

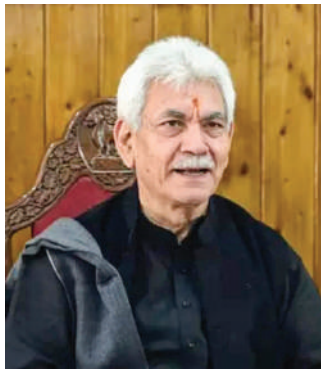


## LG summons J&K Assembly for Budget Session from Feb 2

- Manoj Sinha to address House on first day
- CM to present second budget of UT
- Session likely to be held in two parts

**KNO Special Correspondent**

Srinagar, Jan 03: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has summoned the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly to convene for its upcoming budget session beginning February 02, 2026.



The summon was issued by the LG in exercise of powers vested in him under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019. "I, Manoj Sinha, Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, in

exercise of the powers conferred upon me under Section 18(1) of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, do hereby summon the Legislative Assembly for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir to meet at Jammu on Monday, the 2nd of February, 2026 at 10:00 A.M.," reads the summon, a copy of which is with news agency Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

The Council of Ministers had recommended to the LG to summon the Assembly from February 02.

The session will begin with the LG's address to the House on February 02 at 10:00 A.M.

"I, Manoj Sinha, Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, in



Tourists enjoy a serene Shikara ride on Dal Lake amidst crisp winter chill of January in Kashmir  
Pic: Jahangir Shah (KNO/KT)

**Each MLA can submit 20 questions, 4 resolutions, two bills**

**KNO Special Correspondent**

Each MLA can submit twenty questions, four resolutions, and two bills for the upcoming Budget Session of the Jammu and Kashmir

Assembly beginning February 02, 2026. As per a bulletin issued by the Legislative Assembly Secretariat, a copy of which is in possession of news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), each MLA may send notices of not more than 100 words.

## Div Com Kashmir calls for united fight against drug addiction

**Rehan Qayoom Mir**

Srinagar, Jan 03: Describing drug addiction as a "major warning signal", Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Anshul Garg on Saturday called for a united social response to tackle the growing challenge of substance abuse. He termed it one of the gravest social issues facing Jammu and Kashmir today.

Speaking at an Orientation-cum-Capacity Building Workshop for Masjid Imams and Religious Scholars held at the Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (IMHANS), Rainawari, the Div Com said the problem has intensified rapidly, with cases of drug abuse having "tripled in the



last three years".

"Drug addiction has become a big problem for all of us. This issue has multiplied three times in the last three and a half years. This is alarming," he said, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

The programme, organised by the District Administration Srinagar, aimed at

## Modi Govt aims to complete flood recovery in J&K by Aug 2026: Dr Jitendra

Centre releases Rs 1,400 crore, elected reps to assist admin | Canal system planned to utilise excess water locally | Surplus to reach neighbouring states

**Sajid Raina**

Kathua, Jan 03: Asserting that PM Modi led government is determined to complete major reconstruction works in the flood hit areas in Jammu and Kashmir by August this year, Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Friday said the Centre has released over Rs 1,400 crore as special assistance to rebuild the shattered infrastructure.

Chairing a meeting with district officials and public representatives, Dr Singh, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said that Kathua was the worst-affected district due to recent flash floods, given its location near the international border



and its geographical linkage with adjoining areas of Punjab and Himachal Pradesh.

"Kathua was worst hit due to floods. After the Prime Minister's intervention, we have received more than Rs 1,400 crore from the central

government," Dr Singh said.

He said the meeting focused on ensuring proper utilisation and accountability of the funds. "It was decided that the money should be used judiciously and in a time-bound manner," he added.

Singh said the administration has been asked to prepare, within a week, a list of public structures that have suffered damage exceeding Rs 2 crore.

"Once the list is ready, a detailed plan will be prepared so that reconstruction work can be completed by August, before weather conditions turn unfavourable," he said.

Dr Singh said from January 5 to 7, elected representatives and officials will be

## J&K Govt unveils draft amendments to Industrial Policy 2021-30 with new incentives

**KNO Special Correspondent**

Srinagar, Jan 03: The Jammu & Kashmir Government has unveiled a draft amendment to its industrial policy 2021-30, proposing a slew of incentives aimed at transforming the Union Territory's industrial landscape.

The Industries and Commerce Department has placed the proposed incentives in the public domain to seek suggestions from various stakeholders.

According to the proposed amendments, a copy of which is in possession of news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), sick industries under revival will receive the same incentives as new industrial units under the policy. "A special

mechanism will identify and rehabilitate sick SME units (as per the Reserve Bank of India definition), and such units under revival will receive the same incentives as new industrial units in the current policy," the draft states.

The amendments further provide that MSME units in Zone A shall be eligible for 30% financial assistance, subject to a ceiling of Rs 50 lakh, while units in Zone B shall be eligible for 50% financial assistance, subject to a ceiling of Rs 1 crore.

Women-led MSME units (with at least 51% stakes) across all zones may be provided an additional 25% financial assistance, as an extra benefit, the policy notes.

The proposed initiative also provides for

## LG Sinha unveils poster of 'The Last Dose' film



**KT NEWS DESK**

Jammu, Jan 03: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday unveiled the poster of "The Last Dose", an

awareness film on drug abuse produced by Khwaish Gupta Productions, at Lok Bhawan.

The Lieutenant Governor congratulated the entire team and conveyed his best wishes to

them. Khwaish Gupta, Founder of Khwaish Gupta Productions; Shivdeep Gupta and Priya Gupta, Producers of the film along with other team members were present at the unveiling ceremony.

## Three new criminal laws to ensure time-bound justice by 2029: Amit Shah

'Modi Govt has completely modernised all five pillars of justice system'

**Press Information Bureau**

New Delhi, Jan 03: Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Amit Shah, on Saturday highlighted the transformative impact of the recent criminal laws and forensic reforms on India's justice system. Shah was addressing a meeting of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Home Affairs at Sri Vijaya Puram in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The meeting focused on the advancements and future plans for the Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL) and the National Forensic



Sciences University (NFSU).

Shah began by underscoring the government's comprehensive efforts since 2019,

emphasizing the importance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for timely justice. He announced that the government

aims to complete the entire judicial process—from FIR to the Supreme Court—within three years by 2029, a goal driven by ongoing reforms and technological advancements.

Addressing the impact of the new criminal laws, which came into effect in July 2024, the Union Home Minister pointed to the positive results seen so far. He cited cases from West Bengal and Bihar where investigations into heinous crimes, such as rape and triple murders, were concluded within 50 to 62 days, showcasing the speed and efficiency these laws have

## Judges must remain intellectually agile, socially aware: CJI on modern challenges

**PTI**

Patna, Jan 03: CJI Surya Kant on Saturday said he was "shocked" to note the high incidence of cyber crimes in the country, which have led common people, especially senior citizens, to be robbed of thousands of crores of rupees.

He was addressing a function in Pothahi, on the outskirts of Patna, where he laid the foundation stone for a new campus of the Bihar Judicial Academy.

"A judicial academy is the only effective platform for district judiciary to keep abreast of the newest complexities in civil or criminal laws like the fast-growing quagmire of cyber crimes," he said.

"All of you have never



thought of hearing offences like digital arrest and how these cyber crimes are being committed day and night, and the harassment caused, particularly, to senior citizens," he added.

The CJI said these are the latest challenges which the Indian judiciary is facing.

"I was shocked to know that in India alone, not a few hundred crores, (but) thousands of crores have been siphoned off, by way of extortion committed on senior citizens through cyber crime," he said.

The CJI said, therefore, the significance of sensitive training and updating of judicial officers to deal with these kinds of modern challenges is extremely important.

"Courts function through judges, but judges are also shaped by training. Judicial academies are, therefore, silent pillars that sustain the justice delivery system. They are spaces where legal knowledge is refined," he said.

"The judiciary today, let us acknowledge, operates in an

environment of unprecedented change. Courts are increasingly called upon to address disputes arising from technological innovation, economic complexity, social transformation and evolving rights jurisprudence," he said.

Maintaining that public expectations from the justice delivery system are higher than ever, the CJI said judicial education cannot remain static and episodic, with continuous learning essential for maintaining judicial relevance and credibility.

"Judges must remain intellectually agile, socially aware and ethically grounded. Judicial academies serve as the institutional mechanism through which this ongoing education is structured | More on P6

## Cold wave grips Kashmir, Ladakh as mercury dips further

» Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Kargil among coldest

» Light snowfall on Jan 6, fog in Jammu plains

**Sajid Raina**

Srinagar, Jan 03: Cold conditions continued across Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday as most parts of the Kashmir Valley and Ladakh recorded sub-zero minimum temperatures, while the Jammu region witnessed comparatively milder weather, officials said.

In the Kashmir region,



Gulmarg emerged as the coldest place with a low of minus 6.5 degrees Celsius, followed by Pahalgam at minus 5.2 degrees and Shopian at minus 4.7

degrees, according to details obtained by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO). Srinagar recorded a minimum | More on P6



# Agriculture Minister reviews Sopore fruit mandi modernisation plan

KT NEWS DESK

BARAMULLA, JANUARY 3: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, Cooperative and Election Departments, Javid Ahmad Dar, Saturday reviewed the current status and future development roadmap of Sopore Fruit Mandi during a meeting held at Baramulla.

The meeting, as per an official statement was convened in pursuance of directions issued during the District Development Board meeting chaired by the Chief Minister Omar Abdullah. It emphasised on preparing a holistic plan for modernization of the Sopore Fruit Mandi and augmentation of facilities. Today's meeting was chaired by the Minister, during which a detailed and threadbare review was held with the concerned officers and stakeholders.

While reviewing the progress, the Minister noted that Sopore Fruit Mandi, recognized as Asia's second-largest fruit market after Azadpur Mandi, Delhi, occupies a pivotal position in Jammu & Kashmir's



horticulture-driven economy. The focus, he emphasized, is on systematic infrastructure upgradation, improved facilities and operational efficiency, rather than mere expansion in size.

During the meeting, key issues including the need for additional parking space, requirement of land for truck yard, solid waste management, establish-

ment of facilities such as a medical dispensary and labour sarai and widening of the main approach road to the mandi were discussed in detail. The

Minister directed the Deputy Commissioner, Baramulla, to prepare and submit a comprehensive, holistic modernization proposal in light of the deliberations for appropriate decision at the Government level.

Reiterating the Government's commitment towards strengthening the agricultural marketing infrastructure, the Minister said that modern, transparent and efficient market systems will significantly benefit the farmers and traders alike. He also directed that

impetus should be given on development of cold storage facilities, hi-tech grading lines, portable graders to strengthen the supply chain from "farm to market," minimize post-harvest losses and ensure better returns to growers connected to the Mandi.

The meeting was attended by Irshad Rasool Kar, MLA Sopore, Deputy Commissioner Baramulla Minga Sherpa, senior officers from the Agriculture Production Department and allied sectors and officers of the district administration.

## DC Bandipora reviews NRLM progress

KT NEWS DESK

BANDIPORA, JANUARY 03: Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, Saturday chaired a review meeting of the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) to assess progress across key components and chart priorities for the coming period.

During the meeting, as per an official statement, block-wise performance under social mobilisation was reviewed in detail, including household coverage targets and achievements.

Expressing concern over the unsatisfactory performance of Tulail and Sumbal blocks in the areas of social mobilisation and bank credit linkages, the Deputy Commissioner stressed the need for focused and sustained efforts to improve outcomes. She appreciated the improvement shown by some blocks and urged the teams to continue working with the same commitment, assuring full support from the district administration to strengthen

outreach and mobilisation initiatives.

The status of bank credit linkages, including targets and achievements, was also reviewed, with emphasis laid on improving coordination with banking institutions to enhance credit flow to Self Help Groups. The District Programme Manager, NRLM, informed that a focused strategy had been put in place and that regular review meetings were being conducted to improve overall performance.

The Deputy Commissioner reviewed the status of the IBCB cadre, including Cluster Coordinators (CCs), Cluster Data Entry Operators (CDEOs) and Bank Sakhis. She also assessed progress under the Lakhpati DIDI initiative, covering women engaged in farm, non-farm and allied livelihood activities. Updates were taken on farm-based cadres, including Krishi Sakhis, Pashu Sakhis and Van Sakhis.

Progress under Mission YUVA was also reviewed, including Udyam Jagriti registrations and the status of credit applications.

## SMC Commissioner reviews asset mapping, pushes monetisation for revenue boost

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 3: Reinforcing the Srinagar Municipal Corporation's (SMC) commitment to financial sustainability and efficient urban governance, the Commissioner, SMC, Faz Lul Haseeb, Saturday conducted the inspections of municipal assets with a focused thrust on strengthening revenue generation as the backbone for delivering hassle-free civic services to the citizens of Srinagar.

The Commissioner, as per an official statement, carried out an extensive on-site inspection of municipal assets at Hazuri Bagh, accompanied by the Joint Commissioner, Suhail Ul Islam, Chief Revenue Officer, and other senior officers of the Corporation.

During the inspection, the Commissioner reviewed the status, condition, functionality, and utilisation of key municipal properties and facilities as part of the ongoing asset mapping and monetisation initiative. He assessed their potential for enhanced utilisation through structured, transparent, and policy-compliant monetisation models aimed at improving financial sustainability.

