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Nation remembers Pulwama martyrs on 7th anniversary

Every Indian draws strength from their enduring courage: PM Modi

Sacrifices will never be forgotten: HM | Rajnath reaffirms anti-terror resolve | Their service to motherland inspiring: LG Sinha | CRPF visits site, pledges support to families

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Feb 14: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and leaders across the political spectrum on Saturday paid rich tributes to the 40 CRPF personnel who lost their lives in the 2019 Pulwama terror attack, saying their sacrifice continues to inspire the nation.

In a post on X, PM Modi, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) remembered the slain jawans and said their devotion and courage remain etched in the country's collective consciousness.

"Remembering the brave heroes who laid down their lives in Pulwama on this day in 2019. Their devotion, resolve and service to the nation remain forever etched in our collective consciousness. Every Indian draws strength from their enduring courage," he said.

Vice President C. P. Radhakrishnan also paid homage to the personnel, stating that their supreme sacrifice would



forever remain in the nation's memory. "I pay homage to the brave personnel who laid down their lives in the Pulwama terror attack. Their supreme sacrifice will forever remain etched in the nation's memory and continues to inspire us to build a strong and secure India," he said.

Paying tributes to the slain CRPF personnel Union Home Minister Amit Shah in a post on X, said the dedication of the security forces continues to inspire the country and reaffirmed the government's

resolve to root out terrorism in all its forms. "The sacrifices of the personnel would never be forgotten," he added.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said the nation stood united in honouring the memory of the CRPF personnel and in solidarity with their families. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to combating terrorism in all its forms and ensuring the country's safety and security.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar remembered the fallen jawans and said their

sacrifice strengthened India's resolve to pursue zero tolerance against cross-border terrorism.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha while paying tributes to the CRPF personnel who lost their lives on this day in 2019 wrote on X: "Humble tributes to the valiant martyrs who made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty during the dastardly terrorist attack in Pulwama in 2019. Their unwavering commitment, unparalleled bravery and selfless service to the motherland will forever inspire every citizen."

A wreath-laying ceremony was held at Lethpora in South Kashmir's Pulwama district to mark the anniversary of the attack in which 40 CRPF personnel lost their lives when a suicide bomber targeted their convoy on February 14, 2019. Senior officials of the CRPF, civil administration and security forces participated in the ceremony.

The CRPF, in a post on X, recalled the valour and devotion of its personnel and said the force stands firmly with the families of | [More on P6](#)

Technology, organic farming key to boosting rural economy: CM Omar

Urges value addition, branding, better market linkages to improve farmers' income, competitiveness

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Feb 14: Stating that technology-driven and organic farming solutions are essential for strengthening the rural economy Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Saturday said that government is putting in every effort to improve the rural economy of Jammu and Kashmir.

Addressing a function after inaugurating the GON'GUL-2026—the 11th AgriTech Mela—at the Shalimar campus of Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir, CM Omar, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "The government has placed special focus on the rural economy in the recent budget, prioritising sectors such as agriculture, horticulture, livestock, fisheries, floriculture and dairy."

"We are trying our best to improve the rural economy of Jammu and Kashmir. In the last few days, you must have seen that special emphasis



has been laid on agriculture and allied sectors," he added.

The Chief Minister said institutions like SKUAST-K and its counterpart in Jammu and Kashmir must enhance both the quality and quantity of its agricultural produce. He stressed the need for value addition, branding and stronger market linkages to ensure better returns for farmers.

Highlighting the significance of the GON'GUL festival, now in its 11th edition, he said the mela provides an important platform for farmers to interact | [More on P6](#)

growth through innovation and government-backed programmes.

To compete at the global level, CM Omar said Jammu and Kashmir must enhance both the quality and quantity of its agricultural produce. He stressed the need for value addition, branding and stronger market linkages to ensure better returns for farmers.

Highlighting the significance of the GON'GUL festival, now in its 11th edition, he said the mela provides an important platform for farmers to interact | [More on P6](#)

5-year-old boy dies after fall at home

KNO Correspondent

Srinagar, Feb 14: A five-year-old boy died after falling from a height inside his residence in the Bemina area of Srinagar on Saturday, officials said.

An official told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), that the minor sustained critical injuries in the fall and was rushed to SMHS Hospital, where doctors declared him brought dead.

The deceased was identified as Daniyal Sheikh, son of Parveez Ahmad Sheikh, a resident of Bemina.

Police have taken cognisance of the incident and initiated an investigation. (KNO)

CRPF duty-bound to wipe out terrorism: DG Singh

Says committed to welfare of Pulwama martyrs' families, pays homage to 40 personnel



Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Feb 14: Paying rich tributes to the 40 personnel killed in the 2019 Pulwama

terror attack, Director General of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) GP Singh on Saturday said that paramilitary force is | [More on P6](#)

2019 Pulwama Attack Anniversary

Terrorism 'greatest enemy of humanity'; India determined to wipe it off: Amit Shah

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Feb 14: As the country marked the seventh anniversary of the 2019 Pulwama terror attack, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday reiterated that terrorism is the "greatest enemy of humanity" and India remains firmly committed to eliminating the menace.

Paying homage to the 40 CRPF martyrs, who laid down their lives in the line of duty, Shah, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "The nation will always remain



indebted to the courage and sacrifice of security forces who confront terrorism."

In a post on X, he said the dedication of the security forces continues to inspire the country and reaffirmed the government's resolve to root

out terrorism in all its forms.

"Terrorism is the greatest enemy of humanity, and India is firmly determined to eradicate it completely," Shah said, adding that the sacrifices of the personnel would not be forgotten.

Pertinently, the Pulwama attack took place on February 14, 2019, when a suicide bomber affiliated with Pakistan-based terror outfit JeM rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into a bus carrying CRPF personnel on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway. The attack killed 40 personnel | [More on P6](#)

LG, CM extend Mahashivratri, Herath greetings

KT News Desk

Jammu, Feb 14: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah have extended heartfelt greetings to the people on the auspicious occasion of Mahashivratri, which will be celebrated today (February 15).

In his message, the Lieutenant Governor said: "On the sacred occasion of Mahashivratri, I extend my heartfelt greetings and best wishes to all. I pray for the health, happiness, and prosperity of every citizen."

The sacred festival, celebrated as 'Herath' by Kashmiri Pandit community, is a symbol of our spiritual | [More on P6](#)

Dir DIPR calls for ethics in evolving media landscape

Says accuracy, fairness, objectivity more important than ever

KT News Desk

Jammu, Feb 14: The Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) on Saturday organised a day-long workshop on 'Ethical Journalism and the Evolving Landscape of Journalism', for media persons of Jammu at Media Complex here.

The objective of the workshop was to sensitise the media professionals and communication practitioners about the changing dynamics of journalism and the critical importance of ethical standards in the present digital age.

During the workshop,



Regional Director IIMC Jammu, Dr. Dilip Kumar and Assistant Professor, Vishav were the resource persons.

The resource persons

enlightened the participants on emerging trends in journalism, challenges posed by misinformation, and the growing influence of digital platforms

on news consumption and dissemination. They also spoke in length about the ethics in journalism and importance of ethical journalism in view of rising AI use in Journalism as well as digital journalism.

Speaking on the occasion, Director Information, Nitish Rajora highlighted the vital responsibility of journalists in the present scenario, stressing that the role of the media extends beyond reporting facts to shaping informed, balanced and responsible public opinion.

"Journalists today operate in a fast-paced environment, where information travels instantly. This | [More on P6](#)

Rs 40 cr heroin seized in suspected drone drop near IB

KT News Desk

Jammu, Feb 14: As part of breakthrough against cross-border drug trafficking, Jammu Police in joint operation with 165 Battalion BSF recovered 6.582 kilograms of heroin worth approximately rupees 40 crore from wheat fields in the R S Pura sector near the International Border.

The narcotics, suspected to have been dropped by a drone from across the border, were seized during a late-night cordon and search operation on February 13-14, 2026.

In a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer | [More on P6](#)

With 28% transition gap, J&K battles to retain kids in schools

Riyaz Bhat

Srinagar, Feb 14: With nearly 28 percent of students in Jammu and Kashmir failing to transition from secondary to higher secondary level, the retention rate post 8th standard poses a real challenge for the School Education Department in ensuring the consistency of the learners.

According to the official figures available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the transition rates have improved significantly with 94.8 percent transition from primary to upper primary and 90.7 percent from

elementary to secondary levels.

The documents further reveal that the J&K was facing a transition rate of 72.9 percent from secondary to higher secondary and Gross Access Ratio remains above 98 percent across stages.

Besides, the figures further reveal that literacy has improved significantly from 11.03 percent in 1961 to 68.74 percent in 2011.

"Gender inclusion has strengthened, with the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of girls exceeding overall averages at 114.5 at primary, 80.0 at upper primary, and 67.5 at secondary levels in 2024-25, reflecting the success of | [More on P6](#)

Deputy CM conducts surprise inspection of Govt offices in Jammu areas

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 14: Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary on Saturday conducted surprise inspections of various government offices in Satwari, Akhnoor and Sunderbani to review administrative functioning and public service delivery.

During his visit to the SDM Office in Akhnoor, the Deputy Chief Minister, as per an official statement, took stock of the overall functioning there. He emphasized the need for greater efficiency, transparency and prompt grievance redressal to ensure better governance and responsive administration.

He also undertook a surprise inspection of the PWD (R&B) Division and Sub-Division offices in Akhnoor. He evaluated the performance standards and functioning of the departments. He directed the officers to maintain transparency in works execution and ensure time-bound completion of the projects.

Later, at the PWD Guest House in Sunderbani, the Deputy Chief Minister interacted with several delegations and individuals who



apprised him of various issues and development concerns.

Senior PWD officers were also present during the interaction who had detailed discussion on addressing the grievances raised by the public.

While reviewing the functioning of offices across the inspected areas, the Deputy Chief Minister laid special emphasis

on seamless service delivery to the general public. He called for strict adherence to duty rosters and timely execution of official responsibilities.

Cautioning the officials against dereliction of duty and unauthorized absence, he warned that strict action would be initiated against those found neglecting their responsibilities. Reiterating

the government's commitment towards accountable and people-centric governance, the Deputy Chief Minister directed the officers to work with dedication to ensure that public services are delivered efficiently and without delay.

Later, the Deputy Chief Minister visited the BDO Office Lamberi and chaired a meeting there. He also inspected the construction site of the 100-bedded Mother and Child Healthcare Hospital at Lamberi. He emphasized timely completion of the project to further strengthen healthcare services for mothers and children in the region.

He also visited the under-construction motorable bridge, approach road from Bagnoti to Dabber. He asked the officers for speedy work execution and timely completion. The Deputy Chief Minister interacted with the people of Bagnoti Lamberi. He assured them that their genuine issues shall be taken up with the concerned offices for timely resolution.

Various senior officers attended the meeting and also accompanied the Deputy Chief Minister during the inspections to various government offices.

Nasir Aslam Wani attends funeral of senior NC leader in Kargil

KT NEWS DESK

Srinagar, 14 Feb: Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Senior leader and Advisor to the Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani along with Provincial President Kashmir Showkat Mir, attended the Namaz-e-Janaza of senior party leader, Additional General Secretary and former Cabinet Minister Qamar Ali Akhooon at his native village Sangrah Sankoo in district Kargil.

On the occasion, Nasir, as per an official statement, addressed the gathering, remembering Late Akhoo's lifelong service, humility and unwavering commitment to the people of Karil. He also remembered with fondness and deep admiration his contribution to the governance and administration of J&K. Leaders expressed solidarity with the bereaved family and prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul.

Later, both Nasir Sogami and Showkat Mir visited Qazigund and conveyed heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family including MLA Devsar Peerzada Faroz. They remembered Peerzada Gh Ahmad Shah as a towering politician who was humble and connected to roots. "His contribution as Forest Minister will remain unparalleled," Nasir said. They offered feteha and prayed for peace to the departed soul and strength to the family to bear the loss.

SANJY-2026: DC Bandipora reviews arrangements at Shadipora Transit Camp



KT NEWS DESK

BANDIPORA, FEBRUARY 14: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, on Saturday conducted a spot inspection of arrangements at Shadipora Transit Camp in preparation for the upcoming

Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY) 2026.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner took a first-hand assessment of the infrastructure, facilities, and essential services being developed at the transit camp for the convenience of Yatris

proceeding towards the holy cave via the Baltal route. She reviewed the pace and quality of ongoing works and inspected various arrangements finalized for the smooth and efficient conduct of the Yatra.

Emphasizing timely completion of all preparatory measures, the DC stressed the importance of ensuring a safe, comfortable, and hassle-free experience for the pilgrims. She directed the concerned departments to work in close coordination and maintain high standards of sanitation, potable water supply, uninterrupted power, accommodation, medical facilities, and other essential services at the transit camp.

On the occasion, the DC directed all line departments to function in synergy and ensure that all infrastructure and support services are put in place well ahead of the commencement of the Yatra.

