



Ensure 'zero infiltration,' eliminate Pak terrorists: Amit Shah directs top security brass

- » Home Minister chairs high-level security review meeting in Jammu
- » LG Sinha, Army Chief, Union Home Secy, others attend
- » HM calls for choking supply lines of terrorists
- » Lauds security agencies for maintaining peace in J&K
- » Meets family members of martyrs, hands over appointment letters
- » To chair dev review meeting today, discuss future plans for UT

Sajid Raina

Jammu, Feb 06: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday directed the security top brass to ensure "zero infiltration" from



across the border and eliminate Pakistani terrorists holed up in the upper reaches of the Jammu region.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) soon after returning from Hiranagar, the Home Minister chaired a high level security review meeting at Lok Bhawan here. The meeting was attended by Lieutenant Governor Manoj

Sinha, Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi, Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan, J&K Chief Secretary Atal Duloo, Northern Army Commander Lt Gen Pratik Sharma, J&K Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat, General Officer Commanding Jammu-based White Knight Corps Lt Gen P K Mishra, Jammu and Kashmir Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat, Intelligence | [More on P6](#)

BSF destroyed 118 Pak posts, 3 terror launch pads along J&K frontier in recent ops: HM

- » Says nation sleeps secure as BSF guard borders
- » Visits border outposts in Hiranagar sector
- » Pays tributes to bravehearts
- » Hails BSF's valour during 'Op Sindoor'
- » Lays foundation of infra projects worth Rs 242 crore

Sajid Raina

Hiranagar (Jammu), Feb 06: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said that Border Security Force completely destroyed 118 Pakistani posts and three terrorist launch pads along J&K frontier during recent operations.

Shah, according to the news agency—Kashmir



News Observer (KNO), commenced his 2-day Jammu visit by reaching the Border Out Posts (BOPs) 'Gurnam' and 'Bobiya' located in Hiranagar sector on the India-Pakistan border.

Addressing BSF personnel at BOPs, Shah said, "Whenever the nation's borders have | [More on P6](#)

CM Omar says fixing J&K's fiscal health not an easy journey

'Baisaran attack, floods my biggest challenges in 2025'

Yogesh

Jammu, Feb 06: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday said that it is in the interest of Jammu & Kashmir to be self-sufficient, but reaching that point would not be an easy journey and would require difficult decisions.

Addressing a post-budget news conference here, as per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the CM said that he would like to see Jammu & Kashmir in a position where it is self-sufficient and does not have to rely on the Government of India.

"I don't have a categorical answer to that, I cannot put it in terms of years—one year, two years, or five years. The problem is endemic; it is not a recent issue. The scale of the problem has grown, and certain events have taken it



even further," the CM said when asked about when J&K would be able to fix its financial position.

He said fixing J&K's fiscal health is not going to be easy.

"To bring Jammu & Kashmir to that point will require difficult decisions. It may not be painless, but I believe it is in the interest of Jammu & Kashmir, and in the interest of its self-respect, to be in a position where we are not dependent," he said.

On being | [More on P6](#)

CM Omar unveils Rs 1,13,767 crore budget for 2026–27

- Six free gas cylinders for AAY families
- Fee waiver for poorest students from Class 9 to graduation
- Scholarships for 6,000 orphans
- Upgradation of healthcare services in GMCs, border areas
- Crop insurance scheme for apples



KNO Special Correspondent

Jammu, Feb 06: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday unveiled a Rs 113767 crore budget for the Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory for 2026-27.

Budget Figures

Presenting the Union Territory's second financial plan in the Assembly, the CM, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the total net

budget estimates for the fiscal year 2026-27 are Rs 113767 crore, excluding provisions for ways and means advances and overdraft.

"The total net budget estimates for the | [More on P6](#)

Ruling regime hails J&K Budget as 'historic, inclusive, welfare-oriented'

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Jammu, Feb 06: The ruling National Conference-led government on Friday hailed the Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory Budget for 2026-27 as a "historic, inclusive and welfare-oriented" document, saying it reflects the administration's commitment to balanced growth, employment generation and social welfare.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who presented the Budget in the Legislative Assembly earlier in the day, said the proposals were aimed at "transforming Jammu and Kashmir into a modern, progressive and economically vibrant region."

"Our focus is on building a business-friendly ecosystem,

strengthening healthcare and education, empowering youth and ensuring inclusive rural prosperity," Omar told the House, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

Defending the Budget later in a press conference, the CM said that despite financial constraints, his government has ensured welfare remains central to policy decisions.

"No Budget is an isolated document. It reflects a continuity of welfare measures and responsible fiscal management," he said, adding that the government has avoided overburdening finances while ensuring targeted relief for the most vulnerable.

National | [More on P6](#)

J&K opposition tears into 'hopeless, bureaucratic, anti-people' Budget

LoP terms it 'NC-centric', Lone says 'drafted by bureaucrats', Parra dismisses it as 'vague'

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Jammu, Feb 06: Leaders across the opposition spectrum on Friday slammed the Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory Budget, calling it "hopeless, bureaucratic and anti-people", while alleging that it ignores unemployment, daily wagers and the poor.

Leader of Opposition (LoP) and senior BJP leader Sunil Sharma described the budget as "National Conference-centric" and "anti-people".

"This is a budget for NC MLAs. There is nothing in it for the common people of Jammu and Kashmir," Sharma said, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO). He alleged that funds allocated by the Centre were diverted to NC-held constituencies.

He accused the government of betraying daily wagers by failing to announce a clear, time-bound regularisation policy and ignoring unemployment. "Nearly 24,000 jobs have been outsourced with no written exam or transparent process. This budget is deceptive and disappointing," he said, adding that earlier promises of free electricity and LPG cylinders remain unfulfilled.

People's Conference (PC) chief and Handwara MLA Sajad Lone criticised the government, saying the budget was "drafted by bureaucrats" and lacked political direction.

"The budget is as good or as bad as it was last time. It's a budget by | [More on P6](#)

Businesses welcome key initiatives, employees seek clarity on regularisation

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Feb 06: The Jammu and Kashmir Budget 2026-27, presented by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday, drew mixed reactions, with business bodies and industrial federations welcoming long-pending initiatives such as the Unity Mall and the Centre of Excellence in Artificial Intelligence.

The trade body and employee groups, however, expressed concerns over sectoral relief, export incentives and the regularisation of temporary employees.

"The Budget, which outlines a total net outlay of Rs 1,13,767 crore with a projected GSDP of Rs 3,15,822 crore and a fiscal

deficit of 3.69 per cent, has been welcomed for its focus on infrastructure, welfare and sectoral development," trade leaders and industry bodies told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

While business and industrial groups praised initiatives aimed at fostering innovation, entrepreneurship and market access, stakeholders in tourism, trade, and temporary employment voiced concerns over the absence of targeted relief measures, export incentives and a clear roadmap for employee regularisation.

KCCI welcomes long-pending demands

The Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) welcomed Budget proposals, including the Unity Mall, with Rs 200 crore support and the AI Centre of Excellence, with Rs 20 crore, describing them as "long-standing demands of the business community."

The Chamber also noted that the Unity Mall would enhance market access for artisans and craftsmen, while the Self-Certification Scheme for MSMEs, offering a three-year grace period for clearances, was a positive step.

KCCI also lauded social welfare measures, including six free LPG cylinders per year for Antyodaya Anna Yojana

households, full fee waivers for students (Class 9-12) in government schools and degree

colleges, monthly assistance, 25% increase in disability pensions benefiting over 1.62 lakh pensioners and free government transport for persons with disabilities.

Support for agriculture and horticulture was also appreciated, including crop insurance for apple, saffron, mango and litchi under the Restructured Weather-Based Insurance Scheme (Rs 6,594.93 crore), top-up subsidy for 40 new Controlled Atmosphere stores (Rs 1,400 crore investment, Rs 600 crore subsidy for districts outside Pulwama and Shopian), seven milk processing plants (Rs 770 crore), 25% top-up subsidy for micro and sprinkler irrigation | [More on P6](#)

Omar promises roadmap for regularising daily wagers

KNO Special Correspondent

Jammu, Feb 06: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday said that a structured and phased roadmap for regularisation of daily wagers will be announced in the coming period.

Speaking in the Legislative Assembly during the presentation of budget for 2026-27, the CM, as per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the Government is committed to finding a just and humane resolution to this long-pending issue.

"I assure this House that my Government is committed to finding a just and humane resolution to this long-pending issue.

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PM Surya Muft Bijli Yojana: DC Srinagar implementation status

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR FEBRUARY 06: To review the implementation status of the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo Friday chaired a meeting of KPDCL Engineers, Banks and other line departments here at Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex.

During the meeting, the DC, as per an official statement, who is also the Chairman Monitoring and Management Committee of the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana held detailed deliberations on the progress of rooftop solar installations being carried out under the flagship scheme aimed at promoting clean energy and reducing electricity expenses for households.

At the outset, the DC took a detailed division-wise and bank-wise assessment of performance, focusing on targets achieved, applications received, and installations completed across all four electric divisions of Srinagar.

On the occasion, the DC appreciated the efforts of teams performing well in the implementation of the scheme and directed others to improve their performance to reach the eligible households under the scheme.

Emphasizing the importance of public awareness, the DC urged all four divisions of KPDCL to launch an aggressive Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaign on the benefits of PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana. He directed the department to



organize mega awareness camps with concerted efforts to mobilize registered applicants and make them aware of the long-term benefits of this beneficiary-oriented scheme.

While banks were impressed upon to improve the loan disbursement and ensure faster banking facilitation to enable timely installation of solar rooftops and expedite overall scheme implementation. He stressed that all stakeholders must work with added

zeal to reach all the eligible households by the end of March 2026.

The meeting was informed that more than 4,000 solar rooftops have been installed in the district so far under the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana. The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar; Executive Engineers of KPDCL, Zonal Head J&K Bank, Lead District Manager (Banks) and empanelled vendors of the scheme.

DC Kupwara reviews public grievances redressal

KT NEWS DESK

KUPWARA, FEBRUARY 06: Deputy Commissioner Kupwara chaired a comprehensive review meeting Friday to assess the status of public grievances redressal handled by Revenue officers.

During the meeting, the DC, as per an official statement, examined the tehsil-wise status of grievances registered on the JK-SAMADHAN Portal. Concerned Tehsildars presented detailed updates on the action taken against various revenue-related grievances.

The DC laid special emphasis on the quality of grievance disposal and issued firm directives to all Tehsildars for ensuring time-bound redressal of all complaints. He further instructed Tehsildars to enforce accountability on field functionaries for any delays observed without justifiable cause in the redressal process.

The DC also underscored the need for intensified awareness campaigns and enhanced citizen registrations on the JK-SAMADHAN Portal, aimed at facilitating seamless grievance registration for the general public.

In addition, the meeting deliberated on pendencies under the Public Services Guarantee Act (PSGA), redressal of migrant-specific grievances, alongside progress in digitization initiatives and implementation of the SVAMITVA scheme.

The meeting was attended by the Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Kupwara, Mufti Fareed-ud-Din; Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Kupwara, Gulzar Ahmad; Assistant Commissioner Revenue Kupwara and all Tehsildars.

DC Budgam reviews road safety measures, enforcement

KT NEWS DESK

BUDGAM, FEBRUARY 6: Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, Friday chaired a meeting of the District Road Safety Committee at the Conference Hall Budgam to review the status of road safety measures and enforcement of traffic regulations across the district.

The meeting, as per an official statement focused on strengthening coordinated efforts to minimise road accidents and ensure safer travel for the public.

During the meeting, the DC emphasised the urgent need for strict and effective implementation of all road safety regulations in letter and spirit. He called upon all concerned departments to reinforce road safety mechanisms, identify and rectify accident-prone black spots, improve road infrastructure, and intensify enforcement of traffic rules to reduce violations and enhance overall road discipline.