Highlighting the direct linkage between robust municipal revenues and quality civic service

delivery, the Commissioner emphasised that sustainable revenue generation is essential for ensuring uninterrupted sanitation services, improved urban infrastructure, efficient public utilities, and timely delivery of civic amenities across the city. He stated that municipal assets are valuable public resources and must be managed professionally and responsibly in the larger public interest.

The Commissioner directed the concerned officers to prepare a comprehensive and updated inventory of all municipal assets, identify underutilised properties, and initiate time-bound measures for their effective monetisation strictly in accordance with prescribed rules and government policies. He further stressed the importance of innovative yet accountable asset utilisation strategies to enhance the Corporation's financial resilience.

The Commissioner also underscored the need for regular monitoring, systematic maintenance, prevention of encroachments, and plugging of revenue leakages as integral components of effective asset management. He called for strengthened inter-departmental coordination to ensure that asset utilisation aligns with the broader objectives of planned urban development.

## DC Srinagar flags off FMD vaccination drive across district

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 3: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo on Saturday kick-started the 7th round of vaccination against Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) by flagging off mobile veterinary units from the DC Office premises here.

The district-wide vaccination drive, as per an official statement, is being carried out by the District Sheep Husbandry Department with the objective of protecting livestock and strengthening disease prevention mechanisms across Srinagar.

The mobile veterinary units will visit villages, urban localities and remote areas of the district to vaccinate livestock at the doorstep, making the process accessible and convenient for farmers.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC highlighted the importance of timely vaccination to safeguard livestock from Foot and Mouth Disease, which causes heavy economic losses to farmers and livestock owners. He stressed that the administration is committed to ensuring 100 percent vaccination coverage of the sheep population and other susceptible animals in the district.

The DC directed the concerned to ensure proper planning, monitoring, and execution of the vaccination campaign so that every livestock pocket is covered efficiently. He also appealed to livestock owners to extend full cooperation to veterinary teams and ensure their animals are vaccinated during the drive.

The Deputy Commissioner added that the 7th round of FMD vaccination is part of the Government's ongoing efforts to control animal diseases and enhance livestock health, productivity, and farmers' livelihoods.

He was informed that under the campaign, mobile veterinary units will reach farmers at their doorsteps, providing free-of-cost vaccination services to about 3,400 farming families across Srinagar district, covering nearly 58,000 sheep and goats and 28,000 cattle.

District Sheep Husbandry Officer, Dr, Mohammad Ashraf, Officials of Sheep Husbandry Department, Veterinary Officers, Field staff and other concerned were present during the launch of the vaccination drive.

## GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR DIRECTORATE OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS

127-AD, Opposite Police Residential  
Qtrs. Gandhi Nagar Jammu 180004.

Kashmir Office: Suliman Complex Dalgate Srinagar 190001

Email: [directorjk.tad@ik.gov.in](mailto:directorjk.tad@ik.gov.in)

Subject: Extension of timeline for filling of online application and Completion of verification process for the Pre-Matric & Post Matric Scholarship for ST Students of J&K during the Academic Year 2025-26.

### NOTICE

It is hereby notified for the information of all the concern that timeline for receipt and verification of online applications on National Scholarship Portal (NSP) for Pre-Matric (9th & 10th ) and Post Matric scholarships for ST students of Jammu & Kashmir for the Academic Year 2025-26 called for vide Notice(s) issued under endorsement No: DTA/PMS/2025-26/2742-2804 Dated: 14.08.2025 (post matric) read with corrigendum No: DTA/PMS/2025-26/427-88 dated: 18.08.2025 and endorsement No: DTA/PMS/2025-26/489-502 Dated: 19.08.2025(pre-matric) is further extended as per details indicated in the table given below:

S. No	Name of the Scheme	last Date of Filling of online Application after extension	Last Date for Institution verification after extension	Last Date for State/ District Nodal Officer verification after Extension
1	Pre-Matric Scholarship to ST Students for J&K	10th of Jan, 2026	15th of Jan, 2026	31th of Jan, 2026
2	Post-Matric Scholarship to ST Students for I&K	10th of Jan, 2026	15th of Jan, 2026	31th of Jan, 2025

Mohd Mumtaz Ali JKAS Director Tribal Affairs J&K

No: DTA/Sch/PMS/2025/23-103

Dated:01 - 01-2026

DIPK-9599/25

DATED: 03-01-2026

## GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT CIVIL SECRETARIAT, J&K.

Subject: Selection of candidates for the post of Assistant Professor (Cost Accountancy) in the Higher Education Department-appointment thereof.

### NOTICE

The following candidates who have been recommended by the MK Public Service Commission for the post of Assistant Professor (Cost Accountancy) advertised vide Notifications No. 17-PSC (DR-P) of 2023 dated 15.05.2023, pursuant to letter No. PSC/DR-HE/AP-Cost Accountancy/2023 dated 24.12.2025 are hereby directed to submit their E-mail IDs and Contact number details as per Annexure-A in the Higher Education Department, Civil Secretariat Jammu/Srinagar in person or on e-mail-id: [bedik.disoatcheik.crov.in](mailto:bedik.disoatcheik.crov.in) within a period of seven (7) days positively for uploading the same on the Employee Verification System (EVS), failing which it shall be presumed that he/she is not willing to take up his/her appointment as Assistant Professor in the Higher Education Department and he/she shall forfeit the right of appointment without any further notice:-

S. No.	Name Mr/Mrs.	Parentage	Address	Selection Category
01	Zubair Ahmad Sofi	Mohamad Yousuf Sofi	Gulshan Abad Noor Bagh Eidgah	OM
02	Zubair Yousif Zargar	Mohammad Yousif Zargar	150 Ashipora Kralgund	RBA

Sanjay Kumar Tickoo JKAS  
Deputy Secretary to the Government

DIPK-9668/25

DATED: 03-01-2026

No. HED-GAZ/419/2025-04(7714920)

Dated: 01.2026

## GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION & PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT INFORMATION OFFICER SHOPIAN.

Email-Dio-shopian@ik.gov.in

Short Term Quotations

Phone No: 01933-29344

Short term quotations affixed with revenue stamp of Rupees 05 (five) are invited from registered dealers for supply of high-quality PAS equipment's (DJ system) along with a qualified service technician/ operator for four days starting from 23 January to 26 January 2026.

The tenders should reach this office within 07 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice.

Terms and Conditions:

- The price quoted shall be inclusive of GST.
- The bid shall be opened in the next working day on completion of stipulated time.
- Well qualified and sufficient number of technician shall be deputed for operating of PAS/ DJ system at the venue during the said period.
- DJ System must include adequate numbers of Amplifiers, Speakers (standing monitor, Bass etc),mics & allied equipments with proper back up of Genset.

More information can be obtained from the office of District Information Center, Mini Secretariat Shopian.

Showkat Hussain Ganie JKAS  
District Information Officer  
Shopian

No: DIC/INF/SPN/913-14/2026 Dated: 01/10/2026

DIPK-9596/25

DATED: 03-01-2026



# Kashmir's 'Jewel Losing Shine'

## Tourists skip Dal Lake, prefer Gulmarg, Pahalgam

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Jan 03: Once the pride of Kashmir's tourism and a floating symbol of its charm, Srinagar's houseboats, often called the "jewel in the crown" are quietly sinking into neglect as visitors are bypassing the lakes. Houseboat owners said, "Occupancy has dropped to as low as 10-15 percent this winter, leaving most rooms empty, heaters off and livelihoods adrift. We are watching the rush in Gulmarg and Pahalgam on television. But here, our boats are empty," said Ghulam Nabi, a houseboat owner from Dal Lake. "It



feels like tourists have forgotten that Srinagar exists," he added. Notably, despite a packed tourist season in Gulmarg and Pahalgam, where hotels are running full, Dal and Nigeen lakes narrate a different story. The charm of the floating hotels, once popular with couples, filmmakers and other people from different parts of the world has faded amid changing travel trends and the winter chill. "Tourists are preferring snow-covered resorts, which could be one of the reasons for the emptiness of Dal Lake," said a houseboat owner. "Running a houseboat in winter is costly,

with high expenses for heating, frozen water pipes and maintenance," said Manzoor Ahmad, who has been in the business for over decades. "When guests don't come, it's a double loss." Pertinently, Srinagar's houseboats have long been the face of Kashmir's tourism, offering visitors a unique experience of living on the serene Dal and Nigeen lakes. Once numbering over 3,000, only around 750 remain operational today due to decades of restrictions on repairs, declining water quality and shifting tourist preferences—(KNO)

# Govt denies fare revision, commuters pay more

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Jan 03: Even as the government maintains that no official order has been issued regarding a hike in passenger fares, transporters across several parts of Kashmir have already increased the rates, leading to confusion and resentment among commuters.

Last week the government 'reportedly approved an 18 percent' hike in passenger fares across all categories of public transport vehicles, with the revised rates scheduled to take effect from January 1, 2026.

The decision followed deliberations by the Fare Revision Committee (FRC), chaired by Principal Secretary Finance Santosh D. Vaidya, during a meeting with transporter representatives at the Civil Secretariat, Jammu on December 23.

However, no formal notification has been issued till date by the government, leading to uncertainty on the ground. Transporters have also stated they plan to implement the fare hike from January 5—Monday.

"There was a meeting at the Civil Secretariat from about 7 PM to 8 PM—what was it for if fares were not up for revision?" asked a



transporter.

He said that transporters were compelled to increase fares due to the government not revising rates during the past five years.

"Our fitness fare increased from Rs 13,000 per year to Rs 28,000 at one point—over 200 percent. The hike will apply across Jammu and Kashmir for all vehicles, large or small, including passenger vehicles," he said, adding that it will come into force from their side from January 5, 2026.

Despite the government's claims, several commuters told KNO they are already paying higher fares. "I used to pay Rs 25 from Brein Nishat to Lal Chowk Srinagar, but from January 1, they started

asking Rs 30," said Firdous Nazir, a commuter.

Another commuter, Sajad Ahmad, told KNO that fares have suddenly gone up without any notice, leaving passengers unsure about the actual rates. "Before I used to pay, Rs 20 and now I paid Rs 30 from Pantha Chowk to Dal Gate Srinagar and it is frustrating," he said.

Another student who travels daily said, she used to pay Rs 60 from Awantipora to Dalgate, Srinagar, but drivers are now demanding between Rs 75 and 80.

The J&K Transport Welfare Association, which had earlier demanded a 35-40 percent hike, had welcomed the government's 18 percent

increase, calling it a "balanced decision."

Meanwhile, MLA Zadibal and NC's chief spokesperson Tanvir Sadiq refuted claims of any fare hike, saying it was merely a proposal and "has not been approved yet." "There has been no notification of revised fares. The government must clarify the matter immediately," Sadiq told reporters over a week ago when asked about the situation.

The contradictory statements have left both passengers and transporters confused. With no official order in circulation, some routes are witnessing arbitrary fare increases, while others continue under old rates—(KNO)

# Significant gains in maternal, child healthcare

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jan 03: From safer childbirths to healthier childhoods, Jammu & Kashmir is scripting a quiet healthcare success story, with sustained reforms translating into measurable improvements in maternal, infant and child health indicators across the Union Territory. Jammu & Kashmir is witnessing tangible progress in maternal and child health, positioning J&K among the better-performing regions in the country. For instance, the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) in the Union Territory stands at 47 per 100,000 live births, substantially lower than the national average of 88. This achievement is attributed to improved institutional delivery care, wider availability of Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (EmONC) and blood services, along with strengthened referral transport systems under the National Health Mission (NHM).

Jammu & Kashmir has also performed commendably in infant and neonatal health indicators. The Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR) is 10 while the early NMR stands at 6, both significantly better than the national averages of 19 and 13, respectively. The Under-5 Mortality Rate in the UT is 15, compared to the national average of 29 while the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) is 14, against the national average of 25.

The Union Territory has further achieved impressive immunization outcomes with full immunization coverage reaching 96.5 per cent, placing J&K among the highest-performing regions in the country. This progress is attributed to intensified routine immunization drives and robust monitoring mechanisms.

In another significant step, Jammu & Kashmir is introducing the HPV vaccine under the Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) for girls aged 14-15 years, reinforcing its preventive healthcare framework.

These achievements reflect the Union Territory's sustained commitment towards strengthening the healthcare delivery and position Jammu & Kashmir among the better-performing States and Union Territories in the country.

# PCF pushes for Awantipora district status



**"Aurantipora, historically known as Awantipora, has been a seat of civilisation and culture for centuries. Today, it has transformed into one of the most important institutional centres in the Valley," a forum member said. "The presence of premier institutions like AIIMS Awantipora and the Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) has given the town national and international recognition."**

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, Jan 03: The Progressive Citizens Forum (PCF) on Saturday strongly pitched for granting district status to Awantipora, underlining the town's deep historical roots and its fast-emerging role as a major administrative, educational and institutional hub in south Kashmir.

Addressing a press conference, members of the forum said, "Awantipora occupies a prominent place in Kashmir's history, dating back to ancient times when it was the capital of Jammu & Kashmir and has in recent years witnessed unprecedented growth in terms of infrastructure, population and institutional presence." Despite this expansion, they said, the town continues to function under administrative constraints that hinder efficient governance and timely public service delivery.

"Aurantipora, historically known as Awantipora, has been a seat of civilisation and culture for centuries. Today, it has transformed into one of the most important institutional centres in the Valley," a forum member said. "The presence of premier institutions like AIIMS Awantipora and the Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) has given the town national and international recognition."