DC Anantnag chairs Gram Diwas at Sheikhgund

KT NEWS DESK

ANANTNAG, FEBRUARY 14: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, SF Hamid, Saturday conducted a Gram Diwas and public grievance redressal programme at Government Middle School, Sheikhgund, Shangus.

Addressing the gathering, the DC, as per an official statement, congratulated the residents and noted with pride that Sheikhgund was recently mentioned by the Hon'ble Prime Minister in the 130th episode of 'Mann Ki Baat' on 25th January, acknowledging the village's collective resolve against drug abuse and tobacco consumption. The recognition at the national level, he observed, has infused renewed motivation among residents and has encouraged other areas of the district to undertake similar grassroots initiatives.

He further congratulated social activists of Sheikhgund for their exemplary efforts under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA). He stated that the village has set a benchmark in community-led social reform and is now inspiring other villages and panchayats to initiate similar movements towards a drug-free society.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner also inaugurated the Social Reform Movement Kashmir and felicitated social activists, teachers, and local youth for their outstanding contributions towards social reform and community service, particularly in the fight against drug abuse.

Responding to the suggestion about community development, the Deputy



Commissioner reiterated the commitment of the district administration towards time-bound and transparent resolution of all genuine public demands.

Emphasising youth empowerment, the DC directed the concerned departments to organise a Mission YUVA camp in the village next week, with participation from departments such as Horticulture, Agriculture, and Banking institutions to ensure that eligible youth are facilitated under self-employment and livelihood schemes. He further stated that the proposal for establishing a handicraft/handloom training centre for female artisans would be explored in consultation with the competent authorities.

The programme was attended by the Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD), Block Development Officer (BDO), Child Development Project Officer (CDPO), Assistant Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti, Tehsil Social Welfare Officer (TSWO), and officers and officials from various line departments, besides residents and representatives of social organisations.

DC Pulwama reviews Ramadan arrangements

KT NEWS DESK

PULWAMA, FEBRUARY 14: Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom, on Saturday chaired a meeting at the Administrative Complex Pulwama to review and finalise arrangements aimed at facilitating the smooth observance of the Holy month of Ramadan.

Addressing the meeting, the DC highlighted the need for coordinated and comprehensive measures to ensure public convenience throughout the holy month. He stated that it is the responsibility of all officers to ensure seamless delivery of essential services and prompt grievance redressal during Ramadan.

During the meeting, the DC, as per an official statement, laid special emphasis on ensuring uninterrupted power supply during the peak hours of Sehri and Iftar. He sought a detailed action plan from the KPDCL to ensure zero curtailment during these hours and directed that distribution transformers, in case of any damage, be replaced on the same day to avoid inconvenience to the public.

Dr. Qayoom also reviewed the status of water supply schemes across the district. He was informed that all schemes are fully functional and that water tankers have been kept in readiness to meet any exigency. The DC directed the Jal Shakti Department to ensure regular monitoring of supply and immediate response to any disruption.

Calling market inspections critical during the holy month, he directed that joint teams comprising Revenue, Food Safety, Municipality, CAPD, Legal Metrology and Police shall carry out daily inspections in major markets with focus on quality adherence, prevention of overpricing and safeguarding consumer rights. He further directed the concerned authorities to submit daily reports regarding the status of inspection drives conducted.

Sakeena Itoo visits Qazigund, condoles former minister's demise

KT NEWS DESK

KULGAM, FEBRUARY 14: Minister for Health & Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education Sakeena Itoo on Saturday visited Qazigund and met the family members of former Minister Peerzada Ghulam Ahmad Shah to offer solidarity and condolences on his demise.

During the visit, Minister Sakeena, as per an official statement, interacted with the bereaved family members, sharing their grief and expressed solidarity with them. She also recalled the significant contributions of the late leader towards public service and development of the region, stating that his commitment and dedication will always be remembered.

She expressed profound grief over the loss and prayed for his magfirat and highest place in Jannat. She also prayed for strength to the family members to bear this loss with courage and fortitude.



UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR. PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND MONITORING

DEPARTMENT Civil Secretarial J&K. NOTIFICATION

Jammu, the 11th February, 2026

S.O 38: In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (ia) of Rule 8 of the Census Rules 1990, the Government of Jammu and Kashmir hereby republish the Notification S.O.353 (E) dated 22nd January, 2026 issued by the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India, Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, appended to this notification for information of General Public.

By order of the Government of Jammu and Kashmir.

**Sd/-
Financial Commissioner (ACS)
Planning Development & Monitoring Department**

No. PDMD-CSSs/2/2026-13 (7718942)

Dated: 11.02.2026

DIPK-10928/25

Dated: 14-02-2026

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD (R&B) DIVISION QAZIGUND. CANCELLATION

Subject: - Construction of GT at MS Shistergam. (item No.03 Only)

The tenders invited vide this office NIT No.50 OF QAZIGUND/2025-26 JE- TENDERING/5157-71 DATED: 07-02-2026 for item No.03 is hereby cancelled due to administrative reasons.

No: R&B/QZD/25-26/5275-77

Dated: 13/02/2026

DIPK-10941/25

DATED: 14-02-2026

**Executive Engineer
PWD R&B Division Qazigund**

Winter carnival in Durban to begin tomorrow

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, Feb 14: Shopian is all set to host the second edition of the much-anticipated Winter Carnival at Dubjan Meadow on Monday. According to the details available, the event is being organized by the Tourism Department in collaboration with the Shopian administration. It aims to boost winter tourism in the region by highlighting the natural beauty and rich cultural heritage of South Kashmir. Surrounded by snow-covered landscapes, Dubjan is expected to transform into a vibrant hub of celebration, adventure, and tradition for the day-long carnival.

An Official of the Tourism Department told KNO that the carnival will offer a wide range of attractions including snow activities, fun-filled snow games, colourful cultural performances,



traditional Kashmiri music, local cuisine stalls, departmental exhibitions, and various recreational events. "The objective is not only to attract tourists during the winter season but also to create livelihood opportunities for local artists, artisans and vendors," he said. "Dubjan has immense tourism potential, especially in winter, and such initiatives help put it on the tourism map," the official added.

Locals are eagerly awaiting the festival, calling it a much-needed push for the area's economy. "We are very happy that the government is focusing on Dubjan. During winters, business usually slows down, but such carnivals bring visitors and help us earn," said Ghulam Hassan, a tea stall owner from a nearby village.

Another resident, Farooq Ahmad, who runs a small handicraft shop, said the carnival provides a rare platform for locals to showcase

their products. "Tourists love our handmade items and local food. Events like this help preserve our culture while supporting our families," he added. Young residents are equally excited about the snow sports and cultural programs. "We usually travel far to enjoy winter festivals. Having one here in Shopian is special and will attract people from other districts too," said college student Aijaz Ahmad.

The district administration has assured adequate arrangements regarding safety, traffic management, and basic facilities to ensure a smooth and enjoyable experience for visitors. With scenic snowfall, cultural vibrancy, and community participation, the Dubjan Winter Carnival is expected to emerge as a signature winter tourism event in Shopian, strengthening the region's growing reputation as a year-round tourist destination—(KNO)

DM Kathua extends border restrictions to 5 Km zone



KNO

Jammu, Feb 14: Amid heightened security concerns along the International Border (IB), the District Magistrate Kathua has issued fresh orders limiting non-essential movement in a 5-kilometre strip adjacent to the border.

According to the details available, District Magistrate Rajesh Sharma invoked Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) to enforce these preventive measures, aimed at averting risks to public safety, countering potential cross-border shelling, and blocking any anti-national elements.

Pertinently, the order highlights the fragile

security environment in the border region, where sporadic firing from across the border remains a credible threat.

To prioritize the protection of local residents and maintain peace, unnecessary travel has been curtailed in the specified zone under the Border Security Force (BSF)'s jurisdiction, stretching from Border Outpost (BOP) Paharpur to BOP Karol Krishna.

Additionally, the movement of heavy vehicles—such as trucks, tippers, and multi-axle carriers—has been banned on the old Samba-Kathua road from 9 pm to 6 am to further reduce vulnerabilities during nighttime hours.

These curbs took effect immediately on February

14, 2026, and will continue for the next 60 days, or until withdrawn sooner. Violations could lead to legal consequences under Section 223 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. Speaking to reporters, DM Sharma clarified that this is a renewal and update of previous restrictions, which had lapsed on the same day.

The key change involves expanding the restricted belt from the earlier 2 km to the current 5 km, reflecting an assessment of ongoing sensitivities in the area.

The measure underscores the administration's proactive approach to safeguarding border villages amid persistent cross-border tensions—(KNO)

Littering chokes water bodies in Zainapora

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Shopian, Feb 14: Continuous littering along water bodies has choked many streams and drains in the Zainapora area of south Kashmir's Shopian district, with residents and environmentalists expressing serious concern.

People from different villages of the subdivision said that indiscriminate dumping of waste into and along water bodies has become a common practice, resulting in blockages and pollution.

Residents say unchecked dumping has turned many scenic spots into garbage sites, contaminating water sources used for irrigation and daily needs.

"People throw plastic bags and garbage directly into streams. During rains, it spreads everywhere, blocking drains and polluting fields," said a local shopkeeper. "Government action is necessary, but public awareness is equally important."

Environmental activists in Shopian have long raised concerns over the growing plastic menace, warning that polythene waste not only harms soil fertility but also poses serious threats to livestock and aquatic life.

Amid reports of plastic waste, diapers, animal dung, and household refuse increasingly being dumped along roadsides and into streams, the local administration in Zainapora has launched a renewed cleanliness drive, urging residents to take responsibility for protecting the environment.

In a public notice, the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) of Zainapora called upon people across all villages of the subdivision to immediately remove waste from their neighbourhoods, homes, lanes, roads, drains, and open spaces. The notice



specifically mentioned polythene bags, disposable diapers, sewage waste, animal waste, and other harmful materials often seen scattered in public areas and dumped into water channels, a practice that has led to severe pollution and growing health risks.

"Every conscious citizen must understand their environmental responsibility and cooperate fully in keeping the surroundings clean and healthy," the administration stated, warning that anyone found contributing to environmental pollution would face strict legal action.

Officials said that cleanliness is not just a government duty but a collective responsibility of society. "Without public cooperation, no campaign can succeed. People must stop treating roads and water bodies as dumping sites," an official said.

Authorities added that inspections will be intensified in the coming days, and violators will be penalised under relevant laws to curb pollution and restore environmental hygiene across the region—(KNO)

Sonamarg poised to be next winter tourism hub: Dir Tourism

WARIS FAYAZ/ RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Feb 14: The Tourism Department has identified Sonamarg as the next major winter tourism hub after Gulmarg, with plans to expand skiing infrastructure and host competitive winter sports events in the coming years.

Director Tourism Kashmir, Syed Qamar Sajad said the department is supporting initiatives to showcase Sonamarg's potential for winter sports, noting that the area's natural slopes and terrain are well-suited for skiing.

Around 180 students from Jammu and Kashmir and as many as 20 other states are taking part in the ongoing programme, which the director described as an encouraging response reflecting growing



interest in winter sports.

Referring to Gulmarg as the country's winter capital, Sajad said nearby destinations, particularly Sonamarg, have the capacity to host competitive winter events in a phased and

structured manner.

He said winter tourism in the Valley has seen improvement this season, with a steady inflow of visitors, and added that the department would intensify efforts within its mandate to

promote Sonamarg as a winter destination.

As part of these efforts, the department has launched a 14-day integrated skiing course, exposing trainees to different slopes, including sessions in Gulmarg, to improve skill levels. Sajad said a drag lift installed at Sonamarg by the cable car corporation will be operationalised on priority, while local youth will be encouraged to participate in winter sports to build a pool of trained guides and adventure tourism professionals.

He added that the department will assess the need for additional drag lifts and infrastructure as activities expand, with the objective of developing Sonamarg into a major winter tourism destination—(KNO)

Srinagar infra projects to ease traffic congestion: DC

REHAN QAYOUM MIR

Srinagar, Feb 14: Stating that the Government of India is funding multiple infrastructure projects in Srinagar to improve traffic flow, connectivity and urban facilities, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Akshay Labroo on Saturday said that work on several key projects, including vehicular underpasses, a foot overbridge, and the city ring road, will begin very soon.

The DC said the vehicular underpasses near Mominabad and Nowgam Railway Station have received approval from the Government of India and the final designs have been finalized.

He said the Government of India has approved the designs and the final plans are ready. "A foot overbridge is also planned at Children's Hospital, Bemina. Surveys and field inspections have started. Work will begin very soon," said.

The DC also said these projects will help decongest city traffic and improve connectivity.

He also highlighted the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), implemented by the Srinagar Municipal Corporation, as a key contributor to urban development. "NCAP funds are supporting major projects across the city. At Sonarcoal, we have proposed an alternate route behind SMHS Hospital to strengthen health infrastructure, including the super-specialty hospital and government medical college."