The DC reviewed the district's road safety framework in line with the directions of the Supreme Court Committee on Road Safety (SCCoRS) and the provisions of the J&K Road Safety Council Act, 2018.

He highlighted that the district is aligned with the national vision to achieve a 50 percent reduction in road accidents and fatalities by 2030, and stressed the need to focus on the 4 Es of Road Safety that are Engineering, Enforcement, Education and Emergency Care.

On the engineering front, the DC directed departments to prioritise black spot identification and rectification, improve road geometry, install adequate signage, road markings, crash barriers, rumble strips, pedestrian crossings, footpaths and traffic calming measures to address local risk factors and improve road user safety.



On enforcement, he called for strengthened monitoring and strict action against over-speeding, drunk driving, non-use of helmets and seatbelts, overloading and violations of lane discipline.

He stressed close coordination among Traffic Police, Transport Department and other enforcement agencies to ensure consistent compliance.

Emphasizing education and awareness, the DC directed that road safety awareness programmes be organised in schools, colleges and other institutions, and that print, electronic and social media be effectively utilised to promote safe and responsible road usage, especially among youth, elderly and specially-abled persons.

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NOTICE

This is to inform all concerned that my bank account details have been updated. The name on my bank account is being changed from "JIBRAN AHMAD KHAN" to "JIBRAN IFTIKHAR KHAN".

Account Details:

Account No.: 1501040100021195

IFSC: JAKAOEXPORT

Bank Name: Jammu and Kashmir Bank

Branch: Lal Bazar Srinagar

For any objection/clarification, please contact bank branch or my number: 9596495287

JIBRAN IFTIKHAR KHAN

GOVERNMENT OF (U.T) JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER JAL SHAKTI (PHE) DEPTT. GROUND WATER DIVISION SRINAGAR

BAGHI-ALI-MARDAN, NOWSHARA SRINAGAR.

E-mail: - suresh05.gupta@jk.gov.in

JS-PHE GWD Srinagar

Tel./ Fax No: 0194-2411285

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS

GIST of Fresh/ Detailed e-NIT No: - 81/JS-PHE/GWDS/Mech. of 2025-26.

For and on behalf of Government of UT - J&K, e-tenders from reputed and resourceful Firms/Companies/drilling agencies/Joint Ventures etc for "registered experienced Contractors of Machine Drilled Hand pump wells" as per details given below. The bidding process shall be completed online on www.jktenders.gov.in in two covers viz. Cover 1st consisting of Pre Qualification Criteria, General Terms and Conditions and Technical Specifications and Cover 2nd shall consist of Financial Bid in the prescribed BOQ.

Table-I

S. No	S. No of AA	Name of work	Est. Cost Rs. in Lacs	Earliest money (EMD)	Cost of Tender Document	Time of completion	Major Head /Programme	Technical Sanction	Tender Call
1	--	Installation of Bore Well near Tantra House at Check Saidpora Shopian.	Rs. 6.158 Lacs	Rs.18,500/-	Rs.500/-	10 Days (after identification of site)	MPLADS.	JS-PHE/GWDS/ MPLADS/ 63 of 02/2026, Dt: 05-02-2026	1 st
2	1	Construction of Machine Drilled Well with motor and NHO Younis Khan for community benefit at Galan Khiram	Rs. 6.00 Lacs	Rs.18,000/-	Rs.300/-	10 Days (after identification of site)	District Capex Budget 2025-26 (CDF Scheme)	JS-PHE/GWDS/ Capex Budget/ 174 of 10/ 2025, Dt: 23-10-2025	2 nd
3	1	Construction of (1 No) of 125 mm dia machine drill tube well with motor at SBF Daksum in District Anantnag.	Rs. 5.876 Lacs	Rs.18,000/-	Rs.500/-	10 Days (after identification of site)	NLM 'Irrigation Facilities' activity.	JS-PHE/GWDS/ Other Deptt./ 12 of 12/ 2025, Dt: 23-12-2025	2 nd
4	1	Construction of machine drilled deep bore well and supply installation testing and Commissioning submersible pumping equipment along with required accessories near the orchard of Bashir Ahmad Bhat (Bashir Assad) at Dadoor Marhamma Anantnag.	Rs. 5.217 Lacs	Rs.15,700/-	Rs.500/-	10 Days (after identification of site)	MPLADS.	JS-PHE/GWDS/ MPLADS/ 62 of 02/2026, Dt: 05-02-2026	1 st
5	9	Installation of Tube Well at Meeripora Wadar Mohalla near Mohd Iqbal Ganie S/o Ab Rashid Ganie	Rs. 4.23 Lacs	Rs.12,700/-	Rs.500/-	10 Days (after identification of site)	CDF Scheme 2025-26 Hon'ble MLA Beerwah	JS-PHE/GWDS/ CDF/ 47 of 12/ 2025, Dt: 23-12-2025	2 nd
6	2	Borewell NHO Gulzar Ah Itto Nazir Ah Itto & Ors District Anantnag.	Rs. 3.079 Lacs	Rs.11,400/-	Rs.300/-	10 Days (after identification of site)	District Capex Budget 2025-26 (PRI Grants)	JS-PHE/GWDS/ Distt. Capex/ 226 of 02/ 2026, Dt: 02-02-2026	1 st
7	3	Bore well at Bhagwan Mohall District Anantnag.	Rs. 3.079 Lacs	Rs.11,400/-	Rs.300/-	10 Days each well (after identification of site)	District Capex Budget 2025-26 (PRI Grants)	JS-PHE/GWDS/ Distt. Capex/ 228 of 02/ 2026, Dt: 02-02-2026	1 st
8	1	Installation of Machine well near Mirpora Graveyard, Below Dardgund District Pulwama	Rs. 3.038 Lacs	Rs.9,200/-	Rs.300/-	10 Days each well (after identification of site)	MPLADS District Capex Budget 2025-26 (PRI Grants)	JS-PHE/GWDS/ MPLADS/ 61 of 02/ 2026, Dt: 02-02-2026	2 nd
9	1	Construction of Bore well at Mohall Old Arawani District Anantnag.	Rs. 2.768 Lacs	Rs.8,350/-	Rs.300/-	10 Days each well (after identification of site)	MPLADS District Capex Budget 2025-26 (PRI Grants)	JS-PHE/GWDS/ Distt. Capex/ 227 of 02/ 2026, Dt: 02-02-2026	1 st

Position of Funds: - Available:

Note: The above-mentioned works (Refer Table – I)
a. S. No. 02 were earlier advertised vide this office e-NIT No: 48 of 2025-26 Dated: 11-09-2025,
b. S. No. 03 were earlier advertised vide this office e-NIT No: 70 of 2025-26 Dated: 24-12-2025
c. S. No. 05 were earlier advertised vide this office e-NIT No: 71 of 2025-26 Dated: 24-12-2025 & cancelled vide this office No: JS-PHE/GWDS/25-26/Camp/18042-50, dated: 28-01-2026.

➢ (For Sl. No. 01): Accord of Administrative Approval /Financial issued by the District Development Commissioner Shopian Vide Order No: 203-DDCS of 2026, issued under endorsement No. DDCS/MPLADS/2025-26/3512-14, Dated: 04-02-2026.

➢ (For Sl. No. 02): Accord of Administrative Approval issued by the District Development Commissioner Anantnag Vide Order No: 260-DDCA of 2025, issued under endorsement No. DDCA/CDF-45-Srinwara-Bijbehara/2025-26/179-82, Dated: 18-10-2025.

➢ (For Sl. No. 03): Accord of Administrative Approval issued by Director Sheep Husbandry Department Kashmir's Order No:90-DSHK/Plan of 2025 Dated: 10-12-2025 issued vide endorsement NO: DSHK/Plan/2025-26/11856-65 Dated: 10-12-2025

➢ (For Sl. No. 04): Accord of Administrative Approval cum Financial issued by the District Development Commissioner Anantnag Vide Order No: 28-DDCA of 2025, issued under endorsement No. DDCA/CAPEX/2025-26/9964-70, Dated: 24-01-2026.

➢ (For Sl. No. 05): Accord of Administrative Approval issued by the District Development Commissioner Pulwama Vide Order No: 11-DDCP of 2026, issued under endorsement No. DDCP/MPLADS/HMMP/2025-26/8003-05, Dated: 28-01-2026.

The Bidding Documents and other documents can be downloaded from the website: <https://www.jktenders.gov.in>

From 06.02.2026 (02:00 PM) to 18.02.2026 (03:00 PM)

The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings (if any), Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms, conditions of contract and other details can be seen / downloaded from the website: <https://www.jktenders.gov.in>

As per Critical Dates/Information scheduled given below

Table-II

1.	Period of Publishing Date	06-02-2026 (02:00 P.M)
2.	Period of Downloading of Bids	06-02-2026 (02:00 P.M) upto 18-02-2026 (03:00 P.M)
3.	Period of Submission of bids	06-02-2026 (02:00 P.M) upto 18-02-2026 (03:00 P.M)
4.	Date of opening of Tender.	19-02-2026 (01:00 P.M)
5.	Cost of Tender Document : Non-Refundable should be in form of DD /TR/e-challan/ via online deposited to Account Head 0215 or in the below mentioned account Number in favour of Executive Engineer (Jal Shakti) PHE Ground Water Division Srinagar (at Saddr Treasury Srinagar) (The firm shall specify the name of work for which apply)	
6.	Name of Bank	Jammu & Kashmir Bank
	Name of Branch	Residency Road, Lal Chowk-190011
	Name of Account	Executive Engineer PHE Ground Water Division Srinagar.
	Account Type	Current Accounts Government.
	Account Number	0005 0405 0004 7709
	IFSC Code	JAKAOCHINAR
	MICR Code	190051056
7.	NOTE: In case the firm/agency/contractor submits/uploaded scanned copy of tender document fee in the shape of DD /TR/e-challan/ via online, the hard copies shall have to be submitted in the divisional office before opening of cover 2 nd (Financial Cover) of e-NIT Bid Validity	

CM pushes for high-value, tech-driven agriculture

Announces Rs 1,878 crore capex

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, Feb 06: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, while presenting the Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory Budget on Friday, laid strong emphasis on transforming agriculture and allied sectors into a modern, diversified and income-oriented economy, backed by massive public investment and technology-driven reforms.

The Chief Minister said the sector is witnessing a paradigm shift under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) and the J&K Competitiveness Improvement Project (JKCIP), supported by IFAD assistance. "Our focus has moved away from subsistence farming towards a climate-resilient, productivity-driven and remunerative agricultural ecosystem," he told the House.

According to the Budget, the cultivated area in J&K has expanded from 12.71 lakh hectares to 13.50 lakh hectares, while the Seed Replacement Rate has nearly doubled from 12 per cent to 22 per cent, significantly improving crop productivity and resilience.

Protected cultivation has also received a major push, with 332 hi-tech greenhouses and 848 polyhouses established over nearly 30 hectares. These facilities have enabled farmers to increase cropping intensity up to 250 per cent while reducing risks from erratic weather.

The CM highlighted remarkable progress in oilseed cultivation, where the area has expanded from 1.4 lakh hectares

to 2.1 lakh hectares, leading to a doubling of production and helping the UT reduce dependence on imported edible oils.

