



J&K Budget a roadmap for inclusive growth & development: CM Omar

‘Govt committed to social justice, rural dev, transparent governance’

KT News Desk

Jammu, Feb 10: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday reaffirmed his government's firm commitment to fulfilling all promises made to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, stating that the Budget 2026-27 lays a strong foundation for sustained economic growth, social welfare and inclusive development across Jammu and Kashmir.

The Chief Minister was replying to the discussion on the Budget 2026-27, presented by him for the second consecutive year in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly on February 6, 2026.

He said the government is focused on creating employment opportunities, strengthening core infrastructure, improving public services and ensuring that the benefits of development



reach every section of society in a transparent and time-bound manner.

Opposition frustrated over pro-people Budget

The Chief Minister said the opposition is unable to digest the pro-people nature of the Budget. “Opposition is frustrated because we | [More on P6](#)

LG’s Sainik Sahayta Kendra bolsters soldier-family welfare

Provides time bound assistance to soldiers, acts on several representations

KNO Desk

Jammu, Feb 10: Lieutenant Governor’s Sainik Sahayta Kendra (LGSSK) continues to demonstrate its unwavering commitment and steadfast support to serving soldiers and their families, honoring their priceless service to the nation.

Through proactive intervention and seamless coordination with various authorities, the LGSSK, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) has successfully resolved several representations and provided time-bound assistance.

Upon receiving a martyr’s emoluments plea, LGSSK handled the matter with deep sensitivity—swiftly coordinating with authorities for prompt resolution.

The Lieutenant Governor’s Sainik Sahayta Kendra



(LGSSK) successfully facilitated the issuance of a migrant certificate for a serving soldier

following a representation through his Commanding Officer. The case was taken up

on priority and coordinated with the concerned authorities. As a result, the migrant certificate was issued and the grievance resolved.

The Lieutenant Governor’s Sainik Sahayta Kendra (LGSSK) has also taken cognizance of a representation from a serving Agniveer regarding his father’s medical exigency. The case was taken up on priority and coordinated with inter-state health authorities, enabling timely treatment at a government health facility. The matter was resolved within two days, underscoring the LGSSK’s prompt and outcome-oriented institutional response.

The Lieutenant Governor’s Sainik Sahayta Kendra is a landmark initiative dedicated to the welfare of serving personnel of the Armed Forces and Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs). (KNO)

J&K Budget repetition of decades-old lies: LoP Sharma

Accuses NC govt of evading responsibility

KNO Special Correspondent

Jammu, Jan 10: Leader of Opposition (LoP) Sunil Kumar Sharma on Tuesday slammed the National Conference-led government, saying it was evading its responsibility by questioning the Union Government whenever confronted about its own performance.

Speaking in the Legislative Assembly, Sharma, as per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said that whenever the opposition seeks accountability from the treasury benches, they start asking questions about the Union Government.

“In a democratic set-up, there is a ruling party and an



opposition. The government is accountable, and it is the responsibility of the opposition to raise genuine demands of the people and seek answers from the government. It is a tragedy for the House when the opposition questions the government, and the | [More on P6](#)

India–US trade deal could hit J&K’s core sectors, says CM Omar

Says duty-free imports threaten horti, dairy, dry fruits, deal benefits others, not UT

Rules out apology amid Assembly ruckus

Asserts Amarnath Yatra impossible without Kashmiri support

Sajid Raina

Jammu, Feb 10: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday warned that the proposed India-US trade deal could have serious repercussions for Jammu and Kashmir’s traditional economy, particularly its horticulture and dry fruit sectors, asserting that the Union Territory stood to lose far more than it would gain from the agreement.

Addressing reporters outside the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly after proceedings were adjourned amid disruptions, CM Abdullah, as reported



by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said duty-free imports of American

agricultural products would directly hurt local growers who depend almost entirely on horticulture-related livelihoods.

Referring to the sectors reportedly covered under the interim trade understanding, the Chief Minister said items such as tree nuts, dry fruits, fresh fruits and dairy products were central to J&K’s economy. Unlike coastal regions, he said, the Union Territory does not have a marine or seafood industry to fall back on.

“Our strength is horticulture — almonds, walnuts, saffron, apples, kiwis and similar produce. If these goods start

coming in duty-free from the United States, Jammu and Kashmir is bound to suffer losses,” Omar said, adding that this was the reason behind public concern over the deal.

He maintained that while the agreement might be beneficial for other parts of the country, it did not serve the interests of J&K. “As the chief minister, it is my responsibility to speak for my people. From what we see, there is no benefit for us in this trade deal, only potential damage,” he said.

The Chief Minister’s remarks earlier in the Assembly triggered sharp | [More on P6](#)

Process of regularising daily wagers to begin this year: Omar

‘SASCI criticism devoid of merit; provided relief to poorest of poor’

KNO Special Correspondent

Jammu, Feb 10: Stating that the budget is meant to heal wounds and provide relief to the poorest of the poor, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said the government will begin the process of regularising daily wagers this year.

Winding up the discussion on the budget in the J&K Assembly, the CM, as per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the government will start the process of regularisation of daily wagers this year.

The CM said that criticism of SASCI is devoid of merit, adding, “Those who are unable to understand the scheme are the ones commenting on it.”

“Jammu & Kashmir will receive an interest-free loan for 50 years. My young colleague accused us of pushing Jammu & Kashmir into a debt trap. If a loan of Rs 3000 crore were to become Rs 30000 crore 50 years down the line, it would indeed be irresponsible. But you should compare the value of the rupee today with its value 50 years from now. We did the calculations ourselves, and if we take Rs 3000 crore while keeping inflation figures in view, it will amount to only Rs 97 crore 50 years down the line. It will not even be Rs 100 crore then,” he said.

The CM said they have tried to heal wounds and provide relief to the poorest sections of society.

“Our effort | [More on P6](#)

BREIF NEWS

CM SPEAKS

No role of cabinet in Vaishno Devi ropeway project

KNO Correspondent

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said that the council of ministers had no role in approving the ropeway | [More on P6](#)

Flat-rate billing for unmetered consumers as per JERC tariff

KT News Desk

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday informed the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly that un-metered | [More on P6](#)

Hopeful work on Tulbul, Chenab projects will begin soon

KNO Correspondent

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday expressed hope that work on the Tulbul navigation project and the | [More on P6](#)

Govt working on major water supply initiatives

KT News Desk

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said the Jammu and Kashmir government is working with the Centre on crucial water | [More on P6](#)

Fresh snowfall in higher reaches, rain in plains

Temps rise across J&K; IMD predicts largely dry weather till Feb 20

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Feb 10: Fresh snowfall was reported in the higher reaches of the Kashmir Valley on Tuesday, while several areas in the plains received rainfall, even as temperatures showed a marginal improvement across Jammu and Kashmir, officials said.

Light snowfall occurred in the middle and upper reaches of the Valley, including tourist destinations such as Gulmarg, Sonamarg, Doodhpathri, Tangmarg and Pahalgam, besides Gurez, Sadhna Pass, Dubjan-Herpora, Peer Ki Gali and the Daksum-Sinthan top areas.

Parts of the Kashmir plains witnessed intermittent rainfall during the afternoon, officials told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

The Meteorological Department said light rain or snow is likely at most places on Wednesday. From February 11 to 20, the weather is expected to remain largely dry, with brief spells of light snowfall over a few higher reaches on February 14 and 17.

Temperatures improved noticeably across the Union Territory on Tuesday. Srinagar recorded a minimum temperature of 3.3 degrees Celsius, while Jammu city registered 12.3 degrees Celsius.

Among other places, Gulmarg recorded a low of minus 3.4 degrees Celsius and Pahalgam minus 0.4 degrees Celsius.

In the Jammu region, Katra town recorded a minimum temperature of 11.2 degrees Celsius, Batote 6.1 degrees Celsius, Banihal 3.2 degrees Celsius and Bhaderwah 2.4 degrees Celsius, the department said.

Day temperatures also showed an upward trend, with Srinagar recording a maximum of 10.6 degrees Celsius, while Jammu touched 22.4 degrees Celsius.

The weather office has forecast generally cloudy conditions across Jammu and Kashmir, with the possibility of light rain, snow and gusty winds at many places.

A partly cloudy day with chances of light rain or snow at isolated locations is expected on Wednesday, followed by generally dry weather on Wednesday and Thursday.

Cloudy weather with the possibility of light snowfall over isolated higher reaches has been predicted for Friday.

Partly cloudy to generally cloudy conditions are likely on February 15 and 16, while February 17 may see generally cloudy weather with light rain or snow at scattered places. From February 18 to 20, partly cloudy weather is expected.

The Meteorological Department has issued an advisory asking travellers and transporters to check the status of highways with the concerned authorities and strictly follow official advisories.

Residents of snow-bound areas have | [More on P6](#)



WINTER RUSH: A large crowd of tourists throngs the snow-covered slopes of Kongdoori (Phase 1) in Gulmarg.

Pandemonium in Assembly over CM’s remarks

BJP leaders protest, seek apology

Yogesh

Jammu, Feb 10: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah’s remarks in the Jammu & Kashmir Assembly on Tuesday triggered protests from opposition BJP legislators, who demanded an apology for what they termed “objectionable words.”

Winding up the discussion in the Legislative Assembly on the budget, as per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said the Indo-US trade deal was



detrimental to the interests of the people of J&K.

“Here, a few of my friends talked about the Indo-US trade deal, although it is not part of the budget. I am

unable to understand how it is beneficial to the people of J&K. You may have protected seafood from Kerala and some other products. You have allowed the entry of tree

nuts-walnuts and almonds—which are products of Jammu & Kashmir, at zero duty. You have also put dry fruit on the list at zero duty. You have told America to send fruit at zero duty, and we will purchase it. You made a deal on walnuts and almonds, but you should have at least protected apples,” the CM said.

The Leader of Opposition objected to the remarks, triggering an exchange of heated arguments between the two sides.

The CM said, “They themselves call it the Indo-US trade deal. If you translate it, ‘deal’ means ‘souda.’”

As BJP legislators continued with protests, | [More on P6](#)

Div Com Kashmir reviews Ramadhan arrangements, orders uninterrupted power during Sehri, Iftar

Directs intensified market inspections ahead of Ramadhan

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 10: In view of the forthcoming holy month of Ramadhan, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, on Tuesday chaired a high-level meeting to review arrangements aimed at facilitating smooth observance of the fasting month across the Kashmir Division.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Deputy Commissioners, Senior Superintendents of Police, Chief Engineers of KPDCL, PHE and R&B, along with officers from the Food Safety Department, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Urban Local Bodies (ULB), Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA), and Imams of prominent mosques.

Addressing the meeting, the Divisional Commissioner stressed the need for coordinated and comprehensive measures to ensure public convenience throughout the holy month. He directed Deputy Commissioners to ensure all the arrangements in their respective districts.

Chief Engineer, KPDCL, was instructed to ensure uninterrupted electricity supply across the division during peak hours of Sehri and Iftari.

To ensure the availability of safe and quality food items in the market, the Divisional Commissioner directed the Food Safety Department to carry out intensive and regular market inspection drives across all districts. He also emphasized strict action against traders involved in illegal profiteering.



Srinagar Municipal Corporation was asked to undertake regular sanitation drives at mosques and shrines. Meanwhile, the General Manager, SRTC, was directed to augment public transport services, especially around the Hazratbal area during evening and Taraweeh prayer hours. Deputy Commissioners were also urged to ensure adequate availability of public transport during evening hours.

FCS&CA Department was directed to ensure timely and adequate distribution of ration to meet

increased demand during the holy month.

CE, R&B was instructed to repair the damaged roads leading to mosques and shrines while CE PHE was asked to supply tap water during the peak hours especially at Sehri. He was also urged to mobilize water tankers to provide drinking water to the areas facing shortages.

The Divisional Commissioner reiterated that all departments must work in close coordination to ensure hassle-free observance of Ramadhan by the public.

DC Budgam leads Safer Internet Day programme

Stresses cyber hygiene, responsible AI use

KT NEWS DESK

BUDGAM, FEBRUARY 10: Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-din Bhat, Tuesday presided over a district-level awareness programme to mark Safer Internet Day 2026, organised under the aegis of the Information Security Education and Awareness (ISEA) Project of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), in collaboration with NIC and other stakeholder departments.

The programme, as per an official statement, was organised as part of the nationwide campaign being observed across the country on the second Tuesday of February, with the theme "Smart Tech, Safe Choices", focusing on promoting safe and responsible use of the internet and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The event also served as a national-level precursor to the upcoming AI Impact Summit 2026 scheduled to be held in New Delhi from February 15th to 20th.

While addressing the



participants, the DC highlighted the growing importance of digital safety in Tuesday's technology-driven world and stressed the need for creating widespread awareness among students, government employees, and the general public regarding cyber threats and safe online practices.

He underscored that with the increasing use of digital platforms and AI-based tools, citizens must be equipped with the right knowledge to protect themselves from cyber frauds, misinformation, and data breaches.

The DC emphasised that responsible and

ethical use of AI is essential for ensuring inclusive and people-centric development. He also stressed the role of AI in key sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, education, and governance, while cautioning against its misuse for scams, deepfakes, and misinformation.

During the programme, detailed presentations were made on key aspects including safe internet usage, cyber hygiene practices, common cyber threats such as phishing, OTP and UPI frauds, fake customer care scams, malware, deepfake and AI voice scams, online shopping frauds, and digital

arrest scams. Participants were sensitised on mechanisms for reporting cybercrimes through the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal and the helpline number 1930.

The participants were also educated on best practices such as use of strong passwords, enabling two-factor authentication, avoiding suspicious links, securing UPI and card transactions, and protecting personal identifiable information. Awareness resources including www.staysafeonline.in and www.infosecawareness.in were also highlighted.

An online pledge for safe and responsible use of AI was administered, and participants were encouraged to enrol in ISEA e-learning courses and download the ISEA Cyber Hygiene mobile application to further strengthen their understanding of cyber safety.

