
2	Providing/ fixing and installation of various items for celebration of Republic Day (26th Jan 2026) at Tangmarg.	2.36	200/-	4720/-	2 days	Overall contingency/ 3054	DEE	R&B	1 st

Position Of AAA: Accorded

Position of T.S: Accorded

Position of funds: Assured

1. The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q),Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be viewed/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:-

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	31-12-2025
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	01-01-2026
3	Bid submission Start Date	01 -01-2026
4	Bid Submission End Date	08-01-2026 4:00 PM
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	09-01-2026 11:00 AM

3. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan (Dated between bid submission start date and bid submission end date) with NIT No. , Serial No. and name of work to be deposited in M.H. 0059 in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Tangmarg (tender inviting authority).

4. All the bidders must upload Earnest money/Bid security equal to 2% of advertised cost in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Division Tangmarg (tender receiving authority) (The Date of earnest money/Bid security should be between the Bid Submission start date and Bid submission End date, otherwise bids shall be rejected).

5. The Successful bidder will have to provide performance security @ 5% of contract value in the form of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Division Tangmarg (tender receiving authority) as per rule-171 (I) of GFR 2017. The earnest money/ Bid security @2% shall be released to the successful bidder only on receipt of Performance Security @ 5% of Contract value which shall be released after successful completion of DLP /maintenance period.

6. The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the Office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Tangmarg (tender receiving authority).

7. The earnest money/ Bid security in favour of unsuccessful bidder shall be released only after submission of original Treasury Challan.

8. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids.

9. The earnest money shall be forfeited, If:-

i. Any bidder/ tenderer withdraw his bid/ tender during the period of bid validity or make any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.

ii. Failure of Successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within the specified time limit.

iii. Failure of Successful bidder to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.

iv. Failure of successfully bidder to submit the performance security within the time period (as per JKPWD Engineering Manual 2020) i.e 21 Days from the issuance of letter of acceptance, after that the work will be put to fresh tenders without any notice to the contractor and the EMD will be forfeited.

38. All other terms conditions are as per PWD Form 25(Double agreement Form), NIT, GFR 2017 & JK PWD Engineering Manual 2020.

39. As per the Circular No. 01 (Adm) FD of 2025 Dated: 08-07-2025 issued by Finance Department of UT J&K "Every participating supplier/contractor to mandatorily disclose the bank account number which is linked with their GSTIN at the time of bid submission. No payments shall be released by the Government Department/Agency to any other bank account except the one linked with the GST registered number of the successful bidder".

No: R&B / Divn./ Tang/6878-88
Dated: 31-12-2025

DIPK-9537/25
DATED: 31-12-2025

Sd/-
Technical Officer

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
R&B Division Tangmarg.

Year Ender

J&K sees sustained sporting rise in 2025

From Auqib Nabi's IPL windfall to Gulmarg's rise as India's winter sports capital, 2025 emerged as landmark year for sports in Jammu & Kashmir

JAHANGEER GANAIE, WARIS FAYAZ, REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Dec 31: Sports in Jammu and Kashmir have thrived on raw talent and resilience for decades despite limited infrastructure and exposure. However, in 2025, that approach changed as potential turned into recognition, systems began delivering results, and athletes made their mark nationally and globally. This year-ender, based on months of on-ground reporting by the news agency – Kashmir News Observer (KNO) correspondents – Jahangeer Ganaie, Waris Fayaz and Rehan Qayoom Mir – captures the moments and milestones that redefined J&K's sporting journey.

At the heart of this sporting renaissance stood Baramulla pacer Auqib Nabi Dar, whose Rs 8.40 crore IPL auction deal with Delhi Capitals did more than rewrite

record books.

Auqib Nabi Dar: The Moment That Changed Everything

When the auction hammer fell, sealing Auqib Nabi Dar's fate with Delhi Capitals for Rs 8.40 crore, history was made. The 28-year-old right-arm pacer became the most expensive IPL buy from Jammu & Kashmir.

Ranji Trophy Returns to Srinagar

Another highlight of 2025 was the return of Ranji Trophy cricket to Srinagar, with Sher-e-Kashmir Stadium in Srinagar hosting the season opener against Mumbai.