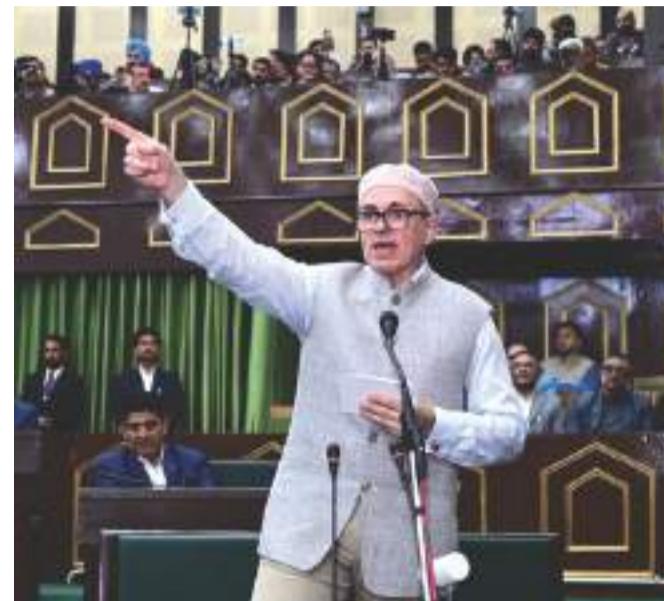
Digital empowerment of farmers has emerged as a key pillar of reforms. Through Kisan Khidmat Ghars (KKGs), over eight lakh farmers have been onboarded onto the Kisan Sathi and KKG mobile platforms, with 1,300 centres already operational.

Omar said the government aims for universal digital farmer coverage by March 2027 through the Digital Crop Survey.

Under the PM Fasal Bima Yojana, more than 2.01 lakh farmers covering over 75,000 hectares were insured during Kharif 2025, providing critical protection against crop losses.

Irrigation infrastructure, too, has seen massive expansion. The government has created irrigation potential for 4.53 lakh hectares by December 2025 under Command Area Development and Modernisation schemes, with another 16,207 hectares proposed for 2026-27.

Allied sectors are emerging as major income drivers. Mushroom production has risen by 31 per cent over three years, touching 2,742 metric tonnes through the establishment of 227 units. Apiculture has witnessed an impressive 77 per cent growth, with honey production crossing 3,895 metric tonnes, supported by the distribution of over one lakh bee colonies and the creation of 11 honey processing units. In horticulture, the High-Density Plantation Scheme continues to transform orchard productivity. Over 1,119 hectares have been



covered since 2017-18 with an investment of ₹139 crore, while nearly 18,915 hectares are under medium-density plantations. Fruit production increased from 26.43 lakh metric tonnes in 2023-24 to 26.92 lakh metric tonnes in 2024-25, with a target of 29.72 lakh metric tonnes by 2029-30.

To strengthen planting material quality, a mega fruit nursery has been commissioned at RS Pura, Jammu, with a capacity of five lakh saplings, while elite nurseries are being developed in Udhampur and Anantnag. During 2026-27 alone, over 8 lakh planting materials and nearly 18 lakh rootstock plants will be produced.

The Chief Minister also announced that SKUAST Jammu

has established a state-of-the-art Ex-Situ Gene Bank, making it only the third such institution in India, aimed at conserving valuable plant genetic resources.

The dairy sector featured prominently in the Budget, with annual milk production already touching 28.75 lakh metric tonnes. Omar announced the setting up of seven milk processing plants of one lakh litres per day capacity, at a cost of around ₹770 crore, expected to benefit nearly 11 lakh dairy farmers.

"My target is to increase milk processing in J&K from the current 4 per cent to 25 per cent in the next few years," he said.

To further boost organised dairy farming, the government will offer a 15 per cent top-up subsidy under the Integrated

Dairy Development Scheme, form 4,000 new dairy cooperative societies, and deploy bulk milk coolers, testing labs, milk-o-chill units and insta-chillers across rural areas.

With these interventions, dairy cooperative turnover is projected to rise from ₹407 crore to nearly ₹1,898 crore annually, generating an additional ₹300 crore in income for around three lakh farmers each year.

Marketing reforms have also gained momentum through the e-NAM platform, now integrated with 17 of the UT's 19 wholesale mandis. Since 2020-21, trade worth ₹1,721 crore has been conducted digitally, benefitting farmers by eliminating middlemen and improving price discovery.

The poultry and fisheries sectors are set for rapid expansion, with plans to establish 800 commercial poultry units and 50,000 backyard units to produce around 250 million eggs annually. Fish production is expected to rise from 31,000 metric tonnes in 2025-26 to 33,000 metric tonnes in 2026-27.

Capping the ambitious roadmap, the CM announced a capital expenditure allocation of ₹1,878 crore for agriculture and allied sectors in 2026-27, signalling the government's strong commitment to making rural prosperity the backbone of Jammu and Kashmir's economic growth.

"This Budget is about empowering farmers, strengthening rural livelihoods and building a resilient, modern agricultural economy for the future of J&K,"

MP Mian Altaf urges Vande Bharat train stop for Anantnag

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, Feb 06: Member of Parliament (MP) Anantnag-Rajouri, Mian Altaf has written to Union Minister for Railways Ashwini Vaishnaw, urging the inclusion of Anantnag Railway Station as a scheduled stoppage for the Vande Bharat Express operating on the newly commissioned Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBR).

In his detailed letter, the MP described the launch of the Vande Bharat Express in Kashmir as a "historic achievement that has finally integrated the Valley with the national rail network, bringing speed, comfort, and modern connectivity to the region".

Providing a similar stoppage at Anantnag would ensure equitable access to premium rail services for South Kashmir, which has a significantly larger catchment area than Banihal and Reasi combined," he said.

Highlighting Anantnag's strategic and cultural importance, Mian Altaf described it as the main gateway to Pahalgam and the holy Amarnath Cave shrine, in addition to being home to major heritage sites such as the Martand Sun Temple, Mughal Gardens, and Verinag. He underlined the region's rich syncretic traditions rooted in Shaivism, Buddhism, and Sufism, which continue to attract pilgrims and tourists from across the country.

The MP also pointed out that with Anantnag Railway Station being opened for goods traffic in August 2025, it has emerged as a crucial logistics hub for South Kashmir's horticulture sector, particularly apple and fresh produce growers. According to him, a Vande Bharat halt would significantly boost business travel, tourism inflow, and the fast movement of high-value goods.



year-round passenger volume far exceeds that of Reasi.

"Providing a similar stoppage at Anantnag would ensure equitable access to premium rail services for South Kashmir, which has a significantly larger catchment area than Banihal and Reasi combined," he said.

"Anantnag is the administrative and commercial headquarters of South Kashmir and serves a massive catchment population of nearly 2.5 million people across Anantnag, Kulgam, Shopian, and Pulwama districts," Mian Altaf wrote. He pointed out that official figures consistently show Anantnag as one of the busiest railway stations in the Valley in terms of daily passenger footfall.

Drawing a comparison, the MP noted that while Banihal largely functions as a transit interchange, Anantnag caters to a dense and permanent population comprising students, traders, professionals, and government employees. He further welcomed the experimental stoppages provided at stations such as Reasi for local commuters, but stressed that Anantnag's

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

249-bedded M&CCH planned in Anantnag: Govt

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, Feb 06: The Health and Medical Education (H&ME) Department has initiated major steps towards strengthening maternal and child healthcare services in Anantnag with the proposed construction of a 249-bedded Mother and Child Care Hospital (M&CCH) at Janglat Mandi.

Replies to a question raised by MLA Reyaz Ahmad Khan in the Assembly, Health Minister Sakeena Ito informed the House that the Paediatric Department has already been shifted to the Ground Floor of Block-A at MMABM & Hospital, Janglat Mandi, Anantnag. However, the Obstetrics and Gynaecology (OBG) Department is still functioning from the old Maternal & Child Care Hospital at Sheer Bagh, Anantnag.

She said that the OBG Department will be shifted to the newly identified site behind Block "A" of MMABM Hospital once the required infrastructure is completed.

The minister further revealed that around 4.5 kanals of land behind Block "A" of MMABM Hospital at Janglat Mandi has been identified for the construction of the new 249-bedded Mother and Child Care Hospital.

For this purpose, the Public Works (R&B) Department prepared a Detailed Project Report (DPR) amounting to ₹86.15 crore, covering the construction of the modern healthcare facility aimed at improving maternal and neonatal services in south Kashmir.

Ito said the DPR was submitted to the Finance Department for financial concurrence and for seeking Administrative Approval along with funding under NABARD RIDE XXXI. However, the proposal was returned with certain observations. "The Finance Department advised identification of a clear source of funding other than NABARD and also directed incorporation of furniture and furnishing components in the DPR," she said.

The minister added that the concerned PWD division is now working on revising the DPR and recalculating the financial implications accordingly.

To ensure progress on the project, the government has already earmarked ₹5 crore under the Capex Budget 2025-26 for initial works. Additionally, the Health Department plans to propose the project under the SASCI scheme in 2026-27 as an additional funding source to fast-track completion, considering the project's large scale and importance.

Once completed, the 249-bedded Mother and Child Care Hospital is expected to significantly enhance healthcare facilities for women and children across Anantnag and adjoining districts, reducing the burden on adjoining hospitals and improving access to specialised maternal services—(KNO)

351 Jan Aushadhi Kendras functional in J&K: Centre

RAJA SYED RATHER

New Delhi, Feb 06: The Centre on Thursday informed the Parliament that 351 Jan Aushadhi Kendras, under the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana, are operational in Jammu and Kashmir, while only three are functional in Ladakh.

In a written reply to an unstarred question in the Lok Sabha, Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilisers Jagat Prakash Nadda said that 351 Jan Aushadhi Kendras are currently functional in Jammu and Kashmir, with 32 centres being closed till December 31, 2025.

The Minister said that across the country, 17,990 Jan Aushadhi Kendras are functional, while 3,135 have been shut down so far.

He added that the government has set a target of opening 25,000 JAKs by March 2027, including in remote and hilly regions such as Ladakh.

To promote expansion in difficult areas, the Centre provides a one-time incentive of ₹2 lakh for setting up Jan Aushadhi Kendras in Himalayan regions, island territories and aspirational districts. Online applications are open for all districts, including those in Ladakh, through the PMBJP portal, the Minister said.

On the closure of several centres nationwide, the government said Jan Aushadhi Kendras operate on a franchise-based model, and closures occur due to low sales, personal reasons of owners or logistical issues.

The implementing agency, PMBJ, is providing hand-holding support to revive low-performing centres, including in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh—(KNO)

'Over 20,000 emigration clearances for J&K workers since 2021'



RAJA SYED RATHER

New Delhi, Feb 06 (KNO): More than 20,000 emigration clearances have been issued to workers from Jammu and Kashmir for overseas employment during the past five years, the Centre informed the Lok Sabha on Thursday.

In a written reply, the Ministry of External Affairs said that 20,128 Emigration Clearances (ECs) were granted to passport holders from Jammu and Kashmir between 2021 and 2025, mainly for employment in Gulf countries including Saudi Arabia, the UAE,

Qatar and Kuwait.

The Ministry said that complaints related to non-payment of wages, harassment and contract violations from Indian migrant workers abroad are monitored through Indian Missions and Posts, and grievances are addressed via the e-Migration portal.

It said that workers from Jammu and Kashmir are sensitised about their rights and safety through the Pre-Departure Orientation Training (PDOT) programme, while action against illegal recruitment agents is taken in coordination with State police and other enforcement agencies—(KNO)

64 faculty posts vacant at AIIMS Jammu



RAJA SYED RATHER

New Delhi, Feb 06: Sixty-four faculty posts are lying vacant at AIIMS Jammu, the Centre informed the Lok Sabha on Thursday. In a written reply to an unstarred question, the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said that AIIMS Jammu has 183 sanctioned faculty positions, of which 119 are currently in position, while the remaining posts are vacant.

The ministry said that the creation and filling of posts is a continuous process and several measures have been taken to expedite recruitment across AIIMS institutions, including AIIMS Jammu. These include the constitution of standing selection committees, engagement of retired faculty on a contractual basis and the visiting faculty scheme.