"Work has started using Government of India funds in convergence with NCAP," he said.

The DC Labroo also urged senior citizens above 70 to avail the Pradhan



Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PM-VY). "Eligible citizens will receive a card like the Ayushman Bharat Golden Card, providing medical coverage of up to Rs 5 lakh. You can go to any BMO office in Srinagar or call the numbers available on our website and social media. The district administration will ensure you receive the benefits," he added.

He further highlighted the Sanat Nagar project, recently completed and opened for vehicular movement, which was also funded by the Government of India.

The Deputy Commissioner said work on the Srinagar Ring Road Phase-1 and Phase-2 is underway. "Phase-1 will connect districts surrounding Srinagar and South Kashmir. Phase-2 is also being implemented. These projects, funded by the Government of India and the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), will gradually decongest city traffic and upgrade infrastructure," he said.

The DC added that the combined implementation of all these projects, including underpasses, the foot overbridge, alternate health route, Sanat Nagar and the ring road, will significantly improve traffic management and connectivity in Srinagar—(KNO)

Those holding 'illegal' land cannot label others grabbers: AIP MLA

WARIS FAYAZ

Srinagar, Feb 14: Taking a jibe at Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Awami Ittihad Party (AIP) MLA Sheikh Khurshheed on Saturday alleged that those holding illegal land have no right to label others as land grabbers. He also accused the ruling National Conference (NC) of political silence despite a massive mandate.

Khurshheed said a BJP legislator who branded Kashmiris as land grabbers must first clarify his own position. "Those who hold illegal land cannot sermon others or give them the tag of land grabbers," he said.

He accused BJP leader Javid Qureshi of illegally occupying a fisheries hut in Handwara. "The government property cannot be occupied in the name of any political party and questioned why authorities have not taken action," the AIP leader said.

Khurshheed alleged selective enforcement by the administration. "The poor people are targeted in the name of law, while influential figures escape scrutiny," he claimed. "Lakhs of rupees in revenue could have been generated if such assets were properly outsourced instead of being occupied."

The MLA accused the BJP of sustaining its politics through regional and religious division. He said the party has nothing to offer except attempts to divide Jammu and Kashmir.

"Jammu and Kashmir is one unit, and divisive statements can deepen regional tensions, especially when Jammu holds a



major share in reservation quotas," he warned.

Khurshheed claimed that NC and BJP are hand in glove. "Both parties adopt one stance inside the Assembly and another outside," he said. The MLA said the NC failed to raise core political issues in the House despite seeking votes on those commitments during elections. "People are disappointed. The government has stepped back from the political aspirations of the people," he said.

Acknowledging that the government is gradually delivering on developmental measures such as free gas cylinders, 200 units of free electricity and marriage assistance, Khurshheed said development alone is not enough.

"The ruling party secured votes on promises related to Article 370, Article 35A, restoration of statehood, release of political prisoners and stopping termination of employees. If they cannot stop these measures, they should at least speak up," he said—(KNO)

Chadoora bridge shutdown enters third month, residents suffer

NAVEED UL HAQ GANAIEE

Budgam, Feb 14: The vital Chadoora bridge in Budgam, which connects Srinagar to Charar-i-Sharif and Yousmarg, has remained closed to traffic since November 28, 2025, due to structural damage caused by floods. The prolonged closure has caused severe and ongoing inconvenience for residents, who are now forced to take alternative routes.

Locals said that since the bridge

was shut, they have been grappling with traffic jams and muddy roads. "Sometimes, people who are unaware of the alternative route attempt to cross the flowing river and end up stranded in the water for hours, especially during these cold winter days," a resident said.

Nazir Ahmad, a resident, recounted a recent incident: "An auto tried to cross the river in the evening, as the occupants did not know about the alternative route via the college side. They remained stuck in the

river for hours. We are thankful to the Chadoora police, who helped rescue them and saved their lives."

"The administration has opened an alternative route from the New Bus Adda side, but it remains plagued by traffic jams as the road is narrow. People continue to face hardship. Students reach institutions late, and patients, particularly pregnant women and the elderly, cannot reach hospitals on time," he added.

Another local, Yaqoob Ahmad,

said that despite assurances from the administration since the very beginning about installing a Bailey bridge as an alternative route, more than two months have passed and people are still waiting. "On January 27, Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary said that the department had assured him the Bailey bridge would be completed soon, yet 17 days later, the work remains unfinished," he said.

Continued on
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Institutions, Investment, And Inclusion

Union Budget 2026-27: Rural Transformation through Decentralization

India’s rural development trajectory over the past decade indicates a structural transition from fragmented welfare provision towards an integrated, decentralised, and community-led development paradigm

Press Information Bureau

India's pursuit of inclusive growth under the development framework of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Prayas, Sabka Vishwas has produced measurable outcomes in recent years. These outcomes are reflected in sustained poverty reduction, a gradual narrowing of socio-economic inequalities, and improved access to basic services. Rural transformation has been central to this process, as a large share of India's population continues to reside in rural areas and remains dependent on public investment, local institutions, and community-based governance structures for socio-economic advancement.

A combination of expanded public expenditure, infrastructure development, reforms to employment frameworks, the adoption of digital technologies, and stronger participation by local governments and community institutions has increasingly shaped rural development in India. This paradigmatic shift reflects a broader understanding of inclusive development that emphasises fairness, dignity, and equal rights, with a particular focus on empowering vulnerable and marginalised groups.

Union Budget allocations for Rural Development increased from 87,765 crore in 2016–17 to 2,73,108 crore in 2026–27, representing a rise of over 211 per cent during the decade. These figures indicate a sustained fiscal commitment to strengthening rural infrastructure, livelihoods, and local institutional capacity.

Policy Shift: From Welfare Delivery to Decentralised Partnerships

An essential dimension of this transformation is the gradual shift away from a purely government-led model of development towards more community-driven, decentralised approaches. Local governments and grassroots institutions are increasingly recognised as critical actors in planning, implementation, and monitoring of development initiatives. This transition has enabled local voices to shape development priorities, making growth processes more participatory, context-specific, and sustainable.

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment (1992) institutionalised Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) as vehicles of grassroots democracy, enabling communities to participate directly in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of development initiatives. Building on this foundation, major national programmes such as the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin), formerly MGNREGS, Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission, Swachh Bharat Mission, and the Jal Jeevan Mission have embedded participatory mechanisms by working through panchayats, self-help groups (SHGs), and grassroots organisations.

This policy evolution reflects the principle of Jan Bhagidari, which marks a shift from beneficiary-based participation to active partnership between the state and communities. Participation is increasingly supported through capacity building, technology-enabled engagement, strengthened community institutions, and participatory planning and budgeting processes. Fiscal decentralisation has further reinforced this approach. Direct fiscal transfers to panchayats have been increased from around 2.36 lakh crore under the 15th Finance Commission (2021-2026) to nearly 4.35 lakh crore under the 16th Finance Commission (2026-2031), thereby significantly enhancing local financial autonomy.

Social Protection Expansion and Poverty Reduction Outcomes in India

India has recorded substantial advances in expanding social protection and reducing poverty, underpinned by sustained public investments in the social sector. Coverage under social protection systems (which includes access to improved drinking water, household electrification, and rural sanitation) increased markedly from 22 per cent in 2016 to 64.3 percent in 2025, reflecting a significant broadening of social security reach. This expansion has been supported by a steady rise in social services expenditure (SSE), which has grown consistently since FY22. Between FY22 and FY26 (BE), SSE grew at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 12 percent, with education and health expenditures rising at 11 percent and 8 percent, respectively.

Assessing Poverty through Multi-Dimensional Indicators

India's Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), published by NITI Aayog, indicates Poverty Headcount Ratio declined from 55.3 per cent in 2005–06 to 14.96 percent in 2019–21 and further to 11.28 percent in 2022–23. Estimates based on the Tendulkar Committee methodology similarly indicate a pronounced reduction in poverty over time. Between 2011–12 and 2023–24, poverty incidence is estimated to have declined sharply, with low levels observed across both rural and urban areas and across states. Taken together, these trends suggest that sustained economic growth, in conjunction with targeted social welfare interventions and expanded access to basic services, has contributed to a significant reduction in poverty in India. This progress reflects the combined efforts of central and state governments through a range of welfare programmes

and context-specific policy innovations.

Enhancing Rural Living Standards through Basic Services

Public policy in India is oriented towards expanding equal opportunity, reducing absolute poverty, and mitigating the risk of widening inequality. Government initiatives have focused on expanding access to affordable housing, food and social security, financial inclusion, universal basic services, and affordable healthcare. Together, these interventions have played a central role in improving living standards, particularly in rural areas. The scale and outcomes of these interventions are reflected in the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation's (MOSPI's) Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) National Indicator Framework Progress Report, 2025, which documents substantial advances across multiple development indicators.

Accessibility to Safe Drinking Water

Access to safe drinking water in rural areas has reached near-universal coverage. It has seen transformative progress under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), launched in 2019 to achieve Har Ghar Jal. At inception, only 3.23 crore rural households (17 per cent) had tap water connections. By November 2025, an additional 12.50 crore households were covered, raising total coverage to about 15.74 crore households. Therefore, the proportion of rural households using improved drinking water sources increased from 94.6 per cent in 2015–16 to 99.6 percent in 2024–25. The Economic Survey 2025–26 reports that independent assessments have identified significant social and health benefits, including substantial time savings for women, increased participation in economic activities, and reduced incidence of waterborne diseases. Significant improvements in sanitation and electricity access have further complemented these gains.

Accessibility to Sanitation Facilities

The Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) was launched in 2014 to achieve Open Defecation Free (ODF) status nationwide by October 2019, and all districts were declared ODF by 2019–20. As of December 31, 2025, over 96 percent of villages under the Swachh Bharat Mission have attained ODF Plus status. An ODF Plus village is defined as one that sustains its ODF Status, ensures solid and liquid waste management, and remains visually clean. As of February 9, 2026, there are 5.68 lakh ODF Plus villages in our country, of which 5.29 lakh have suitable arrangements for solid waste management and 5.46 lakh have suitable arrangements for liquid waste management. So far, 2,331 plastic waste management units, 2.70 lakh community sanitary complexes, and 12.05 crore household toilets have been constructed.

Ensuring Universal Household Electrification

Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (SAUBHAGYA) was launched in 2017 to achieve universal household electrification by providing electricity connections to all willing un-electrified households in rural areas and all willing poor households in urban areas in the country. In 2017, the total number of un-electrified households was estimated at 3 crores, against which 2.86 crore households across the country were electrified by FY 2021–22. As of March 31, 2019, all States have reported 100% electrification of all the willing un-electrified households identified.

Expanding Access to Safe and Affordable Rural Housing

Housing constitutes a critical determinant of dignity, safety, and economic participation among low-income households. Implemented since April 2016, the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) aims to achieve the objective of Housing for All by 2029 by providing pucca dwellings with basic amenities to eligible rural households. Against an overall target of 4.95 crore houses, 4.14 crore units have been allocated to States and Union Territories, of which 3.86 crore have been sanctioned and 2.93 crore completed to date. In addition, 76.98 lakh dwelling units pending from earlier housing schemes have been completed, bringing the total number of rural houses constructed over the past 11 years to 3.70 crore. Reflecting the heightened policy emphasis on rural housing, budgetary allocations for PMAY-G increased from 15,000 crore in 2016–17 to 54,916.70 crore in 2026–27.

Ensuring Last-Mile Access through Rural Roads Connectivity

Rural connectivity is a foundational pillar of rural development, directly contributing to poverty reduction by enhancing access to healthcare, education, markets, and employment opportunities. Launched in 2000, the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY-I) was designed to provide all-weather road connectivity to eligible unconnected habitations. As of mid-January 2026, more than 99.6 percent of eligible habitations had been connected. Under PMGSY-I, a total of 1,63,665 roads spanning 6.25 lakh kilometres, along with 7,210 bridges, have been completed.

Launched in 2013, the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY-II) focused on strengthening and upgrading the existing rural road network. As of mid-January 2026, a total of 6,612 roads covering 49,087 kilometres, along with 749 bridges, had been completed under this phase. Subsequently, PMGSY-III, approved in 2019, aims at consolidating 1.25 lakh kilometres of critical

rural routes linking habitations to agricultural markets, educational institutions, and healthcare facilities. Under PMGSY-III, more than 1.02 lakh kilometres of roads and 1,734 bridges have been completed to date. Reflecting sustained policy emphasis on rural connectivity, budgetary allocations for PMGSY increased from 12,581 crore in 2016–17 to 19,000 crore in 2026–27.