Besides, DIO Informatics, the programme witnessed active participation from officials, students, teachers, Representatives from Revenue, RDD and other stakeholders

DC Kulgam calls for preventive safeguards at Safer Internet Day event

KT NEWS DESK

KULGAM, FEBRUARY 10: Safer Internet Day was Tuesday observed in Kulgam with a focus on the theme "Smart Tech, Safe Choices—Exploring the Safe and Responsible Use of AI." Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan inaugurated a mega sensitization programme, organised at the Mini-Secretariat Kulgam. Addressing the gathering, the DC, as per an official statement, highlighted the growing penetration of digital technology and artificial intelligence across the country and stressed the need for awareness and preventive safeguards. He

said that with technology usage at an all-time high, ensuring the safe and responsible use of the internet and AI tools has become essential. He emphasized that awareness at all levels is necessary and that teachers have a particularly important role in guiding students toward ethical, secure, and productive use of digital platforms. He underlined that preventive measures, digital literacy, and early education are key to safeguarding users from online risks, misinformation, misuse of AI tools, and cyber threats.

The DC added that structured training and awareness programmes on AI and safe internet

practices will be started in schools across the district to equip students and teachers with practical knowledge on responsible AI usage, digital safety and wellbeing.

DIO, NIC Kulgam, Nadeem Yousuf, along with other experts and speakers, also spoke about safe browsing practices, digital responsibility, responsible use of AI and the importance of community participation in building a secure online environment.

The programme was attended by District/Sectoral Officers, teachers, CSC District Manager along with VLEs and various officials from line departments.

DC Kupwara reviews health initiatives, seeks improved telemedicine, ABDM coverage

KT NEWS DESK

KUPWARA, FEBRUARY 10: Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Shrikant Suse, chaired a series of meetings to review key health sector initiatives including Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) and Tele-Consultation (e-Sanjeevani).

He reviewed block wise performance under ABHA ID generation and scan & share service. The Deputy Commissioner directed underperforming medical

blocks to improve performance through intensified enrolment drive. He emphasised coordinated efforts by Health, ICDS and Common service centres to improve performance in the 0–5-year age category.

It was informed that individuals can also self-enrol under ABDM to generate their Health ID through the link (<https://healthid.ndhm.gov.in>).

The DC also reviewed the advancement of telemedicine services across the district, designed to enhance

specialist healthcare accessibility, particularly in remote and border regions.

Dr. Zaffar Akbar, Chief Medical Officer, Kupwara briefed block-wise progress under E-Sanjeevani OPD and E-Sanjeevani AB-HWC. It was informed that the E-Sanjeevani is being operated through 11 functional hubs, 5 functional hubs cum spokes and 130 functional spokes, enabling doctor-to-patient and doctor-to-doctor consultations to reinforce healthcare delivery.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD(R&B) DIVISION DOORU

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

NIT NO 54 OF R&B/Dooru/2025-26 /E-TENDERING/EED/HD/ 4470-75 DATED: 10-02-2026

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, Union Territory of J&K, Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Dooru invited e-tenders on % age basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with &K Govt. CPWD Railways and other State/Central Governments for each of the following works: -

S. No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (in Rs)	Earnest Money (In Rs)	Time of Completion	Major Head of Account	Class of Contractor
1	Permanent Restoration of Ionepora Tragam Lonepora Bridge	30.00 lacs	1100	60000	3 Months	UT Capex	AAY and BEE Class only
2	Permanent Restoration of Darpora hakura Bridge	14.56 lacs (12.36+ 2.20)	600	29120	2 Months	UT Capex	Bee, CEE, DEE class only
3	Permanent Restoration of Old Larkipora Bridge	24.26 lacs (20.60 + 3.66)	800	48520	3 Months	UT Capex	BEE and Cee Class only
4	Permanent Restoration of Shelmag inner link	5.00 lacs (4.25 + 0.75)	200	10000	21 days	UT Capex	DEE Class only
5	Permanent Restoration of Kharpora link road	10.00 lacs (8.51 + 1.50)	600	20000	45 days	UT Capex	DEE and CEE Class only
6	Permanent Restoration of Damages to crate protection work of nadoora bridge over Nallah Sandran	19.33 lacs (16.41 + 2.92)	800	38660	2 Months	UT Capex	BEE and CEE Class only
7	Permanent Restoration of Damages to approach wall and protection work of nadoora bridge over Nallah Sandran	29.12 lacs (24.73 + 4.39)	1100	58240	3 Months	UT Capex	AAY and BEE Class only
8	Permanent Restoration of Natipora Bragam road	3.00 lacs (2.55 + 0.45)	200	6000	21 days	UT Capex	DEE Class only
9	Permanent Restoration of Badasgam Kandipora Via Gundi Hakura Road	16.99 lacs (14.43 + 2.56)	800	33980	2 Months	UT Capex	Bee, CEE, class only
10	Permanent Restoration of Malikpora Hakura Link	15.52 lacs (13.18 + 2.34)	800	31040	2 Months	UT Capex	Bee, CEE, class only
11	Permanent Restoration of ADV road near Gagadsund	5.00 lacs (4.25 + 0.75)	200	10000	21 days	UT Capex	DEE Class only
12	Permanent Restoration of Culvert on larkipora Lukbawan Sherpora	8.00 lacs (6.79 +1.21)	300	16000	30 days	UT Capex	DEE , CEE Class only
13	Construction of Elementry CWSN toilet at MS Nowgam Nard	2.07 lacs (1.76 +0.31)	200	4140	2 Months	Samagra Shiksha	DEE Class only
14	Construction of Devri stone gate for Model Hr. Sec. School Dooru.	16.48 lacs (13.99 +2.49)	800	32960	1 Months	CDF	BEE, CEE Class only

Position of AAA ; Accorded. Position of TS Accorded. The date of completion is subject to the availability of funds.

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

S.No.	Particulars	Dated
1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	10-/02/2026
2	Period of Downloading of bidder documents	From 11 /02/2026 (09:00 Am)
		To 19-02-2026 (06:00 PM)
3	Bid submission Start Date	From 11 /02/2026 (09:00 Am)
4	Bid Submission End Date	To 19/02/2026 (06:00 PM)
5	Date and time of opening of bid (online)	20/02/2026

In the office of Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division DOORU.

1. Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender document in shape of Treasury Challan / Receipt (Under MH- 0059

2. PWD) in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division DOORU. [Tender Inviting Authority] (Name of Work to be mentioned on the Treasury Challan / Receipt)(Refer Govt. order No. O.M No. A/24 (2017)-651 Dt 07-06-2018 (The Date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of Start of Bid and Bid Submission End Date (NIT No and Name of work/ Item No. should be mentioned on Treasury Challan) and EMD (2% of advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division DOORU (Tender receiving Authority).

3. All the Bidders have to submit Earnest Money/Bid Security (EMD@2% of Advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG. Non submission of Earnest Money/Bid Security shall render the bidder as No-responsive.

4. The 1st lowest responsive (Successful) Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 5% of contract as Performance Security in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division DOORU (Tender receiving authority) within 03 Days before fixation of Contract and shall be released after successful completion of Defect Liability Period (DLP) of the work. Failure to produce Performance Security shall render the L1 as non-responsive and case for debarment of the Contractor for a period of 03 Year be forwarded to Higher Authorities. The Earnest Money Deposit (EMD@2% of Advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG of the successful Bidder shall be released after receiving Performance security @5% of the allotted cost in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG and same shall be released after successful completion of Defect Liability Period (DLP) of the work.

5. Note: a. MSME's are required to pay only 50% of Tender Document Cost or Rs 500/- whichever is lower. MSME's are required to pay only 50% of the amount of EMD/ Bid Security or Rs 5000/- whichever is lower.

6. The bidders are requested to quote their rates excluding 18%GST .

7. The date and time of opening of Bid shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the office of Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division DOORU.

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

9. The Earnest Money/Performance Security shall be forfeited if:

a) Any bidder/tenderer withdraws his bid/tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modification in the terms and conditions of the bid.

Failure of successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within specified time period beforeSuccessful Bidder fails to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.

a) If at any stage of work, the Bidder back up from the contract, again the Performance security/EMD as well as work done claim will be forfeited.

. e) The tenders shall be opened and allotted to 1st lowest responsive bidder only when the funds are released/ available on Beams.

11. Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.

a. Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in to acquaint bid submission process.

b. To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved vendors.

c. The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No Financial bid will be accepted in physical form.

d. Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para-1.

e. Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with bid.

No:EED/HD/ 4470-75

Dt: 10 /02/2026

DIPK-10753/25

Dated: 10-02-2026

Sd/- Er Manzoor Ahmad wani
Executive Engineer, PWD (R&B) Division DOORU

From The Parliament

Rs 10,155 Cr boost for J&K rural roads

RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Feb 10: The Government of India on Tuesday informed the Parliament that Jammu and Kashmir re-ceived Rs 10,155 crore in central assistance under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) over the past ten years and the current financial year.

Replying to an unstarred question in the Lok Sabha, the Ministry of Rural Development said that Jammu and Kashmir has received one of the highest financial allocations in recent years to strengthen rural road connectivity.

"J&K received ₹488 crore in 2015-16, ₹755.61 crore in 2016-17, ₹1,400 crore in 2017-18, ₹590.77 crore in 2018-19, ₹695.50 crore in 2019-20, ₹1,727.30 crore in 2020-21, ₹1,328.34 crore in 2021-22, ₹717 crore in 2022-23, ₹1,304.17 crore in 2023-24, ₹1,028.25 crore in 2024-25, and ₹121.17 crore so far in 2025-26," the reply stated. The Ministry



said that under various PMGSY interventions, thousands of kilometres of rural roads and bridges have been constructed across the country to improve last-mile connectivity, particularly in hilly, border and remote areas such as Jammu and Kashmir.

It said that under PMGSY-IV, the government is prioritising habitations with population thresholds of 250+ in hilly States and UTs, including J&K,

with special focus on tribal, SC-dominated and aspirational areas to ensure inclusive access to all-weather roads.

The Rural Development Ministry maintained that PMGSY continues to be implemented as an area development programme, with habitations as the unit of planning, to ensure equitable rural connectivity in geographically challenging regions like Jammu and Kashmir—(KNO)

J&K has 2 agricultural universities: GoI Under ICAR, UT received Rs 35.63 crore in 3 yearss

RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Feb 10: The Centre on Tuesday informed Parliament that Jammu and Kashmir has two agricultural universities, both functioning under the Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST) system — SKUAST-Jammu and SKUAST-Kashmir (Srinagar).

Replying to an unstarred question in the Lok Sabha, the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare said that under the ICAR scheme "Strengthening and Development of Higher Agricultural Education in India," Jammu and Kashmir received Rs 35.63 crore during the last three years and the current financial year for upgradation and strengthening of agricultural universities. The year-wise

assistance to J&K stood at ₹8.12 crore in 2022-23, ₹4.72 crore in 2023-24, ₹19.30 crore in 2024-25, and ₹3.49 crore so far in 2025-26, the ministry said.

It informed the House that across the country, nearly 47 percent faculty positions in agricultural universities are vacant, affecting teaching and research activities. However, creation and filling of posts in State Agricultural Universities, including those in J&K, remains the responsibility of the respective State and UT administrations.

The government said ICAR continues to provide need-based financial support to accredited universities to modernise infrastructure, improve teaching facilities, support student research and strengthen higher agricultural education in J&K and other States—(KNO)

Govt mulls 5 Marla land allotment to Bagra flood victims: Dy CM



KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Feb 10: Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary on Tuesday said that the government is considering allotment of 5 marla land plots to the eligible families hit by flash floods at village Bagra in Kathua district on the intervening night of 16th and 17th August 2025. The Deputy Chief Minister was replying on behalf of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to a question raised by Legislator Dr. Bharat Bushan in the Legislative Assembly today.

He said that as per SDRF norms, a compensation of Rs. 4 lakh each was released in favour of the Next of Kin (NOK) of the deceased and additional Rs. 2 lakh each was also released through the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. He added that Chairman, Red Cross Society Kathua (Deputy Commissioner Kathua) also released Rs. 50,000 compensation each to the NOKs of the deceased.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that heavy flash floods triggered by flash rains and landslides occurred in several areas of Village Bagra, which resulted in unfortunate loss of two persons and damages to various private and public properties.

He informed the House that seven houses fully damaged during the flash floods were duly compensated as per SDRF guidelines. He added that temporary restoration measures have been taken by the district

administration while the line departments are taking further necessary action for permanent restoration. He said that during this period, the affected families were shifted to safe lodgement centres, where all basic amenities like food, water, medicines and blankets were provided to them.

The Deputy CM added that the link road in Bagra has been damaged to a length of 1.20 km and some temporarily restored stretches will be fully reinstated by August 2026.

He said that during the recent spell of heavy rainfall/flash floods, certain low-lying areas of Kathua Town were affected, resulting in damage to residential houses and property, particularly in areas located near natural drainage channels and Kathua Khad. He said that due to sudden heavy discharge of rainwater, Kathua Khad experienced overflow at several vulnerable locations, causing erosion of embankments.

He added that the proposal of channelization and protection work in Sahar Khad has been duly incorporated in the DPRs titled "Construction of flood protection works on Sahar Khad/Maggar Khad/Sukhal Khad and other tributaries of river Ravi" under NABARD, with a total estimated cost of Rs. 1500.71 lakh.

He said that the DPR is presently under process with the Jal Shakti Department for obtaining requisite approval.

‘Panchayats non-functional in J&K, Ladakh’

RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Feb 10: The Government of India on Monday informed the Lok Sabha that Panchayat elections have not been held in both Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh after the expiry of their respective tenures, leaving grassroots democratic institutions non-functional in both the Union Territories.

In a written reply, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj said that J&K currently has 276 elected representatives, including 95 women. "The tenure of Gram Panchayats and Block Panchayats ended in January 2024 and fresh elections are yet to be held," it said.