Youth Engagement Reaches Record High

Away from headlines and auctions, the numbers told an equally powerful story. Over 61 lakh youth participated in sports activities across J&K in one year, according to official data accessed by KNO.

In medal tallies alone, J&K athletes delivered standout

performances:

2023-24: 549 national medals, 16 international medals

2024-25: 639 national medals, 15 international medals

Gulmarg: India's Winter Sports Capital

While sports in summer thrived on fields and courts, winter sports flourished on snow. The Khelo India Winter Games firmly established Gulmarg as the country's winter sports capital.

Young Achievers Shine Globally

2025 also belonged to teenagers who carried J&K's flag overseas.

17-year-old Nasir Aijaz Sufi from Sopore clinched bronze at the ISF World School Volleyball Championship in China.

In martial arts, Kupwara's Rashid Shafi struck gold at a Wushu championship in Sweden.

MMA fighter Owais Yaqoob secured a dominant first-round victory at BRAVE CF 103 in

Uzbekistan.

Institutional Growth and Inclusion

Behind these achievements stood expanding institutional support. Academies for football, volleyball, wushu, hockey, gymnastics and water sports continued to grow. The Gymnastics Academy at MA Stadium, Jammu, operated at international standards, while Srinagar's Gindun Stadium facility neared completion.

A Year That Redefined Belief

2025 was a year when systems met talent, when belief replaced doubt, and when success stories inspired more participation rather than isolated celebration.

As Auqib Nabi Dar prepares for the IPL spotlight and hundreds of youngsters lace up their boots across J&K, one thing is clear: Jammu & Kashmir sport is no longer knocking on the door; it has stepped firmly inside. (KNO)



India, Russia move towards more balanced, diversified economic ties in 2025

PTI

Moscow, Dec 31: The time-tested partners India and Russia moved towards more balanced, diversified economic ties in 2025, as both sides realised the need to expand bilateral trade beyond defence and energy sectors. During Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to New Delhi in December, India and Russia unveiled a raft of measures, including a five-year roadmap to build a robust economic partnership and addressed India's concerns over trade deficit.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also conveyed to President Putin that the war in Ukraine must be brought to an end through peaceful means. Prior to his visit to India, when asked about the US threat to impose high tariffs and sanctions on Russia's key partners, Putin stated that the Indian people would not tolerate their country being bullied into making a decision that contradicted their national interests and priorities, as reported by the RT news channel.

"(India) will never allow itself to be humiliated by anyone. I know Prime Minister Modi, he will also not make any such decisions," he



had said. He was referring to the additional 25 per cent tariff imposed by President Donald Trump on New Delhi as a penalty for its purchases of Russian oil, taking the total levies imposed on India by the US to 50 per cent.

New Delhi has described these duties as "unfair, unjustified and unreasonable."

Meanwhile, the key outcome of the 23rd India-Russia Annual Summit held in New Delhi was the signing and approval of 30 documents that form a long-term foundation for expanding trade, economic, and investment cooperation, including on non-nuclear (powered) shipbuilding, and the training of Indian sailors for polar shipping.

Khaleda Zia's funeral prayer held in Bangladesh amid tight security

PTI

Dhaka, Dec 31: Bangladesh's former prime minister Khaleda Zia's funeral prayers were held on Wednesday amid tight security.

The funeral prayer (namaz-e-janaza) was held at the Manik Mia Avenue on Wednesday afternoon.

Baitul Mukarram National Mosque Khatib Mufti Mohammad Abdul Malek conducted the funeral prayers while Bangladesh Nationalist Party's Standing Committee Member Nazrul Islam Khan read out a brief biography of Zia.

Zia, who dominated Bangladesh's politics for decades, died on Tuesday in Dhaka.

Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus, Chief Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury, and Khaleda Zia's son and BNP Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman joined the



funeral prayers along with foreign dignitaries, advisers of the interim government, leaders of different political parties and senior government and military officials.

"Please pray to Allah seeking her place in heaven," Zia's elder son, Rahman, told the crowd ahead of the prayers.

Millions of people joined namaz-e-janaza of Zia, three-time Prime Minister and political icon of Bangladesh.

Mourners from all walks of life offered prayers seeking forgiveness for the

departed soul of Zia as they burst into tears, being emotional with the passing of their beloved leader.