Improving Access to Services and Inclusion for Tribal and Vulnerable Communities

Targeted infrastructure interventions have increasingly prioritised tribal and particularly vulnerable communities. Under the PM-Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN), which seeks to achieve saturation of government schemes across 28,700 habitations of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), a total of 2,495 roads spanning 7,324 kilometres and 164 bridges have been sanctioned, with 263 roads completed as of January 15, 2026. Complementing these efforts, the Dharti Abha-Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (DA-JGUA) covers more than 63,000 tribal villages and focuses on enhancing access to drinking water, housing, education, healthcare, and livelihood opportunities.

Environmental sustainability and livelihood-linked infrastructure are further advanced through initiatives that strengthen community stewardship of natural resources. The establishment of 4,105 Van Dhan Vikas Kendras has benefited approximately 1.2 million individuals. At the same time, the implementation of the Forest Rights Act, 2006, has resulted in the distribution of over 2.5 million forest titles, thereby reinforcing community control over land and forest resources.

Digitalisation and Technology-Led Service Delivery in Rural Areas

Digitalisation has emerged as a critical enabler of inclusive and efficient service delivery in rural India. The integration of administrative reforms with technology adoption has enhanced transparency, participation, and accountability in the implementation of rural programmes, while simultaneously expanding access to public services in remote and underserved areas. Aadhaar seeding has developed rapidly, Aadhaar-based payment systems have been widely adopted, and electronic wage disbursements have become nearly universal. Programme monitoring has been strengthened through large-scale geo-tagging of assets, with a growing proportion of assets being created at the individual household level.

The SVAMITVA scheme uses drone-based mapping to formalise rural property rights, reduce disputes, and enhance access to credit and government services. As of December 2025, surveys covered 3.28 lakh villages and generated 2.76 crore property cards across 1.82 lakh villages. Complementing this, the Namo Drone Didi initiative supports women's participation in the digital economy through drone-based agricultural and mapping services, with 1,094 drones distributed to SHG Drone Didis in 2023–24.

Land governance reforms under the Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme (DILRMP) have further advanced digitisation, with 99.8 percent of rural Records of Rights digitised, 95.73 percent of Sub-Registration Offices computerised, and Unique Land Parcel Identification Numbers (ULPIN/Bhu-Aadhaar) assigned to 36.67 crore land parcels, strengthening transparency and access to land-related services.

Community-Led Institutions enabling Inclusive Governance and Livelihoods

India's development experience highlights state capacity as a human system, in which community institutions, frontline workers, and local administrators are central to effective last-mile service delivery across health, education, skills, and livelihoods. Strengthening their capacities enhances local-level responsiveness, accountability, and the overall effectiveness of public service delivery.

Empowering Youth and Panchayats for Effective Local Governance

The Model Youth Gram Sabha (MYGS) promotes democratic engagement and civic awareness by familiarising students with grassroots governance through simulated Gram Sabha processes in schools. Implemented nationwide through institutions such as Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas and Eklavya Model Residential Schools, it builds leadership skills while reinforcing transparency, inclusivity, and accountability in local governance.

Complementing this, the Revamped Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) strengthens decentralised governance by enhancing the institutional capacity of Panchayati Raj Institutions through leadership development, e-governance, and deeper constitutional devolution. Implemented during FY 2022–23 to 2025–26 with an outlay of 5,911 crore, RGSA aims to improve the efficiency and participatory quality of local governance. In the recent Union Budget 2026–27, 1,142 crore has been allocated for RGSA, reflecting continued emphasis on strengthening grassroots institutions.

Women-Led Institutions as Drivers of Rural Transformation

Women-led institutions are central to the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), positioning

women as key drivers of rural transformation. The programme has been allocated 19,200 crore in the Union Budget 2026–27. Through Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and their federations, the programme provides the rural households with a collective platform for savings, access to credit, and community support. To date, 10.05 crore women have been mobilised into 90.09 lakh SHGs, expanding financial inclusion and collective economic action.

Beyond financial intermediation, the programme supports women farmers through sustainable agriculture and livestock interventions, promotes non-farm micro-enterprises, and facilitates livelihood opportunities for landless women based on local resources. Anchored in the Panchsutra and extended through the Dashsutra framework, Self-Help Groups (SHGs) increasingly contribute to community development across health and nutrition, education, local governance, access to entitlements, and sustainable livelihoods, positioning them as central institutions of community-led rural development and social transformation.

Women-Led Community Resource Pool for Livelihoods and Service Delivery

Community Resource Persons (CRPs), including Bank Sakhis, Krishi Sakhis, Pashu Sakhis, and Enterprise Promotion CRPs, facilitate the smooth functioning of women-led community institutions. These cadres strengthen women's agency, leadership, and livelihood outcomes; currently, 1.49 lakh Bank Sakhis deliver financial services, while over 9 lakh CRPs support agriculture, banking, insurance, nutrition, and allied activities at the grassroots. Over a 6 to 8-year engagement cycle, SHG households are expected to achieve food security and stable incomes, thereby contributing to sustainable livelihood improvements.

Building on this platform, the National Campaign on Entrepreneurship aims to train 50,000 CRPs and provide enterprise development support to 50 lakh SHG members under the vision of “Har Ghar Udyam, Har Gaon Samridh.” Women-led BC Sakhis, supported by digital tools and Point of Sale (Pos) devices in collaboration with India Post, have further expanded access to banking and social security services. At the frontline, convergence between DAY-NRLM CRPs and Anganwadi Workers, ANMs, and ASHAs has strengthened SBCC-based community engagement, improving maternal and child health practices and utilisation of health services.

Samaveshi Aajeevika Yojana: Ultra-Poor Graduation Approach

The Samaveshi Aajeevika Yojana, launched in April 2023, implemented under DAY-NRLM, adopts the Ultra-Poor Graduation Approach to promote sustainable livelihoods among rural women through integrated support across livelihoods, social protection, social empowerment, and financial inclusion. State-level pilots, such as Bihar's Satat Jeevikoparjan Yojana (SJY), demonstrate the model's effectiveness through asset transfers, coaching, capacity building, and time-bound livelihood support, complemented by access to social security schemes and data-driven monitoring through a community-based MIS.

Community-Led Approaches to Food, Nutrition, Health, and WASH (FNHW)

India's improvements in health and nutrition outcomes reflect the growing role of community-led delivery systems alongside national programmes. As noted in the Economic Survey 2025–26, India has outperformed global averages since 1990, with maternal mortality declining by 86 per cent, under-five mortality by 78 per cent, and neonatal mortality by 70 per cent. Infant mortality fell from 40 per thousand live births in 2013 to 25 in 2023, underscoring sustained progress in maternal and child health.

To strengthen grassroots outcomes, DAY-NRLM has institutionalized Food, Nutrition, Health, and WASH (FNHW) interventions to address persistent challenges related to malnutrition, sanitation, and health awareness. Implemented through state-specific strategies with a strong emphasis on Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC), these interventions cover maternal and child health, diet diversity, anaemia reduction, menstrual hygiene, disease prevention, sanitation practices, and waste management, while promoting nutrition-sensitive livelihoods such as nutri-gardens, backyard poultry, small ruminants, and dairy. By 2025, FNHW interventions had been initiated in 6,406 blocks across 683 districts, strengthening community engagement, enhancing awareness of panchayat-level initiatives and government schemes, and supporting behavioural change toward more inclusive and participatory local governance.

Skill Development, Entrepreneurship, and Employment in Rural Areas

India's rural labour market exhibits a distinct employment structure shaped by high dependence on agriculture and self-employment. According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) (October-December 2025), rural employment is dominated by agricultural workers (58.5 per cent) and self-employment (63.2 per cent), with women showing relatively higher participation in these categories. This underscores the importance of strengthening livelihoods, skills, and enterprise opportunities suited to rural contexts.

Skilling Pathways for Inclusive Rural Growth

Skill development is a critical instrument for promoting productive employment and diversifying livelihood opportunities in rural areas. The Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) addresses this objective through demand-driven skill training linked to assured placements, with quality and industry relevance ensured through mandatory third-party certification by National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) Sector Skill Councils. The programme targets poor rural youth aged 15–35 years, with an extended upper age limit of 45 years for women and other vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups, and transgender persons.

Implemented across 27 States and 4 Union Territories, DDU-GKY operates through 2,369 training centres covering 37 sectors and 816 job roles. As of October 2025, 82,272 candidates had been trained and 37,035 placed during the year, while cumulatively since inception, 17.92 lakh youth have received training and 11.64 lakh have been placed in wage employment. Complementing DDU-GKY, Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (RSETIs) function under a public–private partnership model across 629 institutes in 616 districts in 33 states/UTs, promoting both wage and self-employment through locally relevant skills and entrepreneurship training. Since its inception, RSETIs have trained nearly 59 lakh rural youth, of whom about 43 lakh have been settled in self- or wage employment, underscoring their role in strengthening rural labour market outcomes and enterprise creation.

Entrepreneurship Pathways for Women in Rural India

Promoting women's entrepreneurship is integral to raising rural incomes and increasing female labour force participation. Aligning skill development initiatives with emerging sectors such as manufacturing, renewable energy, digital services, and agro-processing broadens economic opportunities for women. Complementary measures, including ‘Back to Work’ and ‘Returnship Programmes’, facilitate workforce re-entry. At the same time, integrating Self-Help Groups (SHGs) into the MSME ecosystem supports women's transition from subsistence activities to formal, growth-oriented enterprises.

SHE-Marts for Rural Women-led Enterprises

Building on the success of the Lakhpati Didi Programme, the Union Budget 2026–27 proposes establishing Self-Help Entrepreneur (SHE) Marts as community-owned retail outlets within Cluster-Level Federations. Supported by enhanced, innovative financing mechanisms, these initiatives aim to shift women's livelihoods from credit-based activities to sustainable enterprise ownership.

Advancing Employment Pathways in Rural India

The Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, 2025, represents a significant reform in India's rural employment policy. With a budgetary allocation of 95,692.31 crore in 2026–27, the Act modernises the employment guarantee regime by strengthening accountability mechanisms and aligning job creation with objectives of infrastructure development and climate resilience. The Act represents a substantive advancement over MGNREGA.

The legislation introduces a legal entitlement of 125 days of unskilled wage employment per rural household annually.

It identifies four priority domains: water security, rural infrastructure, livelihoods, and disaster preparedness.

It enhances rights-based safeguards through provisions for compensation for delayed employment, removal of disentitlement clauses, and re-inforced accountability.

Conclusion

India's rural development trajectory over the past decade indicates a structural transition from fragmented welfare provision towards an integrated, decentralised, and community-led development paradigm. Sustained public investment, evidenced by significantly enhanced budgetary allocations, has broadened access to housing, rural connectivity, drinking water, sanitation, digital services, and social protection, while concurrently strengthening livelihoods, skill formation, and entrepreneurship in rural areas. Central to this transformation has been the empowerment of local institutions, including Panchayati Raj Institutions, Self-Help Groups, and community cadres, which have reoriented rural governance from passive beneficiary models to active, participatory partnerships grounded in the principle of Jan Bhagidari. Technology-enabled service delivery, women-led institutional frameworks, and graduation-based livelihood strategies have further reinforced transparency, inclusion, and resilience, particularly among vulnerable and marginalised populations. Collectively, these reforms position rural India not merely as a recipient of development interventions but as a pivotal driver of inclusive growth, democratic governance, and long-term socio-economic sustainability.

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

Satish Sharma reviews border infrastructure development

KT News Desk

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 14: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Information Technology, Transport, Youth Services and Sports, Science and Technology, ARI and Trainings, Satish Sharma, on Saturday met R K Mishra, Chief of Border Roads Organisation (BRO), and held comprehensive discussion on key developmental priorities in border regions, with particular focus on Chhamb Constituency.

The meeting, as per an official statement, centred on strengthening the infrastructure and improving connectivity in strategically important border belts to accelerate socio-economic growth and enhance public service delivery.

The Minister underscored the need for sustained and coordinated efforts to ensure timely execution of road construction, upgradation and maintenance works in remote and sensitive areas.



Emphasising the strategic and developmental importance of border constituencies, the Minister said that robust road infrastructure plays a critical role not only in ensuring mobility but also in improving access to essential services such as healthcare, education, emergency response and supply of essential commodities. He highlighted that better connectivity is fundamental to empower the local communities, promote economic opportunities and strengthening overall regional resilience.

During the interaction, detailed deliberation was held on the status of ongoing projects, identification of priority stretches requiring immediate attention and formulation of a time-bound roadmap for future infrastructure initiatives.

The Minister stressed the importance of adopting modern engineering practices, maintaining quality standards and expediting project timelines to deliver tangible benefits to the

people at the earliest.

The BRO Chief briefed the Minister on the progress of various infrastructure works currently underway in the region. He also outlined the upcoming plans aimed at further strengthening the connectivity and enhancing the durability of road networks in border areas. He reiterated the organisation's commitment towards supporting the developmental initiatives and assured full co-operation in fast-tracking priority projects.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to balanced and inclusive development, the Minister stated that special focus will continue to be accorded to border constituencies to bridge infrastructure gaps and improve the quality of life of residents living in far-flung areas. He emphasised that coordinated institutional efforts and regular monitoring will remain key to ensuring efficient implementation of development initiatives.