Regarding Ladakh, the Centre informed that there are no elected Panchayat representatives at present, as the tenure of Panchayats ended in January 2024, and elections have not been held so far.

The Ministry clarified that the data shared pertains to elected representatives functioning in Gram Panchayats, Intermediate Panchayats and District Panchayats, as reported by States and Union Territories from time to time.

The Centre further stated that it does not maintain caste-based data, including information related to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe elected representatives.

J&K records few crimes against SCs in 3 years

RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Feb 10: Jammu and Kashmir has reported a limited number of cases related to crimes against Scheduled Castes (SCs) during the last three years, according to official data tabled in the Lok Sabha.

The information was shared by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in response to an unstarred question raised by Lok Sabha member Anita Nagarsingh Chouhan.

According to the data, 13 cases were registered in J&K in 2021, 11 cases in 2022 and 26 cases in 2023, showing a marginal rise during the last year. Of the cases registered in 2023, 10 were charge-sheeted, indicating initiation of legal proceedings by the investigating agencies.

A district-wise breakup shows that incidents were reported from only a few districts, while most districts across Jammu and Kashmir recorded no such cases.



During 2023, two cases were registered in Doda, one each in Kathua, Rajouri, Reasi, Samba and Poonch. Udhampur recorded 3 cases.

In 2022, cases were mainly reported from Jammu (11), Udhampur (4), Kishtwar (3), Kathua (1), Rajouri (1) and Reasi (1), while in 2021, cases were recorded in Udhampur (6), Kathua (4), Reasi (1) and Kishtwar (1).

All other districts, including Srinagar, Anantnag, Baramulla,

Bandipora, Kupwara, Budgam, Pulwama, Shopian, Ganderbal and Kulgam, reported zero cases during the period.

The data further shows that no cases were registered by specialised agencies such as Cyber Crime Wings, Anti-Narcotics Task Force, Economic Offences Wing or Vigilance in Jammu and Kashmir. Meanwhile, the Union Territory of Ladakh, including Leh and Kargil, reported no cases of crimes against Scheduled Castes from 2021 to 2023.

At the national level, the government informed Parliament that 57,789 cases of crimes against Scheduled Castes were registered across India in 2023, while reiterating that laws including the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, are being implemented to ensure protection and justice for Scheduled Castes—(KNO)

SKIMS infra work shifts to PWD post reorganisation: Govt

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, Feb 10: After the reorganisation of Jammu & Kashmir in 2019, the engineering wing of the Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Soura, which previously handled its own infrastructure and maintenance, was wound up and its functions transferred to the Public Works (R&B) Division, Soura, the government said on Tuesday.

In a written reply to the question of MLA Gulmarg Farooq Ahmad Shah, Health and Medical Education Department Minister Sakeena Itoo said that after the reorganisation of the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir, administrative arrangements and certain aspects related to the composition of the Governing Body of SKIMS have changed.

The minister clarified that SKIMS continues

to award degrees in accordance with the provisions of the SKIMS (Grant of Degrees) Act, 1983. According to the applicable Transaction of Business Rules, the subject of SKIMS remains assigned to the Health & Medical Education Department, she said, adding that the funding structure of SKIMS remains unchanged, with budgetary allocations continuing under the Health Budget as before.

She added, "Before the reorganisation, SKIMS, Soura, had an independent engineering wing. However, as part of the broader administrative restructuring following the reorganisation of Jammu & Kashmir, the engineering wings of several departments and organisations, including SKIMS, were reorganised."

Continued on
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Speaker Rahim Rather calls to preserve J&K's multilingual character

KNO

Jammu, Feb 10: Veteran politician and Speaker of the Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather on Tuesday said that poets and writers should come forward to preserve the multilingual ethos of Jammu and Kashmir.

He said this while inaugurating the 46th three-day Annual Literary Conference of Adbi Markaz Jammu & Kashmir (AMK) in Jammu.

Rather, per news agency — Kashmir News Observer (KNO), hailed Adbi Markaz Kamraz for its efforts in bringing together representatives of different regional languages on a single platform. He said the organisation deserves appreciation for hosting conferences aimed at uniting linguistic communities.

"Jammu and Kashmir is home to diverse languages, and people take pride in this multilingual ethos," he said, highlighting the significant role poets and writers have played — and continue to play — in sustaining this



cultural plurality.

He added that eliciting genuine and quality writers not only strengthens literature but also inspires younger generations to remain connected with tradition and fosters unity through shared literary identities.

The conference was organised under the theme "Festival of Mother Languages." Vice-President AMK, Shakir Shafi, conducted the proceedings of the session, while General Secretary Shabnum Tilgami presented

the organisation's annual report.

In his welcome address, President Adbi Markaz Kamraz J&K stated that language and literature create bonds among people of diverse identities and lead humanity towards a higher sense of unity. He expressed concern over the erosion of cultural and civilisational bonds and emphasised the need to revive them.

He described the conference as an initiative in that direction and invited all stakeholders to participate in preserving the ethos of Kashmir and Kashmiriyat.

Expressing concern over the growing disconnect between the younger generation and their cultural identity, he urged collective efforts to reconnect youth with the linguistic and cultural heritage of Jammu and Kashmir.

He further noted that all regional languages in the Union Territory — including Gojri, Dogri, Pahari, and Punjabi — face common challenges, and their representatives must work

together to safeguard their linguistic and cultural heritage. He also extended gratitude to all participants.

Delivering his presidential address, Sahitya Akademi Convener (New Delhi) Shad Ramzan highlighted the historical depth of the Kashmiri language and its prospects for being granted classical status.

He reiterated the demand for recognition of Kashmiri as a classical language, noting its long literary tradition and rich corpus of literature that meet the necessary criteria.

"Our language deserves classical status, and this demand should reach all government forums," he said, presenting historical and scholarly details supporting the claim.

Poets and writers representing various regional languages were felicitated during the event, including Aseer Kashtiawari (Kashmiri), Vijay Verma (Dogri), Javid Rahi (Gojri), K. D. Mani (Pahari), Khalid Hussain (Punjabi), and Prem Nath Shad (Kashmiri)—(KNO)

No transport fee for hired vehicles during vacations: FFRC



KNO

Srinagar, Feb 10: The Fee Fixation and Regulation Committee (FFRC) has ordered the private schools not to charge any transport fee for the outsourced or hired vehicles during summer and winter vacation period.

Besides, the Committee has asked the private schools to charge only 50 percent of the transport fee for their own buses.

FFRC chairman Justice (Retd) Sunil Hall in a circular has said that the committee has received some complaints that certain schools are charging transport fees during the vacations in light of the order issued by the FFRC who do not own their transport.

"Those schools who do not have their own transport facilities but have outsourced or hired the same from third parties, operated under a contractual arrangement are also charging 50 percent of the transport fee," it reads.

FFRC Chairman said that the Committee has already specifically barred such schools from collecting any transport

fee during the vacation where the facilities are not owned by the school but have been outsourced or hired from third parties and are operated under a contractual agreement.

"They have been specifically barred from collecting any transport fee from the students" reads the circular.

FFRC said "It is ordered that private schools shall charge 50 percent transport fee only where the transport facilities are owned and operated by the school itself."

"In cases where the transport facilities are outsourced or hired from third parties and are operated under a contractual agreement, no transport fee shall be charged during the winter or summer vacations," it reads.

The committee said that any fee collected by the private school in this behalf shall be refunded to the parents forthwith, "Failing which appropriate action under law shall be taken against the school, including imposition of a penalty of one percent of the total revenue and also de-affiliation of the school."—(KNO)

EDITORIAL

Digitising Heritage A Welcome Step To Promote Cultural Treasures

The launch of the official website for Jammu & Kashmir's Department of Culture is an important and positive step into the digital age. It aims to make the region's incredible cultural treasures available to everyone. In today's world, where so much happens online, this website is more than just an office update. It is an essential link for local people, artists, students, and the world to connect with the living heritage of Jammu & Kashmir.

By creating this digital space, the department ensures its culture is not locked away in old records but is lively, easy to find, and engaging. The effort deserves praise for its modern vision. The website is designed as a "single digital window", making it simple for the public to find information about events and use services. A key feature is the new online system for booking auditoriums. This move toward transparency and efficiency in using

cultural spaces removes complicated paperwork and helps local artists and event planners. It fits perfectly with the broader Digital J&K goal, showing how technology can benefit people in new ways. Most importantly, the website's digital photo galleries are a true treasure. By putting images of historical objects, monuments, festivals, and traditional art online, the department is preserving and teaching about this heritage. It protects traditions

that might otherwise fade away over time and makes them available for school projects, university research, and sharing with the world. For a place as historically rich as Jammu & Kashmir, this online collection is a powerful way to build pride, connection, and understanding. This launch shows a smart understanding that in the 21st century, promoting culture must include a strong online presence. It creates new possibilities for sharing stories,

encouraging tourism, and involving the community. As the website grows, we hope to see even more features, like virtual tours and special sections for artists. For now, the launch itself is a major achievement - a promise that the heart and soul of Jammu & Kashmir's heritage will be both safeguarded for the future and shared with the world, one click at a time. This is how good governance can truly serve and celebrate culture.

Artificial Intelligence For Culture And Languages

By aligning AI deployment with inclusion, participation and opportunity, India can ensure that its cultural heritage and creative communities continue to remain active contributors to a digitally empowered and socially inclusive future.

Press Information Bureau

From Cultural Preservation to Cultural Participation

India's cultural heritage and linguistic diversity shape its social identity and shared knowledge systems. From manuscripts, monuments, performing arts and crafts to oral traditions, folklore and indigenous knowledge, culture in India is created and passed on through many languages, scripts and spoken forms.

According to Census 2011, India's linguistic landscape includes 22 Scheduled languages and 99 Non-Scheduled languages, spread across multiple language families, along with thousands of mother tongues and tribal languages[1]. The Government of India has undertaken sustained institutional, educational and digital initiatives to preserve and promote our linguistic heritage and the rich traditional knowledge that it holds.

At the core of this effort is the emphasis on leveraging emerging technology including AI, to preserve cultural resources and traditional knowledge, and make it available to people in the language and formats that they are familiar and comfortable with. This calls for democratisation of technology. AI has emerged as a key enabler in this process. By supporting the digitisation and discovery of cultural assets, enabling multilingual and voice-based access, and facilitating engagement at scale, AI helps bridge gaps between heritage and people, tradition and technology. This approach reflects the vision of using AI as technology for humanity, aligned with the goal of "Welfare for All and Happiness for All".

Building Language as Digital Public Infrastructure

To expand access to culture, knowledge and public services, the Government of India is taking an infrastructure-based approach.

Key pillars of this language infrastructure include:

National Language Translation Mission (NLTM) – Bhashini

Launched in 2022 under the National Language Translation Mission, BHASHINI was developed to respond to India's wide linguistic diversity in the digital space. The initiative focuses on building language and voice capabilities directly into digital systems. This allows public platforms to function effectively across the many languages used in the country.

BHASHINI addresses three key barriers together:

Language barrier – systems that do not understand local languages or accents

Digital barrier – complex interfaces that discourage use

Literacy barrier – dependence on reading and typing

At a system level, BHASHINI is building multilingual AI as national digital public infrastructure. It provides language services such as translation, speech-to-text, text-to-speech, transliteration and document understanding across Indian languages, allowing platforms to add language and voice features without building them from scratch.

BHASHINI is already operating at scale:

Supports voice in 22 languages and text services in 36 languages

Hosts 350+ AI models and datasets

Has completed over 4 billion language inferences so far

Its strength lies in collaboration. Research institutions, language experts, startups, state governments and industry partners jointly contribute to the platform, ensuring that language models improve through real-world use and local participation.

As a foundational language layer, BHASHINI turns linguistic diversity into practical digital access, enabling people to engage with information, culture and public services in languages and formats they understand.

Key examples of use of Bhashini

Real-Time Speech Translation at Kashi Tamil Sangamam 2.0:

At the Kashi Tamil Sangamam event in Varanasi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi



used the BHASHINI AI platform during his address. His Hindi speech was translated in real time into Tamil so that Tamil-speaking attendees could understand the address directly in their language, demonstrating BHASHINI's real-time translation capability in a live cultural exchange context.

Multilingual Support at Maha Kumbh 2025:

BHASHINI powered the Kumbh Sah'Al'yak chatbot, a multilingual, voice-enabled assistant used at Maha Kumbh 2025 to provide navigation and event information to pilgrims in 11 languages (Hindi, English and nine others). It also supported features like a digital Lost & Found solution with real-time text and voice translation to make the event more accessible for attendees from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

As foundational language infrastructure, BHASHINI translates diversity into access, helping people engage with information, culture and public services in their own languages and formats – a critical step toward inclusive participation and empowerment.

Technology Development for Indian Languages (TDIL)

TDIL is a long-standing Government of India programme that laid the foundational technology base for Indian language computing, covering scripts, speech and text across multiple Indian languages.

It focuses on the development and standardisation of core language technologies, including:

machine translation

optical character recognition (OCR) for Indian scripts

speech-to-text and text-to-speech systems

handwriting recognition and transliteration tools

TDIL enables practical use by:

creating shared linguistic resources, datasets and standards that can be reused across platforms

supporting cross-lingual access, allowing users to retrieve and interact with information in their own languages

ensuring consistent digital representation of Indian languages across systems and devices

TDIL-supported systems, such as Indian

language machine translation tools, demonstrated early real-world applications of multilingual access in governance, education and information dissemination.

As a foundational language technology programme, TDIL enabled India's transition from language research to scalable language infrastructure, eventually directly supporting platforms such as BHASHINI and strengthening inclusive access to digital, cultural and knowledge ecosystems.

Anuvadini (AICTE)

Anuvadini is an AI-based multilingual translation platform developed by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) to enable large-scale translation of academic, technical and knowledge content into Indian languages.