The forum pointed out that apart from these major institutions, Awantipora hosts several government and semi-government offices, catering not only to local residents but also to people from neighbouring areas.

According to the members, the increasing population pressure and administrative workload

have made it imperative to upgrade Awantipora's status.

"Despite fulfilling many parameters required for a district—such as population size, geographic importance and institutional concentration—Awantipora is still being administered under its existing framework, which causes delays in decision-making and public grievance redressal," another member said.

The forum said that granting district status would decentralise administration, ensure faster implementation of development projects and make governance more accessible to the people.

District status will bring offices closer to the public, reduce dependence on distant district headquarters and help address day-to-day issues in a more efficient manner, the members said.

They further stressed that the move would also promote balanced regional development in the south Kashmir by creating new employment opportunities and boosting economic activity in the area.

Appealing to the government to acknowledge what they termed as the "legitimate and long-pending aspirations" of the people, the Forum urged the authorities to initiate the process for granting district status to Awantipora at the earliest.

"This is not merely a demand, but a genuine public need rooted in history, growth and future potential. We hope the government will take a pragmatic and people-centric decision in the larger public interest," it said—(KNO)

# ACB arrests Tehsil clerk in bribery case

KNO

Srinagar, Jan 03: The Jammu and Kashmir Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Saturday said to have trapped and arrested a clerk of the Tehsil Office Central Shalteng, Srinagar, for demanding and accepting a bribe of rupees 2,000 from a complainant in exchange for erasing his detention record from official registers.

According to a statement, the Jammu and Kashmir Anti Corruption Bureau received a written complaint wherein the complainant has alleged that after being detained under preventive action (vide Section 126/170 BNSS) by orders of the 1st Class Executive Magistrate of the Tehsil Office Central Shalteng Srinagar, a clerk namely Laiq Ahmad Nath deputed in the said office has demanded an illegal gratification of rupees 2,000 for erasing the complainant's detention record from the official registers.

The statement reads, the complainant who is unwilling to pay the bribe, approached the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) Srinagar with a written complaint, requesting legal action against the accused public servant under relevant provisions of law.

It reads, on receipt of the complaint, a discreet verification was conducted, which confirmed the demand of bribe by the accused public servant. Accordingly, Case FIR No. 01/2026 U/S 7 PC Act 1988 was registered at Police Station ACB Srinagar and investigation was taken up.

"During the course of investigation, a trap team was constituted which laid a successful trap and caught the accused clerk, Laiq Ahmad Nath, R/o Qamarwari Srinagar red-handed while demanding and accepting the bribe amount of rupees 2,000 from the complainant," the statement reads.

It reads, after completing all necessary medico-Legal formalities, the accused Public Servant was taken into custody. Further investigation in the case is going on—(KNO)

# Hakeem Yaseen welcomes CM Omar's freeze on power tariff

KNO

Srinagar, Jan 03: President People's Democratic Front (PDF) and former Minister, Hakeem Mohammad Yaseen, Saturday welcomed the decision of Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah that there will be no general increase in electricity tariffs across the Union Territory during the current financial year.

The Chief Minister's announcement has come as a major relief to consumers amid widespread apprehensions over a proposed additional 20 per cent charge on electricity consumption during peak morning and evening hours. In a statement, Hakeem said the decision reflects a people-centric approach and addresses the genuine hardships faced by residents of Jammu and Kashmir.

"This is a timely and much-needed step. Given the prevailing winter conditions and the forthcoming holy month of Ramzan, any increase in electricity tariffs would have added to the financial burden of common people," he said. The former minister added that such relief measures are essential at a time when inflation and rising living costs have already strained household budgets.

He said the decision has been widely welcomed by the public and will provide much-needed respite to consumers across urban and rural areas.

Highlighting the special circumstances of the region, Hakeem said that winters in Jammu and Kashmir are particularly severe, leading to increased dependence on electricity for heating, lighting and daily needs.

"Keeping in view Ramzan, prolonged winters and the overall economic condition of the people, at least a 50 per cent concession or additional amenities should be provided



to general consumers," he said.

Hakeem also stressed the need to improve ground-level power infrastructure. He urged the authorities to ensure that damaged and faulty transformers are repaired or replaced on a priority basis to avoid prolonged outages. "Frequent power cuts and delays in transformer repairs cause immense inconvenience, especially during peak winter months. The administration must act swiftly to address these issues," he added.

PDF president called upon all political parties in Jammu and Kashmir to jointly raise the long-pending demand for the return of National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) projects to the Union Territory.

He argued that reclaiming these projects would strengthen local control over power resources and help reduce the burden on consumers. "If our hydropower projects are returned, the people of Jammu and Kashmir will benefit directly, and the region can move towards an affordable and sustainable electricity supply," Hakeem said, adding that a united political stand is necessary to safeguard public interest and prevent further suffering of the people—(KNO)

# Budgam police crackdown on unauthorized VPN use

KNO

Srinagar, Jan 03: In continuation of efforts to enforce lawful orders and prevent misuse of digital platforms, J&K Police have acted against the use of unauthorized Virtual Private Network (VPN) services across the district Budgam.

In a statement, the police said that following prohibitory orders issued by the District Administration on 29 December 2025 banning unauthorized VPN usage, Police carried out systematic verification and monitoring in Budgam. During the period from (29 December 2025 to 2 January 2026), 24 individuals were identified for violating these orders.

Based on investigation and technical analysis, two (02) FIRs were registered against individuals with adverse terror-related backgrounds, underscoring the security risks posed by misuse of encrypted platforms. Additionally, security proceedings were initiated against eleven (11) individuals, aged between 18 and 40 years, for non-compliance with the prohibitory orders. They were bound down under Sections 126/170 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) and later released after due warning.

J&K Police reaffirm their commitment to maintaining public order, enforcing lawful directives, and preventing misuse of digital platforms. The public is advised to strictly comply with all orders issued by the District Administration and to use digital services responsibly—(KNO)



# Transforming India With AI

## Over ₹10,300 crore investment & 38,000 Graphics Processing Unit (GPUs) powering inclusive innovation

### Press Information Bureau

India stands at the cusp of a new era powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI), where technology is transforming lives and shaping the nation's progress. AI is no longer limited to research labs or big corporations. It is reaching citizens at every level. From improving healthcare access in remote areas to helping farmers make informed crop decisions, AI is making daily life simpler, smarter, and more connected. It is revolutionising classrooms through personalised learning, making cities cleaner and safer, and enhancing public services through faster, data-driven governance.

Initiatives such as the IndiaAI Mission and the Centres of Excellence for AI are at the heart of this transformation. They are expanding access to computing power, supporting research, and helping startups and institutions create solutions that directly benefit people. India's approach focuses on making AI open, affordable, and accessible, ensuring that innovation uplifts society as a whole.

What is Artificial Intelligence?  
Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the ability of machines to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence. It enables systems to learn from experience, adapt to new situations, and solve complex problems independently. AI uses datasets, algorithms, and large language models to analyse information, recognise patterns, and generate responses. Over time, these systems improve their performance, allowing them to reason, make decisions, and communicate in ways similar to humans.

This inclusive vision is also reflected in NITI Aayog's report, AI for Inclusive Societal Development (October 2025). The report shows how AI can empower India's 490 million informal workers by expanding access to healthcare, education, skilling, and financial inclusion. It highlights how AI-driven tools can boost productivity and resilience for millions who form the backbone of India's economy. The report also stresses that technology can bridge deep social and economic divides, ensuring that the benefits of AI reach every citizen.

AI Ecosystem in India at Present  
India's technology sector is expanding rapidly, with annual revenues projected to cross USD 280 billion this year.

Over 6 million people are employed in the tech and AI ecosystem.

The country hosts 1,800+ Global Capability Centres, including more than 500 focused on AI. India has around 1.8 lakh startups, and nearly 89% of new startups launched last year used AI in their products or services.

On the NASSCOM AI Adoption Index, India scores 2.45 out of 4, showing that 87% of enterprises are actively using AI solutions.

Leading sectors in AI adoption include industrial and automotive, consumer goods and retail, banking, financial services and insurance, and healthcare. Together they contribute around 60 percent of AI's total value.

About 26% of Indian companies have achieved AI maturity at scale, according to a recent BCG survey.

As India builds an inclusive AI ecosystem, its growing global recognition reflects this progress. Rankings such as the Stanford AI Index place India among the top four countries in AI skills, capabilities, and policies. The country is also the second-largest contributor to AI projects on GitHub, highlighting the strength of its developer community. With a strong STEM workforce, expanding research ecosystem, and growing digital infrastructure, India is positioning itself to harness AI for economic growth, societal progress, and the long-term vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047.

India is the world's third most AI-competitive nation

India has secured the 3rd position globally in Artificial Intelligence competitiveness, according to a report by Stanford University's 2025 Global AI Vibrancy Tool. The ranking emphasises India's rapid growth in the global AI landscape. The report measures AI growth and innovation from 2017 to 2024. This recent achievement underscores India's rapidly growing AI talent, strong research capabilities, vibrant startup ecosystem, investment and economic impact, infrastructure, and policy and governance.

India AI Mission

Guided by the vision of "Making AI in India and Making AI Work for India", the Cabinet approved the India AI Mission in March 2024, with a budget outlay of ₹10,371.92 crore over five years. The mission marks a defining step towards making India a global leader in Artificial Intelligence.

Since its launch, the mission has made strong progress in expanding the country's computing infrastructure. From an initial target of 10,000 GPUs, India has now achieved 38,000 GPUs, providing affordable access to world-class AI resources.

What is a GPU?

A GPU or Graphics Processing Unit is a powerful computer chip that helps machines think faster, process images, run AI programs, and handle complex tasks more efficiently than a regular processor.

Implemented by IndiaAI, an independent business division under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), the mission is building a comprehensive ecosystem that drives innovation, supports startups, strengthens data access, and ensures the responsible use of AI for public good.

The seven pillars of the IndiaAI Mission are:

1. IndiaAI Compute Pillar

This pillar provides high-end GPUs at affordable costs. As mentioned earlier, over 38,000 GPUs have been onboarded. These GPUs are available at a subsidized rate of just ₹65 per hour.

2. IndiaAI Application Development Initiative

This pillar develops AI applications for India-specific challenges. Sectors include healthcare, agriculture, climate change, governance, and assistive learning technologies. Thirty applications have been approved by July 2025. Sector-specific hackathons are organized with ministries and institutions. For example, the CyberGuard AI Hackathon helps develop AI solutions for cybersecurity.

3. AIKosh (Dataset Platform)

AIKosh develops large datasets for training AI models. It integrates data from government and non-government sources. The platform has over 5,500 datasets and 251 AI models across 20 sectors. These resources help developers focus on AI solutions instead of building basic modules. The platform has over 385,000 visits, 11,000 registered users, and 26,000 downloads by December 2025.

4. IndiaAI Foundation Models

This pillar develops India's own Large Multimodal Models using Indian data and languages. It ensures sovereign capability and global competitiveness in generative AI. IndiaAI received over 500 proposals. In the first and second phase, twelve startups were selected: Sarvam AI, Soket AI, Gnani AI, Gan AI, Avaatar AI, IIT Bombay consortium – BharatGen, Zenteiq, Gen Loop, Intellihealth, Shodh AI, Fractal Analytics, Tech Mahindra Maker's Lab.

5. IndiaAI Future Skills

This pillar builds AI-skilled professionals. Support is provided to 500 PhD fellows, 5,000 postgraduates, and 8,000 undergraduates. Over 200 students received fellowships by July 2025. 73 institutes onboarding PhD students. Data and AI Labs are being set up in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities. Thirty-One labs have been launched with NIELIT and Industry Partners. States and UTs nominated 174 ITIs and polytechnics for labs.

6. IndiaAI Startup Financing

This pillar provides financial support to AI startups. The IndiaAI Startups Global program launched in March 2025. It helps 10 Indian startups expand into the European market in collaboration with Station F and HEC Paris.

7. Safe and Trusted AI

This pillar ensures responsible AI adoption with strong governance. 13 projects have been selected and initiated through Expressions of Interest. They focus on machine unlearning, bias mitigation, privacy-preserving ML, explainability, auditing, and governance testing. An additional expression of interest was published on 9 May 2025 for partner institutions to join the IndiaAI Safety Institute.

AI at India Mobile Congress 2025

Artificial Intelligence took centre stage at the 9th India Mobile Congress, inaugurated by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on 8th October 2025 at Yashobhoomi, New Delhi. Organised by the Department of Telecommunications and COAI, the event ran from 8th to 11th October under the theme "Innovate to Transform."

IMC 2025 features six major global summits, including the International AI Summit, which highlighted AI's transformative role in networks, services, and next-generation digital infrastructure. Over 1,600 new use-cases across AI, 5G, 6G, smart mobility, cybersecurity, quantum computing, and green technology showcased through 100+ sessions and 800+ speakers.

The event hosted over 1.5 lakh visitors from 150 countries, 7,000 global delegates, and 400 companies, bringing together innovators, startups, policymakers, and industry leaders to shape the future of AI and digital technology.

Other Key Government Initiatives and Policy Push

The Government of India is turning its Artificial Intelligence vision into action through a series of transformative initiatives. These efforts are focused on building a robust AI ecosystem, promoting innovation, and ensuring that technology serves every section of society. From creating world-class research hubs to developing homegrown AI models, the government's approach combines policy, infrastructure, and capacity-building in equal measure.