The national flag-draped coffin of Zia was placed at the west end of Manik Mia Avenue. After the funeral prayers, Zia will be laid to eternal rest beside her husband, Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman's grave in the city with state honour while the general public will not be allowed during the burial as there will be an elaborate state funeral ceremony.

EAM Jaishankar hands over PM Modi's letter to BNP's Tarique Rahman

PTI

Dhaka, Dec 31: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday handed over to Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leader Tarique Rahman a letter from Prime Minister Narendra Modi as thousands of people bid farewell to former prime minister Khaleda Zia at her funeral. Shortly after landing in Dhaka, Jaishankar met Rahman, the acting chairman of BNP and the eldest son of Zia, and conveyed India's deepest condolences over the death of the iconic leader who dominated the country's politics for over three decades.

The top BNP leader died on Tuesday following a prolonged illness. The external affairs minister is representing India at Zia's funeral. "Handed over to him a personal letter from Prime Minister @narendramodi. Conveyed deepest condolences on behalf of the Government and people of India," Jaishankar said on social media.

India Israel teams may meet next month on proposed trade pact: Official

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 31: India and Israeli teams are expected to meet next month on the proposed Free Trade Agreement (FTA), an official said on Wednesday.

In November, the two countries inked terms of reference to formally start negotiations for the agreement, which aimed at boosting bilateral trade and investments.

The official said that issues related to structuring of Israel-India FTA are expected to be chalked out in the January meeting.

Trade representatives from Israel are expected to arrive for talks, the official added.

During 2024-25, India's exports to Israel dipped 52 per cent to USD 2.14 billion from USD 4.52 billion in 2023-24. Imports, too, fell 26.2 per cent to USD 1.48 billion last fiscal year. The bilateral trade stood at USD 3.62 billion.

India is Israel's second-largest trading partner in Asia.

Though bilateral merchandise trade is dominated mainly by diamonds, petroleum products, and chemicals, recent years have witnessed an increase in trade in areas such as electronic machinery and high-tech products, communications systems, and medical equipment.

Major exports from India to Israel include pearls and precious stones, automotive diesel, chemical and mineral products, machinery and electrical equipment, plastics, textiles, apparel, base metals and transport equipment, and agricultural products.

Imports include pearls and precious stones, chemical and mineral/fertiliser products, machinery and electrical equipment, petroleum oils, defence, machinery, and transport equipment.

Iran appoints new central bank governor



AP

Tehran, Dec 31: Iran on Wednesday appointed a new governor to the central bank after the former one resigned following a record currency fall against the US dollar that sparked large protests.

The plummeting of the rial, Iran's currency, sparked the largest protests in the country in three years, with rallies that began Sunday and continued until Tuesday.

A report by the official IRNA news agency said President Masoud Pezeshkian's Cabinet appointed Abdolnasser Hemmati, a former economics minister, as new governor of the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He replaces Mohammad Reza Farzin, who resigned on Monday.

Experts say a 40 per cent inflation rate led to public discontent. The US dollar traded at 1.38 million rials on Wednesday, compared to 430,000 when Farzin took office in 2022. Many

traders and shopkeepers closed their businesses and took to the streets of Tehran and other cities to protest.

The new governor's agenda will include a focus on controlling inflation and strengthening the currency, as well as addressing the mismanagement of banks, the government's spokeswoman Fatemeh Mohajerani wrote on X.

Hemmati, 68, previously served as minister of economic and financial affairs under Pezeshkian. In March parliament dismissed Hemmati for alleged mismanagement and accusations his policies hurt the strength of Iran's rial against hard currencies. A combination of the currency's rapid depreciation and inflationary pressure has pushed up the prices of food and other daily necessities, adding to strain on household budgets already under pressure due to Western sanctions on Iran over its nuclear programme.

MOVIES Schedule

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IKKIS (U/A 13+)

HINDI - 10:45 AM, 02:00 PM, 06:50 PM



AVATAR : FIRE AND ASH (UA 16+)

3D HINDI - 03:00 PM



TU MERI MAIN TERA MAIN TERA TU MERI

(U/A 16+) HINDI - 11:05 AM, 06:00 PM



DHURANDHAR (A)

HINDI ATMOS - 11:00 AM

HINDI - 01:45 PM, 05:00 PM