It supports practical language access through:

AI-enabled translation of textbooks, reference material and learning resources

Multimodal capabilities, including text, document and speech-based translation

Integration with national repositories such as e-KUMBH, enabling access to translated content at scale

Anuvadini enables practical use cases such as:

expanding access to higher education and technical knowledge for students in regional languages

supporting skilling and capacity building by making learning resources available in local languages

strengthening Indian languages as mediums of knowledge, not only communication

As an AI-driven language access platform, Anuvadini expands access to knowledge and skills in Indian languages. By enabling participation in education, skilling and cultural knowledge systems, it contributes to social empowerment and livelihood opportunities.

AI for Cultural Heritage, Knowledge Systems and Linguistic Diversity

To preserve India's vast cultural legacy while enabling wider public access and participation, the Government of India is deploying AI across heritage preservation, traditional knowledge systems and linguistic diversity, with a focus on scale, discoverability and inclusion.

Gyan Bharatam Mission

It is national mission for the survey, documentation, digitisation and dissemination of India's manuscript heritage and traditional knowledge systems, including creation of a National Digital Repository.

Leverages AI-enabled tools such as: handwritten text recognition (HTR) and OCR for ancient manuscripts metadata extraction and intelligent cataloguing across scripts and languages improved discovery and access to digitised heritage content

Key achievements include: Over 44 lakh manuscripts documented in the Kirti Sampada digital repository

Mission approved with an outlay of 482.85 crore (2024–31) to scale digitisation and access

The mission will ensure cultural heritage to move from physical archives to shared digital access, supporting long-term preservation and increased public engagement.

Gyan-Setu (National AI Innovation Challenge under Gyan Bharatam)

Gyan-Setu was launched as a national challenge to source AI-led solutions for manuscript preservation, decipherment, restoration and access.

Focused on practical AI use cases including:

Cataloguing and Dataset Creation

Digitisation and Archiving

Script deciphering and Knowledge dissemination

Key outcomes include:

Successful completion of the national challenge with award-winning AI prototypes identified for heritage applications

The initiative created a pipeline of deployable AI solutions, strengthening collaboration between cultural institutions and the AI ecosystem.

Adi Vaani – AI Platform for Tribal Languages

Adi Vaani is an AI-based platform for the preservation, promotion and revitalisation of tribal languages, which are central to India's cultural and oral heritage.

Enables practical use through:

real-time translation between Hindi, English and tribal languages

speech-to-text transcription for oral languages

language learning modules for younger generations

digitisation of folklore, oral histories and community narratives

Key achievements (beta phase):

Initial rollout covering tribal languages such as Santali, Bhilli, Mundari and Gondi, with expansion underway

Use of the platform for subtitling advisories and public messages in tribal languages

Strengthens inclusion by bringing tribal languages into digital, educational and public communication spaces.

Enabling Participation and Opportunity through AI

As AI improves access to culture, language and knowledge, the next step is to turn this access into economic opportunity and social empowerment. This is especially important for India's cultural and creative sectors, where livelihoods depend on traditional skills, local knowledge and community-based practices.

Artisans, craftspeople and cultural practitioners make up a large part of India's informal and creative economy. When designed to be inclusive and sensitive to local context, AI can support these livelihoods by improving visibility, productivity, skills and participation in digital markets—while preserving cultural identity.

AI-Enabled Pathways for Artisans and Cultural Workers

Improved market access through language-inclusive platforms

AI-based translation and discovery tools help artisans present their products, stories and cultural value across different languages and regions.

Multilingual catalogues and interfaces reduce dependence on intermediaries and expand reach to wider markets.

Key Takeaways

- India is institutionalising AI for culture and languages through national platforms such as BHASHINI, Anuvadini, Gyan Bharatam and Adi Vaani etc.

- AI is being used to make cultural and knowledge assets usable by digitisation of manuscripts, translation of academic content, and inclusion of tribal and endangered languages.

- AI is being leveraged to integrate cultural and creative sectors into digital value chains, linking artisans to platforms and opportunities.

Voice-first and inclusive digital engagement

Voice-enabled interfaces allow artisans with limited literacy or digital familiarity to access platforms, training modules and services in their own languages.

Such interfaces enable broader participation in digital systems.

Skilling, productivity and enterprise support

AI-enabled learning tools can deliver on-demand training in areas such as quality improvement, digital marketing, pricing and inventory management.

Data-based insights help artisans plan production, manage demand and improve efficiency.

Trust, provenance and cultural authenticity

AI-supported documentation and tagging systems help establish authenticity and build trust for heritage and GI-tagged products.

Clear and transparent digital representation increases consumer confidence and protects cultural value.

By building language access, voice-based tools and cultural understanding into AI systems, artisans and cultural workers become active users of technology, not just beneficiaries. In this way, AI supports social empowerment by strengthening dignity of work, sustainable livelihoods and India's cultural and creative traditions.

Advancing Inclusive AI for Culture, Languages and Livelihoods

As India expands the use of AI across public systems, the main aim is to ensure that technology leads to greater cultural participation, social empowerment and sustainable livelihoods. Recent policy thinking, including NITI Aayog's report on AI for Inclusive Societal Development, points to the following key aspects for better use of AI in the public space:

Building trust through verifiable digital credentials, allowing training providers, employers, platforms and government bodies to issue reliable work and skill certificates that can be easily verified across systems.

Strengthening AI infrastructure by expanding language-based AI tools and supporting AI systems that work offline and in areas with poor internet access.

Encouraging innovation at the local level by supporting state and district programmes, using local facilities as digital work hubs, and working with community organisations to improve digital skills and adoption.

Promoting multi-stakeholder collaboration, bringing together government, technology providers, academia, industry bodies and civil society to scale inclusive AI solutions in a coordinated and sustainable manner.

These efforts will position AI not merely as a technological tool, but as a public good that reflects India's cultural and linguistic diversity. This human-centred approach reinforces the idea of technology for humanity—AI that listens, understands and responds to people's lived realities. By aligning AI deployment with inclusion, participation and opportunity, India can ensure that its cultural heritage and creative communities continue to remain active contributors to a digitally empowered and socially inclusive future.

CS bats for long-term monitoring, rehab framework for drug abuse victims

KT News Desk

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 10: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, Tuesday chaired a high-level meeting of senior officers to deliberate upon and give shape to a robust mechanism for rehabilitation and reintegration of drug abuse victims across the districts of Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Principal Secretary, Home; Commissioner Secretary, General Administration Department (GAD); Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare Department; Commissioner Secretary, School Education Department; Secretary, Health & Medical Education (H&ME); Secretary, Skill Development Department (SDD) and Labour & Employment (L&E); Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD); Director General, Budget; Director, Information; Managing Director, JKRLM; Director Colleges and other concerned officers.

While reviewing the framework, the Chief Secretary stressed the need for systematic tracking of every registered drug abuse victim who comes forward for treatment to ensure sustained handholding, rehabilitation and social reintegration.



He emphasized that such individuals should be monitored for several years post-treatment and provided opportunities in livelihood generation, skill development, self-employment or education based on individual rehabilitation needs.

Highlighting the importance of institutional support, the Chief Secretary called for dovetailing resources and manpower of multiple departments to ensure comprehensive support to individuals at every stage of recovery. He observed that while family and societal support remains crucial, long-term reintegration into mainstream society largely depends on strong institutional mechanisms.

The Chief Secretary noted that motivating victims to undergo treatment is only the first step and must be complemented by

regular follow-up, counselling and livelihood support to prevent relapse. He underscored the need for an end-to-end mechanism covering awareness generation through IEC campaigns, treatment, counselling, rehabilitation and post-rehabilitation engagement of affected youth.

To ensure accountability and effectiveness, he directed the creation of a district-level monitoring framework under senior officers, supported by dedicated teams to identify gaps and ensure lifetime rehabilitation outcomes. He further instructed development of an integrated online platform with clearly defined departmental roles and unique identification for each beneficiary to enable real-time tracking and case management.

During the meeting, Commissioner Secretary, Social

Welfare Department, Sarmad Hafeez, made a detailed presentation outlining the proposed inter-departmental coordination mechanism and post-rehabilitation framework. He informed that under the ongoing Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan, a dedicated Task Force has been constituted under the chairmanship of Principal Secretary, Home Department, with the mandate to plan, coordinate and monitor rehabilitation and reintegration interventions across departments.

The meeting was informed that the Task Force will focus on multi-departmental coordination, standardized screening and referral mechanisms, availability of trained psychiatrists in hospitals, strengthening law enforcement for supply reduction and enhancement of

rehabilitation processes.

It was further highlighted that the rehabilitation framework envisages standardized rehabilitation protocols and counselling units across J&K. The importance of integrating skill development programmes, livelihood support, start-up credit linkages, self-employment assistance and private sector partnerships was also emphasized to ensure sustainable recovery of rehabilitated individuals.

The meeting also underscored the need for school-based preventive programmes, community engagement initiatives, post-care monitoring systems and strengthening of infrastructure and capacity building. The roles and responsibilities of departments including School Education, Higher Education, Rural Development, Skill Development, Labour & Employment, Health, Home and Social Welfare were clearly delineated to achieve the long-term objective of a drug-free Jammu and Kashmir.

Reaffirming the government's commitment, the Chief Secretary stressed that addressing drug abuse requires a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to safeguard the future of youth and build a healthier society.

DC Kulgam reviews Ramadan preparations, directs strict market checks



KT News Desk

KULGAM, FEBRUARY 10: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan, convened a meeting of concerned officers Tuesday to review and finalize arrangements for the ensuing holy month of Ramadan-ul-Mubarak across the district.

During the meeting, the DC, as per an official statement, directed the Jal Shakti Department and KPDCL to ensure uninterrupted and hassle-free water and electricity supply throughout the month, with special focus on peak hours during Sehri and Iftar.

Emphasizing sanitation and proper lighting, the DC instructed Executive Officers of Municipal Committees to launch special cleanliness drives covering roads, lanes,

drains, and marketplaces. He also directed regular lifting of waste and installation of additional streetlights wherever required.

To prevent profiteering and overcharging, the DC instructed for intensified market checking to monitor prices and take strict action against hoarding and unfair trade practices.

He also reviewed the availability of mutton, poultry, LPG, and other essential commodities to ensure adequate supply during the holy month.

The meeting was attended by the ADC, ACR, ACD, Executive Engineers of Jal Shakti, R&B and KPDCL, Tehsildars, ASP, Executive Officers of Municipal Committees, officers from the Sheep Husbandry and Animal Husbandry Departments, besides representatives of Auqaf Committees.

Pulwama Admin observes Safer Internet Day with cyber awareness workshop

KT News Desk

PULWAMA, FEBRUARY 10: District Administration Pulwama Tuesday observed Safer Internet Day by organizing an awareness workshop at Circuit House Pulwama under the theme "Smart Tech, Safe Choices – Exploring the Safe and Responsible Use of AI."

The programme was held under the nationwide awareness campaign launched by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

The workshop, as per an official statement, was attended by various officers and officials from all line departments of the district, and aimed at strengthening cyber awareness and promoting a secure digital ecosystem across government offices.

During the session, Mujtaba Ahmad Bandy, District Informatics Officer Pulwama, delivered a comprehensive presentation highlighting the importance of cyber hygiene, safe online practices, and responsible use of Artificial Intelligence. He sensitized participants about emerging cyber threats such as phishing, OTP and UPI frauds, fake customer care scams, malware, deepfake and AI-based voice scams, social media account hacking, online shopping frauds and digital arrest scams.

The resource person also elaborated on the growing misuse of AI technologies, privacy concerns, misinformation and deepfakes, while emphasizing practical mitigation strategies, verification techniques, and best security practices for digital users. The workshop further highlighted the positive and people-centric applications of AI in sectors like governance, healthcare, education, agriculture and financial security, while underlining the need for ethical, inclusive and responsible adoption of emerging technologies.

On the occasion, participants were encouraged to take the online pledge for Safe and Responsible Use of AI and actively disseminate key learnings within their respective departments to ensure protection of data and promotion of a secure digital environment in the district.

Budgam Admin holds NMBA awareness drive DC calls for collective fight against drug abuse

KT NEWS DESK

BUDGAM, FEBRUARY 10: The District Administration Budgam in collaboration with Information and PR department Budgam Tuesday organised a day-long district-level awareness programme under the Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA) at the Indoor Sports Stadium, Budgam.

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-din Bhat who attended the programme as the Chief Guest, as per an official statement delivered a comprehensive address highlighting the serious physical, psychological, social, and economic consequences of substance abuse on individuals, families, and society at large.

It was emphasised by the DC that drug addiction not only destroys individual lives but also weakens the social fabric, thereby posing a grave challenge to the overall development and well-being of the community.

While addressing the gathering, it was stressed that the menace of drug abuse cannot be tackled by enforcement agencies alone and that a holistic and collective approach is required.

The DC underlined that coordinated efforts of parents, teachers, educational institutions, community and religious leaders, civil society organisations, healthcare professionals, and youth groups are



essential for effectively preventing and combating drug addiction.

The DC further said that early awareness, timely intervention, counselling, and rehabilitation are key components in addressing the issue in a sustainable manner. He exhorted the youth to remain vigilant, stay away from drugs, and channel their energy towards constructive and positive pursuits such as sports, education, skill development, and community service. He reiterated that a drug-free youth is the foundation of a strong, progressive, and prosperous society.

The DC also highlighted the importance of strengthening de-addiction and rehabilitation services and ensuring that affected individuals are provided with proper medical, psychological, and social support to facilitate their reintegration into society.

During the programme, a series of expert talks were delivered by medical professional Dr. Shahid and subject expert DSWO

Budgam wherein participants were sensitised about the health hazards of drug abuse, signs and symptoms of addiction, and available treatment and counselling mechanisms.

A short awareness film on the ill effects of substance abuse was also screened, followed by cultural performances and a skit, which effectively conveyed strong messages against drug addiction in an engaging manner.