Centres of Excellence for AI

To encourage research-driven innovation, the government has set up three Centres of Excellence (CoEs) in key sectors such as Healthcare, Agriculture, and Sustainable Cities. A fourth CoE for Education was announced in Budget 2025. These centres are designed to serve as collaborative spaces where academia, industry, and government institutions come together to develop scalable AI solutions. Alongside, five National Centres of Excellence for Skilling have been established to prepare the

youth with industry-relevant AI skills, building a future-ready workforce.

AI Competency Framework  
This framework provides structured training for government officials, helping them acquire essential AI skills and apply them in policy-making and governance. Designed in line with global benchmarks, it ensures that India's public sector remains informed, agile, and prepared for the AI-driven future.

Sarvam AI: Smarter Aadhaar Services

Sarvam AI, a Bengaluru-based company, is translating advanced AI research into practical governance solutions. In partnership with the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), it is using generative AI to make Aadhaar services smarter and more secure. In April 2025, Sarvam AI received approval to build India's Sovereign LLM Ecosystem, an open-source model designed to enhance public service delivery and promote digital trust.

Bhashini: Voice for Digital Inclusion

Bhashini is an AI-powered platform that breaks language barriers by offering translation and speech tools in multiple Indian languages. It helps citizens access digital services easily, even if they are not comfortable reading or writing. In June 2025, the Digital India Bhashini Division and the Centre for Railway Information Systems (CRIS) signed an MoU to deploy multilingual AI solutions across public-facing railway platforms.

Since its launch in July 2022, Bhashini has crossed one million downloads, supports 20 Indian languages, and integrates more than 350 AI models. With 450+ active customers, it continues to promote digital inclusion and bridge linguistic divides.

BharatGen AI: India's Multilingual AI Model

Launched on 2 June 2025 at the BharatGen Summit, BharatGen AI is the first government-funded, homegrown multimodal large language model. It supports 22 Indian languages and integrates text, speech, and image understanding. Built using domestic datasets, BharatGen captures India's cultural diversity and provides a common platform for startups and researchers to create AI solutions tailored to Indian needs.

India AI Impact Summit 2026

India will host the AI Impact Summit in February 2026. The summit will showcase India's AI capabilities and encourage innovation across sectors. On September 18, 2025, India unveiled the event logo and key flagship initiatives.

The key flagship initiatives are:

AI Pitch Fest (UDAAN): A platform for AI startups from around the world with a focus on women leaders and differently-abled changemakers.

Global innovation challenges for youth, women, and other participants: An initiative to promote AI-driven solutions that address real world public challenges across sectors.

Research symposium: A gathering to showcase latest AI research and bring together leading researchers from India, the Global South, and the wider international community to present their work, exchange methods, and evidence and encourage collaborations.

AI Expo: This Expo will focus on Responsible Intelligence and will feature 300+ exhibitors from India and 30+ countries.

The event that unveiled the Summit logo and key flagship initiatives also saw the launch of eight new foundational model initiatives to build indigenous AI models trained on India-specific data. Another major focus was the AI Data Labs, with thirty labs launched pan-India, forming a 570-lab network. The first 31 labs were set up in partnership with the National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT) and Industry Partners. These labs provide foundational AI and data training under the FutureSkills initiative of the IndiaAI Mission.

The IndiaAI Fellowship Program and Portal were also expanded during the event to support 13,500 scholars. This includes 8,000 undergraduates, 5,000 postgraduates, and 500 PhD researchers across all disciplines. Fellowships are now open to students from fields such as engineering, medicine, law, commerce, business, and liberal arts.

AI in Everyday Life and Work

Artificial Intelligence is driving a new wave of innovation that touches every part of daily life, from healthcare and farming to education, governance, and climate prediction. It helps doctors diagnose diseases faster, assists farmers in making data-driven decisions, improves learning outcomes for students, and makes governance more efficient and transparent.

At the heart of this transformation is the Large Language Model (LLM), an advanced AI system that learns from vast amounts of data to understand and generate human-like text. LLMs are what make chatbots, translation tools, and virtual assistants possible. They make it easier for people to find information, use government services, and learn new skills in their own language.

India's approach to AI goes beyond technology, focusing on inclusion and empowerment. Through national initiatives and global collaborations, AI is being used to solve real-world

challenges, enhance public services, and make opportunities more accessible to every citizen. From improving rural healthcare and predicting weather patterns to translating court judgments into regional languages, AI is emerging as a powerful enabler of progress in building a digitally empowered and equitable India. Some key areas where AI is improving everyday life are:

Healthcare  
AI is transforming healthcare delivery. It helps doctors detect diseases early, analyse medical scans, and recommend personalised treatments. Telemedicine platforms powered by AI connect patients in rural areas with specialists in top hospitals, saving time and cost while improving care quality. India's participation in HealthAI, a global body promoting safe and ethical AI in healthcare, and collaborations between ICMR and IndiaAI with countries like the United Kingdom and Singapore are ensuring responsible innovation and global best practices.

Agriculture

For farmers, AI is a trusted digital companion. It predicts weather, detects pest attacks, and suggests optimal times for irrigation and sowing. The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare is using AI through initiatives like Kisan e-Mitra, a virtual assistant that helps farmers access government schemes such as PM Kisan Samman Nidhi.

The National Pest Surveillance System and Crop Health Monitoring combine satellite data, weather inputs, and soil analysis to provide real-time advice that improves yields and income security.

Education and Skilling

AI is being integrated into India's education system to make learning more inclusive, engaging, and future-ready. Under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) offers a 15-hour AI skill module from Class VI and an optional AI subject from Class IX to XII. The DIKSHA digital learning platform by NCERT uses AI tools such as keyword search in videos and read-aloud features to enhance accessibility, especially for visually impaired learners.

In addition, the National e-Governance Division (NeGD) under MeitY, in collaboration with its partners, has implemented YUVAI: Youth for Unnati and Vikas with AI, a national programme aimed at enabling students from Classes 8 to 12 with AI and social skills in an inclusive manner. The programme provides a platform for students to learn and apply AI skills across eight thematic areas: Krishi, Aarogya, Shiksha, Paryavaran, Parivahan, Grameen Vikas, Smart Cities, and Vidhi aur Nyaay, empowering them to develop AI-driven solutions for real-world challenges.

Governance and Justice Delivery

Will AI Lead to Unemployment?  
Artificial Intelligence is often seen as a threat to jobs, but in reality, it is creating new kinds of opportunities. According to NASSCOM's report "Advancing India's AI Skills" (August 2024), India's AI talent base is expected to grow from about 6 to 6.5 lakh professionals to more than 12.5 lakh by 2027, at a compound annual growth rate of 15 percent.

AI is driving demand in areas such as data science, data curation, AI engineering, and analytics. As of August 2025, around 8.65 lakh candidates have enrolled or trained in various emerging technology courses, including 3.20 lakh in AI and Big Data Analytics.

To prepare the workforce for the future, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, MeitY, has launched FutureSkills PRIME, a national programme focused on reskilling and upskilling IT professionals in 10 new and emerging technologies, including AI. As of August 2025, more than 18.56 lakh candidates had signed up on the FutureSkills PRIME portal, and over 3.37 lakh had successfully completed their courses.

AI is reshaping governance and public service delivery. As per the Supreme Court of India, under e-Courts Project Phase III, modern technologies are being integrated to make the justice system more efficient and accessible. Artificial Intelligence and its subsets such as Machine Learning, Optical Character Recognition, and Natural Language Processing are being used in translation, prediction, administrative efficiency, automated filing, intelligent scheduling, and communication through chatbots. AI Translation Committees in High Courts are overseeing the translation of Supreme Court and High Court judgments into vernacular languages. Digital legal platforms such as e-HCR and e-ILR now provide citizens online access to judgments in multiple regional languages, making justice delivery more transparent and inclusive.

Weather Forecasting and Climate Services

AI is strengthening India's ability to predict and respond to natural events. The India Meteorological Department uses AI-based models to forecast rainfall, fog, lightning, and fire. The Advanced Dvorak Technique helps estimate cyclone intensity, while MausamGPT, an upcoming AI chatbot, will offer real-time weather and climate advice to farmers and disaster management agencies.

### Key Takeaways

- ₹10,300+ crore allocated over five years for IndiaAI Mission with 38,000 GPUs deployed.
- 6 million people are employed in the tech and AI ecosystem.
- Indian Tech sector is projected to cross \$280 billion in revenue this year.
- AI could add \$1.7 trillion to India's economy by 2035.

AI for Inclusive Societal Development  
NITI Aayog's report, AI for Inclusive Societal Development (October 2025), sets a roadmap for using technology to empower India's informal workforce. It asks a key question: how can the world's most advanced technologies reach the most overlooked workers so they can overcome constraints and claim their place in India's growth story?

The report draws on real-life experiences of informal workers. It reflects the challenges and aspirations of a home healthcare aide in Rajkot, a carpenter in Delhi, a farmer, and many others. These stories show persistent barriers, but also the immense potential that thoughtfully deployed technology can unlock. For these millions, technology must not replace their skills, it must amplify them.

The roadmap discusses how Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, blockchain, robotics, and immersive learning can remove systemic barriers faced by India's 490 million informal workers. It envisions a future where, by 2035, voice-first AI interfaces overcome language and literacy barriers. Smart contracts will ensure timely and transparent payments. Micro-credentials and on-demand learning will allow workers to upskill at the pace of their ambition.

At the heart of this vision is the Digital ShramSetu Mission, a national initiative to deploy frontier technologies at scale for India's informal sector. The mission focuses on persona- or sector-led prioritisation, state-driven implementation, regulatory enablement, and strategic partnerships to ensure affordability and wide adoption. It will mobilise government, industry, and civil society, guided by a robust multi-level impact evaluation framework.

The report emphasises that achieving this inclusive digital leap will require more than optimism. It calls for concerted investments in R&D, targeted skilling programmes, and a strong innovation ecosystem. India's past successes with digital public infrastructure such as Aadhaar, UPI, and Jan Dhan show that inclusive, at-scale platforms are possible.

Proposed Implementation Roadmap:

Phase 1 (2025–2026): Mission Orientation  
Drafting of the mission charter with clear goals, timelines and measurable outcomes. Stakeholders from government, industry, academia and civil society will be engaged to set priorities and define objectives.

Phase 2 (2026–2027): Institutional Setup and Governance Design  
Establishment of cross-sectoral governance structures, leadership roles and an implementation blueprint. This phase will also focus on legal, regulatory and digital infrastructure readiness, while promoting domestic innovation and public-private partnerships.

Phase 3 (2027–2029): Pilots and Select Programme Launch

Pilot projects will be rolled out in high-readiness sectors to test solutions in real-world conditions. Accessibility and last-mile adoption will be prioritised, supported by strong monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

Phase 4 (2029 onwards): Nationwide Rollout and Integration

Proven solutions will be scaled across states and cities. Local adaptation will ensure regional relevance and worker mobility across sectors. The phase will aim to institutionalise the mission and sustain its benefits at scale.

By 2035, the mission envisions India as a global leader in inclusive AI deployment. It seeks to ensure that technology not only drives growth but also strengthens livelihoods, opens access to opportunities, and supports the nation's journey towards an equitable and empowered digital economy.

Conclusion

India's journey in Artificial Intelligence reflects a clear vision and decisive action. From expanding computing infrastructure to fostering homegrown models and supporting startups, the country is creating a robust AI ecosystem that benefits citizens and drives innovation. Initiatives in agriculture, healthcare, education, and governance demonstrate practical applications with real impact. Strategic initiatives like the IndiaAI Mission, Digital ShramSetu, and foundational model development are ensuring that innovation reaches every citizen while fostering research, skills, and entrepreneurship. These efforts lay a strong foundation for India to emerge as a global AI leader while advancing the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

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



## JKEDI launches new MDP batches across 18 districts

KT News Desk

JAMMU/SRINAGAR, JANUARY 03: The Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) on Saturday launched the fifth and sixth batches of Management Development Programmes (MDPs) across 18 districts of the Union Territory under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) scheme. The programme is funded by the Union Ministry of MSME and implemented in Jammu and Kashmir by the Industries & Commerce Department.

The MDPs, as per an official statement, were inaugurated simultaneously in Anantnag, Baramulla, Budgam, Ganderbal, Srinagar, Samba, Jammu, Pulwama, Ramban, Rajouri, Reasi, Doda, Poonch, Kulgam, Kupwara, Kathua, Kishtwar and Udhampur. A total of 504 entrepreneurs, including 479 women, have enrolled for the 30-hour training programme scheduled over a period of six days.

At Udhampur, the programme was inaugurated by Jugal Kumar Sharma (JKAS), Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC), while at Nagam, Budgam, the inaugural session



was presided over by Sh. Irshad Ahmad Dar, Block Programme Manager, NRLM. In the remaining districts, the MDPs were inaugurated by the respective District Nodal Officers and their teams.

The district-level programmes have witnessed enthusiastic participation from local MSMEs, who will receive hands-on training in modern business management practices. The initiative aims to strengthen managerial, financial and operational capabilities of entrepreneurs, enabling them to scale up their enterprises, improve competitiveness and adopt sustainable business models.

The MDP curriculum covers business planning, marketing strategies, digital tools, financial literacy, statutory compliance, innovation and leadership, supplemented by case studies, mentorship sessions and experiential workshops for practical exposure.