DC Ramban reviews arrangements for Mahashivratri celebrations



KT News Desk

RAMBAN, FEBRUARY 14: Deputy Commissioner Ramban Mohammad Alyas Khan Saturday chaired a meeting with representatives of religious organisations to review arrangements for the festival of Mahashivratri. The objective was to ensure smooth, safe and harmonious celebrations across the district.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by ADC Varunjeet Singh Charak, Tehsildar Ramban, Executive Engineers of JPDC and Jal Shakti, Dy SP Operations, Chief Executive Officers of Municipal Committees and other concerned officers.

The Deputy Commissioner informed the meeting that all necessary arrangements, including civil and security measures, have been put in place by the concerned departments in line with the directions issued during earlier meetings.

To maintain sanitation and hygiene, all Block Development Officers (BDOs) and Municipal Committees were instructed to ensure cleanliness in and around temples. The

Assistant Director, Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA) was asked to conduct joint market inspections with Revenue, Police and other departments to monitor quality, prevent overpricing and ensure adequate availability of essential commodities, LPG cylinders and other food items.

The Executive Engineer, JPDC, was directed to ensure uninterrupted electricity supply during Mahashivratri, while the Jal Shakti Department was asked to maintain regular water supply and deploy water tankers wherever required.

The Chief Medical Officer was instructed to ensure the availability of ambulances, adequate medical staff and essential medicines during religious processions and celebrations. Meanwhile, Fire and Emergency Services were directed to deploy fire tenders at key religious locations to ensure a prompt response in case of emergencies.

The Deputy Commissioner resolved issues highlighted by representatives of religious organisations on the spot by issuing necessary directions to the concerned officers.

Div Com Kashmir reviews Amarnath Yatra 2026 arrangements, stresses timely works

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 14: To ensure a smooth and spiritually fulfilling pilgrimage of Yatris during SANJY-2026, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg Saturday chaired a comprehensive review meeting to review arrangements at base camps along the route to the Holy Cave.

On the occasion, the Div Com, as per an official statement issued, slew of instructions for advance preparations for forthcoming annual Shri Amarnathji Yatra.

The Divisional Commissioner emphasized optimal utilization of already released funds to augment facilities for pilgrims. He instructed departments to submit detailed action plans for SANJY-2026, float tenders in advance, complete works within stipulated timelines and prepare realistic and practical cost estimates.

Highlighting the role of the Tourism Department as the nodal agency for the SANJY, he directed it to ensure accountability among stakeholder departments.

To facilitate registration of pilgrims, the Divisional Commissioner instructed concerned authorities to increase staff deployment at RFID registration counters. He further directed the Animal Husbandry and Labour Departments to work in coordination for RFID tagging of service providers and ponies.

BEACON was instructed to install crash barriers along the Pahalgam-Chandanwari stretch and the Baltal route, and to construct shelter sheds for security



forces along the axes.

During the meeting, he also reviewed operationalization of control rooms including ICC and circulation of mitigation plans among agencies.

Also, he instructed for capacity augmentation of camps and installation of headcount cameras at designated parking areas.

To ensure seamless movement of SRTC buses during SANJY-2026, Police authorities were directed to facilitate smooth circulation of buses after debarking of yatris.

The Divisional Commissioner also reviewed the progress of works undertaken by R&B, PHE and KPDC and emphasized adherence to timelines. He also reviewed arrangements for supply of essential items, including ration and firewood, to the yatra camps.

During the meeting, special focus was laid on sanitation along the camps and routes,

stationing of fire tenders at strategic locations, installation of signage and display screens, and expansion of telecom coverage in shadow areas by communication agencies.

The meeting underscored the administration's commitment to advance planning, inter-departmental coordination and augmentation of services to ensure a safe, efficient and well-managed pilgrimage during SANJY-2026.

The meeting was attended by the Commissioner SMC; Deputy Commissioners of Ganderbal and Bandipora; concerned SSPs, Additional Deputy Commissioners of Anantnag, Srinagar, and Budgam; and officers from FCS&CA, SRTC, Tourism, ULB, RDD, Rural Sanitation, Information, KPDC, R&B, PHE, NHIDCL, NHA, Labour, Animal Husbandry, as well as representatives from Jio, Airtel, BSNL, and G-Max.

Javed Rana condoles demise of Qamar Ali Akhoon

KT News Desk

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 14: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, has expressed profound grief and sorrow over the demise of former Minister, Qamar Ali Akhoon.

In his condolence message, the Minister, as per an official statement, described the late leader as a dedicated public servant and a seasoned politician who worked tirelessly for the welfare and upliftment of the people.

Rana conveyed his heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved



family and associates of the departed leader and prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul. He also prayed for strength and fortitude to the family to bear this irreparable loss.

DC Ganderbal reviews telecom infrastructure, public grievances



KT News Desk

GANDERBAL, FEBRUARY 14: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore, who is also chairman of District Level Telecom Committee (DLTC) convened a meeting here on Saturday to review the progress of telecom infrastructure projects and address issues related to mobile connectivity and public grievances in the district.

During the meeting, threadbare discussions were held on BSNL 4G saturation and it's physical status, pending Right of Way (RoW) cases, and progress under BharatNet and other connectivity initiatives.

The meeting was informed that out of total Tower installation sites, most of the towers are on air while work on remaining is ongoing and expected to be completed soon.

It was informed that several RoW applications have been received, and the concerned departments were directed to ensure that No Objection Certificates (NOCs) are issued within the stipulated time-frame to avoid any delays.

The DC emphasized the need

for close coordination among line departments for early resolution of pending cases.

The Committee also reviewed the progress of BharatNet projects. It was further informed that works at few locations have been completed, while the remaining are at various stages of execution.

The DC directed the executing agencies to accelerate the pace of work, especially in areas where tendering formalities have already been completed.

The DC stressed that strengthening telecom infrastructure is vital for public service delivery, emergency response, and overall socio-economic development of the district. All stakeholders were directed to work in synergy to ensure seamless mobile connectivity across Ganderbal.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Superintending Engineer PWD, Assistant Commissioner Development, other officers and officials besides representatives from BSNL, Jio and other operators.

DC Udhampur hands over sanction orders under Karkhandar scheme



KT News Desk

UDHAMPUR, FEBRUARY 14: Deputy Commissioner Udhampur Saloni Rai Saturday handed over sanction orders to beneficiaries under the Karkhandar scheme in the presence of Assistant Director, Handicrafts and Handloom Department Udhampur, Joginder Mangol.

The sanction orders, as per an official statement, were issued in favour of Shipali Sharma, Master Trainer Udhampur and Sanjay Kumar of Tandar (Chenani) for skill upgradation and the promotion of the traditional Chamba embroidery craft in Udhampur district.

Speaking on the occasion,

the Deputy Commissioner highlighted the objectives of the scheme, stating that it primarily aims to empower artisans, enhance their skills and strengthen the livelihoods of craftsmen through structured interventions.

She emphasised that such initiatives play a significant role in the revival and preservation of traditional crafts while promoting sustainable self-employment opportunities.

The DC interacted with the beneficiaries, encouraging them to make optimal use of the assistance provided and extending best wishes for their continued success in promoting the craft.

Pulwama Martyrs Day observed with tributes in Doda

KT News Desk

DODA, FEBRUARY 14: Pulwama Martyrs Day was observed with solemnity and patriotic fervour at Town Hall, Doda, where the District Administration, in collaboration with the NGO Tejass Ek Pahal Foundation, civil society members, students and citizens, paid heartfelt tributes to the brave martyrs who laid down their lives in the service of the nation.

The programme, as per an official statement, was organised by Tejass Ek Pahal Foundation under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Doda Harvinder Singh and the supervision of NGO Chairman Akash Parihar. The event was led by District Development Council (DDC) Chairman Dhananther Singh Kotwal, DC Doda Harvinder Singh, SSP Doda Sandeep Kumar Mehta, DDC Vice Chairperson Sangeeta Rani, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Doda Din Mohd Afaqi and



Chief Education Officer (CEO) Doda Bhushan Kumar Pathak. The dignitaries paid tributes to the martyrs by lighting traditional lamps, laying floral wreaths and observing a two-minute silence.

Students and participants presented patriotic songs, speeches and cultural performances, remembering the supreme sacrifice of the martyrs and reaffirming their commitment to the nation. The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from students of various government and private schools, volunteers and citizens.

Addressing the gathering, the dignitaries underscored

the importance of patriotism, unity, discipline and national integrity. They urged the youth to draw inspiration from the courage, dedication and selfless service of the martyrs and to contribute positively towards nation-building, social harmony and community welfare.

As part of the observance, a students' rally was organised, commencing from Town Hall Doda and passing through Tondwah, Clock Tower and the DC Office Doda before culminating back at the Town Hall. Participants carried placards and raised patriotic slogans to honour the martyrs and spread messages of unity, peace and

responsibility.

Speaking on the occasion, CEO Doda Bhushan Kumar Pathak paid tribute to the martyrs and delivered an address urging students to actively promote awareness about the Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan. He encouraged everyone to participate in the e-pledge campaign against drug abuse.

SSP Doda Sandeep Kumar Mehta lauded the efforts of the organisers and paid homage to the martyrs and their families. He urged citizens, especially the youth, to perform their fundamental duties with honesty, integrity and dedication.

Deputy Commissioner Doda

Harvinder Singh appreciated the role of the NGO in organising the observance. He highlighted that the country's unity and integrity have played a vital role in preserving a strong India. He also expressed condolences over the recent loss of soldiers in road accidents in Bhaderwah and informed that the Indian Army is organising a Snow Marathon as a tribute to the fallen soldiers. He urged the people to work collectively for the development of the nation.

The Chief Guest, DDC Chairman Dhananther Singh Kotwal, delivered a patriotic address, paying tributes to the martyrs. He appreciated the leadership of the Prime Minister in making the nation proud globally. He urged people to honour the sacrifices of the martyrs and paid homage to all those who lost their lives during militancy-related incidents. He further called upon citizens to safeguard youth from the menace of drug abuse and contribute to environmental conservation.

Hard work, clear goals, discipline essential for success in life: CJI Kant

PTI

Chandigarh, Feb 14: Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Saturday asserted that clarity of goals, hard work, discipline, and unwavering determination are essentials for success in life.

Integrity, values, and ethics, along with a sense of dedication to society and the nation, are crucial on this path, he stressed.

The CJI was addressing a gathering as the chief guest at the Maharshi Dayanand University's Golden Jubilee and alumni felicitation ceremony in Haryana's Rohtak district, according to an official release.

Recalling his days at his alma mater, Justice Kant said that he never faced discrimination on the MDU campus due to his rural background.

The university provided an inclusive environment where only talent, hard work, and intellectual ability were valued, he said.

The CJI stated that these values laid a strong foundation of his judicial thinking.



Appreciating the university's academic tradition, Justice Kant urged students to remain vigilant about moral values, the spirit of the Constitution, and the principles of justice.

In his welcome address, Vice Chancellor Rajbir Singh stated that the MDU has achieved remarkable achievements in the fields of education, research, sports, culture, and social concerns over the past five decades.

He stated that the Golden Jubilee year is not merely an occasion for celebration, but a time for introspection and new resolutions for the future. In line with the National

Education Policy, the university prioritises multidisciplinary education, skill development, innovation, and research, enabling students to become globally competitive.

The VC stated that the university's objective is not merely to confer degrees, but to cultivate responsible, sensitive, and value-based citizens who play an active role in building society and the nation.

He described the alumni as living symbols of the university's glorious tradition, saying that their achievements are a source of inspiration for current students.

During the ceremony, the VC honoured the Chief Justice robe.

Punjab and Haryana High Court Chief Justice Sheel Nagu was also felicitated on the occasion.

Distinguished alumni of the university were honoured for their outstanding contributions in various fields, including judiciary, legal profession, sports, literature, administration, medicine, education, and corporate leadership.

On this occasion, the CJI inaugurated the newly

constructed Golden Jubilee Gate at the campus of MDU.

Built to commemorate the university's Golden Jubilee Year, the grand gate symbolises the institution's achievements, progress, and glorious legacy.

On the occasion, CJI Surya Kant also planted a sapling, conveying a message of environmental conservation, and appreciated the green and clean environment of the campus.

Punjab and Haryana High Court Chief Justice Sheel Nagu, District and Sessions Judge Ajay Tewatia, CJM Tarannum Khan, Deputy Commissioner Sachin Gupta, along with several administrative officers, academicians, and distinguished guests were present on the occasion.

Constructed at a cost of approximately Rs 1.25 crore, the Golden Jubilee Gate has been established towards the Jhajjar Bypass side, making entry and exit to the university more organised and convenient.

Built on an RCC frame structure, the gate features Dholpur and red sandstone cladding, giving it a grand and attractive appearance.