A pledge taking ceremony under the Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan was also organised, wherein DC budgam administered "NASHA MUKH BHARAT PLEDGE" to the participants and the participants reaffirmed their commitment to remain drug-free and to actively contribute towards spreading awareness against drug abuse in their respective communities.

It was reiterated during the event that the District Administration Budgam remains committed to intensifying awareness campaigns, strengthening inter-departmental coordination, and

enhancing support systems for prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation in order to achieve the objectives of the Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan in the district.

The programme concluded with a formal vote of thanks, followed by the distribution of certificates and awards to participants and contributors in recognition of their efforts towards promoting a drug-free society.

The programme witnessed the presence and active participation of several senior officers and stakeholders, including Programme Officer ICDS, Samar Naik; Joint Director Planning, Budgam, Javid Ahmad Najar; Chief Education Officer, Budgam; District Informatics Officer, Budgam; District Social Welfare Officer, Budgam; Chief Horticulture Officer, Budgam; Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Budgam; representatives from the Drug De-Addiction Centre, Budgam; doctors from ATF; besides youth, students, civil society members, and media representatives.

DLSA Shopian launches 'Mediation for the Nation 2.0' awareness programme



KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, FEBRUARY 10: District Legal Authority (DLSA) Shopian Tuesday organized a special awareness programme on "Mediation for the Nation 2.0" at District Court Complex Shopian to promote awareness on mediation as an effective mode of alternative dispute resolution.

The events, as per an official statement were organized under the supervision of Mehmood Ahmad Chowdhary, Chairman DLSA (Principal District & Sessions Judge) Shopian and the guidance of Mudasar Farooq, Secretary DLSA Shopian.

Mehmood Ahmad Chowdhary, Chairman DLSA (Principal District & Sessions Judge) Shopian and Secretary DLSA Shopian, Mudasar Farooq laid emphasis on mediation. They addressed the gathering that mediation can play an effective role in disposal of cases which is flexible, expeditious in nature, less expensive and restore social harmony.

All the trained mediators

were directed to give their best to make mediation process an effective way for disposal of cases. All the judicial officers of District Shopian were directed to identify and refer maximum number of cases for mediation and actively participate and co-ordinate to make this campaign successful and strengthen in the mediation through process of dialogue.

"The 90-day mediation drive is justice at the doorstep. Mediation not only saves time and resources but also preserves relationships", said the Chairman DLSA.

He also appealed to the lawyers, litigants and general public to come forward and take advantage of this campaign while highlighting how disputes, especially matrimonial matters, MACT, NI Act, Civil Disputes, Criminal Compoundable Cases and recovery suits can be resolved effectively through mediation.

The programme was attended by all the judicial officers, legal aid defense counsels, the Learned Advocates, PLVs and general public.

DLSA Srinagar organizes legal awareness programme

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 10: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Srinagar, in collaboration with Allen Career Institute, Lal Bazar Srinagar, organized an awareness programme aimed at educating students about the Right to Education, NALSA DAWN (Drug Awareness and Wellness Navigation) Scheme 2025, and NALSA Legal Services to Victims of Acid Attack Scheme 2016, under the able guidance of Haq Nawaz Zargar, Chairman DLSA (PD&SJ) Srinagar and overall supervision of Secretary DLSA Srinagar.

During the session, Adv. Sabiya Kousar, Pro-bono Lawyer DLSA, Srinagar, elaborated on the Right to Education Act, emphasizing the importance of free and compulsory education for children and the legal safeguards ensuring access to quality education without discrimination. Students, as per an official statement were



encouraged to become aware of their educational rights and the mechanisms available for grievance redressal.

The participants were further sensitized by Adv. Laila Khalid, Panel Lawyer DLSA, Srinagar, about the NALSA DAWN Scheme-2025, highlighting the growing menace of drug abuse among youth and the role of legal services institutions in providing awareness, counseling, rehabilitation support, and legal

assistance to affected individuals and their families.

The programme also focused on the NALSA (Legal Services to Victims of Acid Attack) Scheme-2016, by Sehar Nazir, Asst. LADC DLSA, Srinagar, wherein she explained the legal remedies, compensation mechanisms, medical assistance, and rehabilitation measures available for victims of acid attacks. The students were informed about the role of DLSA in

providing free legal aid and support to victims in seeking justice.

The management and faculty of Allen Career Institute appreciated the initiative and assured their continued support in spreading legal awareness among students. The programme concluded with an interactive session where students actively participated and raised queries, which were addressed by the resource persons.

Anantnag Admin conducts AI-focused workshop on Safer Internet Day

KT News Desk

ANANTNAG, FEBRUARY 10: As part of the observance of Safer Internet Day-2026, District Administration Anantnag organised an awareness workshop on the theme "Stay Alert in the Age of AI: Safe and Responsible Use of AI" Tuesday at Khanabal.

The workshop, as per an official statement, was held under the supervision of District Informatics Officer, Umair Ahmad Beig and was attended by the officers and officials of various departments. It focuses on enhancing digital awareness among government officials and promoting safe internet practices at all levels.

On the occasion, resource persons delivered key lectures about the safe, responsible, and judicious use of the internet and



digital technologies, particularly in the modern age of Artificial Intelligence.

Emphasis was laid on responsible online conduct, data protection and prevention of online frauds besides adopting best practices for secure internet usage in both official and personal capacities.

DySP HQ, Syed Mujahid,

shared valuable insights regarding common cyber scams and frauds and advised participants to remain cautious while using digital platforms, online banking, and social media.

At the conclusion, an interactive session was held, wherein participants raised queries and shared their experiences related to cyber safety.

SAYBO delegation apprises LG Sinha of Yatra logistics

J&K BJP Social Media Incharge calls on Lt Governor

KT News Desk

Jammu, Feb 10: A delegation of Shri Amarnathji Yatra Bhandara Organisation (SAYBO) called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday.

The delegation led by Rajan Kapoor, President, SAYBO apprised the Lieutenant Governor of several key matters pertaining to the logistics and smooth operation of bhandaras along the Yatra route during the upcoming Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026.

The Lieutenant Governor assured the delegation that appropriate action will be taken to



address the issues of bhandara sewadars. He also commended the crucial role played by voluntary organizations in the success of the annual Yatra.

Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari, CEO

Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board and Rahul Singh, Additional CEO, SASB were also present during the meeting.

Dr Makson Tickoo, BJP Social Media Incharge J&K UT also called on the Lieutenant Governor and apprised him of various welfare issues of Kashmiri Pandit community.

Subsequently, representatives of Shopkeepers Association Multi-Tier Parking General Bus Stand Jammu headed by Vishal Mahajan, and a delegation of Shakti Udghosh Foundation led by its Convenor Preeti Choudhary also called on the Lieutenant Governor.

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Feb 10: A meeting of District Level Committee on Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) was Tuesday held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo here at the Meeting Hall of the DC Office to review the ongoing anti-drug measures and efforts to curb drug abuse and drug trafficking in the district. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Sandeep Chakravarthy was also present in the meeting.

At the outset, the meeting conducted a comprehensive review of inter-agency coordination to combat drug abuse, including identification of drug hotspots, confiscation of

vehicles under NDPS and ongoing anti-drug IEC activities, particularly in educational institutions to sensitize youth about the illicit effects of narcotics.

The meeting was informed that, as per the directions of the NCORD Committee, the District Administration in coordination with the Police and other stakeholder departments, has launched a massive crackdown on drug peddlers and drug trafficking.

Acting firmly against offenders, the driving licences of 73 accused involved in narcotics cases have been disqualified. In addition, 56 vehicles have been blacklisted by the Regional Transport Office, Kashmir under the NDPS Act.

Addressing the meeting, the DC appreciated the Transport Department and other stakeholders for strengthening administrative controls by suspending licences and black-listing vehicles involved in NDPS cases, thereby disrupting the logistical support of drug peddlers. He reiterated that driving licences and vehicle registrations are privileges not rights and that anyone found misusing them for drug-related offences will face strict action without any leniency.

The DC emphasized that such measures will continue across to curb the drug menace in the district and break the supply chain of narcotics trade. He underlined the administration's firm resolve to protect

society, especially the youth, from the devastating impact of drugs.

SSP Srinagar, in his remarks, stated that the action against drugs shall continue and the message of zero tolerance against drug crimes is loud and clear. He stated that drug peddlers will face criminal prosecution, disqualification of licences, blacklisting of vehicles and other punishments as warranted under law.

On the occasion, the meeting decided to further strengthen coordination among stakeholder departments and continue focused enforcement, preventive awareness, and rehabilitation measures to effectively combat the drug menace in Srinagar district.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

J&K Budget a

have presented a good and people-centric Budget for Jammu and Kashmir," he remarked.

He recalled that SRO-based employment support for militancy-hit families was initiated in 1996 under former Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah, benefiting thousands.

CM thanks members for valuable suggestions Responding to the three-day-long debate, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who is also the Leader of the House, expressed gratitude to all legislators who participated in the discussion.

"For the last three days, I have been standing here to respond to the debate about the Budget. I thank all the honourable MLAs who took part. They gave valuable suggestions and we will try to implement many of them in the future," he said.

He noted that the Budget was widely discussed not only inside the House but also outside, and that people have largely responded positively.

"Generally, people were satisfied with the Budget. They understand that it is not easy to propel Jammu and Kashmir forward in these circumstances, but through this Budget, a roadmap has been laid out to take J&K out of the present challenges," he remarked.

Budget covers all sectors, focuses on weaker sections

The Chief Minister underlined that the Government's foremost responsibility is towards the poorest and most vulnerable sections of society.

"The first responsibility of every government is to help the weakest and the poorest. Through this Budget, we have tried to provide comfort to those who need it the most," he said.

Rejecting criticism over not announcing certain populist measures, he stated firmly that the Government's priority remains social justice and targeted welfare.

Free LPG cylinders to be funded through J&K's own resources

Clarifying a major welfare promise, CM Omar Abdullah announced that the Government will provide free LPG cylinders from its own budgetary resources, without depending on any central scheme.

"I want to put it on record that we will give these cylinders with our own money and resources. We do not need to take money from the central government for this," he said.

New welfare measures beyond Central Schemes

Responding to allegations that the Budget contains only centrally-sponsored schemes, the Chief Minister highlighted several unique initiatives funded directly through the J&K Budget.

He announced monthly assistance for orphans and vulnerable families:

"We have said that those who have lost both parents, or who have lost the sole breadwinner, will be declared orphans. If they are not covered under any other scheme, they will receive Rs 4,000 per month," he said.

Similarly, scholarships for tribal children and poor students have been introduced where no other coverage exists.

He also recalled the success of free bus ridership for women announced last year.

"This was not a Government of India scheme. We introduced it through our own Budget, and it has been very successful," he said.

This year, the Government has extended free ridership relief to persons with disabilities.

EV Buses and balanced economic growth

The Chief Minister also spoke about expanding environmentally-friendly EV bus service while ensuring balanced growth for other transport sectors.

"If we can make EV buses reach more areas, autos and taxis will also run. By closing one thing, we cannot increase the economy," he said.

Budget expenditure and economic strength Refuting claims that the Budget is shrinking, CM Omar Abdullah clarified expenditure figures and said misleading comparisons were being drawn.

"It is wrong to say we have spent only 12 per cent. If we look only at capital expenditure, it has reached 36 per cent, and by March 31 we will bring it close to last year's level," he informed.

He explained that last year's revenue expenditure was higher due to settlement of expensive loans, which is not the case this year.

"To say that we are shrinking our economy is not true at all. We have put our money where it is most needed," he asserted.

Focus on rural economy: Agriculture, Horticulture and Dairy

Emphasising that Jammu and Kashmir lives

in its villages, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said the Budget gives special attention to strengthening the rural economy.

"As long as village areas do not develop, J&K will not develop," he said.

He listed key thrust areas including agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, fisheries and dairy development.

The Chief Minister announced a new dairy scheme aimed at increasing milk production by one lakh litres.

"The central government has praised this initiative and even wants to support us further through the National Dairy Development Board," he said.

He also spoke about improving livestock quality, backyard poultry, and enhancing productivity.

In horticulture, he highlighted the introduction of weather-based crop insurance for the first time.

"If there is nothing in our Budget, then why did this not happen before?" he asked.

Mission YUVA: Empowering youth through entrepreneurship and employment

The Chief Minister also underscored his Government's strong focus on youth empowerment through Mission YUVA, a flagship initiative aimed at creating sustainable livelihood opportunities, promoting entrepreneurship and enhancing skill development across Jammu and Kashmir. He said the scheme is designed to harness the potential of young people by supporting start-ups, self-employment ventures and targeted training programmes, enabling the youth to become active partners in the region's economic growth.

Restoration of Darbar Move reflects commitment to Jammu's aspirations

Addressing criticism that the Budget is Kashmir-centric, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah termed such assertions meaningless and misplaced, stating that his Government remains equally committed to balanced development across all regions. He pointed out that the Government would not have restored the Darbar Move to Jammu if it did not intend to correct the wrongs done with Jammu and ensure equitable attention to its aspirations and needs.

Industries to prioritise recruitment of local youth

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah further emphasised that industries benefiting from the incentives and support provided by the Jammu and Kashmir Government must also contribute meaningfully to local employment generation. He noted that industrial units receive substantial facilitation in the form of subsidies, land, power supply and other concessions, and therefore have a responsibility to prioritise the recruitment of local youth. The Government, he said, has impressed upon such industries to ensure that the people of Jammu and Kashmir, particularly the younger generation, are given adequate employment opportunities so that industrial growth translates into inclusive development and real benefits for the region.

The Chief Minister concluded by reiterating that the Budget 2026–27 is a roadmap for inclusive growth, long-term development and social justice, and that his government remains fully committed to delivering results on the ground for the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

J&K Budget repetition

government, instead of responding, starts questioning the Union Government to evade its responsibility," he said.

"Why have you come here? Were you elected by the people of J&K to tell the Assembly that Delhi doesn't allow you to work? Have you come only for salaries and to enjoy in the House?" Sharma asked.