Over the next six days, participating entrepreneurs and MSME operators will interact with industry experts, certified trainers and JKEDI faculty. The simultaneous rollout of MDPs across 18 districts underscores JKEDI's commitment to inclusive entrepreneurship development, particularly in remote and underserved areas of the Union Territory.

## Udhampur delegation meets Jal Shakti Minister over water issues

KT News Desk

JAMMU: A delegation of public representatives from various villages of Udhampur district, including Makyani Chanoonta, Dhannu and Majalta, on Tuesday, met Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, and apprised him of drinking water issues affecting their respective areas.

The delegation was led by Abdul Ghani Teli, Chairman OBC Cell of the Jammu & Kashmir National Conference (JKNC).

During the meeting, the members, as per an official statement, raised concerns regarding irregular drinking water supply, the need for upgradation of existing infrastructure and replacement of old and damaged pipelines. They also stressed the importance of augmentation of water sources and preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) to address the long-standing water scarcity and infrastructure-related challenges in their villages.

Senior officers of Jal Shakti Department present on the



occasion included Chief Engineer, Jal Shakti Jammu; Superintending Engineer, Udhampur; Executive Engineer, Udhampur, along with Assistant Executive Engineers (AEEs) and Junior Engineers (JEs) of Jal Shakti Division Udhampur.

Taking serious notice of the issues raised, the Minister asked the Superintending

Engineer, Jal Shakti, to personally visit all the habitations and ensure regular and adequate water supply. He further instructed for formulation of DPRs for permanent restoration of damaged water supply infrastructure in the affected areas at the earliest.

Meanwhile, the department was directed to put in place appropriate temporary

and alternate arrangements to ensure uninterrupted water supply.

The Minister also directed the department to immediately prepare a DPR for a comprehensive water supply scheme for Dhannu Thathi, aimed at providing a long-term and sustainable solution to drinking water problems faced by the residents of the area.

## DC Budgam reviews digitisation of revenue records

KT News Desk

BUDGAM, JANUARY 3: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-din Bhat, Saturday chaired a meeting to review the progress of digitisation of revenue records across all tehsils of the district.

The meeting, as per an official statement, held at the DC Office Complex, was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Budgam, NT Headquarters, and other concerned revenue officials.

During the meeting, a comprehensive review of the digitisation process was carried out. It was observed that the digitisation of revenue records is being undertaken to ensure greater transparency, accuracy, and efficiency in land records management.

The DC assessed the progress achieved so far and reviewed tehsil-wise status of digitisation across the district.

He emphasized that complete digitisation of revenue records is essential for creating a reliable and accessible digital land database.

The DC highlighted the need for maintaining accuracy, consistency, and integrity of digitised records to avoid discrepancies and ensure long-term sustainability of the system. He said that digitisation of land records will significantly contribute towards



minimizing land-related disputes, improving ease of access for citizens, and strengthening overall governance.

The DC also stressed that all historical and current revenue records must be digitised in a time-bound manner. He directed the concerned officers to expedite the remaining digitisation work and ensure that proper verification and validation mechanisms are put in place before finalisation of records.

The DC called for regular monitoring and review of progress were advised to ensure adherence to set timelines.

He directed for coordination among field functionaries and technical teams must be strengthened to address challenges arising during the digitisation process.

The DC focused on capacity building and handholding of revenue staff for effective implementation of the initiative. He directed concerned officers to ensure completion of the digitisation exercise at the earliest, with a focus on accuracy, transparency, and public convenience.

## DC Kupwara reviews JJM works, SASCI scheme implementation

KT News Desk

KUPWARA, JANUARY 3: Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Shrikant Suse, Saturday convened a series of meetings of concerned officers to review the status of Water Supply Schemes (WSS) under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) that have been granted extensions for completion, besides, reviewing implementation of SASCI scheme.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by the Superintending Engineer, Hydraulic Circle Kupwara; Superintending Engineer, R&B; Chief Education Officer; Chief Planning Officer; Executive Engineer Jal Shakti and other concerned officers.

Reviewing the progress under JJM, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the need for concerted efforts and expedited execution of the pending works, directing officers to ensure completion of all incomplete projects within the revised timelines.

He also directed to Jal Shakti department to actively address issues regarding drinking water during ongoing winter.

In a separate meeting, the DC reviewed the



implementation of the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI) scheme in the district.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner directed all concerned departments to submit detailed proposals of works to be taken up under the SASCI scheme to ensure their timely execution. He emphasized that the projects proposed should be impact-oriented and aimed at improving the quality of life of the people in the district.

The Deputy Commissioner stressed that priority should be accorded to projects related to disaster mitigation.

He further instructed the officers to ensure that

complete details of the proposed works are submitted within one week positively, enabling early approval and prompt execution of the projects under the scheme.

The meeting was attended by the Superintending Engineer, R&B Circle Kupwara; Superintending Engineer, Hydraulic Circle Kupwara; Chief Planning Officer; Assistant Commissioner Development; Chief Education Officer; Chief Animal Husbandry Officer; District Sheep Husbandry Officer, Divisional Forest Officers, Executive Engineers from PHE and R&B departments, along with other concerned officers.

## KPDCL distributes safety gear to field staff in Srinagar

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 03: A Safety Equipment Distribution Programme was organized by Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL) at Conference Hall of IT&C Division, Bemina Srinagar as part of its ongoing efforts to strengthen electrical safety practices among field staff engaged in operation and maintenance of the power distribution network.

During the event, the Managing Director, KPDCL, Mahmood Ahmad Shah, as per an official statement, stressed upon the need and importance of strict adherence to safety norms while working on electrical installations. He emphasized that safety of personnel is of utmost concern and proper use of safety gear is essential

to prevent accidents for ensuring a secure working environment. A range of safety equipment were distributed among the concerned staff during the programme.

The initiative underscores KPDCL's commitment towards promoting a culture of adopting safety and responsibility across all levels of its workforce.

The programme concluded with a collective resolve to maintain high safety standards while delivering reliable power supply to consumers.

Among others present on the occasion were Chief Engineer (Distribution) KPDCL, Er. Nisar Ahmad Lone, and the Chief Engineer (Planning & Procurement), KPDCL, Shurjeel Ghani Lalla along with other senior officers and officials of the Corporation.

## DC Kulgam Chairs DLC meeting for change of land use

KT News Desk

KULGAM, JANUARY 03: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan, who is also Chairman District Level Committee on Saturday chaired a meeting of members and Officers of various departments

to decide the the cases for change of land use.

During the meeting several CLU cases were cleared as per norms. The meeting was attended by ACR Reyaz Ahmad Shah; CAO, CHO, CMO, Exens, Tehsildars, and other officers and members of the committee

## Taxes department reviews GST enforcement, revenue growth

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 03: In a significant push towards enhanced revenue mobilization and stricter GST compliance, Additional Commissioner, State Taxes (Administration and Enforcement), Kashmir Division, Parveez Ahmad Raina, Saturday chaired a comprehensive review meeting with senior officials of the department.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Enforcement (Central), Deputy Commissioner IT, State Taxes Officers, and other key functionaries from across the Kashmir Division.

The deliberations, as per an official statement, covered a wide range of critical issues, including enforcement measures, advanced data analytics, revenue realization up to December 31, 2025, progress in cash settlements, audit cases under Section 65 of the JKGST Act, time-barred cases for FY 2021-22 under Section 73, and concerted action against fake Input Tax Credit (ITC) frauds.

Officers presented in-depth updates on enforcement activities and the effective deployment of IT-enabled data analytical tools. A detailed sector-wise



analysis was undertaken to pinpoint vulnerabilities and bolster compliance mechanisms.

Highlighting the division's performance, it was noted that the Kashmir Division has recorded an impressive 16.55% year-on-year growth in cash revenue and 4.56% growth in settlement revenue for the current financial year 2025-26 (up to December 31, 2025), reflecting the positive outcomes of rate rationalization measures introduced under the GST 2.0 framework. Fresh targets were assigned to circles to ensure achievement of the allocated revenue goals for the remaining period of the financial year.

The meeting also acknowledged the beneficial impact of GST 2.0 reforms in simplifying tax structures, easing the burden on essential goods, and fostering fair trade practices.

The Additional Commissioner, underscored the need for

intensified efforts in key areas, including expeditious recovery through DRC-03, reversal of ineligible IGST claims, and optimal cash utilization under Rule 86B. He directed officers to redouble their focus on these priorities while continuing to leverage cutting-edge data analytics tools to detect and deter ITC misuse.

Raina further emphasized continuous skill upgradation of field teams to strengthen capabilities in combating tax evasion and promoting ethical trade practices. "The State Taxes Department remains steadfast in building a transparent, technology-driven, and taxpayer-friendly ecosystem. The encouraging growth trajectory achieved so far is a testament to our collective efforts, and with renewed focus on enforcement and compliance, we are confident of surpassing our annual targets while protecting revenue and consumer interests," stated the Additional Commissioner.

## DC Ramban reviews development works, disaster mitigation plan

KT News Desk

RAMBAN, JANUARY 03: Deputy Commissioner Ramban Mohammad Alyas Khan Saturday chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the progress of development works currently under implementation in District Ramban and to deliberate on the Disaster Mitigation Plan.

The Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, took a detailed review of physical and financial progress of works being executed under the District Capex Budget 2025-26, Constituency Development Fund, SANYJ 2025-26, Tribal Affairs, District Road Safety, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), SDRF 2025-26, APDP, ABDP, Untied Funds and SASCI Scheme.

The meeting also reviewed progress related to the revival of heritage sites, financial inclusion initiatives, Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan Yojana, PM-KISAN Scheme and SDRF. The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer Dr. Shakeeb Ahmed Rather; Executive Engineers of PWD Ramban and Banihal, Jal Shakti, JPDCL and REW, Chief Medical Officer, Chief Education Officer, Chief Agriculture Officer, Chief Executive Officer Municipal Council, Lead District Manager and other concerned officers.

The Deputy Commissioner set timelines for the completion of all development works under the District Capex Budget and other schemes. He directed the officers of executing departments to submit daily progress reports to ensure



effective monitoring and timely completion of all ongoing and new projects, with a focus on achieving 100 percent physical and financial targets.

The DC specifically directed the Executive Engineers of PWD, REW, Jal Shakti and JPDCL to ensure completion of works related to Education, Health, Minor Irrigation, Water Supply Schemes, Youth Services & Sports, Urban Local Bodies and other key sectors. The CEO, CMO and other concerned officers were instructed to closely follow up on the progress of projects under their respective jurisdictions.

The Deputy Commissioner also resolved several issues on the spot that were hindering the pace of progress and issued necessary directions to the concerned officers.

Further, the Disaster Mitigation Plan was discussed in detail and directions were issued to submit the plan within the prescribed timeline, strictly adhering to the laid-down guidelines.

Officers of all departments were directed to expedite the implementation of schemes and ensure that the benefits reach the intended beneficiaries in a timely and effective manner.

## MD NHM reviews critical care block at GMC Kathua

KT News Desk

JAMMU, JANUARY 3: Mission Director, National Health Mission, Jammu & Kashmir, Baseer Ul Haq Choudhary, visited Government Medical College, Kathua to review progress on 50 bedded Critical Care Block and District Integrated Public Health Lab being constructed under the Pradhan Mantri-Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM).

The Mission Director, as per an official statement, conducted a detailed inspection of the construction works and assessed the status of civil, electrical and allied components of the project. He emphasised complete adherence to the prescribed timelines, quality standards and compliance with the technical specifications. He asked the executing agency to expedite the pace of work and ensure completion of the project within the approved timeframe.

The Mission Director stressed that the Critical Care Block is a vital healthcare infrastructure project aimed at strengthening the emergency and critical care services in the region. Once completed, the facility will significantly enhance the capacity of GMC Kathua to manage critical patients and improve overall healthcare delivery.

Director Health Services Jammu, Principal Government Medical College Kathua, officials from GMC Kathua and representatives of the executing agency accompanied the Mission Director during the visit.



# Minister Sharma announces ₹30 lakh for development of Block Kharah Balli

Pays obeisance at Dev Sathan Balli

Jammu, Jan 03: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Information Technology, Youth Services and Sports, Satish Sharma on Saturday paid obeisance at the revered Dev Sathan Balli on the eve of the annual religious congregation and prayed for peace, harmony and prosperity of the people of the region.

Following the religious ceremony, the Minister addressed a huge public gathering at Kharah Balli, where he held detailed interaction with the local residents, religious leaders and representatives of various sections of society. He reiterated that the Omar Abdullah-led government is firmly committed towards ensuring inclusive, equitable and people-centric development, particularly in border and rural areas that have



remained vulnerable and underserved for decades.

The Minister was accompanied by MLA Chanapora, Mushtaq Guru besides senior civil and police officers during the visit.

The Minister also conducted an on-the-spot inspection of the playfield at Balli, which is currently under construction.

Stressing the importance of sports for youth empowerment and positive engagement, he directed the concerned departments to expedite the work and ensure that the facility is completed at the earliest with proper quality standards.

Giving a major boost to development in the area, the Minister announced 30 lakh from his

Constituency Development Fund (CDF) for undertaking various development works in Block Kharah Balli. These works will include improvement of local infrastructure, strengthening of civic amenities and creation of community-friendly facilities to enhance the quality of life of the people.

Highlighting the strategic

importance of Chhamb, Satish Sharma said the area has witnessed several wars in the past and continues to face challenges due to cross-border shelling and firing". He acknowledged the resilience and sacrifices of the people living in the border belt and assured them that the government is fully sensitive to their concerns and is working towards improving the infrastructure, safety measures, connectivity and basic services in such vulnerable areas.