The Minister said that common recruitment examinations and national-level entrance tests are being conducted regularly to fill both faculty and non-faculty positions in AIIMS institutions across the country—(KNO)

Only 2 working women hostels functional in J&K: GoI

RAJA SYED RATHER

New Delhi, Feb 06: Jammu and Kashmir currently has only two functional working women hostels under the Sakhi Niwas Scheme, the Centre informed the Lok Sabha on Thursday.

In a written reply, the Ministry of Women and Child Development said that the Sakhi Niwas scheme is a demand-driven, centrally sponsored programme, under

which States and Union Territories assess their requirements and submit proposals accordingly.

The Ministry said that ₹42.04 lakh has been released to Jammu and Kashmir during the 15th Finance Commission period for supporting Working Women Hostels in the Union Territory.

The Centre also said that under the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASI) Scheme, funds have been allocated nationwide for construction of new

Working Women Hostels, though Jammu and Kashmir is not among the States approved so far for hostel construction under this component.

The Sakhi Niwas scheme aims to provide safe and affordable accommodation for working women and women pursuing education or training, particularly in urban and semi-urban areas where employment opportunities exist, the Ministry added—(KNO)

EDITORIAL

Collective Efforts Needed To Tackle Stray Dog Menace

The fact that over 2.06 lakh (206,000) people in Jammu and Kashmir have been bitten by dogs in just two years is a serious public health crisis. With nearly 100,000 cases reported every year, the problem has become normal, making people afraid to go outside and putting huge pressure on hospitals. This data shows an epidemic-level problem that needs an urgent, full, and kind response. The current small efforts are not enough. The main

reason there are so many stray dogs, especially in cities like Jammu and Srinagar, is poor garbage management. Dogs gather and multiply around open rubbish dumps where they find food. Therefore, the first and most important step for a lasting solution is proper, scientific waste management. Municipal corporations must be made responsible for collecting all waste from every home and securely processing it so that dogs cannot get to it. At the same time, the

Animal Birth Control (ABC) program, which sterilises dogs to control their population, must be made much bigger and faster. Starting a third ABC centre in Srinagar is a good step, but it is too slow when the city alone has over 64,000 stray dogs. The government must treat this as a top-priority mission. It needs to provide enough money and support to run high-capacity sterilisation and vaccination drives in every district. Plans for such drives in Jammu must

be carried out quickly and openly. Public awareness and quick response systems are also vital. People need to know how to live safely around dogs and how to report aggressive animals. The health department must guarantee that vaccines for rabies are available in every hospital and health centre, even in remote areas, to prevent deaths. No single department can fix this crisis alone. It needs a united effort from all government bodies—the city councils, the

health department, the animal husbandry department—and the community itself. The people of Jammu and Kashmir have the right to walk on their streets without fear. The government must tackle this with the same urgency as a major health campaign. It must combine fast sterilisation work with long-term cleanliness solutions. Every day we wait, more children, the elderly, and citizens are at risk of being hurt by a threat that can be stopped.

Defence in Union Budget 2026-27

Modernisation, Aatmanirbhar Bharat and Veterans' Welfare

Press Information Bureau

The Union Budget 2026-27, announced by the central government on February 01, 2026, places national security at the core of India's modernisation, self-reliance and innovation priorities. The Ministry of Defence has received the highest-ever allocation of 7.85 lakh crore, an increase of 15.19% over Budgetary Estimates (BE) of FY 2025-26, accounting for 14.67% of the Union Budget which is highest among the Ministries. India's defence budget rose from 2.53 lakh crore in 2013-14 to 7.85 lakh crore in 2026-27, an increase of approximately 5.32 lakh crore, marking about a three-fold rise.

Out of the total allocation made to the Ministry of Defence, 27.95% of the Defence Budget allocation is for capital expenditure, 20.17% for revenue expenditure on sustainability and operational preparedness, 26.40% for revenue expenditure on pay and allowances, 21.84% for defence pensions, and 3.64% for civil organisations.

Modernisation Push

A major highlight of the budget related to the defence sector is at modernising all the three services and enhancing future capabilities. The emphasis is on acquiring advanced platforms, cutting-edge technologies and force multipliers.

For FY 2026-27, the budgetary allocation under capital head to the Defence Forces is over 2.19 lakh Crore, which is 21.84% more than Budget Estimates of FY 2025-26.

Out of 2.19 lakh crore, 1.85 lakh crore has been earmarked for capital acquisition, representing an increase of approximately 24% over FY 2025-26.

The forthcoming Capital Acquisition projects will equip the Armed Forces with next-generation fighter aircraft, advanced weapons, ships and submarines, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, Drones etc.

The capital allocation to the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has been increased to 7.394 crore for FY 2026-27.



Source: Union Budget 2026-27

The enhanced allocation to the BRO will help in modernising strategic projects like tunnels, bridges, airfields etc.

Allocation of 975 Crore for Optical Fibre Cable based network for Defence Services.

Boosting Indigenous Defence Manufacturing

The Budget gives a strong thrust to Aatmanirbhar Bharat (Self-reliant India) by promoting indigenous manufacturing and reducing import dependence. Domestic defence industries, including private sector

players, are key beneficiaries.

1.39 lakh crore allocated for procurement from domestic defence industries.

Around 75% of the Capital Acquisition budget is reserved for domestic defence industries in FY 2026-27.

Basic customs duty on raw materials imported for manufacture of parts of aircraft to be used in maintenance, repair, or overhaul requirements by Units in the Defence sector to be exempted.

Measures support domestic production,

investment and job creation.

Research, Development and Innovation The budgetary allocation to Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has been increased to 29,100.25 crore in FY 2026-27 from 26,816.82 crore in FY 2025-26. Out of this allocation, a major share of Rs. 17,250.25 crore is allocated for capital expenditure.

Along with this, the central government has implemented a range of measures to promote R&D in defence manufacturing. As of 1st December 2025, some key initiatives included:

About 25% of the Defence R&D budget has been opened to industry, start-ups and academia based on Budget 2022-23 announcements.

15 DRDO-Industry-Academia Centres of Excellence have been established, covering 82 identified research verticals.

DRDO has built a network of around 2,000 industries to manufacture equipment, with technologies transferred at zero Transfer of Technology fee to Indian partners to empower innovation.

During 2022-23 to 2024-25, a cumulative Actual of 68,210.22 crore was incurred on Defence R&D, with an additional 26,816.82 crore provided under Budget Estimates for FY 2025-26.

148 new R&D projects have been sanctioned by DRDO during 2022-23 to 2024-25.

Enhanced Healthcare and Pension Support for Veterans

The Union Budget 2026-27 strengthens the central government's commitment to veterans' welfare through higher allocations for healthcare and pensions, ensuring quality medical services and timely financial support for ex-servicemen and their families.

12,100 crore allotted to the Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) in FY 2026-27, which is 45.49% higher than Budget Estimates of FY 2025-26.

ECHS supports Medical Treatment Related Expenditure (MTRE) for ex-servicemen and their dependents.

Key Takeaways

- ₹7.85 lakh crore allocated to the Ministry of Defence in Union Budget 2026-27, the highest among all Ministries.
- The allocation marks a 15.19% increase over the FY 2025-26 Budget Estimates (BE) and accounts for 14.67% of total Central Government expenditure.
- ₹1.39 lakh crore earmarked for procurement from domestic defence industries.
- ₹12,100 crore allotted to the Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme in FY 2026-27, 45.49% higher than FY 2025-26 at BE stage.
- Allocation to DRDO increased to ₹29,100.25 crore in FY 2026-27 from ₹26,816.82 crore in FY 2025-26.

Allocation to ECHS has increased by over 300% in the last five years compared to FY 2021-22 at BE stage.

Total allocation for Defence Pensions stands at over 1.71 lakh Crore, marking a 6.56% increase over the FY 2025-26 budget estimates.

The amount supports monthly pension disbursement to more than 34 lakh pensioners, disbursed through SPARSH and other authorised pension disbursing authorities.

Conclusion

The Union Budget 2026-27, the first Union Budget after the historic success of Operation Sindoora, reflects the Government's sustained focus on strengthening national security through modernisation, self-reliance and innovation. With a strong push for indigenous defence manufacturing, focused investments in research and infrastructure, and continued priority for the welfare of veterans, the Budget for Defence Sector promises more secure and resilient India, aligned with the long-term vision of Viksit Bharat@2047.

CPI Updated For The Digital Age: What It Means For Your Wallet And Policy

As lifestyles changed, the official inflation measure has been updated with new weights, online price collection, and administrative data to ensure it captures the real cost of living for policy decisions

Saurabh Garg

Inflation, one of the most closely watched macroeconomic indicators, is something most people feel in daily life, through routine household expenses. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) captures this reality by tracking the prices of goods and services that households regularly consume, turning everyday experiences into an official measure of inflation. For the common man, the CPI is like a quiet mirror of daily life capturing, *inter alia*, the changing cost of basic needs like food on the plate, rent over the head, and fuel for the journey to work. Though it appears as a simple number, it speaks for households, guiding income and social security adjustments so that life's essentials remain within reach. CPI-based inflation is also the primary indicator for the Reserve Bank of India for guiding decisions like interest rates and inflation control. Therefore, when the CPI reflects reality, policies respond better to what people are truly experiencing.

Inflation isn't just about prices going up, it's about how these price changes affect household budgets. That's why making sure the index reflects people's current consumption patterns is just as important



as tracking the prices themselves. This is the context in which India's ongoing CPI base update from the year 2012 to 2024 must be seen. Since the last base revision, the economy has changed significantly, urbanisation has grown, services have expanded, digital platforms have changed buying habits, and household spending has diversified.

The CPI 2024 series has, therefore, been updated using the latest Household Consumption Expenditure Survey of 2023-24. As people's preferences and expenses

changed over time, the importance (weightage) given to different goods and services in the CPI has also been adjusted. Items on which households now spend more have been given greater weight, while those that account for a smaller share of spending have been given less weight. This ensures that the CPI measures price changes that really affect household budgets. The consumption basket has also been updated to reflect emerging trends, like growing spending on services, driven by rising incomes and changing lifestyles.

Updating the way CPI is calculated is just as important as updating what it measures. The revised CPI is more closely aligned with international standards while still retaining features specific to India. This makes it easier to compare India's inflation with other countries. From the perspective of households, this matters because it helps policymakers understand how price changes in India fit into the global picture, without losing sight of what affects people's daily lives.

Data collection for the CPI has been upgraded to keep pace with how people shop and spend. While traditional market surveys still track prices, particularly of food and other essentials, the 2024 framework has introduced capturing of online prices

for items like telecom services, airfares, and certain other services.

The adoption of computer-assisted price collection in the new series has reduced manual errors and allowed real-time checks, improving both the quality and timeliness of price data. Quality and timeliness of CPI matter because it shapes decisions that touch everyday life, like how costly loans are, how much savings earn, and how rising prices influence household budgets.

In the new base year, the CPI draws more on official data from government sources, railfare, postal charges, fuel prices, and items sold through public distribution systems. This means these numbers are captured with greater precision by mitigating the chances of errors and biases that can occur in market surveys. This integration of survey data, administrative records and digital price sources represents a marked improvement over earlier practices and provides a more reliable picture of how prices are changing.

The massive institutional effort behind a base revision exercise of this scale is also worth noting. It involves coordination across field offices, statistical divisions and national and international expert bodies. The process involves extensive scrutiny of methodology, testing of alternatives and

consultation with economists and domain specialists. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has engaged with expert groups, international organizations and stakeholders to ensure that changes are transparent, easy to understand and methodologically sound.

Even with updates to the basket, weights, and data sources, the CPI keeps its core purpose, capturing how prices change from a household's point of view. This continuity matters because it lets us compare prices over time. In other words, the index is being improved without losing the connection to everyday life, so it remains a reliable guide for policymakers.