He termed the budget a repetition of decades-old lies to the people of Jammu & Kashmir.

"There is nothing solid or truthful in the budget. The government has dashed the hopes and expectations of the people of J&K," Sharma said.

Sharma added that 80 percent of the budget is focused on central schemes. "There is nothing wrong in it. It is good to appreciate things," he said, adding that Rs 58000 crore is a grant from the central government in the budget.

He, however, said central schemes have been reflected as capital expenditure in the budget.

"Where will we generate capital expenditure? There is no concrete plan or vision about it. This is the most visionless government," he said.

He also slammed the government for slashing allocations to different departments.

"During the last year, our rural areas were affected by floods, and we expected that the

government would be concerned and would increase the allocation for rural areas, but instead it decreased the budget," he said.

Sharma also came down heavily on the government over its promises of free electricity and 12 gas cylinders.

He said there is no scheme for unemployed youth in the budget.

"You have shown dreams to the youth. What have you kept for them in the budget?" he asked. (KNO)

India-US trade

protests from BJP legislators, who objected to some of his comments and demanded an apology. The situation escalated into a ruckus, forcing Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather to adjourn the House for the day while Abdullah was winding up a discussion on the Union Territory's Budget presented on February 6.

Responding to the BJP's demand for an apology, the Chief Minister said there was no question of apologising now, as he was not allowed to clarify or withdraw his words during the disruptions.

"Had they allowed me even a moment to speak, I was prepared to withdraw my words and make the same point differently. But since I was not allowed to speak, what has been said is already on record," he said.

Omar also questioned whom he was expected to apologise to, alleging that some of those lecturing others on nationalism and the Constitution had themselves failed to uphold decorum. Without naming individuals initially, he said certain leaders who frequently invoke patriotism could not even sit through the entire Republic Day.

Later, he referred specifically to the Leader of Opposition (LoP), alleging that he had left the Republic Day function midway. "People who cannot remain present for national events should not lecture others on nationalism," the Chief Minister said.

Abdullah further claimed that BJP members were upset not because of the language used, but because he had placed uncomfortable economic realities before the public. "What benefits the rest of the country does not automatically benefit Jammu and Kashmir. My job is to protect the interests of the people here," he said.

The Chief Minister said his remarks on the trade deal were based on economic facts and the structure of J&K's economy, asserting that raising these concerns was part of his constitutional duty.

On a separate issue, Omar rejected suggestions that the administration facilitates the annual Amarnath Yatra under pressure. He said Kashmiris had historically played a central role in ensuring the success of the pilgrimage. "The Yatra is not possible without the people of Kashmir. They have always supported it and will continue to do so," he said.

Responding to a question on a proposed cricket match involving Pakistan, the J&K CM remarked that threats should not be issued lightly. "Those who do not have the strength to stand behind a threat should not make one. Let them come and play, and whatever happens will happen on the field," he said. (KNO)

Process of regularising

was not only to touch major sectors but also to improve them. It is the responsibility of every government to first help the poorest of the poor and then reach out to other sections of society," he said.

The CM announced that Jammu & Kashmir would provide gas cylinders to AAY families from its own resources.

"I want to put it on record that we will provide cylinders from our own funds. They will neither be given under any scheme nor will any help be sought from the Centre. This will be provided from the J&K budget," the Chief Minister said.

He further said that scholarships for 6000 orphans, fee waivers for students belonging to AAY households, and free ridership for disabled persons are being funded from J&K's resources.

The CM added that the budget is a roadmap to take Jammu & Kashmir out of the morass. "It is not easy to take Jammu & Kashmir forward," he said.

He termed claims of budget shrinkage as untrue.

"It was said that we have spent only 12% of the budget. That is wrong. There are still two months left in this financial year. Salaries and pensions will be disbursed, and capital expenditure till last month was 36%. We will reach the last year's capital expenditure figures by March 31," he said, adding that revenue expenditure was higher last year because loans were

settled.

The CM also said that tourist destinations closed after the Pahalgam attack would be reopened in the next few months.

"I want to assure the House that I have taken up the matter with the Union Government," he said. (KNO)

Fresh snowfall

been advised to avoid venturing into avalanche-prone higher reaches.

Officials said that, based on current trends, February may end with an overall deficit in rainfall across the region. (KNO)

Pandemonium in Assembly

the CM said their attitude has changed and it seems "Inka Home Minister Ke Aate Atte Joote Pade."

The remarks triggered fierce protests from BJP legislators, who demanded that the Chief Minister apologise for his comments.

"This is unparliamentary language. He should apologise for these remarks," the BJP legislators shouted.

The Chief Minister continued his speech while BJP legislators tried to disrupt him with slogans.

Unfazed by the protests, the CM went on with his speech and concluded it. (KNO)

No role of cabinet

project for the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi shrine. Speaking in the Legislative Assembly, as per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the CM said that after checking records, he found that his cabinet had no role in approving the project.

"One member had said that the cabinet had approved the ropeway project. I checked the records and found that the cabinet did not approve it. It is also not a decision of the Administrative Council," he said.

The CM said the project was approved by the Lieutenant Governor in September 2024 before formation of the elected government.

The CM said that both the House and the people were being misled.

"In an emotional moment, the member had yesterday threatened to resign," Omar said.

The MLA from the Mata Vaishno Devi segment Baldev Raj Sharma had claimed in the House on Monday that the cabinet had approved the project and that he would resign if his claims proved incorrect.

Flat-rate billing for

consumers are presently being billed on a flat-rate basis in accordance with the tariff approved by the Jammu & Kashmir Electricity Regulatory Commission (JERC).

The Chief Minister, who also holds the charge of the Power Department, said that electricity connections are issued strictly in line with the JERC Supply Code Regulations, 2023, after due field verification by the concerned staff.

"Inspection teams, when they find that a consumer is using more power than the load agreement with the Department, load revision is effected on the spot in a transparent and accountable manner," he told the House.

The Chief Minister was replying to a question raised by MLA Budhal, Javid Iqbal Choudhary, regarding the electrification of villages in his constituency.

In response, he stated that the electrification of un-electrified and partially electrified habitations/Morhas in Budhal Constituency, including both tribal and non-tribal areas, is being undertaken under the DA-JGUA scheme.

He informed that the works were allotted to a private limited company on October 14, 2025, and the scheme envisages coverage of 275 habitations in Budhal Constituency. The expected date of completion has been fixed as October 2026.

The Chief Minister further added that to address issues arising from temporary arrangements, sustained efforts are underway to strengthen and upgrade the power distribution network under the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) in District Rajouri.

"Works are presently in progress on various 11 kV feeders, with emphasis on replacement of LT bare conductors with AB cabling and new conductors, augmentation of overloaded distribution transformers, and replacement of old transformers with energy-efficient units," he said.

These measures, he noted, are aimed at ensuring safe, reliable, and quality power supply to all habitations, including tribal areas. He also said that JKPCL is properly maintaining the 132 kV and 220 kV transmission network supplying power to Rajouri District.

Hopeful work on

diversion of Chenab river water to provide drinking water to Jammu will begin soon.

Speaking in the Legislative Assembly, as per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the CM said that the state government is working with the Centre to start these projects following the suspension of the Indus Water Treaty.

"We are working with the Centre on two things after the Indus Water Treaty was put in abeyance — one, the Tulbul Navigation Project near Sopore, and second, lifting water from the Chenab river near Akhnoor to provide water supply to Jammu," he said.

He added that the water supply project had earlier been submitted to the Asian Development Bank but was stalled due to the treaty. (KNO)

Govt working

supply projects including the Tulbul Navigation Barrage at Sopore and a proposal to pump water from the Chenab River at Akhnoor to meet Jammu's future needs, in light of recent developments concerning the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT).

The Chief Minister made these remarks while intervening during supplementary questions raised by several MLAs in the Legislative Assembly.

"I have said this before in the House and I have said it through the press and I will repeat it again. If we have to ensure water availability for the next 30 to 40 years for Jammu, then we must look at new and sustainable solutions," asserted the Chief Minister.

He recalled that during our previous regime, the intention was to bring water from the Chenab at Akhnoor to Jammu. However, the proposal could not move forward due to constraints arising from the Indus Waters Treaty.

"We had submitted this proposal to the Asian Development Bank under the ERA programme but it was not agreed to because of restrictions linked to the Indus Waters Treaty," he informed the House.

He added that with the Indus Waters Treaty currently in abeyance, the government is now actively working with the Government of India on two major initiatives.

"One is the Tulbul Navigation Barrage on the Jhelum at Sopore and the other is pumping water from the Chenab at Akhnoor to Jammu," said the Chief Minister.

The Chief Minister expressed hope that work on these schemes would begin at the earliest. "We are working on both of these and I hope that work will start as soon as possible," he added.

Emphasising the need for long-term planning, the Chief Minister said efforts would also continue to revive the defunct wells, reform existing schemes and install new tube wells.

"We will have to think about the next 30, 40, or even 50 years for Jammu. With traditional water supply schemes alone, we will not be able to meet the growing demand," he added.

Earlier, replying to a main question raised by Legislator Arvind Gupta on behalf of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Health Minister, Sakeena Itoo informed the House that a DPR has been formulated for permanent restoration of 600 mm and 500 mm dia Sitlee – Manda rising mains amounting Rs. 95.97 lakh and submitted to Deputy Commissioner, Jammu for release of funds under SDRF/DMRRR/available District resources.

The Minister said that a proposal amounting Rs. 9215.94 lakh has also been submitted by the department to Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction and Finance Department for development of infrastructure damaged during the recent flash floods including 600 mm and 500 mm dia Sitlee – Manda rising mains, adding that the release of funds is still awaited.

She also informed that Tube Well at Women Polytechnic College, Jammu and Tube Well at front side of Forest Office near Kamdhenu Flats Jammu have been taken up under AMRUT-2.0. She added that various works have been taken up for improvement of water supply in Jammu West Constituency.

The Minister also informed that the matter regarding redevelopment/restoration of the defunct Tubewell in Jammu West is under active consideration. It is proposed to be taken up by the Jal Shakti department under District CAPEX Budget during the next financial year 2026-27, she added.

Legislators Sham Lal Sharma and Vikram Singh Randhawa raised supplementary questions.

Ugly scenes could have taken place had BJP MPs been allowed to confront oppn members in LS: Rijiju

PTI

New Delhi, Feb 10: Union minister Kiren Rijiju on Tuesday said "very ugly scenes" could have taken place had the BJP MPs been allowed to confront the Congress members on the day Prime Minister Narendra Modi was supposed to reply to the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address in the Lok Sabha.

Commenting on the video that showed opposition women MPs coming to the treasury benches on February 4, Rijiju asked if anyone could justify the behaviour of the opposition members.

He said the direction from the BJP leadership was very clear that members belonging to the ruling alliance must maintain the dignity of the House and no MP of the ruling party should get into physical confrontation with the "rude opposition MPs".

"The Congress party is proud of the most degrading behaviour by their MPs. If we had not stopped all the BJP MPs and allowed the women MPs



to confront the Congress MPs, it would have led to very ugly scenes. We have very high consideration to protect the dignity and sanctity of Parliament," he told reporters here.

The parliamentary affairs minister accused the opposition MPs of disrupting proceedings in an unprecedented manner and claimed that the BJP and NDA MPs were very angry because of the behaviour of their Congress counterparts.

"The Congress MPs crossed

the treasury benches and even reached the prime minister's seat. The Congress has shown no respect for the dignity of the House.

"The fact is, they are celebrating on their social media accounts, claiming that women MPs scared the prime minister. This is utterly shameful," he said.

Rijiju said the BJP women MPs have submitted a letter to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla against the behaviour of the Congress members. He said the

Congress MPs even crossed the bench where the prime minister sits and went inside a few rows of the treasury benches and almost laid siege on the entire area.

"We had to control the BJP and NDA MPs. The BJP women MPs were very agitated at this behaviour of the Congress MPs.

"We stopped our MPs from physical confrontation. After that, these opposition MPs went to the speaker's chamber and threatened the speaker. The BJP women MPs have submitted a petition. Let us see how the speaker acts and what steps he takes," he said.

The BJP's women MPs, in a letter, have urged the Lok Sabha speaker to take the strongest possible action against the opposition MPs who have committed "heinous acts" like moving deep inside treasury benches, climbing the table and laying a siege on the prime minister's seat.

The Lok Sabha has been witnessing disruptions since February 2, after Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was disallowed by the chair from quoting from

an article based on excerpts of former Army chief M M Naravane's "unpublished memoir", which has references to the India-China conflict of 2020.

On February 4, Prime Minister Modi could not reply to the debate on the Motion of Thanks due to opposition protests. In an unprecedented move, the Motion of Thanks was passed on February 5 without the customary speech by the prime minister. The speaker read out the Motion of Thanks to the President for her address, and it was passed by a voice vote amid sloganeering by opposition members.

Birla said he received concrete information that many Congress MPs could carry out an "unexpected act" by reaching the spot where PM Modi sits and, therefore, he asked him not to come to the House to deliver his address.

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra refuted this.

Eight opposition members were suspended for the remainder of the Budget session for unruly behaviour in the House.

SC seeks response of 17 states on MHA's proposal to set up special NIA courts



PTI

New Delhi, Feb 10: The Supreme Court on Tuesday issued notices to 17 states, including Delhi, Gujarat and Maharashtra, to ensure the setting up of special NIA courts in states where 10 or more cases are pending trial under anti-terror laws.

A bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant sought responses from the states after the Union home ministry submitted a comprehensive status report, saying it has mooted a proposal to set up special courts in states where 10 or more cases probed by the National Investigation Agency are pending trial.

The bench, also comprising Justices Joymalya Bagchi and N V Anjaria, took note of the submissions of Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the Centre, that the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has finalised norms to provide financial assistance for these special courts.

According to the MHA report, the Centre will provide a one-time grant of Rs 1 crore for non-recurring expenditure and Rs 1 crore per annum for recurring expenditure for each exclusive special court. These funds will cover infrastructure renovation, IT equipment, vehicles, and staff salaries, the report said.