The Minister underlined that the present government is guided by the politics of development, which, he said, will rise above all other political ideologies. "Sustainable development, peace and prosperity of the people will always remain our foremost priority. Through focused governance and transparent implementation of schemes, we aim to bring lasting change to every region, especially border and rural belts," he said.

## Jammu Div ticket checking staff demonstrates exemplary service, integrity

KT News Desk

Jammu, Jan 03: The ticket checking staff of Northern Railway's Jammu Division continues to set a commendable example of honesty and dedication in service. On January 2, 2026, Mohinder Pal, a member of the ticket checking team on Train No. 12414, returned an iPad to a female passenger who had inadvertently left it on the train.

The incident involved a woman traveling from Jammu to Ambala Cantt in cabin C of coach HA/1. After she disembarked at Ambala Cantt, Shri Mohinder Pal found her iPad in her cabin. Using a Hand Held Terminal (HHT), he traced the passenger's mobile number, contacted her, and confirmed that she had forgotten the device in her haste to leave the train.

Following standard verification procedures at the Ticket Inspector's office in Delhi, the staff handed over the recovered iPad



to the passenger, who expressed her gratitude for the honesty and promptness of the railway staff. Senior Divisional Commercial Manager Uchit Singhal lauded the staff's integrity, saying, "This incident highlights the dedication and passenger-first attitude of our ticket checking personnel. Such acts of honesty strengthen the trust and safety of our passengers and reflect our commitment to service excellence."

# Yasha Mudgal reviews progress of works under SASCI projects

KT News Desk

Jammu, Jan 03: Commissioner Secretary, Youth Services & Sports (YSS), Yasha Mudgal on Saturday chaired a high-level review meeting at the Civil Secretariat Jammu to assess the progress of works being executed under the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI) projects by Directorate of Youth Services & Sports and the J&K Sports Council.

The meeting was attended by Director General, Youth Services & Sports, Anuradha Gupta; Director Finance, YSS, Ashok Khajuria; Secretary, J&K Sports Council, Nuzhat Gul; Additional Secretary, Narayan Dutt besides

senior officers of the department and concerned Executive Engineers.

During the meeting, the Director Finance presented a detailed status report on the ongoing and newly approved works under SASCI.

The Commissioner Secretary was apprised of major ongoing working including development of Khel Gaon at Budgam, construction of a synthetic football turf at Migrant Camp Jagti, construction of an indoor multipurpose hall at Khel Gaon Nagrota and construction of a synthetic hockey field at Bandhuraakh.

It was further informed that construction of a water sports facility at Manasbal,



procurement of equipment for the Gymnastics Hall at Gindun Rajbagh, construction of an

indoor multipurpose stadium at Khour and establishment of Centres of Cricket Excellence at

Srinagar, Jammu, Anantnag and Udhampur are among the new projects approved under SASCI.

The meeting was apprised that an amount of over 2182 lakh has been allotted against the approved project cost of 3834 lakh, while more than 2493 lakh have already been released under SASCI.

Taking a comprehensive review of all the ongoing works, the Commissioner Secretary directed the officers to ensure timely completion of SASCI projects for strengthening the sports infrastructure across infrastructure across Jammu and Kashmir. She instructed that both physical and financial progress must be achieved within stipulated schedules, with maximum expenditure to be realised by 15th March 2026 to avoid last minute closures.

Yasha Mudgal further emphasized regular weekly monitoring of projects at the Directorate level and called for better inter-departmental coordination to achieve set targets within timelines. She also directed that in next financial year, the department shall take up only those projects that are completely free from land or other encumbrances.

Reaffirming the department's commitment, the Commissioner Secretary underscored continuous focus on infrastructure development, asset consolidation and nurturing of young sporting talent, ensuring that Jammu and Kashmir continues to witness rapid strides in sports development.

## CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### LG summons J&K

Kashmir, under the provisions of Section 21(1) of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, call upon the Members of the Legislative Assembly for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir to assemble in the Legislative Assembly Complex at Jammu on Monday, the 2nd of February, 2026 at 10:00 A.M. to hear my address," reads the notice issued by the Assembly Secretariat.

After the discussions on the LG's address are over, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who holds portfolio of Finance Department, is expected to present the Union Territory's second budget in the first week of February.

KNO had earlier exclusively reported that the government was convening the session in the first week of February 2026.

According to sources, the Budget Session is likely to be held in two parts-the first before the holy month of Ramadhan and the second after Eid-ul-Fitr.

With the commencement of Ramadhan, the Assembly is likely to go on a month-long recess, after which the session will resume following Eid-ul-Fitr. (KNO)

### Each MLA can submit

than ten starred and ten unstarred questions by or before January 12, 2026.

They may also submit notices of not more than two bills by or before January 15, 2026, the bulletin states.

According to the bulletin, MLAs can further give notices of not more than four resolutions by or before January 17, 2026.

Sources told news agency-Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the Assembly Secretariat may also issue a directive prohibiting advance publicity of questions, bills, and resolutions submitted by MLAs, as the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the J&K Assembly prohibit it.

"The bills, questions, and resolutions are the property of the House and cannot be disclosed before being brought in the House. Such unwarranted publicity violates parliamentary practices and conventions. The premature disclosure of business breaches parliamentary privilege and goes against established rules," sources said. (KNO)

### J&K Govt unveils

reimbursement of 100% SGST to eligible industries for five years, subject to a ceiling of 200% of Fixed Capital Investment (FCI) for micro enterprises and 150% in Zone A; 150% of FCI for small and medium enterprises in Zone B and 100% in Zone A; and up to 100% of FCI for medium and large enterprises in Zone B.

The proposed incentives provide for 100% exemption from stamp duty on land transactions in government industrial estates, including lease deeds and mortgage deeds.

The government also plans to incentivise industrial units that list on stock exchanges.

"An incentive of Rs 50 lakh shall be provided to any industrial unit registered in Jammu & Kashmir that successfully lists its equity on a

recognised stock exchange in India, namely the National Stock Exchange (NSE) or the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE)," the draft reads.

The initiative also proposes incentives for filing patents, with reimbursement of 100% of the actual filing cost on awarded patents, subject to a ceiling of Rs 2 lakh for domestic patents and Rs 5 lakh for international patents.

The policy further seeks to incentivise green and environmentally protective initiatives.

It provides subsidies for the adoption of pollution control devices, rooftop solar, rain-water harvesting, wastewater recycling, zero-discharge processes, solid waste management, or any other green measures certified by the Pollution Control Board. (KNO)

### Modi Govt aims

would carry out a local-level assessment to identify damaged structures and incorporate public suggestions. "We want to ensure that no eligible structure is left out and the opportunity provided by this assistance is fully utilised," he said.

Dr Singh clarified that the special allocation was primarily meant for public infrastructure, including school buildings, roads and bridges, while separate funds would be provided through SDRF and other mechanisms for private housing damage.

The Minister also announced several development initiatives for the district.

He said an MRI facility is being installed at Government Medical College (GMC), Kathua. "After Jammu, this will be the first such facility in the region," he said.

Dr Singh added that a comprehensive cancer care unit, supported by Tata Memorial Cancer Centre, Mumbai, has been established at GMC Kathua.

The Minister said a homeopathy college is moving into the tendering stage, with ground-work and planning to begin soon.

Dr Singh said development works in Kathua had faced a setback due to flash floods, but measures were being taken to bridge the gap.

He said the long-pending Ujh multipurpose project has been revived. "The project is nearly a century old and has now been revived with the Prime Minister's support," he said.

He said a canal system is being planned to utilise excess water locally in Jammu and Kashmir and, where feasible, divert it to neighbouring states such as Haryana and Rajasthan.

Dr Singh also said approval has been granted for the Chattergala tunnel, which will serve as an alternative highway. He said the project will now be executed by the National Highways Authority of India due to its expanded budget.

On infrastructure, Dr Singh said widening work on the Dhar Road, a long-standing demand, has begun. "Following inputs from the Defence Ministry and the Home Ministry, it was decided that widening the road is necessary from a security perspective," he said. (KNO)

### Div Com Kashmir

at highlighting the pivotal role of religious scholars in creating awareness and eradicating

the menace of drug abuse.

It was attended by over a hundred prominent Imams and Ulemas from across the Valley, besides senior officials, mental health experts and civil society members.

In his address, the Divisional Commissioner said the government has adopted a three-stage approach to fight substance abuse, with awareness campaigns, early identification of victims and professional counselling for rehabilitation.

He stressed the importance of involving all stakeholders, religious leaders, educators, parents and youth volunteers to build a co-ordinated network for early intervention and prevention.

"A massive awareness campaign is going on in J&K under the close monitoring of the Chief Secretary. Religious leaders have a huge influence in shaping public behaviour, and their participation is vital in spreading the message that drug consumption is not only prohibited in all religions but also destroys families and society," he said.

Garg added that helpline numbers of de-addiction and counselling centres are being widely circulated to assist those seeking help and that similar training and awareness programmes will soon be extended to all districts of Kashmir.

"We are trying to involve all religious leaders of Srinagar in this fight so they can inform society about this problem. They have already been part of the campaign, but we are giving new energy to it," he said.

The Div Com further pointed out that the administration is focusing on strengthening the community counselling network through five-day training sessions for counsellors across health and educational institutions. "Our goal is to make every section of society an active partner in building a drug-free Kashmir," he said.

Expressing concern over the increasing involvement of youth, he said, "We have found that young people, whether in schools, coaching centres, or colleges, are getting trapped in addiction. Heroin use, in particular, is rising. This is a serious concern for the entire society."

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, who attended the event as the Guest of Honour, termed the rising drug addiction a matter of "grave concern". He called for collective efforts from all sections of society to up-root the menace.

The DC said the administration has rolled out a rehabilitation policy to bring back drug victims into the social fold and has strengthened deterrence measures to break the supply chain and crush drug peddling in the district.

"While the administration is taking strong measures to curb the supply and support rehabilitation, religious scholars and parents have a moral responsibility to play their part. Drug abuse not only destroys the life of an addict but also tears apart families," Labroo said.

Medical experts, including Prof (Dr) Iffat Hassan and Prof (Dr) Arshad Hussain, Head of Psychiatry, IMHANS-GMC Srinagar, spoke on the growing burden of substance use disorders in Kashmir and stressed the need for early

intervention, stigma reduction, and community participation.

"Imams are trusted figures in our community, and their sermons can be powerful tools in prevention and awareness," Prof Iffat said.

Earlier, mental health professionals delivered detailed presentations on the medical, psychological and social dimensions of drug abuse, highlighting existing policies, treatment protocols, and preventive services available in Kashmir.

They urged sustained, community-based awareness efforts and timely identification of symptoms to save lives.

The Divisional Commissioner appealed to citizens to view drug addiction as a shared social responsibility. "As a society, we must come together. Every parent, teacher, Imam and youth must be part of this movement. Only a collective effort can make Kashmir drug-free," he said.

Principal GMC Srinagar, Prof Iffat Hassan Shah, Administrator GMC Mohammad Ashraf Hakak, Additional Deputy Commissioner Aadil Fareed, Tehsildar Khanyar Syed Shahid, Tehsildar Waqf Board Ishtiaq Ahmad and Nodal Officer ATF IMHANS Dr Arshid were among those present. (KNO)

### Three new criminal

facilitated. These examples, he said, prove that the reforms are yielding tangible results, though there is still room for strengthening the system further.

Shah detailed the key criminal laws introduced, emphasizing their role in reducing legal ambiguities. He highlighted that digital evidence, cybercrime, terrorism, organized crime, and crimes against women and children have been clearly defined in the new legislation, thereby streamlining prosecution and judicial processes. The introduction of e-FIRs and Zero FIR has provided significant relief to the poor and women, ensuring faster access to justice.

The Union Home Minister also elaborated on the technological strides made under these reforms. He informed that by November 2025, every police station in India will be online via the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS), with data from over 36 crore legacy cases and 7 lakh FIRs now accessible on central servers. The data infrastructure encompasses fingerprints, narco offenders, human traffickers, and terrorism cases, significantly bolstering investigative capabilities.

Shah highlighted the government's focus on forensic science, noting the establishment of eight new CSFLs and the strengthening of state forensic labs through a Rs. 1,000 crore grant. The IT platform for e-Forensics has been launched, connecting 143 laboratories nationwide. He reiterated the government's long-term vision of creating an integrated forensic structure, with plans to train 35,000 students at NFSU by 2029 and nearly tripling trained officers in the next four years.

The Minister also lauded the role of NFSU, which has registered 46 patents and signed

MoUs with 96 countries and 117 organizations, fostering innovation and global cooperation in forensic sciences.

Amit Shah reaffirmed that the recent criminal laws and forensic reforms are already showing promising results, and the government remains committed to delivering swift justice through the integration of technology, scientific advancements, and dedicated institutional efforts.

### Cold wave grips

temperature of minus 1.5 degrees Celsius, while the temperature at Srinagar Airport settled at minus 2.0 degrees. Qazigund and Avantipora recorded lows of minus 2.6 degrees and minus 2.4 degrees, respectively.

Other places in the Valley also experienced freezing nights, with Anantnag recording minus 3.0 degrees, Pulwama minus 3.9 degrees, Kupwara minus 1.6 degrees, and Ganderbal minus 1.6 degrees Celsius.