The CPI reminds us that behind every statistic lies the lived experience of millions, and that numbers, ultimately, are about people. It quietly traces how prices shape daily life and informs policy decisions. Through the ongoing base revision exercise, MoSPI has ensured that the CPI continues to be accurate, up-to-date, and consistent over time, so that it remains not just a number, but a true mirror capturing the realities faced by people across the country.

The author is Secretary, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation

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

BUDGET SESSION 2026 (QUESTION HOUR)

PMAY-G

506 families allotted 5 marla land across J&K: Javid Dar

Says, 435 others under consideration

KT News Desk

JAMMU FEBRUARY 06: The Government Friday informed the House that 506 families have been allotted 5 marla of land across J&K under PMAY-G while 435 such other cases are under consideration of the Revenue authorities.

This was stated by Minister Department of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Javid Ahmad Dar, while replying to a question raised by Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami.

The Minister added that the government has taken necessary steps for assessment and survey of landless and houseless families under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir. He stated that under PMAY-Gramin Phase I (RDD), a comprehensive survey has been conducted to identify the landless and houseless families from the Permanent Waiting List (PWL), which has been fully saturated across the Union Territory.

The Minister further said that the beneficiary-wise list, including that of Kulgam district, has been finalized and land has been allotted to the eligible beneficiaries after due verification in accordance with the scheme guidelines. He added that as per PMAY-G norms, the eligible beneficiaries are



entitled to allotment of land measuring 5 marla and are required to complete construction of their houses within one year from the date of sanction.

Regarding urban areas, the

Minister informed that an assessment/survey has been undertaken by the Housing & Urban Development Department under PMAY-Urban 2.0 to identify the

landless and houseless families across Jammu & Kashmir. He added that the identified beneficiaries from the Permanent Waiting List available on the Awas Soft Portal have been forwarded to the concerned Deputy Commissioners for necessary verification as per the prescribed norms.

The Minister said that PMAY-Urban 2.0 does not provide for allotment of land, instead the eligible landless and houseless families are provided housing support mainly through flats under the Affordable Housing in Partnership (AHP) vertical, subject to eligibility and availability.

Regarding construction timelines, the Minister stated that houses under the BLC vertical are typically completed within 12-18 months from the release of the first instalment, while those under the AHP vertical, constructed by implementing agencies, are usually completed within 18-24 months from the date of sanction.

The Minister assured the House that the government is committed to provide housing to the landless and houseless families in a transparent and time-bound manner. He emphasized that no eligible beneficiary will be deprived of benefits under PMAY, while due process and scheme guidelines will be strictly followed.

Govt committed to 200 units of free electricity to AAY families: Sakeena Itoo

KT News Desk

JAMMU FEBRUARY 06: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo, Friday informed the House that the government is committed to provide monthly 200 units of free electricity to every household of Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) category in Jammu and Kashmir and the project, in this regard, is at its final stage of approval.

The Minister stated this while replying to a question raised by Shakti Raj Parihar regarding Power sector on behalf of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah.

The Minister stated that Doda district currently faces power cuts ranging from 3 to 6 hours daily, as per the load curtailment programme, excluding additional shedding by the State Load Dispatch Centre (SLDC) due to overall power availability. She noted that certain areas of the district, including Prem Nagar, Dhar, Thathri, Bhaytas, Gando, and Bhalessa, experience extra curtailment due to system constraints such as long feeder lengths, capacity limitations, voltage issues, and technical losses.

She said that the government has launched the Amnesty Scheme for Domestic power consumers by waiving of interest/surcharge on accumulated dues, which is expiring on 31.03.2026.

The Minister added that the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) is a Government of India (GoI)



initiative aimed at improving the distribution infrastructure and enhancing the efficiency of the power distribution system in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. She said that PESL Limited has been engaged as Project Implementation Agency (PIA) on behalf of JPDCL in Doda district and RDSS Doda Package has been awarded to M/s Vijay Electricals by PESL on 08.09.2023.

The Minister informed that the overall physical progress of RDSS works in Doda district stood at 31% as of January-end. She added that out of 41 feeders, 15 fall under Doda West Constituency, with execution works currently underway on 13 feeders.

She said that the smart

metering is under implementation in three phases in J&K viz. Phase-I and Phase-II under PMDP and Phase-III under RDSS. She added that under PMDP, a total of 64,573 smart meters have been installed, comprising 1,25,367 under PMDP Phase-I and 5,20,371 under PMDP Phase-II.

The Minister also informed that the process for recruitment of Junior Engineers, Tech-III, Junior Assistants and Junior Stenographers under direct recruitment quota has been initiated. She added that for vacant posts of promotion quota, concerned DPCs have been directed to fill-up these posts by conducting District Level Departmental Promotion on immediate basis.

158 stone crushers, hot mix plants closed for environmental violations in J&K: Javed Rana

KT News Desk

JAMMU FEBRUARY 06: The Government of Jammu and Kashmir has ordered closure of 158 Stone Crushers and Hot Mix Plants from January 1, 2021 to January 1, 2026, found operating in violation of established norms.

Replies to a question raised by MLA Ajaz Ahmad Jan, Forest, Ecology & Environment Minister, Javed Ahmed Rana said that the J&K Pollution Control Committee has issued directions under Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 and Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 for closure of these 158 units.

Regarding the compliance of Stone Crushers and Hot Mix plants with the established norms, he informed the House that the units are granted Consent to Establish only if they comply with the criteria and after checking of adequacy of Pollution Control Devices (PCDs) as prescribed by JK PCC under Water Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 and Air Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.

He said that the directions issued by National Green Tribunal and Supreme Court of India from time to time have been complied in letter and spirit and legal action is initiated against the violators under the environmental Law.

The Minister further underlined that specific steps are being taken to protect the river ecology, prevent pollution linked to illegal mining and ensure accountability within JKPCB under environmental laws.

Javed Rana stated that Project Proponent are mandated to undertake the mining strictly in compliance with the Sustainable Sand Mining Management Guidelines, 2016.

Further, the Mining Blocks also require consent from the J&K Pollution Control Committee and the project proponents are required to adopt measures like water sprinkling in the mining area, covering of material with sheets while transporting and mining operations are permitted only during the day time i.e. from 8 AM to 6 PM.

He further said that with the advent of remote sensing and GIS tools, the distances are cross-checked on such platforms for issuance of distance certificates.

He added that the distance certificate viz-a-viz Siting Criteria is provided by the concerned line departments while performing cross-checking on GIS platforms, so that report of incorrect distances by field staff does not arise.

49 Water Supply Schemes serving 50 villages in Lolab, Machil: Jal Shakti Minister

KT News Desk

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 06: Minister for Jal Shakti, Javed Ahmed Rana, Friday informed the Legislative Assembly that 49 operational Water Supply Schemes (WSSs) are catering to the water requirements of 50 villages in Lolab and Machil area.

He was replying to a question raised by MLA, Qaysar Jamshaid Lone.

The Minister apprised that the water supply schemes are being regularly maintained which continue to meet the drinking water needs of the population.

The Jal Shakti Minister further stated that to address water scarcity in deficit areas, the government has established 16 new borewell/dugwell sources and 17 new spring/nallah sources under various ongoing programmes over the last three years.

He added that four more sources are currently under development, covering 22 new Water Supply Schemes (WSS) under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) and UT CAPEX. Out of these, 12 schemes are already operational, while the remaining are at various stages of implementation.

He added that upon completion, these schemes will substantially strengthen the water supply infrastructure and ensure sustainable access to safe drinking water as per the prescribed standards (55 LPCD).



The Minister further said that the department is taking necessary measures to address the drinking water shortage areas through tanker service, whenever and wherever needed.

Legislators Qaysar Jamshaid Lone, Saifullah Mir and Javid Hassan Baig raised supplementaries on the question.

Qaysar Jamshaid Lone highlighted that significant improvements have been achieved due to the timely intervention of the Minister but stressed that the existing network requires urgent upgradation to meet the growing demands.

He added that upon completion, these schemes will substantially strengthen the water supply infrastructure and ensure sustainable access to safe drinking water as per the prescribed standards (55 LPCD).

Responding to the concerns, Javed Ahmed Rana acknowledged that challenges persist and noted that the situation has been further compounded

by drought conditions and other natural disasters. He thanked the Chief Minister for his continued support and stated that efforts are underway to address the constraints.

The Minister further assured that issues faced by the rural and hilly areas would be examined on priority, with necessary directions to be issued accordingly.

The Minister also said that directions have been issued to the concerned officers for timely utilization of resources so that sanctioned funds are not surrendered. He emphasized that Legislators who raised the supplementaries, must actively monitor the implementation of works to ensure timely and effective execution.

Housing projects taken up to cater housing needs of local population in J&K: Sakeena Itoo

KT News Desk

JAMMU FEBRUARY 06: The Government Friday informed the House that J&K Housing Board, through JDA and SDA, has taken up Housing Projects at various places in Jammu and Kashmir to cater to the housing needs of local population.

This was stated by Minister for Education Sakeena Itoo in the Legislative Assembly Friday while replying to a question on behalf of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah.

The question was asked by Legislator Nizamuddin Bhat on behalf of Legislator Tariq Hameed Karra in the House.

The Minister informed the House that SDA has taken up Shehjar Heights Apartments project along National Highway Bemina by-pass on estimated cost of Rs. 84.78 crore, wherein 112 flats (56 flats 2BHK and 56 flats 3BHK) are being offered to the general public. She added that the applications have been invited on <https://www.jkhm.in> with last date on 20th February, 2026 and project is expected to be completed within 24 months i.e. 2027-28.

The Minister also informed that Srinagar Development Authority has proposed to develop a Satellite Township on 150 hectares of land along National Highway Bypass, Bemina, Srinagar (Rakhi Gund Aksha), adding that the Project is under process and will be commissioned once

the DPRs are submitted by the agency.

Giving further details, the Minister said that J&K Housing Board, through JDA and SDA, has taken up Housing Projects at various places. These included development of Mass Housing Colony at Chak Bhalwal Jammu, proposed construction of flat accommodation at Bhalwal Jammu, development of Mass Housing Colony at Chowdhari Jammu, development of mass housing colony at Birpur, tehsil Bari Brahma in Samba, development of Housing Colony at Chatterham Srinagar, development of Housing Colony/Flatted accommodation at Bakora, Ganderbal, development of Integrated Mass Housing Colony at Watapora, Tehsil and District Bandipora and development of Mass Housing Colony (flatted accommodation) at Padampura, Pulwama.

She informed that the proposed projects will reserve 20% of housing units for the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) and Low-Income Group (LIG) categories, as per the Jammu and Kashmir Housing, Affordable Housing, Slum Redevelopment and Township Policy 2020. The EWS category is defined as households with an annual income up to Rs. 3 lakh.

Legislator, Mubarik Gul raised supplementary question on the subject.

Health department holds workshop on PC & PNDT Act in Jammu

KT News Desk

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 06: The Directorate of Health Services, Jammu, organized a one-day workshop on the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PC & PNDT) Act, 1994 in Jammu Friday to strengthen awareness regarding the Act and to curb the menace of gender-based sex selection.

The programme, as per an official statement, commenced with the arrival of the chief guest, Director Health Services, Jammu, Dr. Abdul Hamid Zargar, followed by the lighting of the ceremonial lamp and Saraswati Vandana presented by students of ANMT School, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu.

An introductory session was

delivered by Dr. Simmi Verma, Assistant Director, Health Education Bureau, and Nodal Officer, PC & PNDT Act, who highlighted the objectives of the workshop and stressed strict implementation of the Act. A film on female foeticide and legal provisions of PC & PNDT Act was also screened to sensitize the participants.