India wedded to strategic autonomy: EAM Jaishankar



PTI

New Delhi, Feb 14: India is very much wedded to its policy of "strategic autonomy" and the country's energy procurement will be driven by factors like costs, risks and availability, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Saturday against the backdrop of Washington's claim that New Delhi has agreed to stop importing Russian crude oil.

In an interactive session alongside German Foreign Minister Johann Wadepuhl at the Munich Security Conference, Jaishankar said the global energy market is "complex" and India's oil companies will take decisions based on what they consider to be in their best interest.

"We are very much wedded to strategic autonomy because it is very much a part of our history and our evolution. And it is something which is very deep, it is something which cuts across the political spectrum as well," he said.

"As far as energy issues are concerned, this is a

complex market today. I think the oil companies in India, as in Europe, as probably in other parts of the world, look at availability, look at costs, look at risks and take decisions that they feel are in their best interest," he said.

The external affairs minister was responding to a question on whether India will stop buying Russian oil under the provisions of a trade deal and if such a move could impact New Delhi's policy of strategic autonomy.

India has not yet confirmed or denied Washington's claim that it has committed to stopping the procurement of Russian crude oil.

Following a recent phone conversation between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and United States President Donald Trump, both sides announced a reduction of the US tariffs on Indian goods to 18 per cent from 50 per cent.

The reduction included the removal of a 25-per cent tariff that Trump had slapped on India in August last year for New Delhi's purchase of Russian oil.

Jaishankar said India keeps the option of making independent decisions, without always agreeing with its partners in the West.

"We would not necessarily agree on everything, but I do believe that by doing that, and if there is an inclination to find common ground and overlaps, that would happen," he said.

"If the bottomline of your question is -- would I remain independent-minded and make my decisions and would I make choices which may not agree with your thinking -- yes, it can happen," he said.

The external affairs minister also strongly called for reforms in the United Nations, especially in view of the profound changes that the world has been witnessing.

These developments also underline the need to reform the UN, especially after the world experienced a series of shocks over the last five years, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ukraine conflict, the tensions in the Middle East, and the rise of China and its impact on global systems, he said.

'Access to justice can't remain an abstract ideal reserved for legally empowered'

PTI

New Delhi, Feb 14: Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Saturday said access to justice cannot remain an abstract ideal reserved for the legally empowered and must translate into real outcomes for marginalised citizens.

Speaking at the 11th biennial meeting of the Commonwealth Judicial Educators (CJE) here, CJI Kant said judicial leadership cannot be confined to administrative authority or institutional hierarchy and must be understood as an intellectual and ethical orientation.

"Access to justice cannot remain an abstract ideal reserved for the legally empowered. It must translate into real outcomes for the last person standing in the line, the marginalised citizen whose faith in the justice system rests upon its accessibility, responsiveness and humanity," the CJI said.

While placing stress on integration of technology into the justice system, he said that AI must assist, and not replace, judicial reasoning.

CJI Kant said judicial leadership demands not only administrative foresight but deep empathy, and the courts must be vigilant to ensure that procedural complexity does not transform into a barrier for those in need of protection.

The CJI said the convergence of arbitration, mediation and specialised courts reflects an overarching transformation: from a litigation-centric paradigm to a justice-centric ecosystem.

"This transformation acknowledges that justice must be accessible not only in principle but in practice -- timely, efficient and responsive to the needs of litigants," he said.

CJI Kant said courts must continuously earn public trust through clarity of reasoning, transparency, and consistency.

"Judges must appreciate not only the doctrinal aspects of constitutional law but the philosophical foundations that give those doctrines meaning. Comparative constitutional dialogue, historical study, and ethical reflection are essential components of this educational process," he said.

He said courts must act as guardians of constitutional identity even as they adapt to changing realities.

"In an increasingly interconnected world, this responsibility also carries an outward dimension, engaging with global judicial communities to share," he added.

The CJI asked Commonwealth judicial platforms to increasingly recognise jurisprudential contributions emerging from India and the wider Asian region, as it would strengthen shared learning and better reflect the Commonwealth's collective commitment to accessible, people-centred justice.

NOTICE OF TRANSFER OF ELECTRICITY BILL

I want to transfer the Electricity Bill under Cons. ID No – 0208820005324 From GHULAM NABI TEELI S/o ASSAD R/o TEELI MOHALLA WOYAN To GHULAM MOHMAD WANI S/o GHULAM NABI WANI R/o SYED MEHMOOD ABAD WUYAN PAMPORE. If any body has any objection in this regard may contact O.P.D.D Subdivisional PAMPORE within 07 days from publication of this notice. After that no objection will be entertained.

GHULAM MOHMAD WANI
S/o GHULAM NABI WANI
R/o SYED MEHMOOD ABAD WUYAN PAMPORE.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Nation remembers

the martyrs.

Indian National Congress president and Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge paid homage to the slain personnel, saying their courage and devotion to the nation would remain etched in public memory.

Congress leader and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, also paid tributes, saying the nation would forever remain indebted to the soldiers for their supreme sacrifice.

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta also paid homage to the slain CRPF jawans, saying the nation would remain indebted to their courage and sacrifice.

In a message on social media, she said the bravery and valour displayed by the soldiers in the line of duty would continue to inspire generations.

Manipur Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh said the sacrifices of the CRPF personnel would never be forgotten and reaffirmed solidarity with their families. (KNO)

Technology, organic

with experts, explore new technologies and access emerging market opportunities.

The theme of this year's event is "NextGen Agriculture: My Produce-My Price," focusing on cutting-edge agricultural innovations, sustainable farming practices and entrepreneurship in the agri-sector.

After inaugurating the mela, the Chief Minister inspected more than 100 stalls set up by agripreneurs, start-ups and established enterprises showcasing innovative tools, machinery and technologies. He interacted with stall owners and enquired about their products, technological interventions and business models.

CM Omar also appreciated student-led innovations, particularly technological solutions developed for farming and irrigation. He underlined the role of universities in nurturing young agri-entrepreneurs and advancing research-driven solutions tailored to local needs.

Expressing concern over duty-free imports of agricultural produce, the chief minister said local growers often face losses when cheaper and high-quality foreign products enter the market. He said improving quality standards and adopting modern storage solutions are crucial to protecting farmers' interests.

He noted that the establishment of Controlled Atmosphere (CA) storage facilities has helped fruit growers maintain quality and extend shelf life, thereby improving their competitiveness in domestic and international

markets.

Referring to horticulture products such as apples, walnuts and almonds, CM Omar said Jammu and Kashmir has significant potential but must focus on improving grading, packaging and branding to secure better prices.

He reiterated that technology-driven and organic farming practices are not optional but necessary for boosting rural incomes and ensuring long-term sustainability.

The inaugural session was attended by ministers Sakina Itoo and Javaid Ahmad Dar, Vice Chancellor Prof Nazir Ahmad Ganai, Registrar Prof Azmat Alam Khan, Director Extension Education Rehana Habib Kanth, faculty members, scientists and experts.

A large number of growers, progressive farmers, youth innovators and agri-entrepreneurs from different parts of Kashmir participated in the event, which is expected to draw significant footfall over the next three days.

The chief minister said initiatives like GON'GUL strengthen the agricultural ecosystem of Jammu and Kashmir by connecting farmers with technology, research institutions and markets, ultimately contributing to rural economic growth. (KNO)

CRPF duty-bound

duty-bound to eliminate all forms of terrorism from the country.

Talking to the reporters here, Singh, according to the news agency-Kashmir News Observer (KNO) described the anniversary as an emotional occasion for the force and reiterated its continued commitment to the welfare of the martyrs' families.

"We lost 40 brave personnel in 2019. We are here to honour their sacrifice," he said, adding that the CRPF remains steadfast both in its operational responsibilities and in supporting the families of those who laid down their lives in the line of duty.

The DG CRPF said a range of welfare measures have been extended over the years, including housing support, land allotments and financial assistance.

According to him, 19 Next of Kins (NOKs) of martyrs have been provided houses, while others have received land with the assistance of respective state administrations.

He said compassionate appointments are being offered to eligible family members as they attain the required age, and financial packages have been disbursed to all affected families.

"To ensure smoother coordination and quicker redressal of concerns, the CRPF has introduced the Brave Family App. The platform connects families of martyrs directly with the force's welfare directorate, enabling them to

raise issues and track support services," the DGP added.

Singh said that the force's responsibility extends beyond ceremonial tributes. "We stand with the families not just today, but every day. Their concerns are our priority," he said.

Reaffirming the organisation's resolve, the DG said the CRPF would continue to back the families of Pulwama martyrs as well as those of personnel who lost their lives in subsequent anti-terror operations.

The Pulwama attack on February 14, 2019, claimed the lives of 40 CRPF personnel after a suicide bomber targeted their convoy on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway. The anniversary each year is marked by tributes and remembrance ceremonies across the country. (KNO)

Terrorism 'greatest

and triggered nationwide outrage.

India subsequently carried out airstrikes on a JeM training camp in Balakot in Pakistan, escalating tensions between the two countries at the time. (KNO)

LG, CM extend

tradition and communal harmony. Mahashivratri holds a place of profound significance in our life. The holy festival provides opportunity to pause and reflect the timeless virtues Lord Shiva exemplifies. The teaching Lord Shiva embodies is one of universal service. The holy festival reminds us that each person carries the responsibility to contribute to humanity's wellbeing in the ways uniquely available to them.

May Lord Shiva continue to shower his divine blessings upon us. May this festival strengthen the bonds of brotherhood for years to come. Har Har Mahadevi!"

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, in his message, said that Mahashivratri is a sacred festival symbolising devotion, faith and spiritual awakening, and it inspires people to follow the path of righteousness, harmony and compassion.

"On the blessed occasion of Mahashivratri, I convey my heartfelt greetings and best wishes to all. May this sacred occasion bring peace, happiness and prosperity to every household," the Chief Minister said.

The Chief Minister also prayed for strengthening the bonds of brotherhood, unity and communal harmony in Jammu and Kashmir, and wished that the festival may usher in progress and well-being for all. (KNO)

Dir DIPR calls

makes adherence to ethical principles like accuracy, fairness, objectivity and accountability

more important than ever," he said.

He also underscored the need for continuous capacity building to keep pace with technological advancements and evolving audience expectations.

The Director underlined the need for constant interaction between DIPR and media persons, adding that the department will make it a regular feature to organise get togethers for journalists.

In his welcome address, Joint Director Information (hq), Dr. Zahoor Ahmad Raina spoke about the role of media in present scenario. He also highlighted about the importance of fairness and credibility in the media.

Joint Director Information Jammu, Deepak Dubey in his concluding remarks emphasized on the role of media persons in present scenario of evolving digital age. He also said such workshops will be conducted in coming times also to strengthen collaborations between media institutions and government departments to promote professional excellence, transparency and responsible journalism.

During the workshop, an interactive session was also held between the participants and resource persons, sharing experiences and seeking guidance on ethical dilemmas faced in professional practice.

Deputy Director Information (PR), Javid Ahmad Rather; Information Officer Alka Misra along with other officers and officials of DIPR were present on the occasion.

The workshop was attended by media persons of various national and local media organisations.

Rs 40 cr heroin

(KNO), a spokesperson said a significant achievement on Anti-drug trafficking front, Jammu Police along with 165Bn BSF, achieved a major breakthrough, recovering huge quantity of narcotics (Suspected Drone Dropping) worth 40 Crores in R S Pura sector of District Jammu near International border.

He said, as acting promptly on inputs by 165 Bn BSF regarding suspicious drone activity near International border, a Cordon and search operation was launched jointly by Jammu Police and 165 Bn BSF during the intervening night of 13/14-02-2026 at Nai Basti Karotana, Baspur area of R S Pura sector near International border.

"During search at first light, two yellow coloured packets of narcotics were recovered from the Wheat fields at Nai Basti Karotana, the area is near international border and it is suspected to be drone dropping from Pakistan in the Indian Territory."

The spokesperson said, each packet appeared to contain heroin like substance, recovery memo has also been prepared in presence of magistrate, the recovered packets contain approximately 6.582 kg Heroin like substance worth rupees 40 Crores in the international market.

"In this regard case FIR No. 36/2026 under section 8/21/22 NDPS Act and investigation of case take up by SHO Police Station R.S Pura, Inspector Ravi Singh Parihar assisted by Incharge BPP Baspura, SI Ranbir Singh under the supervision of SP Headquarters Jammu," said the spokesperson.

He said, further investigation is underway to trace the exact source and destination of the recovered contraband. Police is thoroughly examining both the backward and forward linkages in the case and more breakthroughs are expected.

"Jammu Police urges citizens to come forward with any information regarding illegal drug activities in their localities including those residing near International border. With continued public cooperation, sincere efforts are being made to build a drug-free and crime-free society," the spokesperson said further. (KNO)

With 28% transition

initiatives like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao," it reads.

The official figures further state that the dropout rates have declined sharply to 1.5 per cent at primary, 3.2 percent at upper primary, and 12.9 percent at secondary levels.