Baramulla and Bandipora recorded relatively higher minimum temperatures of minus 0.5 degrees and minus 0.2 degrees, respectively.

In the Jammu region, temperatures remained above freezing at most places. Jammu city recorded a minimum of 7.9 degrees Celsius, while Jammu Airport registered 8.8 degrees.

Katra recorded 6.6 degrees, Udhampur 5.0 degrees, and Banihal 2.7 degrees. Baderwah was the coldest place in the region, with the mercury dipping to minus 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Ladakh continued to reel under intense cold, with Kargil recording a low of minus 11.2 degrees Celsius, Leh minus 10.6 degrees, and Nubra Valley minus 8.2 degrees.

The Meteorological Department has forecast generally cloudy weather on January 6, with the possibility of light snowfall over isolated higher reaches of north and central Kashmir. From January 7 to 15, the weather is expected to remain partly cloudy.

The department has also warned of dense to very dense fog at a few places over the plains of the Jammu division during the next three days, advising commuters to exercise caution. (KNO)

### Judges must

and maintained. They provide judges with the tools to interpret law in a manner that is principled, pragmatic and sensitive to the life realities of the litigants," he said.

He said the ripple effect of judicial training extends far beyond courtrooms and classrooms, and they shape public trust in the rule of law.

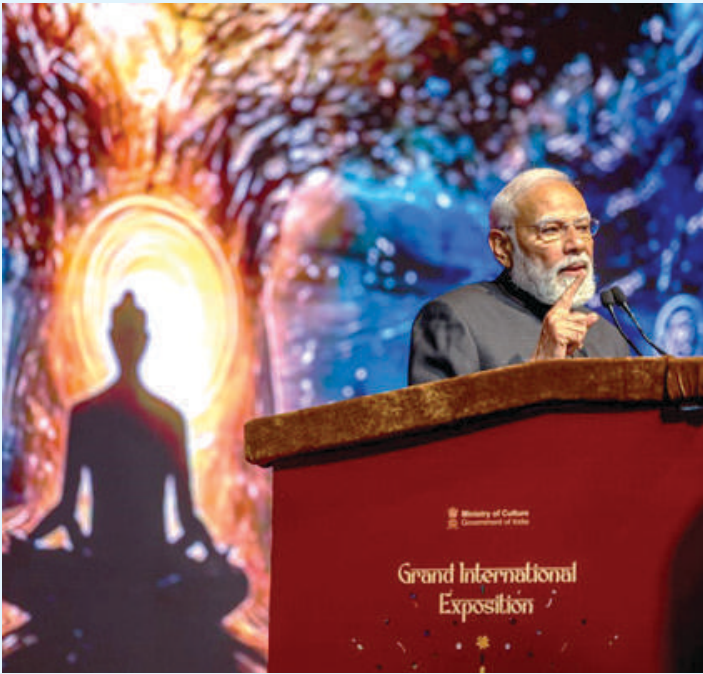
"Justice, when delivered efficiently and humanely, reinforces democratic faith," he added.

The CJJ also noted that Bihar's social diversity, historical experience and regional challenges provide a distinct context within which justice must operate.

"A judicial academy in Bihar must, therefore, engage with these realities, understanding local social dynamics, regional legal issues and everyday challenges faced by citizens while ensuring that adjudication remains consistent with constitutional values and national jurisprudence," he said.



## Sacred relics of Buddha not merely artefacts, but part of India's revered heritage: PM Modi



PTI

New Delhi, Jan 03: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the wisdom and path shown by Bhagwan Buddha belong to all of humanity and his sacred relics

to everyone and unites all the people.

"For India, the sacred relics of Bhagwan Buddha are not merely artefacts, they are a part of our revered heritage and an inseparable part of our civilisation," the prime minister said at the event here in the presence of Buddhist scholars, diplomats and other guests.

After a wait of one and a quarter centuries, he said, India's heritage has returned, and India's sacred legacy has come back home.

The wisdom and path shown by Bhagwan Buddha belong to all of humanity, he said.

Modi also thanked the Godrej Group for ensuring that the relics of Buddha return to his homeland.

The Piprahwa Relics hold a central place in the archaeological study of early Buddhism.

The relics are among the earliest and most historically significant deposits directly connected to Bhagwan Buddha, according to an official statement.

Archaeological evidence associates the Piprahwa site with ancient Kapilavastu, widely identified as the place where Bhagwan Buddha spent his early life before renunciation.

**Inaugurating the grand international exposition of the sacred Piprahwa Relics, which were discovered in 1898, Modi said Bhagwan Buddha belongs to everyone and unites all the people.**

## Centre pushes states to speed up farm scheme spending, warns of fund delays

PTI

New Delhi, Jan 03: Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Saturday urged states to adopt a strategic approach to budget utilisation, warning that delays in spending allocated funds result in losses for states and hamper the timely release of subsequent central instalments.

Addressing a review meeting with state agriculture ministers, Chouhan said states must ensure funds earmarked for various schemes are spent before March to avoid administrative bottlenecks that delay the effective implementation of programmes.

"If states are unable to spend their budgets on time, it only results in losses for them," the minister said, adding that budget allocations are often held up due to minor administrative and procedural issues.

The meeting reviewed the progress and budget utilisation of central agriculture schemes, including the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (PM-RKVY) and Krishonnati Yojana (KY).

### Gandhinagar typhoid surge

## Over 100 persons hospitalized; Amit Shah reviews situation

PTI

Gandhinagar, Jan 03: Gujarat Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi on Saturday reviewed the situation at Gandhinagar Civil Hospital after 104 patients, including children, were admitted for suspected typhoid.

Typhoid cases have been increasing in the Civil Hospital in the last three days, with 104 patients admitted to the paediatric ward, officials said.

Sanghavi said senior officials, including the deputy collector, have been asked to assess the situation at the hospital, while arrangements such as food and other facilities have been made for families of admitted patients. A team of 22 doctors has been formed to treat the patients, he said.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah discussed the situation with the district collector over the phone three times and will take a review again in the evening, Sanghavi added.

"At present, 104 suspected cases have been reported. The administration is continuously strengthening treatment and monitoring arrangements. Efforts are ongoing to provide better facilities to patients and their families," he said.

Civil Hospital Medical



Superintendent Dr Mita Parikh said several persons, including children from Sector 24, 25, 26 and 28 as well as Adivada area in Gandhinagar, have been admitted and their condition is stable.

Water samples have been collected from these areas, and reports showed drinking water was not safe (for consumption), she informed.

Officials said the health department of Gandhinagar Municipal Corporation has started a door-to-door survey in the affected sectors.

"People have been advised to drink boiled water and eat home-cooked food. The civic body is also distributing chlorine tablets for cleaning of water tanks," they said.

## J&K Chief Electoral Officer's 'Wheels on Democracy' SVEEP van drives voter awareness campaign in Budgam

KT NEWS DESK

Srinagar, Jan 03: In a significant effort to strengthen electoral participation, the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Jammu & Kashmir, in collaboration with the District Election Office (DEO), Budgam launched an innovative voter awareness initiative under the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) programme.

As part of the campaign, the mobile awareness van titled "Wheels on Democracy" toured key areas of the 27-Budgam Assembly Constituency, engaging first-time voters and other stakeholders with limited exposure to the electoral process.

The initiative was taken under the strategic guidance and overall supervision of Chief Electoral Officer, J&K, Sanjeev Verma, IAS, and under the supervision of Deputy Director

Information (Nodal Officer SVEEP), Salam Din (JKAS). The campaign witnessed enthusiastic participation from local residents, who showed keen interest in understanding voter rights, electoral procedures, and the importance of informed participation.

The state-of-the-art IEC Vanity Van, equipped with high-resolution LED screens, interactive kiosks, and immersive audio-visual systems, attracted wide attention. Engaging content such as documentaries, animated videos, and multimedia presentations effectively conveyed key messages on electoral processes, voter rights, and the pivotal role of women in democracy.

The campaign covered several areas of the Budgam Assembly Constituency, including Sheikhpura, Ompora, and Housing Colony, Budgam.

Election Assistant, Mohammad Kamran

Shamshad, along with the officials from District Election Office, Budgam including Election Naib Tehsildar led interactive sessions with the public. The team addressed queries related to voter registration, polling procedures, and ethical voting practices, reaffirming the commitment to ensure that no eligible voter is left disenfranchised.

A diverse cross-section of society—including first-time voters, senior citizens—participated actively in the outreach programme. The door-to-door engagement in remote areas was widely appreciated for its accessibility, innovation, and people-centric approach. "The Wheels on

Democracy van serves as a mobile information hub, using modern tools to reach both youth and elders, making voter education inclusive and engaging," remarked a resident of Sheikhpura, Budgam.

The successful campaign



highlights the importance of grassroots initiatives in deepening democratic values. It marks a significant step toward the CEO J&K's mission of achieving 100 percent electoral literacy and participation, ensuring that every citizen's voice contributes to shaping the democratic future of the Union Territory.

## NEP to free new generation from Macaulay mindset: Pradhan

PTI

Nagpur, Jan 03: The National Education Policy will be the medium to implement Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call to bring the country's new generation out of the Macaulay mentality, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said on Saturday.

The NEP, announced on July 29, 2020 proposes various reforms in school education as well as higher and technical education.

Speaking to PTI Videos during his visit here for a programme, Pradhan said the NEP, which is in its sixth year now, will herald a paradigm shift.

"Prime Minister Modi has said the country needs



to come out of the Macaulay mentality. The NEP 2020 will be the medium to bring the new generation of the country out of the Macaulay mentality," he asserted.

"India is a country of the youth and it is the responsibility of the education department to prepare the

youth and future generations with education in mother tongue, competency based studies and skill based studies," Pradhan added. The Union minister further pitched for holistic assessment of studies, entrepreneurship and innovation in education, adding that

youth should not be just job seekers but also job creators.

The National Education Policy is working in that direction, he said.

Delivering the sixth Ramnath Goenka Lecture in New Delhi on November 17, PM Modi urged citizens to take a pledge to rid the nation from the mindset of slavery instilled by Thomas Macaulay.

"The crime committed by Macaulay against India's cultural and educational foundations will complete 200 years in 2035. I want to appeal to the entire country: over the next decade, we must resolve to free ourselves from the mindset of slavery that Macaulay imposed on India," Modi had said on the occasion.

## NCC cadets to present soil collected from Andaman to PM at Jan 28 rally

PTI

New Delhi, Jan 03: Soil collected from various islands

of the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago by NCC cadets during a sailing expedition will be presented in an urn to Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the National Cadet Corps PM Rally at Delhi Cantonment on January 28, a top official said on Saturday.

Five different expeditions, including a running-cum-sailing expedition carried out at Lakshadweep and three cyclothons, would be flagged in by the prime minister on his visit to the NCC's Republic Day Camp 2026. "A



PM Rally generally takes place every year on January 27 (after the Republic Day Parade on January 26). But, due to some contingency, it will be held on January 28 this time," Director General, NCC, Lt Gen Virendra Vats told reporters here.

Up to 2,406 NCC cadets, including 898 girls, from across the country are participating in the NCC's Republic Day Camp 2026 that began on December 30 at the Cariappa Parade Ground at Delhi Cantonment.

Addressing a press conference at the Republic Day Camp site, he said Modi will formally flag-in the five NCC-led events -- expeditions and cyclothons -- which had begun earlier, symbolically marking their completion.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

INDUSTRIAL TRAINING INSTITUTE TRAL

Email id: Ph.: 019332293296 web : www.ititral.com

Subject: Admission Notice for 06-months trade Data Entry Operator batch-II (Feb-2026 to July- 2026)

Admission Notice

Applications on the prescribed format are invited from the desirous candidates of J & K UT for admission in 06-months Course in Govt ITI Tral during the period Feb-2026 to July -2026 as per the details mentioned below:

The admission forms will be available in the office of the undersigned w.e.f. 06-01-2026 to 24-01-2026 during office hours and same can be obtained against the cash payment of Rs 100/- (Rupees One Hundred only) per form. The below mentioned Xerox copies of documents are required to be attached with the application form:

1.

Marks Certificate of Qualifying Examination.

2.

Date of Birth Certificate.

3.

Aadhar Card

4.

Domicile Certificate (to be produced at the time of admission)

Selection shall be made purely on the basis of academic merit obtained by the applicants in their qualifying examination as per the reservation norms in vogue.

S.No	Name of the course	Duration	Batch Size	Qualifi-cation	Scheme
01	DATA ENTRY OPERATOR	06-MONTHS	24-seats	10 <sup>th</sup>	SCVT

No: ITI/Tral/Trgs/2026/ \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: - 03/01/2026

DIPK-9683/25

DATED: 03-01-2026

( Er. G. N. Shah)  
Superintendent  
ITI Tral

UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & FARMERS

WELFARE OFFICE OF THE MUSHROOM

SPECIALIST, LALMANDI SRINAGAR

SHORT TENDER NOTICE

Sealed short tender affixed with Revenue Stamp worth 6, on behalf of the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor, UT of Jammu & Kashmir, is invited from registered authorized dealers/firms for the supply of the following items required for research trials of P. eryngii and Cordyceps mushroom culture and preparation of mushroom compost.

The Tenders must be deposited by hand in the tender box kept in the office up to 09-01-2026, 2:00 PM. Tenders received by post/courier shall be accepted only if received within the scheduled date and time. Tenders received after 2:00 PM on 09-01-2026 shall not be entertained. Tenders will be opened on 10-01-2026 at 12:30 PM by the committee to be constituted in presence of those tenderers who wish to remain present.