During the technical sessions, Shivali Gupta, Law Officer,

deliberated upon the legal framework and penalties under the PC & PNDT Act. The Principal, Government Medical College, Jammu and the Director, Health Services, Jammu, addressed the gathering and emphasized collective responsibility in preventing sex determination practices. A poster regarding prohibition of sex determination and female foeticide was formally

released in presence of Raman Sharma, Dy. Director Planning, Directorate of Health Services, Jammu and Rajni Gupta, FA/CAO, Directorate of Health Services, Jammu followed by the broadcast of an awareness jingle to reinforce the message of saving the girl child.

In the post-lunch session, Dr. Simmi Verma again addressed participants on operational

aspects of the Act, followed by a lecture by Bhupinder Singh Sasan. A powerful nukkad natak was presented by the team of professional Artists brought to the event by the Information Department and a SKIT was also presented by the students of ANMT School, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu, effectively conveyed the social and legal consequences of female foeticide

and received wide appreciation from the audience. The workshop concluded with a formal vote of thanks by Dr. Simmi Verma, who acknowledged the efforts of the organizing team of officers/officials of different sections of Directorate of Health Services, Jammu and all participants for making the programme successful.

Ensure 'zero infiltration'

Bureau Director Tapan Deka, Border Security Force (BSF) Director General Praveen Kumar, Central Reserve Police Force DC G P Singh, and other senior military, police, civil and intelligence officers.

Notably, the meeting assumed significance amid stepped up anti-terror operations following nearly a dozen encounters in Kathua, Udhampur and Kishtwar districts of Jammu region over the past two weeks. In these gun battles four Pakistani terrorists were killed.

Sources told KNO that during the meeting the Home Minister reviewed the ongoing anti-terrorist operations, the anti-infiltration grid and the measures being taken to counter drone activities from across the border, amid intelligence reports suggesting the presence of terrorists waiting for an opportunity to infiltrate into India. "Security forces should ensure that there is zero infiltration from across the border," sources quoted the Home Minister as having said.

The Home Minister, they said, directed the top officers of the security forces to "choke the supply lines" of the terrorists hiding in the upper reaches of the Jammu region and intensify anti-terror operations.

Shah reiterated that all resources will be made available to achieve the goal of "terror-free" Jammu and Kashmir at the earliest.

The Home Minister lauded the security agencies for acting tough against the terrorists, their supporters, and maintaining peace and tranquility in Jammu and Kashmir.

Pertinently, this was the second security review meeting chaired by the Union home minister within a month. On January 8, Shah chaired a high-level review meeting on Jammu and Kashmir security in Delhi, and directed continuation of counter-terror operations targeting terror infrastructure and financing in "mission mode".

Earlier, the home secretary had also chaired a review meeting here during his two-day visit on January 14 and 15.

After the security review meeting ended, the Home Minister interacted with the families of the martyrs and handed over the appointment letters to the NOKs of the martyrs, sources added.

HM SHAH TO CHAIR DEVELOPMENT REVIEW MEETING TOMORROW

The Home Minister will chair a meeting on the development of Jammu and Kashmir at 10:30 AM on Saturday at Lok Bhawan, Jammu, to review progress on key development initiatives and future plans for the Union Territory. The meeting will be attended by LG Sinha, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Chief Secretary Atal Duloo and other senior functionaries. He will leave for New Delhi on Saturday afternoon. (KNO)

BSF destroyed 118

faced threats of intrusion or infiltration, the BSF has stood like an impregnable wall, resolute in its commitment to safeguarding the country."

He stated that the bravery and valor displayed by the BSF during 'Operation Sindoor' have added a golden chapter to its six-decade-long history. Even in the most challenging times, BSF personnel upheld the spirit of "We are the sentinels of the border."

He said, "BSF's Jammu and Kashmir Frontier completely destroyed 118 Pakistani posts and three terrorist launch pads. In this operation, Sub-Inspector Mohammad Imliaz Ahmad and Constable Deepak Chingakham, who laid down their lives in the line of duty, were awarded the Vir Chakra. It is a matter of immense pride for us."

Shah also said that during this period BSF also received 16 gallantry medals and several commendation certificates. He paid floral tributes to the martyrs at the "Ajeey Prahar" memorial and also planted a sapling at the Border Outpost Bobiya.

LAYS FOUNDATION STONE OF INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS WORTH RS 242 CRORE

Shah inaugurated projects worth Rs 7 Crore for the welfare of troops, including newly built Solar Water Heaters, Solar Power Plants, and Officers' mess. He also laid foundation stone for the BSF infrastructure projects worth Rs 242 Crore.

The Union Home Minister said, "Whenever I visit BSF posts located in remote and challenging areas of Kutch, Rajasthan, or Jammu and Kashmir, I always return with values of duty consciousness and unwavering commitment from the soldiers posted there."

He said that during such visits, he witnesses how BSF personnel perform their duties with deep dedication under difficult and challenging conditions.

BSF PERSONNEL FINEST EXAMPLE OF DISCIPLINE AND DEDICATION

The Home Minister described BSF personnel as the finest example of discipline and dedication, standing firm day and night to protect the nation's borders. He added that the BSF's glorious 60-year history has instilled the same sense of discipline among the people of the country.

Shah said that whether deployed along the borders, in the difficult terrain of Manipur, or in Maoist-affected areas of Odisha and Chhattisgarh, the BSF has demonstrated impeccable courage everywhere. He praised the force for its outstanding humanitarian service during natural disasters, particularly in Punjab.

The Union Home Minister said that the Chief Minister of Punjab informed him that without the BSF, the challenges during floods would have multiplied manifold. The BSF rendered invaluable service to the people of Punjab and extended extensive assistance during the crisis.

He said that it is a shared responsibility to ensure that the nation's borders remain fully secure and vigilant. "Border-related challenges have changed significantly over the past 60 years. While the courage, alertness, and dedication of personnel remain crucial, many emerging challenges are now technology-driven. Therefore, advanced technological solutions must be adopted to effectively address them."

He recalled that during the BSF Raising Day celebrations, he had announced that the 61st year of the BSF would be dedicated to modernization, as well as to the welfare of BSF personnel and their families. He added that a dedicated team in the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is continuously working on both fronts.

NATION SLEEPS SECURE AS BSF'S UNWAVERING DUTY GUARDS THE BORDERS

Shah said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Government of India is fully committed to the welfare of security personnel. He announced that a special welfare scheme for BSF personnel will be introduced soon.

"Moreover, the Government will invest substantial funds to technologically modernize the entire border security system. This modernization will provide improved border infrastructure and advanced equipment for BSF personnel, enabling them to perform their duties more effectively," he said, adding, "These facilities will significantly reduce hardships faced by the soldiers and enhance their operational efficiency. It is because of the unwavering sense of duty, dedication, and commitment of BSF personnel stationed along the borders that the entire nation sleeps peacefully and feels secure."

The Home Minister also appreciated the significant contribution of women personnel in the BSF towards border security. He later had lunch with the soldiers.

The event was attended by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Union Home Secretary, Director of the Intelligence Bureau (IB), Director General of the Border Security Force, and other senior officials. (KNO)

CM Omar says

Asked about the limited increase in the size of the budget for 2026-27, the CM said that 2025 was a difficult year due to the Pahalgam attack and floods.

"This year was difficult for us. We were hopeful about an increase of 5 to 10 percent, but we suffered massive losses due to Pahalgam and floods. We are hopeful that we will bring growth back on track this year," he said.

The CM said the Baisaran Pahalgam terror attack and the floods were the two biggest challenges faced by him in 2025 as head of the elected government.

"We faced two major challenges last year. One was the Baisaran attack, in which many precious lives were lost. The attack created a war-like situation between the two countries. There was no sector of our economy that was not hit. Every sector was affected—hospitality, industry, services. We could not earn what we had expected," he said.

The CM said the floods of September-October 2025 were also a difficult phase for his government.

"The second challenge was the September-October floods, especially in Jammu due to heavy rains, which proved to be a very difficult phase," he said.

He added that the Centre has sanctioned Rs 1430 crore as relief package for permanent restoration of infrastructure damaged by floods. "We will judiciously use these funds for reconstruction," he said.

The CM further said that the abeyance of the Indus Water Treaty has not yet translated into benefits for Jammu & Kashmir. Jammu & Kashmir should have benefitted from the abeyance of the Indus Water Treaty, but that has not happened yet. The power projects—whether Ratle, Kiru, Kwar, or Pakal Dul—are ongoing projects. There is no change in their scope, design, or water-holding capacity. There will be no change in the generation capacity of these projects. It would, however, be beneficial for us in new projects if there are no restrictions of the Indus Water Treaty on us," he said. (KNO)

CM Omar unveils

fiscal 2026-27 are Rs 113767 crore, excluding the provision for ways and means advances and overdraft," the CM said. Of the Rs 113767 crore budget, Rs 80640 crore is revenue expenditure, Rs 80640 crore is capital expenditure and Rs 33,127 crore is capital expenditure.

Rs 90018 crore and Rs 23749 crore are expected as revenue receipts and capital receipts respectively under the budget estimates for 2026-27," the CM announced.

He said the Union Territory's own revenues, both tax and non-tax, are estimated at Rs 31,800 crore.

The CM added that Rs 42752 crore will flow as central assistance and Rs 13400 crore as Centrally Sponsored Schemes to Jammu & Kashmir.

Fiscal Indicators

The CM said the tax-to-GDP ratio is projected at 6.6% for 2026-27. "The tax-to-GDP ratio was projected at 7.5% for 2025-26," he said.

He said that the fiscal deficit for 2026-27 is estimated at 3.6%.

"The fiscal deficit for 2025-26 was estimated at 2.98%, substantially lower than 5.5% in 2024-25 (RE)," he said.

He added that GDP for 2025-26 had been projected at Rs 288422 crore, showing a growth of 9.5% over the previous year.

"GDP for 2026-27 has been projected at Rs 315822 crore (indicative nominal GDP), which also reflects a growth of 9.5% over the previous year," the CM said.

Key announcements

The biggest announcement in the budget was the provision of six free gas cylinders per year to all Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) households in Jammu & Kashmir.

"To reduce the household energy burden on vulnerable families, improve health outcomes by discouraging the use of solid fuels, and protect poor households from inflationary pressures, I propose to provide six free LPG cylinders per year to all AAY households of Jammu and Kashmir, covering the poorest of the poor," the CM announced.

He said the scheme represents direct cost-of-living relief for the most deprived sections.

The CM also announced a full fee waiver for all students belonging to AAY families studying in government schools from Class 9 to 12, who are not covered under any other education-related scholarship scheme.

He further announced a similar fee waiver for undergraduate students from AAY families studying in government degree colleges, provided they are not receiving any other scholarship assistance.

The CM introduced a sponsorship scheme covering 6000 orphan children who have lost both parents or their sole breadwinner, have no stable source of income, and are not receiving benefits under the Mission Vatsalya framework.

"Each child under this scheme will receive a

CONT. FROM PAGE 1

SATURDAY | 07.02.2026

06

monthly sponsorship of Rs 4000 through Direct Benefit Transfer to support education, nutrition, healthcare, and basic living needs. This initiative reflects our Government's commitment that no child shall be left behind due to circumstances beyond their control," the CM said.

He also proposed extending the existing free government transport facility to persons with disabilities, saying the initiative will enable better access to mobility.

The CM announced the purchase of bullet-proof vehicles for border areas.

"I also propose the purchase of bulletproof ambulances for border districts, starting with two ambulances for Poonch and Tangdhar in the next financial year," he said.

He further announced the establishment of two dedicated emergency and accident hospitals, one at Uri and another at Poonch, to strengthen critical healthcare infrastructure in border areas prone to shelling, cross-border incidents, and natural emergencies.