Meanwhile, teachers in the schools told KNO that there could be various reasons for the transition rate of students from secondary to senior secondary in Jammu and Kashmir.

One of the teachers said, "There can be various reasons for the dropout rate among the students of elementary and secondary levels. Mostly, the students come from financially unstable families and quit studies midway."

"Nowadays, many students are either seen quitting studies midway either to earn for their families or are setting-up their own businesses. Some students don't want to be regular in class but continue their studies simultaneously while working," said another teacher.

"There are a number of Out of School Children (OoSC) in JK. The students from nomad tribes also give less preference to the studies," the teacher said.

Pertinently, the government in 2025 had said that "about 46,000 Out of School Children (OoSC) have been mainstreamed". (KNO)

PM Modi inaugurates bridge on Brahmaputra; unveils IIM, data centre in Assam

PTI

Guwahati, Feb 14: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday inaugurated several projects in Assam, including a bridge on the Brahmaputra River, an IIM and a data centre for the northeastern region.

The projects, which were rolled out months ahead of Assam assembly elections, aim to boost connectivity, strengthen digital infrastructure, promote higher education and enhance public transport.

Modi reached the state on a day-long visit to inaugurate an emergency landing facility (ELF) at Moran in Dibrugarh district and launch projects worth over Rs 5,500 crore.

The first project the prime minister inaugurated in the state capital was a six-lane bridge over the Brahmaputra River. He launched the Kumar Bhaskar Varma Setu, built at a cost of around Rs 3,030 crore.

The six-lane extradosed Prestressed Concrete (PSC) bridge will connect Guwahati with North Guwahati and is the first extradosed bridge in the Northeast.

After the inauguration, Modi took a walk on the bridge.

Assam Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya and Chief Minister Himanta Biswa were present on the occasion.

The bridge will cut travel time between Guwahati and North Guwahati to just seven minutes. Presently, only the Saraghat Bridge in Jalukbari area connects the two banks of the Brahmaputra in the capital region, with travel time taking around 30 minutes.

Considering the high seismicity of the region, the bridge incorporates base isolation technology using friction pendulum bearings, according to a statement issued by the prime minister's office.

High-performance stay cables were used to ensure durability and long-term structural performance, it added.

"A Bridge Health Monitoring System (BHMS) has also been incorporated for real-time condition monitoring, early damage detection and improved safety and service life of the extradosed bridge," the PMO statement said.

Modi had laid the foundation stone for the bridge on February 9, 2019 and construction started on March 1, 2020 by the then Assam chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal.

The initial cost of the bridge was Rs 2,608 crore, which escalated to Rs 3,030 crore, and the project was estimated to be completed within



four years. The length of the bridge is 7.75 km, including approach roads and flyovers on both sides of the Brahmaputra, while the actual bridge over the river is 1.24 km long.

The project was implemented by the Assam Public Works Department with consultancy services from Systara Engenharia Consultoria Ltd of Brazil. The contractor for the bridge was S P Singla Construction Pvt Ltd and the funding agency was the New Development Bank, with 20 per cent of the total project cost borne by the Assam government.

A senior official of the Assam government told PTI that after its formal opening to the public, the bridge will remain open exclusively for pedestrians till February 28.

Later, in nearby Lachit Ghat, Modi unveiled the Indian Institute of Management Guwahati, inaugurated a high-tech data centre that would cater to the entire Northeast, and flagged off 225 electric buses for four cities, including the Assam capital.

Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal, several state ministers, MPs, MLAs and senior government officials were also present along with the CM and governor during inauguration of these projects.

The PM virtually inaugurated the temporary campus of the IIM Guwahati, which is expected to give a major fillip to higher education and management education in the northeastern region.

The main IIM Guwahati project will entail an expenditure of Rs 555 crore. The central government had last year approved the establishment of an IIM in Guwahati. This is the second IIM in the Northeast and the 22nd in the country. The first IIM in the region is in Shillong.

"The permanent campus will be developed at Palasbari near Guwahati, while the institute will commence its academic session from a transit campus at Tech City, Bongora. IIM Ahmedabad will monitor the temporary arrangements," the Assam government official said.

The PM also virtually inaugurated the National Data Centre (NDC) for the northeastern region, set up at an investment of Rs 348 crore at Amin-gaon in Kamrup district of Assam.

The state-of-the-art data centre with a total sanctioned load of 8.5 MW and an average rack capacity of 10 kW per rack will host mission-critical applications of various government departments and also function as a disaster recovery centre for other NDCs.

"This will enable governments in the Northeast to digitally facilitate the delivery of essential citizen-centric services," the PMO said.

Aligned with the vision of Digital India, the NDC for the Northeast has been envisaged as a strategic intervention to strengthen the region's ICT backbone and ensure robust, secure and always-available digital infrastructure.

Modi also flagged off 225 electric buses under the PM-eBus Sewa Scheme.

Of these, 100 buses are for Guwahati, 50 each for Nagpur and Bhavnagar, and 25 for Chandigarh.

"With the launch of e-bus operations under the PM-eBus Sewa Scheme in these four cities, more than 50 lakh citizens are expected to benefit through access to clean, affordable and reliable public transport services, contributing to improved urban mobility and enhanced quality of life," the PMO statement added.

Sibal received award funded by Epstein in 2010, Rahul should respond: BJP

PTI

New Delhi, Feb 14: The BJP alleged on Saturday that former Union minister Kapil Sibal received an award funded by convicted American sex offender Jeffrey Epstein at an event in the US in 2010 and demanded a response on the issue from Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. When asked, Sibal dismissed the ruling BJP's claim as "rubbish".

In a post on X, BJP national spokesperson Pradeep Bhandari said, "In 2010, an award reportedly funded by Jeffrey Epstein was received by senior Congress leader Kapil Sibal, a figure long seen as close to the Gandhi family."

Sam Pitroda, Congress's overseas department head, too was associated with the "same circles", Bhandari alleged.

He posted on X a document, which purportedly had Sibal's name on the list of awardees, alongside other dignitaries, including Pitroda, at the 2010 International Awards Gala that was organised in New York.

"Soon after that period, several policy shifts were witnessed during the then Congress-led government," the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader alleged. "Were these coincidences, or did external influence of Epstein attempt to shape decisions of Congress govt. Rahul Gandhi should answer!" he said, adding, "Epstein -- Congress Government's Valentine!" Sibal quit the Congress in 2022. He is currently an Independent member of the Rajya Sabha, backed by the Samajwadi Party.

India raises its commitment to climate action to 5.6% of GDP: FM Sitharaman



PTI

New Delhi, Feb 14: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday said India has hiked spending on climate action in the last six years to 5.6 per cent of GDP, demonstrating the country's pursuit of meeting nationally determined goals on curbing carbon emission.

Participating in a panel discussion at the Munich Security Conference, she said India has increased its commitment to climate action.

"Six years ago, we were spending approximately 3.7 per cent of our GDP on climate action. Today, that figure is close to 5.6 per cent. We have invested the funds. We are not waiting for financing and technology to come from elsewhere but they must come," she said. She further said that India will continue to invest in renewable energy, and we have been steadily building on that commitment.

Carbon capture strategies have been

funded in the Union Budget 2026-27 so that they can be implemented across the country, she said, adding that they are being incentivised.

Furthermore, she said, India has achieved two-thirds of its nationally determined commitments in the renewable sector and that too four years ahead of the target date.

Making a case for differentiated cost of climate action, Sitharaman said, country which are less polluting should contribute less towards climate action.

"As much attention as we give to emission control, we need to look at resilience and adaptation. Otherwise, you're going to sacrifice a lot. Technologies will have to talk to each other. No one can say they've created a perfect system to counter climate concerns," she said.

And it can't be that countries which have contributed less to emissions are made to pay equally, she said, adding that bearing the cost of climate action will need differentiated treatment.

Govt launches PM RAHAT to provide emergency response system for accident victims

PTI

New Delhi, Feb 14: The government on Saturday announced the launch of PM RAHAT (Road Accident Victim Hospitalisation and Assured Treatment) Scheme, reflecting a governance approach rooted in Seva - service, compassion and protection for vulnerable citizens," MoRTH said.

The decision underscores the government's commitment to ensuring that no life is lost due to lack of immediate medical assistance after a road accident.

By approving PM RAHAT from Seva Teerth, the Prime Minister has prioritised life-saving intervention, financial certainty for hospitals, and a structured emergency response system for accident victims.

Integration with the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) 112 helpline ensures that accident

Minister approved the launch of the PM RAHAT (Road Accident Victim Hospitalisation and Assured Treatment) Scheme, reflecting a governance approach rooted in Seva - service, compassion and protection for vulnerable citizens," MoRTH said.

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Integration with the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) 112 helpline ensures that accident

victims reach hospitals within the Golden Hour.

Road accident victims, Rah-Veer (Good Samaritans), or any person at the accident site may dial 112 to obtain details of the nearest designated hospital and request ambulance assistance, enabling swift coordination between emergency responders, police authorities and hospitals.

Under the Scheme, every eligible road accident victim in any category of road will be entitled to cashless treatment up to Rs 1.5 lakh per victim, for a period of 7 days from the date of the accident.

Stabilization treatment will be provided for up to 24 hours in non-life-threatening cases and up to 48 hours in life-threatening cases, subject to police authentication on an integrated digital system.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER IRRIGATION DIVISION OMPORA BUDGAM.

Email ID: mehrajudrat.8531@jk.gov.in

E-NIT.NO.29 OF 02/2026

For and on behalf of the LT. Governor of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir e-tenders on percentage basis are invited from approved and eligible contractors Registered with Union Territory of J&K Govt.

S. No	Name of work	Estt. Cost of work amount in lacs	Performance security @ 3%	Time of complete-on	Class of contract	Cost of tender document	Head of account
1	Restoration of offtake point of Khardara M/o Bastoori Khan at village Uttigam by way of Crate work and cement concrete works.	2.00	6000	10days	DEE	100/-	M&R 2701

No of works Advertised: 01 (one)

Position of Funds (Budgetary provision).

Position of Technical Sanction Accorded.

Position of Administrative Approval Accorded.

The NIT consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria specifications, Bill of quantities, set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen /downloaded from departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in

1.	Publishing date	13-02-2026 (4:00 PM)
2.	Download date start	13-02-2026 (4:00 PM)
3.	Bid submission date starts	13-02-2026 (4:00 PM)
4.	Bid submission date ends	19-02-2026 upto (3:00 PM)
5.	Bid Opening date	19-02-2026 at (3.10:00 AM)

The bids shall be deposited in electronic format on the departmental website.

27. No claim shall be entertained on account of disruption of internet services being used by bidders and are advised to upload their bids well in advance to avoid any technical snags in last hours. 36) All other terms and conditions will remain same as laid down in PWD Form 25-double.

Executive Engineer
Irrigation Division
Ompora Budgam.

No:-6104-18
Date:- 13 -02-2026

DIPK-10930/25
DATED: 14-02-2026

UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B DIVISION SOPORE NOTICE INVITING TENDER

e-NIT No. EE/R&B/Sopore 161 of 2025-26, Dated 14.02.2026

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor, Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, e-tenders are invited by Executive Engineer R&B Division Sopore on (Aggregate Percentage Basis) from approved and eligible Civil Contractors registered with J&K UT Govt., PWD, CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Govt. for the following work:-

S. No.		Adv. Cost (Rs in Lacs)	E/Money	Cost of T/ DOC (In Rupees)	Time for completion of work	MH Account	Class of Contract or
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Construction of Toilet at Girls High School Tarzoo.	1.746	3500/-	200/-	20 days	SAMAG Shiksha	"DEE"

Date of Issue of Tender Notice	from	14/02/2026
Period of downloading of bidding documents	from	14/02/2026
Bid submission Start Date	from	14/02/2026
Bid Submission End Date	to	20/02/2026 upto 4.00 P.M
Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)		20/02/2026 at 11.00 A.M in the office of Ex. Engineer R&B Div. Sopore

Position of funds:

Available Position of AAA/ TS /

Accorded

1. The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other detail's can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below
2. Bids must be accompanied by a Treasury Challan (dated between the bid start date and the Bid Submission End date) with NIT No. Name of work and S.No. deposited in M.H. 0059 in the name of Executive Engineer R&B Division Sopore (tender inviting authority) as the cost of the tender document.

3. At the time of tendering, all bidders must upload earnest money/bid security equal to 2% of the Advertised Cost in the form of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to the tender receiving authority, i.e. Executive Engineer R&B Division Sopore. Besides that, the successful bidder will have to provide Performance Security @ 5% at the time of contract award, strictly in accordance with the Government's circular instructions from time to time. The earnest money/bid security of 2% will be released after submission of a performance security of 5% of the contract cost which will be released after completion of the DLP/Maintenance Period.

3(b) Geotech Photographs Minimum 03 sets (01 set Comprising of Photograph before, during and after execution of work) of size 26 cm x21 cm to be provided.