Items Required

S. No.	Name of Item	Quantity
1.	Wheat Grain	10 qtls
2.	Brown rice	30 kg
3.	Spirit	30 Litre

TERMS & CONDITIONS

1. If the last date of receipt of tenders happens to be a Gazette holiday, the next working day shall be treated as the last date.

2. Tenders must be neatly typed/ink-written. Cutting/overwriting disqualifies the tender. Rates must be written in words and figures and sealed with cello tape.

3. The committee reserves the right to accept or reject any tender without assigning any reason.

4. Conditional tenders shall not be accepted.

5. Rates shall be inclusive of all taxes and FOR Agriculture Department, Lalmandi Srinagar.

6. The supplier shall ensure proper transportation and safe delivery. Any shortage/damage shall be borne by the supplier. Damaged/defective material must be lifted back at supplier's cost. Payment will be made only after verification and satisfactory completion.

7. The successful tenderer shall execute an agreement on Judicial Stamp Paper of 20 before issue of supply order.

8. Quantity may be increased or decreased at the time of issuing supply order.

9. GFR rules regarding government procurement shall apply.

10. These terms apply as per rules/law and extend to State/Central/Semi-Government/Autonomous Bodies.

DIPK-9584/25

DATED: 03-01-2026

Sd/=

Mushroom Specialist

Department of Agriculture,

Lalmandi Srinagar



## Maduro, wife captured after US airstrikes on Venezuela, Trump announces

AP

Caracas, Jan 03: The United States hit Venezuela with a "large-scale strike" early Saturday and said its president, Nicolás Maduro, had been captured and flown out of the country after months of stepped-up pressure by Washington — an extraordinary nighttime operation announced by President Donald Trump on social media hours after the attack.

Multiple explosions rang out, and low-flying aircraft swept through Caracas, the capital, as Maduro's government immediately accused the United States of attacking civilian and military installations. The Venezuelan government called it an "imperialist attack" and urged citizens to take to the streets.

It was not immediately clear who was running the country, and Maduro's whereabouts were not immediately known. Trump announced the developments on Truth Social shortly after 4:30 am ET. Maduro, Trump said, "has been, along with his wife, captured and flown out of the Country. This operation was done in conjunction with US Law Enforcement. Details to follow." He set a news conference for later Saturday morning.

Venezuela's vice president appeared on state TV to say that the government doesn't know where the president and his wife are after US forces captured them.

"We do not know the whereabouts of President Nicolás Maduro and First Lady Cilia Flores," Delcy Rodríguez said. "We demand proof of life."

The explosions in Caracas, Venezuela's capital, early on the third day of 2026 — at least seven blasts — sent people rushing into the streets, while others took to social media to report hearing and seeing the explosions. It was not immediately clear if there were casualties. The apparent attack itself lasted less than 30 minutes, but it was unclear if more actions lay ahead, though Trump said in his post that the strikes were carried out "successfully." The Federal Aviation Administration issued a ban on US commercial flights in Venezuelan airspace because of "ongoing military activity" ahead of the explosions.

The strike came as the Trump administration has escalated pressure on Maduro, who has been charged with narco-terrorism in the United States. The CIA was behind a drone strike last week at a docking area believed to have been used by Venezuelan drug cartels — the first known direct operation on Venezuelan soil since the US began strikes in September. Trump for months had



### ‘Maduro, wife to face criminal charges’

AP

Caracas (Venezuela), Jan 03: US Attorney General Pam Bondi says deposed Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, will face criminal charges after an indictment in New York. Bondi vowed in a social media post that the couple will "soon face the full wrath of American justice on American soil in American courts."

Maduro was indicted in 2020 in New York, but it was not previously known that his wife had been.

threatened that he could soon order strikes on targets on Venezuelan land following months of attacks on boats accused of carrying drugs. Maduro has decried the US military operations as a thinly veiled effort to oust him from power.

Some streets in Caracas fill up Armed individuals and uniformed members of a civilian militia took to the streets of a Caracas neighbourhood long considered a stronghold of the ruling party. But in other areas of the city, the streets remained empty hours after the attack. Parts of the city remained without power, but vehicles moved freely.

Video obtained from Caracas and an unidentified coastal city showed tracers and smoke clouding the landscape sky as repeated muted explosions illuminated the night sky. Other footage showed an urban landscape with cars passing on a highway as blasts illuminated the hills behind them. An unintelligible conversation could be heard in the background. The videos were verified by The Associated Press.

Smoke could be seen rising from the hangar of a military base in Caracas, while another military installation in the capital was without power.

"The whole ground shook. This is horrible. We heard explosions and planes," said Carmen Hidalgo, a

21-year-old office worker, her voice trembling. She was walking briskly with two relatives, returning from a birthday party. "We felt like the air was hitting us." Trump is at his private club in Palm Beach, Florida, where he has spent the past two weeks for the holiday season. His public schedule showed he was set to receive an intelligence briefing on Friday evening, hours before the reported strikes. He offered no immediate comment on social media.

Venezuela's government responded to the attack with a call to action. "People to the streets!" it said in a statement. "The Bolivarian Government calls on all social and political forces in the country to activate mobilisation plans and repudiate this imperialist attack."

The statement added that Maduro had "ordered all national defence plans to be implemented" and declared "a state of external disturbance." That state of emergency gives him the power to suspend people's rights and expand the role of the armed forces.

The website of the US Embassy in Venezuela, a post that has been closed since 2019, issued a warning to American citizens in the country, saying it was "aware of reports of explosions in and around Caracas." "US citizens in Venezuela

should shelter in place," the warning said.

Inquiries to the Pentagon and US Southern Command have gone unanswered since Trump's social media post. The FAA warned all commercial and private US pilots that the airspace over Venezuela and the small island nation of Curacao, just off the coast of the country to the north, was off limits "due to safety-of-flight risks associated with ongoing military activity."

US Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, posted his potential concerns, reflecting a view from the right flank in Congress. "I look forward to learning what, if anything, might constitutionally justify this action in the absence of a declaration of war or authorisation for the use of military force," Lee said on X.

Regional reaction was not immediately forthcoming in the early hours of Saturday. Cuba, however, is a supporter of the Maduro government and a longtime adversary of the United States. Iran's Foreign Ministry also condemned the strikes.

It was not clear if the US Congress had been officially notified of the strikes. The Armed Services committees, which have jurisdiction over military matters, have not been notified by the administration of any actions, according to a person familiar with the matter and granted anonymity to discuss it.

Lawmakers from both political parties in Congress have raised deep reservations and flat-out objections to the US attacks on boats suspected of drug smuggling near the Venezuelan coast, and Congress has not specifically approved an authorisation for the use of military force for such operations in the region.

Brewing tensions The US military has been attacking boats in the Caribbean Sea and the eastern Pacific Ocean since early September. As of Friday, the number of known boat strikes is 35, and the number of people killed is at least 115, according to numbers announced by the Trump administration.

They followed a major buildup of American forces in the waters off South America, including the arrival in November of the nation's most advanced aircraft carrier, which added thousands more troops to what was already the largest military presence in the region in generations.

Trump has justified the boat strikes as a necessary escalation to stem the flow of drugs into the US and asserted that the US is engaged in an "armed conflict" with drug cartels.

## China held 12 pc higher number of officials for corruption in 2025

PTI

Beijing, Jan 03: China detained a record 65 deputy ministerial level officials in 2025, 12 per cent higher than those caught a year ago, in the ongoing anti-corruption campaign being carried out on the orders of President Xi Jinping.

Those detained included top officials in charge of China's provinces and cities, senior administrators in ministries, top financial regulators and bankers, senior executives of state-owned enterprises and presidents of prestigious universities.

The Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI), China's top discipline and anti-corruption body, said the 2025 detentions were 12 per cent higher than 58 senior officials caught in the anti-corruption fight in 2024, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported on Saturday.

Xi, 72, currently in his unprecedented third five-year term as President, started



the anti-graft campaign against "tigers and flies," meaning big and small officials, when he took over power in 2012.

State media reports previously said over a million officials, including dozens of high-level military officials, were punished. Several top army generals were also removed last year in the anti-graft campaign.

Observers say that the intensity of the campaign and its continuation also helped Xi to consolidate his power in the party and military.

In an October internal speech, excerpts of which were made public on Wednesday, Xi emphasised that corruption was "the

greatest threat" facing the party and said the cases were another reminder that the fight remained "grim and complex."

The latest to be detained was Zhang Shipping, 71, former vice-chairwoman of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions.

She was detained on Tuesday for suspected corruption, the Post report said.

These "tigers" are usually ranked at the deputy ministerial level or above. Some hold slightly lower ranks but occupy key positions in important sectors, the report said.

The CCDI's is due to hold its fifth plenary session from January 12 to 14 to chart out its priorities for 2026.

## Iran's leader says rioters 'must be put in their place' as protest death toll reaches at least 10

AP

Dubai, Jan 03: Iran's supreme leader insisted Saturday that "rioters must be put in their place" after a week of protests that have shaken the Islamic Republic, likely giving security forces a green light to aggressively put down the demonstrations.

The first comments by 86-year-old Ayatollah Ali Khamenei come as violence surrounding the demonstrations sparked by Iran's ailing economy has killed at least 10 people. The protests show no sign of stopping and follow US President Donald Trump's warning to Iran on Friday that if Tehran "violently kills peaceful protesters," the United States "will come to their rescue."

While it remains unclear how and

if Trump will intervene, his comments sparked an immediate, angry response, with officials within the theocracy threatening to target American troops in the Mideast. They also take on new importance after Trump said Saturday that the US military captured Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, a longtime ally of Tehran.

The protests have become the biggest in Iran since 2022, when the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in police custody triggered nationwide demonstrations. However, the protests have yet to be as widespread and intense as those surrounding the death of Amini, who was detained over not wearing her hijab, or headscarf, to the liking of authorities.

### Indo-Bangla tensions

## Following BCCI diktat, KKR releases Mustafizur Rahman

PTI

Guwahati, Jan 03: Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman has been released by IPL franchise Kolkata Knight Riders after being instructed to do so by the Indian Cricket Board (BCCI) amid heightening diplomatic tensions between the two neighbouring countries.

KKR had acquired the services of the 30-year-old left-armers for Rs 9.20 crore from a base price of Rs 2 crore after an intense bidding war with Chennai Super Kings and Delhi Capitals at the players' auction last month.

The BCCI said KKR will be allowed to name a replacement player if required for the event scheduled to start on March 26.

"The BCCI has asked Kolkata Knight Riders to release Mustafizur Rahman from its squad. They can ask for replacement, if needed. And upon request, BCCI will allow a replacement player," BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia told PTI here on Saturday.

Asked why the BCCI has asked Kolkata Knight Riders to do so, he replied, "Because of recent developments all across." In a statement, the franchise said it has released the player as instructed by the BCCI.

"Kolkata Knight Riders confirms that BCCI/IPL as the regulator of IPL has instructed it to release Mustafizur Rahman from the squad ahead of



the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL) season.

"The release has been carried out following due process and consultations, upon the instruction of the Board of Control of Cricket in India," KKR said in a statement.

The pressure had been mounting on the BCCI over Rahman's participation after recent killing of a Hindu man in the country and India's expression of concern for the safety of minorities there.

The criticism has also extended to KKR co-owner and Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan with some politicians from the ruling BJP questioning the call to include the bowler in the current scenario.

Rahman has featured in eight IPL editions since 2016, missing the tournament only in 2019

and 2020.

He has played for teams such as Sunrisers Hyderabad, Mumbai Indians, Delhi Capitals, Chennai Super Kings and Rajasthan Royals. The upcoming edition was going to be his first for three-time IPL winners KKR.

Neither him, nor the Bangladesh Cricket Board have reacted to the development yet.

Rahman was allowed to register for the auction by the Indian Board but the Indo-Bangladesh ties have grown more tense amid political unrest in that country.

With Rahman's ouster, it remains to be seen if Bangladeshi players would be excluded from the IPL the same way their Pakistani counterparts have been for the past several years owing to political tensions.

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*Movies Watchlist*

Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> January



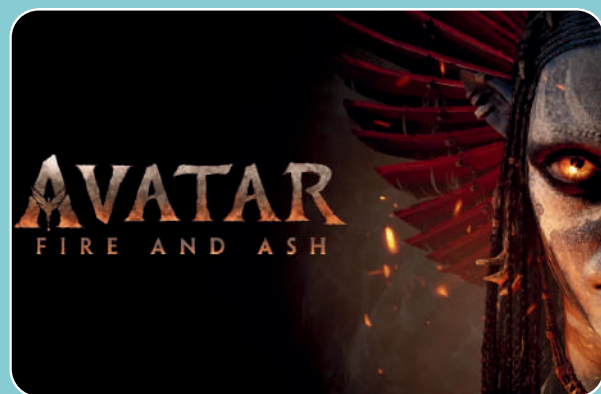
DHURANDHAR (A)  
HINDI - 01:50 PM, 04:40 PM, 06:00 PM  
HINDI ATMOS - 11:10 AM



IKKIS (U/A 13+)  
HINDI - 10:50 AM, 01:35 PM, 07:00 PM



TU MERI MAIN TERA MAIN TERA TU MERI  
(U/A 16+) HINDI - 10:40 AM



AVATAR : FIRE AND ASH (UA 16+)  
3D HINDI - 03:10 PM

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