Taking note of the submissions, the bench asked the chief secretaries of the 17 states to respond within three weeks to the report to formalise the setting up of the special courts to ensure speedy trial and justice in such cases. It said a delay in trial leads to injustice if an

accused is acquitted after a prolonged trial.

The law officer also said that 16 special courts under different special laws are being established at the Rouse Avenue Court Complex in the national capital.

The report said these courts, dedicated to special statutes, including the NIA Act, UAPA, and NDPS, are expected to be ready for operation by April 2026. It said the Delhi High Court has confirmed that judicial officers from the Delhi Higher Judicial Service are available to preside over these courts.

The report said that in Bihar, the court of the District and Additional Sessions Judge-XV, Patna, was officially designated as an exclusive NIA court as per the January 8 notification. It also said that exclusive NIA courts have already been designated in Jammu and Ranchi.

In Maharashtra, the Court of Sessions at City Civil Court, Bombay, has been operationalised as an exclusive NIA court since March 2025, the report states.

It indicates that Delhi has the highest number of pending cases at 59, followed by Jammu and Kashmir (38), Assam (33), Gujarat (33), and Kerala (33).

The Supreme Court bench said it will hear aspects related to the setting up of other special courts after three weeks.

On December 16, 2025, the Centre told the top court that to ensure a speedy trial, it has decided to set up a dedicated NIA court in each state and Union territory and more than one court at places where there are over 10 cases under anti-terror laws.

Silver dips Rs 7,500 to Rs 2.64 lakh per kg; gold rises by Rs 2,200

PTI

New Delhi, Feb 10: Silver prices declined by Rs 7,500 or nearly 3 per cent to Rs 2.64 lakh per kg in the national capital on Tuesday, while gold prices appreciated by Rs 2,200 per 10 grams amid a firm US dollar.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the white metal dropped Rs 7,500 to Rs 2,64,500 per kg (inclusive of all taxes) from Monday's closing of Rs 2,72,000 per kg.

On the other hand, gold of 99.9 per cent purity appreciated by Rs 2,200, or 1.4 per cent, to Rs 1,60,700 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes). It had settled at Rs 1,58,500 per 10 grams in the previous market session.

Traders said gold extended its gains for the second consecutive session amid sustained buying by the jewellers and investors.

"Gold traded with modest gains on Tuesday while traders were awaiting fresh macroeconomic cues," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst, Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

He added that gold and silver prices fluctuate within a broader range as markets move into a consolidation phase in the near term.

Need digital safety framework for students, teachers, parents: Experts at Delhi summit

PTI

New Delhi, Feb 10: Experts on Tuesday highlighted the need for coordinated efforts among the government, schools and tech companies to ensure on-line safety for children, as they pointed to a lack of data, inadequate training on digital media for teachers, and poor digital literacy among parents as major challenges.

At a panel discussion during the Internet Safety Summit in Delhi, policy-makers said the central education board is working on developing digital safety content for middle school students and rolling out modules for training teachers.

However, they said there is a major gap in understanding how many children are active online due to the lack of data.



Stressing the need for tech companies to share anonymised usage statistics, Himanshu Gupta, secretary, Central Board of Secondary Education, said, "There are millions of students across the country. We don't know how many students are active on digital media platforms. Each platform collects data, but there's no unified

framework to compare or consolidate it."

He added that CBSE is focusing on digital media safety content for students from classes six to eight and creating annual awareness calendars for parents.

"Teachers are the ones working on the ground level. They, too, become victims of online fraud and misinformation. We

are also in the process of giving them digital safety training," Gupta shared.

Speaking at the event, Vikash Chourasia, staff officer to the secretary of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, said that the growing exposure of minors online and a surge in unregulated content have made it imperative to strengthen child protection systems.

"There is an urgent need for data-driven platforms and awareness programmes, because in general, there is very little understanding of how content actually works and how apps are technically designed or driven. This becomes even more complex across different social media platforms, especially so-called encrypted one-to-one apps," he said.

Union Health Min says govt committed to eradicating elephantiasis by next year

PTI

New Delhi, Feb 10: Union Health Minister J P Nadda on Tuesday stressed community engagement and raising awareness to tackle last-mile challenges in the elimination of vector-borne disease lymphatic filariasis, and reaffirmed the government's commitment to eradicating it by next year.

Commonly known as elephantiasis, the disease is transmitted by female Culex mosquito, which breeds in polluted and stagnant water. The infection damages the lymphatic system and can lead to chronic morbidity, disability and social stigma.

Launching the Annual Nationwide Mass Drug Administration Campaign for the elimination of lymphatic filariasis, Nadda pointed out that ensuring direct observation of drug consumption and addressing public hesitancy towards medication remain key concerns, which must be tackled through intensive awareness, community engagement, grievance redressal, and trust-building measures.

During his address to health ministers and senior officials from 12 identified lymphatic filariasis-endemic states through video-conferencing, he reaffirmed the Centre's unwavering commitment to eliminating the disease by 2027, well ahead of



the global Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of 2030.

He highlighted that the disease not only affects the health and quality of life of patients but also severely impacts their livelihood, economic productivity, and social well-being, often leading to social stigma and long-term hardship for entire families.

Eliminating lymphatic filariasis is therefore not merely a health objective, but a critical social and economic imperative, Nadda underlined.

Annual Nationwide Mass Drug Administration Campaign seeks to accelerate efforts to interrupt disease transmission, reduce morbidity, and ensure equitable access to preventive healthcare interventions for vulnerable populations across the country.

Lymphatic filariasis is endemic in 348 districts in 20 states and Union Territories. Of these, 41 per cent (143 districts) have successfully stopped Mass Drug Administration (MDA) after clearing transmission assessment survey, while 50 per cent (174 districts in 14 states)

continue to implement annual MDA due to microfilariasis rates above 1 per cent.

The remaining 31 districts are at various stages of transmission assessments. As of 2024, over 6.20 lakh cases of lymphoedema and 1.21 lakh cases of hydrocele have been reported from endemic districts, underscoring the need for sustained and intensified efforts.

At the event, the Union health minister also underscored the significant progress achieved through mission-mode implementation of the MDA campaign, particularly through directly observed treatment, which has yielded encouraging on-ground results.

Highlighting last-mile challenges, Nadda pointed out that ensuring direct observation of drug consumption and addressing public hesitancy towards medication remain key concerns, which must be tackled through intensive awareness, community engagement, grievance redressal, and trust-building measures.

Epilepsy affects over 15 million Indians, doctors urge early treatment

THE INDIAN PRACTITIONER

New Delhi, Feb 09: Epilepsy is a neurological disorder marked by repeated seizures caused by abnormal electrical activity in the brain. According to estimates, more than 15 million people in India live with epilepsy. However, despite the high prevalence, many patients delay seeking medical care due to fear, social stigma, and widespread misconceptions—particularly in small towns and rural areas. Doctors stress that epilepsy should be treated like other long-term conditions such as diabetes or hypertension. With modern treatment options, nearly 70 per cent of epilepsy patients can successfully control seizures through regular medication. Moreover, for patients who do not respond to medicines, advanced therapies available in India now offer renewed hope and a better quality of life.

Explaining the condition, Dr Madhukar Bhardwaj, Director and Head of Neurology at Aakash Healthcare, said seizures occur when the brain's electrical signals function abnormally for a brief period.

As a result, a person may shake, fall, stare blankly, or lose awareness. While some seizures



are mild and last only a few seconds, others can be more severe and disruptive.

However, Dr Bhardwaj noted that many patients remain hesitant to seek hospital care, especially in rural areas, due to persistent myths surrounding epilepsy. He explained that some people wrongly believe epilepsy is caused by ghosts or black magic, spreads through touch, or prevents individuals from studying, working, or getting married. Another dangerous misconception involves putting objects into the mouth during a seizure. Dr Bhardwaj emphasised that all these beliefs are false and can seriously harm patients.

Meanwhile, Dr Neha Kapoor, Associate Director and Head of Neurology at Asian Hospital, said the causes of epilepsy vary from person to person. In many cases, doctors cannot identify a specific cause. She explained that epilepsy may result from genetic factors, head injuries,

brain infections such as meningitis, strokes, or brain damage. In children, it may occur due to lack of oxygen at birth or abnormal brain development before birth.

However, she clarified that while stress, sleep deprivation, and alcohol can trigger seizures, they do not directly cause epilepsy. Highlighting diagnostic challenges, Dr Praveen Gupta, Chairman of Marengo Asia International Institute of Neuro and Spine (MAIINS), said epilepsy often goes undetected because seizures do not always appear dramatic.

He explained that not all seizures involve shaking. Some may resemble brief confusion or daydreaming, which leads to delayed diagnosis. Therefore, he stressed that early detection plays a crucial role in effective treatment. Dr Gupta added that epilepsy affects people of all age groups, yet many patients reach specialists very late due to

fear and misinformation. With timely diagnosis and appropriate treatment, he said, most patients can live completely normal lives.

Furthermore, Dr Gupta noted that epilepsy surgery is being successfully performed in India. Surgeons carefully identify and treat or remove the specific brain area responsible for seizures. Although doctors usually consider surgery only after medicines fail, it offers significant hope for patients with drug-resistant epilepsy. He added that advanced treatment options, including neuro-robotic techniques, are now transforming outcomes and improving quality of life for many patients.

In addition, Dr Vineet Malhotra, Principal Consultant in Urology, Sexology, Andrology, and Infertility Treatment at SCM Healthcare, said epilepsy can also impact men's sexual health.

He explained that seizures, stress, and certain anti-seizure medications may lower energy levels, affect hormones, or reduce sexual desire. However, he reassured patients that doctors can address these concerns through lifestyle changes, medication adjustments, and counselling, enabling patients to maintain healthy and active lives.

Source: The Indian Practitioner

Ugly scenes could have taken place had BJP MPs been allowed to confront oppn members in LS: Rijiju

PTI

New Delhi, Feb 10: Union minister Kiren Rijiju on Tuesday said "very ugly scenes" could have taken place had the BJP MPs been allowed to confront the Congress members on the day Prime Minister Narendra Modi was supposed to reply to the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address in the Lok Sabha.

Commenting on the video that showed opposition women MPs coming to the treasury benches on February 4, Rijiju asked if anyone could justify the behaviour of the opposition members.

He said the direction from the BJP leadership was very clear that members belonging to the ruling alliance must maintain the dignity of the House and no MP of the ruling party should get into physical confrontation with the "rude opposition MPs".

"The Congress party is proud of the most degrading behaviour by their MPs. If we had not stopped all the BJP MPs and allowed the women MPs



to confront the Congress MPs, it would have led to very ugly scenes. We have very high consideration to protect the dignity and sanctity of Parliament," he told reporters here.

The parliamentary affairs minister accused the opposition MPs of disrupting proceedings in an unprecedented manner and claimed that the BJP and NDA MPs were very angry because of the behaviour of their Congress counterparts.

"The Congress MPs crossed

the treasury benches and even reached the prime minister's seat. The Congress has shown no respect for the dignity of the House.

"The fact is, they are celebrating on their social media accounts, claiming that women MPs scared the prime minister. This is utterly shameful," he said.

Rijiju said the BJP women MPs have submitted a letter to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla against the behaviour of the Congress members. He said the

Congress MPs even crossed the bench where the prime minister sits and went inside a few rows of the treasury benches and almost laid siege on the entire area.

"We had to control the BJP and NDA MPs. The BJP women MPs were very agitated at this behaviour of the Congress MPs.

"We stopped our MPs from physical confrontation. After that, these opposition MPs went to the speaker's chamber and threatened the speaker. The BJP women MPs have submitted a petition. Let us see how the speaker acts and what steps he takes," he said.

The BJP's women MPs, in a letter, have urged the Lok Sabha speaker to take the strongest possible action against the opposition MPs who have committed "heinous acts" like moving deep inside treasury benches, climbing the table and laying a siege on the prime minister's seat.

The Lok Sabha has been witnessing disruptions since February 2, after Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was disallowed by the chair from quoting from

an article based on excerpts of former Army chief M M Naravane's "unpublished memoir", which has references to the India-China conflict of 2020.

On February 4, Prime Minister Modi could not reply to the debate on the Motion of Thanks due to opposition protests. In an unprecedented move, the Motion of Thanks was passed on February 5 without the customary speech by the prime minister. The speaker read out the Motion of Thanks to the President for her address, and it was passed by a voice vote amid sloganeering by opposition members.

Birla said he received concrete information that many Congress MPs could carry out an "unexpected act" by reaching the spot where PM Modi sits and, therefore, he asked him not to come to the House to deliver his address.

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra refuted this.

Eight opposition members were suspended for the remainder of the Budget session for unruly behaviour in the House.

Silver dips Rs 7,500 to Rs 2.64 lakh per kg; gold rises by Rs 2,200

PTI

New Delhi, Feb 10: Silver prices declined by Rs 7,500 or nearly 3 per cent to Rs 2.64 lakh per kg in the national capital on Tuesday, while gold prices appreciated by Rs 2,200 per 10 grams amid a firm US dollar.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the white metal dropped Rs 7,500 to Rs 2,64,500 per kg (inclusive of all taxes) from Monday's closing of Rs 2,72,000 per kg.

On the other hand, gold of 99.9 per cent purity appreciated by Rs 2,200, or 1.4 per cent, to Rs 1,60,700 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes). It had settled at Rs 1,58,500 per 10 grams in the previous market session.

Traders said gold extended its gains for the second consecutive session amid sustained buying by the jewellers and investors.

"Gold traded with modest gains on Tuesday while traders were awaiting fresh macroeconomic cues," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst, Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

He added that gold and silver prices fluctuate within a broader range as markets move into a consolidation phase in the near term.