4. Special conditions:-

I. The intending tenderers must have sufficient skilled /unskilled labour force.

II. All intending Bidders have to upload Scanned copy of Earnest money @ 2% as per the circular issued by Chief Engineer PW(R&B) Department Kashmir, vide No. CE/RBK/HD/32857-92, Dated: 01-01-2022.

III. Intending bidders shall upload scanned copies of documents of valid Registration card (2025-26) PAN / GST registration with clearance of December 2025/ January 2026 or /2nd quarter /3rd Quarter 2025-26, Treasury Receipt (Dated between the bid start date and the bid submission end date) deposited in MH 0059 and CDR ,BG or FDR pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Div. Sopore). However successful bidder shall produce the original copies of same within 3 days after opening of tenders.

IV. The undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject any tender or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

V. Error/Omission, if found in the BQ in respect of unit of item, quantity of item, rate of item etc. shall be rectified as per the estimate/SSR in the allotment/ Agreement of work or at any other stage of work..

5. Unbalanced Bid:- In case bid of the successful bidder is unbalanced, the Successful bidder will have to provide additional performance security in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Division Sopore (tender receiving authority) vide Principal Secretary to Government Finance department's circular issued under endorsement No: DF-Code/ 441/ 2021-02-158 dated" 8.8.20025.

a: Where the bid price is below 10% but not below 20% of the project cost put to bid, the additional performance guarantee/security percentage shall be Incremented by 0.1% for every percentage of bid price below 10% of the project cost put to bid starting at 11% with the additional bid performance guarantee being 0.1% and this additional performance guarantee percentage shall be applied on the bid price.

b. Where the bid price is 20% or more below of the project cost put to bid, the additional performance guarantee percentage shall be Incremented by 0.2% for every percentage of bid price below 20% of the project cost put to bid in addition to 1% of the bid price and this additional performance guarantee percentage shall be applied on the bid price.

c. The additional performance guarantee percentage shall be rounded off to the next lower percentage based on whether the decimal point of the percentage of bid price is below 0.5% or next higher percentage based on whether the decimal point of the percentage of bid price is 0.5% or more.

d. The additional performance security shall be treated as part of the performance security. Additional performance security shall be taken only after approval of next higher authority.

6 The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same web site in the office of the Tender receiving authority).

No: 10620-27
Dated: 14.02.2026

DIPK-10962/25
DATED: 14-02-2026

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
R&B Division Sopore

Thunder

‘Bangladesh cabinet oath in next four days’

PTI

Dhaka, Feb 14: Bangladesh President Mohammed Shahabuddin is expected to administer the oath of office to the new cabinet of BNP chairman Tarique Rahman within next four days, officials said on Saturday.

Rahman's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) on Friday secured a sweeping victory with more than two-thirds majority in the landmark parliamentary elections held on Thursday.

The BNP leader is set to become the prime minister, replacing the interim government chief Muhammad Yunus.

"In line with the Constitution, the president will administer the oath at Bangabhaban (presidential palace)," Cabinet Secretary Sheikh Abdur Rashid said without giving any specific date for the oath ceremony.

But a senior BNP policy making leader, preferring anonymity, told PTI that the swearing in ceremony is expected to be held on February 16 or 17.

The Constitution requires the cabinet oath taking ceremony to be followed by the swearing-in of new parliament members while a key aide to Rahman said the existing legal scenario made the issue a little complicated.

"The speaker of the last parliament is supposed to conduct the MPs' oath of office but she resigned and is living in an undisclosed location. The deputy speaker is in jail," he said, wishing not to be named.

In such circumstances, he



said, the president might select someone to conduct the event of administering the lawmakers' oath as "the Constitution has kept a provision" for such an eventuality.

The cabinet secretary, meanwhile, said the Constitution says the MPs-elect must take oath within three days of the gazette notification and then the majority party would elect its parliamentary leader. The gazette notification was issued on Saturday morning.

Asked for the possible date of cabinet's swearing in, Rashid said no date was fixed yet.

"If we are instructed or indicated that it will be held on a certain date and at a certain time, we will work accordingly. Even if it is tomorrow, we will have to prepare for tomorrow. We will be able to tell you the date once we are informed," the top bureaucrat said.

Law ministry officials said, since the gazette notification was issued on Saturday, the three-day period for the oath taking could

be considered from Sunday covering 15, 16 and 17 February.

The 13th Parliamentary election assumed significance as it was held after a period of tumultuous political vacuum, instability and fragile security situation, including widespread attacks on minorities after the student-led protests brought down the 15-year rule of Sheikh Hasina in August 2024. Hasina fled to India on August 5 that year and three days later, Yunus took over as the Chief Adviser of the Interim government.

According to the Election Commission (EC), the BNP has bagged 209 out of 297 seats, while right-wing Jamaat-e-Islami secured 68 seats. Hasina's Awami League party was barred from contesting the polls, which recorded 59.44 per cent voter turnout.

The EC postponed the announcement of results in two seats - Chattogram-2 and Chattogram-4 while the election in one seat was postponed due to the death of a candidate.

Rubio tells Munich security forum that US, Europe belong together

REUTERS

Munich, Feb 14: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio gave a message of unity to Europeans on Saturday, saying Washington does not intend to abandon the transatlantic alliance, but that Europe's leaders had made a number of policy mistakes and need to change course.

Rubio's overall message of togetherness at the annual Munich Security Conference was relatively well-received by the gathering of European diplomats and security officials.

Even as Rubio at times needed European policymakers, his address contrasted sharply with Vice President JD Vance's address here a year ago, in which he argued that the greatest danger to the continent came from censorship and democratic backsliding — rather than external threats like Russia.

"In a time of headlines heralding the end of the transatlantic era, let it be known and clear to all that this is neither our goal nor our wish, because for us Americans, our home may be in the western hemisphere, but we will always be a child of Europe," Rubio told the crowd.

The address was notably short on specifics. Rubio did not mention Russia — the continent's main geopolitical foil — during the roughly half-hour address, nor did he even bring up NATO by name, the continent's main security bloc.

China warns US 'plotting' on Taiwan could lead to 'confrontation'



AFP

Munich, Feb 14: Beijing's top diplomat Wang Yi warned the United States on Saturday against "plotting" on Taiwan, saying it could lead to a "confrontation" with China.

Speaking at the Munich Security Conference in Germany, Foreign Minister Wang said that in the future, the United States could adopt a China policy that involves "instigating and plotting to split China through Taiwan, crossing China's red line."

"This could very likely lead to a confrontation between

China and the United States," he said. He added that he hoped Washington would pursue a "positive and pragmatic" approach, "but we are also prepared to deal with various risks."

China claims self-ruled Taiwan as its own territory and has not ruled out the use of force to bring it under its control. The United States has long been the democratic island's most important backer and biggest arms provider, and Taiwan would be heavily reliant on US support in a potential conflict with China.

During his Saturday

comments, Wang also weighed in on Beijing's current relationship with Tokyo, which has been under heavy strain since Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi took office in October.

"The Japanese people should no longer allow themselves to be manipulated or deceived by those far-right forces, or by those who seek to revive militarism," Wang said.

"All peace-loving countries should send a clear warning to Japan: if it chooses to walk back on this path, it will only be heading toward self-destruction."

T20 World Cup Rashid, Banton guide England to 5-wicket win over Scotland



PTI

Kolkata, Feb 14: Veteran leg-spinner Adil Rashid returned with figures of 3/36 before Tom Banton smashed an unbeaten fifty in the middle overs to guide England to a comfortable five-wicket win over Scotland in a T20

World Cup Group C match here on Saturday.

Opting to bowl first, England rode on Rashid's exploits to bowl out Scotland for 152.

Pacer Jofra Archer and left-arm spinner Liam Dawson also chipped in with two wickets apiece. Captain Richie Berrington top-scored for Scotland

with a 32-ball 49 while opener Michael Jones contributed 33.

Chasing, England didn't have the best of starts losing both their openers -- Phil Salt and Jos Buttler -- inside two overs.

But Jacob Bethell (32 off 28 balls) and Banton (63 not out off 41 balls) shared 66 runs for the third wicket to get England's chase back on track.

Sam Curran played a 20-ball 28-run short cameo, while Will Jacks made unbeaten 16 off 10 balls towards the end as England chased down the target of 153 with 10 balls to spare.

Brief Scores.

Scotland: 152 all out in 19.4 overs (Richie Berrington 49; Adil Rashid 3/36).

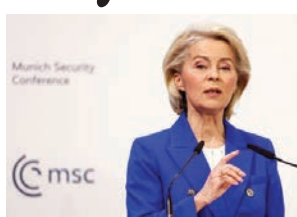
England: 155 for 5 in 18.2 overs (Tom Banton 63 not out; Oliver Davidson 1/12).

Europe needs to take on its responsibilities on security: EU chief

AFP

Munich, Feb 14: Europe must assume more responsibility for its own security, European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen told a security conference in Munich on Saturday. "Europe needs to step up and has to take on its responsibility" for its security, she told the Munich Security Conference.

"Europe's security was not always been seen as our primary



responsibility," she said. "We must grow a European backbone of strategic enablers: in space, intelligence and deep strike capabilities," she said. "No taboo can go unchallenged," she said,

referring notably to the use of a collective commitment by EU member states to defend one another in the event of aggression. "I believe the time has come to bring Europe's mutual defense clause to life."

Europe has already embarked on a historic rearmament effort to have a credible defense by 2030, following threats by the US to reduce their investment in NATO, and to prepare for a potential conflict with Russia.

Zelensky feels 'little bit' of pressure from Trump

REUTERS

Kyiv, Feb 14: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Saturday he was feeling "a little bit" of pressure after US leader Donald Trump called for him to get moving on peace talks, but he said it was important also to see compromises from Russia.

"Give us two months of ceasefire and we will go to elections," Zelensky said in a panel discussion at the Munich Security Conference, responding to US calls for a prompt vote.

"Give us a ceasefire. President Trump can do it: push Putin; make a ceasefire. Then our parliament will change the law and we will go to elections."

Tariq is different from other spinners but Abhishek can help tackle him: Harbhajan



PTI

Colombo, Feb 14: Former India cricketer Harbhajan Singh was relieved to see Abhishek Sharma regaining his fitness, stating that the swashbuckling opener's presence will help India neutralise Pakistan's unorthodox spinner Usman Tariq in their T20 World Cup match here on Sunday.

Off-spinner Tariq's outing against Indian batters at the Premadasa will be keenly watched because of the pause ahead of delivery and sling-ing action.

"See, he's someone that I have seen him bowl in ILT20, where he was a pick of the bowlers. Whenever he got the opportunity to play in the semifinal and the final, he was the man-of-the-match. He is different from the other spinners and has a lot of variations," Harbhajan told PTI.

"People are talking about him for his stand and deliver action. It's not easy. You know, anybody can stand and bowl, but you've got to have different variations, which he's got and he's hard to hit in bigger grounds and slower pitches.

"So, all I want to say is that be a little bit mindful when you're playing against someone whom you have never faced before. India can tackle him and not give him any big wicket. It's good to see Abhishek coming back, who plays spin really well and dominates (spin), throughout his innings," he added.

But what exactly is that Abhishek, who has recovered from a stomach bug that forced him to skip the match against Namibia in New Delhi, brings on to the table against spinners?

"Abhishek is a quality player. He is a player who is determined to win the match on his own. I have played a lot of cricket. I know that he is a proper batsman who has all the shots.

"A lot of batsmen do not have all the shots. He (Abhishek) is not like that. He hits the first ball. And as long as he is on the crease, he keeps hitting. So, he is a proper batsman," he noted.

Harbhajan also exhorted the teams to put behind the unsavoury build-up to Sunday's match and concentrate on the game.

"Of course, there were a lot of hurdles before this game, whether this game will happen or not. But all that is done. Now, the focus should be on cricket, which is the main part. Of course, I'm hoping that India will play well in this game.

"Pakistan is also a very strong team, especially in these conditions with their spinners bowling really well. So, I think it's going to be a great game to watch," he said.

The spinner, who has 711 International wickets, also opined that people should not unnecessarily fret over formalities like handshakes at the toss or after the match.

INOX CINEMA SRINAGAR

O'ROMEO (A)
HINDI - 03:30 PM
HINDI WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES - 07:05 PM
HINDI ATMOS - 11:00 AM, 02:30 PM, 06:00 PM

CRIME 101 (A)
ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES
04:45 PM

BORDER 2 (U/A 13+)
HINDI - 11:30 AM

SHOW TIMINGS

Sunday, 15th February

TICKETS AT:
www.bookmyshow.com
www.inoxmovies.com
Paytm, Inox App or
Directly from the booking
counter at the cinema.

WUTHERING HEIGHTS (A)
ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES
01:45 PM

TU YAA MAIN (U/A 16+)
HINDI - 10:45 AM, 07:40 PM