The CM said the government will implement a time-bound action plan for upgrading services in peripheral medical colleges, based on recommendations of a high-level committee already constituted.

He added that the government will roll out a cancer control strategy for J&K in collaboration with NITI Aayog and ICMR.

"I propose to strengthen advanced cardiac care services in Jammu and Kashmir by establishing Cath Labs at Government Medical College, Rourkela, and Government Medical College, Baramulla during 2026-27, at a total cost of 30 crore," the CM said.

He also announced that the government will establish full-fledged Emergency Medicine Departments in all government medical colleges over the next two financial years, to ensure round-the-clock trauma care, rapid emergency response, and improved survival outcomes for accident victims and critical patients.

The CM said his government is actively contemplating a structured incentive scheme for employees posted in such remote and hardship areas, with the objective of improving retention and ensuring equitable access to public services for citizens living in the most difficult terrains. (KNO)

Ruling regime hails

Conference (NC) president Dr Farooq Abdullah described the Budget as "amazing and inclusive," saying it "offers relief across all sections of society".

"This is an excellent budget. It provides something for everyone, the poor, the youth, the farmers and the employees. I only hope its implementation matches its promise," he said.

NC Chief Spokesperson Tanvir Sadiq termed the Budget "historic," noting that "every sector of Jammu and Kashmir has been touched from farmers and women self-help groups to youth employment, entrepreneurs, horticulture and infrastructure".

He said schemes for "3.5 lakh youth and 1.35 lakh entrepreneurs" show the government's strong focus on job creation and empowerment.

"This is a good start. Rome was not built in a day, but this Budget shows the right intent and direction," Sadiq said, adding that LPG subsidy concerns raised by the opposition were "misplaced".

He added, "The manifesto is for everyone. We have started with those who need it the most, and gradually everyone will benefit."

NC MLA Saifullah Mir said the Budget was "people-centric and focused on public welfare".

"The Budget 2026 is inclusive and focused on welfare. Every section, from farmers to employees, finds representation in it," he said, adding that the ruling dispensation's priority remains "development with compassion".

Cabinet Minister Satish Sharma also lauded the Budget as "very good", highlighting its emphasis on border development and pilgrimage infrastructure while taking a swipe at the opposition for "habitual criticism".

Sharma said key allocations include funding for bulletproof ambulances and hospitals in border regions like Uri and Poonch, as well as major allocations for the annual Amarnath Yatra and new infrastructure in collaboration with the Border Roads Organisation (BRO).

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"We are disappointed that the budget failed to bring real relief to J&K's poor. Promises made on the National Law University (NLU) must also be fulfilled," he said.

Adding to the criticism, BJP MLA Shagun Parikh said the budget "once again deceived" the people. "This year too, the budget is a deception and a fraud. This time, too, we did not get solutions for the people. Daily wagers and the Awaam have all been ignored," she said.

BJP MLA Vikram Randhawa likened the budget to "old wine in a new bottle". "Old wine in a new

bottle, and the bottle very beautifully designed, but those who hold it in their hands slip away," he remarked while speaking in the House.

Randhawa questioned the government over its unfulfilled promise of free LPG cylinders. "When people didn't get 12 cylinders in one-and-a-half years, who will give six? Not a single word was said about daily wagers, not even a single letter," he said, terming the budget "empty on substance".

BJP MLA Sham Lal Sharma said the government's schemes were "good on paper" but lacked clarity and time-bound delivery.

"Government schemes are good, but people lack clarity. The budget appears premature; benefits must be transparent and time-bound," he said, adding that governance should focus on inclusivity rather than labels. "I don't label Kashmiris anti-national," he said. (KNO)

Businesses welcome

covering nearly three lakh hectares and district-wise Embryo Transfer Technology Labs (Rs 65 crore).

However, KCCI raised concerns over the absence of interest subvention or credit support for tourism, trade, transport and SMEs, especially in light of the post-Apr

Agreement to create Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority historic: PM Modi

PTI

New Delhi, Feb 06: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said the tripartite agreement for creation of the Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority was "historic" and reflective of the government's unwavering commitment to peace and inclusive growth in the northeastern region.

"This is a historic agreement indeed, which will enhance the development trajectory of Eastern Nagaland, in particular," Modi said in a post on X.

The Centre signed a tripartite agreement with the Nagaland government and the Eastern Nagaland Peoples' Organisation for the formation of 'Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority' aimed at addressing the demands of eastern Nagaland. "I am



sure it will open new avenues of opportunity and prosperity for the people. It reflects our unwavering commitment to peace, progress and inclusive growth in the Northeast," the prime minister said. The agreement was signed on Thursday in the presence of Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio and Union

Home Minister Amit Shah. "The agreement will pave the way for creation of Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority (FNTA) for six districts of Nagaland viz. Tuensang, Mon, Kiphire, Longleng, Noklak and Shillong, and devolution of powers in respect of 46 Subjects to the FNTA," an official statement said.

AAP leader shot dead in Punjab's Jalandhar

PTI

Chandigarh, Feb 06: Punjab Aam Aadmi Party leader Lucky Oberoi was shot dead by an unidentified assailant outside a gurdwara in Jalandhar's Model Town on Friday, police said.

The incident took place around 7:30 am, when the 43-year-old was leaving the gurdwara in his SUV.

CCTV footage showed when Oberoi came out of the gurdwara and sat in his vehicle, an assailant wearing a black-coloured hoodie approached him on foot and opened indiscriminate fire, and fled along with his accomplice, who was waiting for him at a short distance on a scooter.

Oberoi was hit with multiple shots, and was rushed to a hospital in an unconscious state. He succumbed to the bullet injuries, ACP Jalandhar, Parminder Singh, said over the phone. In the firing incident, the window panes of Oberoi's SUV and another vehicle parked in the area were shattered.



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incident. Various angles in the case are being examined, including the personal enmity angle, they said.

A doctor at a private hospital where Oberoi was admitted told reporters that he was brought in around 8:10 am.

"He was unconscious, and his blood pressure was unrecordable. Eight to nine rounds were fired at him, and one of the bullets pierced through

his chest," the doctor said. Despite best efforts, Oberoi could not be saved, the doctor added.

When contacted over the phone, AAP's Doaba in-charge Tarandeep Singh Sunny said, "The 43-year-old is survived by his wife, who had last year contested the civic elections, two daughters, and a son."

Oberoi was a very active leader, he said.

Forced selfies with foreigners on beaches to invite detention: Goa Police

PTI

Panaji, Feb 06: Goa Police have launched a crackdown against domestic tourists harassing foreign nationals on the state's beaches, warning that anyone found clicking photographs without consent or forcing selfies will be detained on the spot, a senior official said on Friday.

The action has been initiated after several instances of domestic tourists clicking pictures of foreign women and insisting on selfies on beaches have surfaced, the official said.

The Calangute police in North Goa recently registered a case against two tourists hailing from Odisha for allegedly harassing a Russian woman on a beach.

According to the police, the incident took place earlier this week on Calangute beach, where the accused, Akash Minaz (19) and Dhayan Tapo (34), forcibly clicked photos with a foreign tourist and touched her inappropriately.

The senior official said a domestic tourist will be detained on the spot if he is found clicking photographs of foreign women without their consent or forcibly taking selfies with them.



India has set bold goals, we must deliver: Astronaut Shukla

PTI

Panaji, Feb 06: Astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla said on Friday that India has set bold goals for itself, from becoming Viksit Bharat by 2047 to undertaking ambitious space missions, stressing that it is the collective responsibility of citizens to realise these aspirations.

Interacting with students during the ongoing Goa Book Festival 2026 in Panaji, organised by the National Book Trust, Shukla, a Group Captain in the Indian Air Force, narrated several anecdotes about his space mission and also the preparations in the run-up to it.

"India has set very bold goals, be it Viksit Bharat by 2047 or space missions. But how can we achieve those? We all have to make it possible," he said, adding that "you all have to assume that responsibility".

Shukla said India is already

working on the Gaganyaan mission. "We are working to have our own space station, followed by a mission on the Moon," he said. The Gaganyaan project is an ambitious space programme to launch a 3-member crew into an orbit of 400 km for a 3-day mission.

Referring to the students, Shukla said he wants to see one of them, be it a boy or a girl, to be the first Indian to set foot on the Moon.

"Sky was never a limit... not for me, not for you, not

RBI pauses rate cuts, retains interest rate at 5.25 pc

PTI

New Delhi, Feb 06: After a 25 basis point rate cut in December, the RBI on Friday decided to pause on the policy rate front amid geopolitical uncertainties.

This is the first monetary policy review after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the Budget for financial year 2026-27.

A announcement of the sixth and final bi-monthly monetary policy for the current fiscal, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has decided to retain short-term lending rate or repo rate at 5.25 per cent with a neutral stance.

The rate cut pause comes on the back of the CPI-based headline retail inflation ruling below the 2 per cent lower band mandated by the government for the last four months.

The central bank has been tasked by the government to ensure that consumer price index



(CPI) based retail inflation remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side.

Since February 2025, the RBI has reduced the policy rate by 125 basis points. In its previous policy review in December, it had trimmed the repo rate by 25 basis points to 5.25 per cent.

Based on the recommendation of the MPC, the RBI reduced the repo rate by 25 bps each in February, 2025 and April, and 50 basis points in June amidst easing retail inflation. However, the central bank halted its rate cut in August.

In the last MPC meeting, the RBI again went for reduction in repo rate by 25 basis points to 5.25 per cent in calendar year 2025.

per cent. India's retail inflation dropped to a historic low of 0.25 per cent in October 2025, marking the lowest level since the CPI series was introduced. Besides, the Indian economy has clocked better-than-expected GDP growth of 8.2 per cent in the second quarter.

As per the government estimate, India's economy is estimated to grow at 7.4 per cent during the ongoing financial year. However, the rupee declined to historic low and crossed 92 against a dollar last week making imports costlier, raising fears of rise in inflation.

Rupee has depreciated by about 6 per cent in calendar year 2025.

Interest rates to remain at low level for long period of time: RBI Govt

PTI

Mumbai, Feb 06: Reserve Bank Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Friday said the key policy rates will remain at low levels for a long period and may go down even further.

The statement comes soon after the central bank decided to keep the repo rate unchanged at 5.25 per cent at its bi-monthly monetary policy, and kept the stance neutral.

"The policy rates will continue to be at low levels for a long period of time (and) they will go down even further," Malhotra said in a post-monetary press conference. He, however, added that the decision on rates will be taken by the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).

Since February last year, the RBI has reduced the repo rate by 125 basis points.

The governor said policy transmission on the deposit side has been slower and interest rate on fixed deposits will be going down.

Replying to a question on the impact of recent trade deals signed by India, the governor said this, along with other factors, could add up to 20 basis points to the country's GDP growth.

Earlier, the RBI upwardly revised GDP forecast for the first and second quarters of the next fiscal year.

At the press conference, Deputy Governor T Rabi Sankar said the RBI will be able to manage government borrowing programme comfortably.

The government's gross borrowing has been pegged at Rs 17.2 lakh crore during the next fiscal year, while net borrowing was Rs 11.73 lakh crore.

Railways' financial health improves in last 10 yrs, surplus revenue after meeting cost: Vaishnav

PTI

New Delhi, Feb 06: Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnav on Friday said the financial health of the railways department has improved a lot in the last 10 years and it now has a small revenue surplus after meeting all costs. Replying to supplementaries during the Question Hour in the Rajya Sabha, the minister said 5.04 lakh jobs were generated during the 2014-24 period while another 1.5 lakh employment is being provided in the third term of the government.

Vaishnav said there have been concerted efforts in the last 10 years to increase freight traffic, enhance passenger revenue, besides controlling cost.

"Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, there has been a lot of improvement in the financial health of the Indian Railways in the last 10 years," he said while replying to a question by senior BJP member Laxmikant Bajpayee.