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SC seeks response of 17 states on MHA's proposal to set up special NIA courts



PTI

New Delhi, Feb 10: The Supreme Court on Tuesday issued notices to 17 states, including Delhi, Gujarat and Maharashtra, to ensure the setting up of special NIA courts in states where 10 or more cases are pending trial under anti-terror laws.

A bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant sought responses from the states after the Union home ministry submitted a comprehensive status report, saying it has mooted a proposal to set up special courts in states where 10 or more cases probed by the National Investigation Agency are pending trial.

The bench, also comprising Justices Joymalya Bagchi and N V Anjaria, took note of the submissions of Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the Centre, that the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has finalised norms to provide financial assistance for these special courts.

According to the MHA report, the Centre will provide a one-time grant of Rs 1 crore for non-recurring expenditure and Rs 1 crore per annum for recurring expenditure for each exclusive special court. These funds will cover infrastructure renovation, IT equipment, vehicles, and staff salaries, the report said.

Taking note of the submissions, the bench asked the chief secretaries of the 17 states to respond within three weeks to the report to formalise the setting up of the special courts to ensure speedy trial and justice in such cases. It said a delay in trial leads to injustice if an

accused is acquitted after a prolonged trial.

The law officer also said that 16 special courts under different special laws are being established at the Rouse Avenue Court Complex in the national capital.

The report said these courts, dedicated to special statutes, including the NIA Act, UAPA, and NDPS, are expected to be ready for operation by April 2026. It said the Delhi High Court has confirmed that judicial officers from the Delhi Higher Judicial Service are available to preside over these courts.

The report said that in Bihar, the court of the District and Additional Sessions Judge-XV, Patna, was officially designated as an exclusive NIA court as per the January 8 notification. It also said that exclusive NIA courts have already been designated in Jammu and Ranchi.

In Maharashtra, the Court of Sessions at City Civil Court, Bombay, has been operationalised as an exclusive NIA court since March 2025, the report states.

It indicates that Delhi has the highest number of pending cases at 59, followed by Jammu and Kashmir (38), Assam (33), Gujarat (33), and Kerala (33).

The Supreme Court bench said it will hear aspects related to the setting up of other special courts after three weeks.

On December 16, 2025, the Centre told the top court that to ensure a speedy trial, it has decided to set up a dedicated NIA court in each state and Union territory and more than one court at places where there are over 10 cases under anti-terror laws.

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Source: The Indian Practitioner

Social media 'addicting brains of children,' plaintiff's lawyer argues in landmark trial

AP

Los Angeles, Feb 10: Comparing social media platforms to casinos and addictive drugs, lawyer Mark Lanier delivered opening statements on Monday in a landmark trial in Los Angeles that seeks to hold Instagram owner Meta and Google's YouTube responsible for harms to children who use their products.

Instagram's parent company, Meta and Google's YouTube face claims that their platforms addict children through deliberate design choices that keep kids glued to their screens. TikTok and Snap, which were originally named in the lawsuit, settled for undisclosed sums.

Jurors got their first glimpse into what will be a lengthy trial characterised by duelling narratives from the plaintiffs and the two remaining defendants.

Meta lawyer Paul Schmidt spoke of the disagreement within the scientific community over social media addiction, with some researchers believing it doesn't exist or that addiction is not the most appropriate way to describe heavy social media use. Lawyers representing YouTube will begin their opening statement on Tuesday.

Adding the brains of children'

Lanier, the plaintiff's lawyer, delivered lively first remarks where he said the case will be as "easy as ABC" — which stands for "addicting the brains of children." He said Meta and Google, "two of the richest



corporations in history," have "engineered addiction in children's brains."

He presented jurors with a slew of internal emails, documents and studies conducted by Meta and YouTube, as well as YouTube's parent company, Google. He emphasised the findings of a study Meta conducted called "Project Myst", in which they surveyed 1,000 teens and their parents about their social media use. The two major findings, Lanier said, were that Meta knew children who experienced "adverse events" like trauma and stress were particularly vulnerable to addiction; and that parental supervision and controls made little impact.

He also highlighted internal Google documents that likened some company products to a casino, and

internal communication between Meta employees in which one person said Instagram is "like a drug" and they are "basically pushers."

At the core of the Los Angeles case is a 20-year-old identified only by the initials "KGM," whose case could determine how thousands of other, similar lawsuits against social media companies will play out. She and two other plaintiffs have been selected for bellwether trials — essentially test cases for both sides to see how their arguments play out before a jury.

Plaintiff grew up using YouTube and Instagram

KGM made a brief appearance after a break during Lanier's statement, and she will return to testify later in the trial. Lanier spent time describing KGM's childhood, focusing

particularly on what her personality was like before she began using social media. She started using YouTube at age 6 and Instagram at age 9, Lanier said. Before she graduated from elementary school, she had posted 284 videos on YouTube.

The outcome of the trial could have profound effects on the companies' businesses and how they will handle children using their platforms.

Lanier said the companies' lawyers will "try to blame the little girl and her parents for the trap they built," referencing the plaintiff. She was a minor when she said she became addicted to social media, which she claims had a detrimental impact on her mental health.

Lanier said that despite the public position of Meta and YouTube being that they work to protect children, their internal documents show an entirely different position, with explicit references to young children being listed as their target audiences.

The attorney also drew comparisons between the social media companies and tobacco firms, citing internal communication between Meta employees who were concerned about the company's lack of proactive action about the potential harm their platforms can have on children and teens.

"For a teenager, social validation is survival," Lanier said. The defendants "engineered a feature that caters to a minor's craving for social validation," he added, speaking about "like" buttons and similar features.

Meta pushes back

In his opening statement representing Meta, Schmidt said the core question in the case is whether the platforms were a substantial factor in KGM's mental health struggles. He spent much of his time going through the plaintiff's health records, emphasising that she had experienced many difficult circumstances in her childhood, including emotional abuse, body image issues and bullying.

Schmidt presented a clip from a video deposition from one of KGM's mental health providers, Dr Thomas Suberman, who said social media was "not the through-line of what I recall being her main issues," adding that her struggles seemed to largely stem from interpersonal conflicts and relationships. He painted a picture — with KGM's own text messages and testimony pointing to a volatile home life — of a particularly troubled relationship with her mother.

Schmidt acknowledged that many mental health professionals do believe social media addiction can exist, but said three of KGM's providers — all of whom believe in the form of addiction — have never diagnosed her with it, or treated her for it.

Schmidt emphasised to the jurors that the case is not about whether social media is a good thing or whether teens spend too much time on their phones or whether the jurors like or dislike Meta, but whether social media was a substantial factor in KGM's mental health struggles.

A reckoning for social media and

youth harms

A slew of trials beginning this year seek to hold social media companies responsible for harming children's mental well-being. Executives, including Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg, are expected to testify at the Los Angeles trial, which will last six to eight weeks. Experts have drawn similarities to the Big Tobacco trials that led to a 1998 settlement requiring cigarette companies to pay billions in health care costs and restrict marketing targeting minors.

A separate trial in New Mexico, meanwhile, also kicked off with opening statements on Monday. In that trial, Meta is accused of failing to protect young users from sexual exploitation, following an undercover online investigation. Attorney General Raul Torrez in late 2023 sued Meta and Zuckerberg, who was later dropped from the suit.

A federal bellwether trial beginning in June in Oakland, California, will be the first to represent school districts that have sued social media platforms over harms to children.

In addition, more than 40 state attorneys general have filed lawsuits against Meta, claiming it is harming young people and contributing to the youth mental health crisis by deliberately designing features on Instagram and Facebook that addict children to its platforms. The majority of cases filed their lawsuits in federal court, but some sued in their respective states.

TikTok also faces similar lawsuits in more than a dozen states.

NZ openers Seifert, Allen blow UAE away with record-breaking stand in T20 WC

PTI

Chennai, Feb 10: The New Zealand opening pair of Tim Seifert and Finn Allen went on a rampage against the UAE bowling attack to make short work of the 174-run target, firing the Blacks Caps to a 10-wicket win in the T20 World Cup here on Tuesday.

The UAE did well to post 173 for six, their highest total in tournament history following fine fifties captain Muhammad Waseem (66 not out off 45) and Alishan Sharafu (55 off 4) at the top of the order.

However, the destructive duo of Allen (84 not out off 50) and Seifert (89 not out off 42) ran riot on a red soil pitch to fashion a 10-wicket victory for their team. Their 175-run stand off 92



balls was the highest for any wicket in tournament history as New Zealand coasted to the win in 15.2 overs.

It was the first game of the tournament for UAE who would need to go back to the drawing board after the hammering at Chepauk. New

Zealand, eliminated early in the previous edition, have fired warning shots to rival teams with two emphatic wins in as many games.

Barring left-arm spinner Haider Ali, none of the UAE bowlers were able to contain Seifert and Allen who scored boundaries at will.

The game was as good as done when New Zealand raced to 119 for no loss in 10 overs.

The standout shots of Seifert's innings were the reverse sweeps off Haider in the 11th over, fetching him a six and four.

Allen tore into medium pacer Junaid Siddique early on the innings as he shuffled across the stumps to scoop him for a six over fine leg.

Lavrov accuses US of trying to prevent India and others from buying Russian oil

PTI

Moscow, Feb 10: Russia has accused the US of attempting to prevent India and other countries from buying Russian oil, saying Washington is using a wide range of "coercive" measures, including tariffs, sanctions and direct prohibitions, to fulfil its objective of global economic dominance.

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov also accused the US of using "unfair methods" to suppress competitors by imposing sanctions on Russian oil companies.

"(The US) is attempting to control our trade, investment cooperation, and military-technical ties with major strategic partners, such as India and other BRICS members," Lavrov said in an interview with TV BRICS on Monday.



He said that the West is reluctant to relinquish its formerly dominant positions. "With the arrival of the (US President Donald) Trump administration, this struggle to suppress competitors became particularly pronounced and open," he said.

Lavrov said that Russia accepted America's proposal on Ukraine during the Alaska talks between President Vladimir Putin and his US counterpart Trump last year.

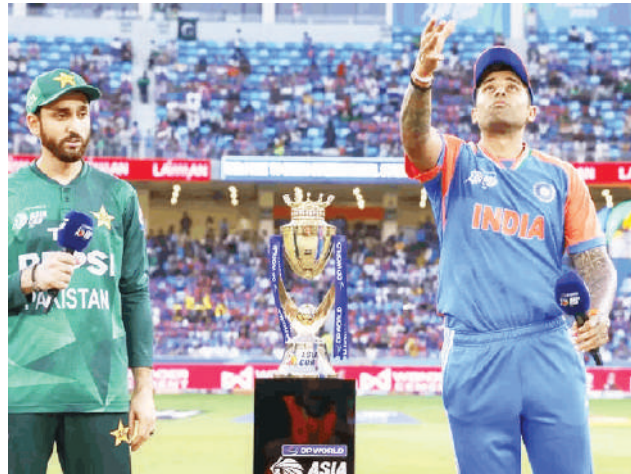
"We were told that the Ukrainian

issue must be resolved. In Anchorage, we accepted the United States' proposal. To put it straightforwardly, they proposed, and we agreed - the problem should be solved," he said.

"Having accepted their proposals, we essentially fulfilled the task of resolving the Ukrainian issue and moving toward comprehensive, broad, mutually beneficial cooperation," he added.

"In practice, however, the opposite occurs: new sanctions are imposed, attacks on tankers are staged in international waters in violation of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, and India and other partners are discouraged from purchasing affordable Russian energy, while Europe has long prohibited such purchases, forcing them to buy American liquefied natural gas at significantly higher prices.

'Concessions given to PCB by ICC for ending boycott will be made public post T20WC'



PTI

Karachi, Feb 10: The ICC has promised a few concessions to the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) for ending its boycott of the India game but those will only be announced after the conclusion of the T20 World Cup, a source said on Tuesday.

"Whatever concessions the PCB has got from the ICC on ending their boycott will only be made public after the end of T20 World Cup," a PCB source told PTI on Tuesday.

The ICC has already announced that Bangladesh Cricket Board will not face any sanctions from the global body and will also be given an ICC event in the 2028-2031 cycle (preferably U19 men's World Cup).

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced that

the national would boycott the T20 World Cup group league match against India in Colombo on February 15 in solidarity with Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), who were replaced after refusing to play their matches in India citing security reasons.

After hectic parleys and back-channel talks which also included intervention from Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Disinayake and the Bangladesh Cricket Board, which requested Shabbaz Sharif to change their stance keeping broader interests in mind, the boycott did end on Monday night.

"The call from Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Disinayake played a big part in ending the boycott as did a briefing from some top people in the government/establishment who have been closely

following the developments," another source informed.

The PCB has now also been given clearance to play India if both countries have to face off again in the latter stages of the World Cup.

Another source said that the Prime Minister who is also patron in chief of the PCB was in fact briefed on what Pakistan could achieve if the government issued a notification for not playing against India.

"The ICC now has a clear understanding with Naqvi that no further details of the discussions that took place with PCB, Bangladesh Cricket Board and some other boards would be made public," the source said.

While ICC in its statement on Monday confirmed that Bangladesh would not be sanctioned for their stance, it had no mention of what would PCB stand to gain from ending the impasse. There have been speculations about Naqvi pushing for an increase in the share of revenues the PCB gets from the ICC but another insider confirmed this would only be after approval from the ICC board for the next financial cycle.

He said during discussions Naqvi had made the point that there was no reason for Pakistan and India not to play home and away matches in the ICC World Test Championship at neutral venues as they were already playing in other ICC white ball events.

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Movies Watchlist
Wednesday, 11th February

BORDER 2 (U/A 13+)
HINDI - 10:45 AM, 03:00 PM, 06:30 PM

MARDAANI 3 (U/A 16+)
HINDI - 11:30 AM, 06:00 PM

BHABHI GHAR PAR HAIN - FUN ON THE RUN (UA 16+)
HINDI - 06:55 PM

DEVDAAS RE-RELEASE
HINDI - 02:10 PM

DHURANDHAR (A)
HINDI - 11:00 AM, 02:30 PM

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