Elaborating further, Vaishnav said the railways staff cost stands around Rs 1.18 lakh crore



for about 12 lakh employees while 18 lakh pensioners cost Rs 65,000 crore. The energy cost is Rs 32,000 crore, finance cost Rs 23,000 crore and maintenance cost Rs 8,000 crore.

The overall cost of railways is about Rs 2.74 lakh crore, he added. "Railways is earning a small surplus after meeting all its costs because of the steps taken by the central government in the last 10 years," Vaishnav asserted.

In the 2024-25 fiscal year, the operating ratio was 98.22 per cent, gross traffic receipts Rs 2,65,114 crore and surplus Rs 2,660 crore, the minister

informed in a written reply. Vaishnav said the Prime Minister's decision to achieve complete electrification of the railway network has led to reduction in the energy cost besides providing immense environmental benefits.

The energy (diesel and electrical) cost has reduced to about Rs 32,400 crore from Rs 37,841 crore four years ago, despite increase in freight traffic, he highlighted.

The minister said the railways is having a small revenue surplus because of efficiencies in operations, especially saving

of Rs 5,500 crore in energy cost, better maintenance practice, and increase in freight traffic by 400 million tonnes.

Vaishnav said the government is providing a subsidy of Rs 60,000 crore to all passengers. The subsidy level is at 45 per cent in the railway fare for passengers.

On employment creation, the minister said between 2014 and 2024, around 5.04 lakh crore jobs were provided.

In the third term of the Modi government, Vaishnav said, the process of providing jobs to 1.5 lakh people is going on and there is a good progress in this direction. He said the process of filing 18,000 vacancies of assistant loco pilots has been completed and their onboarding has begun.

Railways has created a war room to ensure actions against any complaint from the examination centres, the minister said.

Replying to another supplementary, Vaishnav said the Modi government has given a lot of attention to the Northeast.

The Budget has been increased to Rs 11,486 crore from a mere Rs 2,000 crore in the UPA government, he added.

Air India's transformation is like 'morning of 5th day of cricket Test match': CEO

PTI

New Delhi, Feb 06: Air India's transformation is now like on the morning of the fifth day of a cricket Test match as the heavy lifting has been done, the airline's chief Campbell Wilson has said.

The loss-making Air India, which was privatised in January 2022, has been facing various headwinds and when asked about profitability, the CEO and MD said "some unexpected events" have impacted the airline's performance.

Air India is in the process of revamping its fleet, which currently stands around 190 planes. In January, the airline took delivery of its first Boeing 787-9 aircraft after privatisation. To a PTI query on the transformation journey, Wilson, who is from New Zealand, said, "Clearly, I think we are may be (in) the morning of the fifth day (of cricket Test match)."

A Test match is played over five days.

"There is a lot of aircraft that



need to go through the refit process. But that's now a mechanical process. We just need the seats to be manufactured, delivered, installed.

"All of the design, all of the certification, all of that is done. And so, whilst it will take some time, the heavy lifting is finished," he said.

Wilson made the comments during a media interaction after the opening of its new lounge at the Delhi airport on Thursday.

"The upliftment from where we were to where we are today has happened. And so it is iteration rather than revolution... so, the reinforcement cycle is now a positive one."

American officials in Oman as Iran, US set for talks over Tehran's nuclear program

AP

Muscat (Oman), Feb 06: A convoy believed to be carrying American officials arrived on Friday at the site of talks between Iran and the United States where the two countries are set to hold negotiations over Tehran's nuclear programme. The talks on Friday come after a chaotic week that initially saw plans for regional countries to take part in talks in Turkey.

The two countries have returned to Oman, a sultanate on the eastern edge of the Arabian Peninsula, months after rounds of meetings turned to ash following Israel's launch of a 12-day war against Iran back in June. The US bombed Iranian nuclear sites during that war, likely destroying many of the centrifuges that spun uranium to near weapons-grade purity. Israel's attacks decimated Iran's air defences and targeted its ballistic missile arsenal as well.

Associated Press journalists saw the American convoy drive into a palace on the outskirts of Muscat, near its international airport. One of the vehicles flew American flags.

Vehicles that carried Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi arrived earlier, with Iranian state television saying he was meeting with Omani Foreign Minister Badr al-Busaidi. That convoy later left for a hotel being used by the Iranians near the airport. The same



palace had been used by Oman in earlier talks between Iran and the US in 2025.

US officials like Secretary of State Marco Rubio believe Iran's theocracy is now at its weakest point since its 1979 Islamic Revolution after nationwide protests last month represented the greatest challenge to 86-year-old Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's rule. Khamenei's forces responded with bloody crackdown that killed thousands and reportedly saw tens of thousands arrested — and spurred new military threats by US President Donald Trump to target the country.

With the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln and other warships in the region along with more fighter jets, the US now likely has the military firepower to launch an attack if it wanted. But whether attacks could be enough to force Iran to change its ways — or potentially topple its government — remains far from a sure thing.

Meanwhile, Gulf Arab nations fear an attack could spark a regional war dragging them in as well. That threat is real — already, US forces shot down an Iranian drone near the Lincoln and Iran attempted to stop a US-flagged ship in the Strait of Hormuz.

"President Trump seeks to corner Iran into reaching a negotiated solution, strong-arming its leaders into making concessions on the nuclear deal," said Alissa Pavia, a fellow at the Atlantic Council. "The Iranians, on the other hand,

are weakened after years of proxy warfare, economic crisis, and internal unrest. Trump is aware of this vulnerability and is hoping to use it to extract concessions and make inroads toward a renewed nuclear agreement."

Few details on talks ahead of meeting

The scope, nature and participants in the talks remain unclear, just hours before they were due to begin in Muscat, the Omani capital nestled in the Hajar Mountains. Officials at Oman's borders on Thursday showed particular concern over anyone carrying cameras into the sultanate before the negotiations.

On the Iranian side, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi arrived at night along with multiple Iranian diplomats, the state-run IRNA news agency reported.

Flight-tracking data showed the plane that carried him to Muscat initially started its journey from Tabas, Iran, the site of the disastrous Operation Eagle Claw in 1980, when a US Special Forces mission attempted to rescue hostages held after the 1979 US Embassy takeover in Tehran. A sandstorm in Tabas aborted the mission and eight service members died when a helicopter crashed into a C-120 refueling aircraft there. Iran's theocracy long has portrayed the mission as God defeating the Americans.

'New START nuclear treaty was flawed'

AFP

Geneva, Feb 06: A senior US official on Friday criticized the last nuclear treaty between Russia and the United States for failing to include Beijing, speaking at the United Nations a day after the New START deal expired.

"In a nutshell, New START was flawed," said Thomas G. DiNardo, US Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, pointing out that it had not covered all nuclear weapons, "and it didn't include China."

Speaking to reporters in Geneva before addressing the Conference on Disarmament, he said US President Donald Trump "has been pretty clear that he wants a better agreement," and "clarified again last night that he



wants a new treaty."

"He's been crystal clear. He's been consistent on it too, since his first administration," DiNardo said.

"So we'll see how it plays out." Asked if China had agreed to

anything, DiNardo said: "We're always willing to talk to them." China said on Thursday it would not join nuclear talks "at this stage" after the treaty's expiry that day triggered fears of a new global arms race.

Sooryavanshi smashes second fastest hundred in U19 World Cup

PTI

Harare, Feb 06: Indian batting prodigy Vaibhav Sooryavanshi blazed away to the second fastest hundred in the history of the U-19 World Cup, racing to the landmark in just 55 balls against England here on Friday.

Australian Will Malajczuk holds the record of the quickest century in this tournament for his 51-ball ton against Japan in Windhoek recently.

The 14-year-old Indian opener exploded when it mattered the most, reaching his fifty in just 32 balls and continued in the same vein to torment the English bowlers. The second fifty came off just 23 balls.

Sooryavanshi put on 142 runs in just 19 overs with his skipper Ayush Mhatre, who departed for a 51-ball 53 immediately after bringing up his half-century.

At the time of this report, Sooryavanshi was unbeaten on 155 off 72 balls.

Sooryavanshi blitz leads India to historic sixth U-19 World Cup win



PTI

HARARE, Feb 06: Batting prodigy Vaibhav Sooryavanshi lit up the grand stage with a jaw-dropping 175 to power India to a record-extending sixth ICC Under-19 World Cup title with a 100-run victory over England in the final here on Friday.

The triumph adds to India's previous titles in 2000, 2008, 2012, 2018 and 2022, underlining their dominance in the tournament's history.

The 14-year-old Sooryavanshi blazed his way to

a stunning 175 off just 80 balls, recording the fastest 150 in Under-19 cricket history, reaching the milestone in 71 deliveries, as India piled up a daunting 411 for 9 after electing to bat. In response, England kept the required run rate within sight for large parts of the chase but lost wickets at regular intervals, which steadily derailed their pursuit.

They were eventually bowled out for 311 with Caleb Falconer scoring a 66-ball 115. Sooryavanshi, who shot

into the limelight during last year's Indian Premier League, smashed 15 sixes and an equal number of boundaries, registering the highest individual score by any batter in an ICC tournament final.

Brief Scores:
India 411/9 in 50 overs (Vaibhav Sooryavanshi 175, Ayush Mhatre 53; James Minto 3/63, Sebastian Morgan 2/74).

England 311 all out in 40.2 overs (Caleb Falconer 115, Ben Dawkins 66; RS Ambrose 3/56, Deepesh Devendran 2/64).

Childhood coach's message works wonders, Suryavanshi explodes in U-19 World Cup final



ANI

New Delhi, Feb 06: Just after India won their U-19 World Cup semi-final against Afghanistan, coach Manish Ojha sent a WhatsApp message to his favourite ward Vaibhav Sooryavanshi.

"After he scored 68 against Afghanistan, I sent him a WhatsApp message and told him 'Yeh pahla tournament hogta jis mein tumhara ek bhi century nahi hogta. Ek baar final mein set ho gaye, toh chhod ke mat aana (This will be the first tournament where you might end up without a century. If you manage to stay in final, continue and get a big one)," a beaming Ojha told PTI after Sooryavanshi scripted history by smashing 15 fours and 15 sixes against England in Harare on Friday.

With those hits,

balls were being pitched on the off-stump, he was top-edging them. I told him if you are playing the deliveries on the body with that head and feet alignment, it is fine.

"But if you want to pull from outside off-stump, the head should be upright or slightly towards the ball so that you get full arm extension to pack power in your shots."

Sooryavanshi is not even 15 and he already has four hundreds at the senior level -- three in T20s including one IPL ton and one Vijay Hazare trophy knock.

How is he being shielded from the glitz and glamour that come with the territory of being a 'Boy Wonder'.

"He is a little kid and still very, very unaware about worldly things. One good thing was after last year's IPL, there has been so much cricket that he didn't have any chance to look right or left."

"He went on U-19 tours of England and Australia, played Rising Stars Asia Cup, played U-19 Asia Cup, in between played Ranji Trophy, Vijay Hazare and Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy."

"His head was tilting backwards and the back-knee was collapsing a bit. When the short balls were being bowled on the bodyline, they could be pulled easily towards square leg or fine leg."

The coach believes the consistency in his batting has been a revelation even for him.

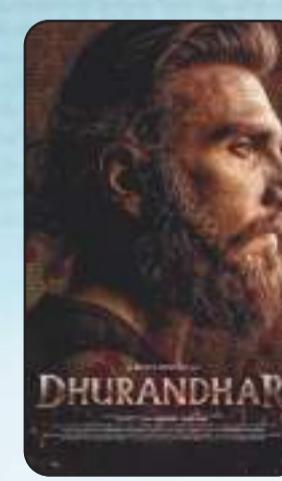
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VADH 2 (U/A 16+)
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