

!! Continuations from Page 1 !! CM stresses for...

on the occasion. Addressing the meeting, the Chief Minister gave directions for early completion of development works taken up under CAPEX strictly as per availability of funds. He assured the MLAs that each of them would receive a detailed communication outlining the status of projects that can be taken up, those that could not be initiated so far, the reasons thereof, and the future roadmap.

"It should not happen that you feel a project has been taken on priority and then put on a back burner. You will receive a letter explaining what we are doing, what we have done and what we intend to do in future, so that everyone is kept in the picture," the Chief Minister said.

On irrigation, the Chief Minister emphasised the need for a comprehensive ground-level inspection, particularly of tail-end areas of canals, to ensure proper desilting and equitable water distribution to farmers. He directed the concerned Minister to prepare a timetable and conduct on-site inspections along with the local MLAs.

Recalling past challenges, the Chief Minister said that farmers at the tail end of canals often suffered due to lack of desilting, which prevented water from reaching them when it was most needed. He stressed the need to take up desilting works in convergence with MGNREGA wherever feasible, so that labour costs are met under MGNREGA while material and machinery costs are borne by the department.

Referring to the issue of farmers being forced to use pumps due to inadequate canal irrigation, the Chief Minister said that unauthorised electricity connections for irrigation would not be disconnected and would be regularised as non-metered connections. He further announced that no hike in electricity charges for farmers would be proposed this year.

Directing the Deputy Commissioner Jammu, the Chief Minister called for maximum utilisation of funds in the remaining months of the financial year. He complimented the district administration for good performance and better-than-expected fund utilisation so far.

He stressed the need for close monitoring of SASCI projects, especially greenfield projects, to ensure timely fund utilisation and avoid additional financial burden under CAPEX. He also directed that MLAs be taken into confidence while organising Mission Yuva events in their constituencies to build momentum for employment generation initiatives.

Highlighting that more than Rs 1400 crore has been sanctioned for permanent flood restoration works, the Chief Minister instructed that the share allocated to Jammu district must be utilised judiciously to ensure durable and long-term solutions.

"The water levels we are seeing now are similar to those witnessed in 2014. Our restoration works must be planned keeping that in mind so that the assets created are not washed away during the next heavy rains. Restoration must be permanent, not temporary," he asserted. The Chief Minister complimented the district administration and the elected representatives for their collective efforts. During the meeting, the concerned Ministers also made interventions related to their respective departments and issued on-the-spot directions to the officers for prompt redressal of issues. Earlier, Deputy Commissioner Jammu gave a detailed presentation on the financial and physical progress of various departments. He highlighted the achievements and ongoing works in sectors including Public Works (R&B), PMGSY, electricity, PMAY-G and PMAY-U, school education, skill development, health, youth services and sports, revenue, labour, agriculture and allied sectors, forest, geology and mining, tribal affairs and other departments. Chairman DDC Jammu, Member of Parliament and MLAs also raised issues, demands and grievances pertaining to their respective constituencies for early resolution.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister laid e-foundation stones of housing and urban development projects worth Rs 13.48 crore and e-inaugurated projects related to school education, housing and urban development and rural development amounting to Rs 19.05 crore.

He also flagged off truck-mounted jetting-cum-sewer suction machines (6000 litres), truck-mounted jetting-cum-sewer suction machines (4000 litres), jetting, grabbing and rodding machines (3000 litres) and open nallah desilting machines mounted on tipper chassis with extendable crane. An ambulance for CHC Pallanwalla was also flagged off on the occasion.

Govt will continue...

would lapse in March. "We have made a review in the meeting. Major decisions will be incorporated in next year's Budget. A significant portion of the funds allotted to the district has already been utilised while we are fixing minor gaps," the chief minister said.

Abdullah walked nearly half-a-kilometre to the venue of the meeting at the Deputy Commissioner's office from his official residence at Wazarat Road. The meeting was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary, Cabinet ministers, Chief Secretary Atal Dhuloo and MLAs of the Jammu district.

"As much help from the central government would be good because the financial position of Jammu and Kashmir is not good. We would continue with last year's budget framework, carry forward ongoing schemes, and introduce some new initiatives," the chief minister said. He asked for patience with regard to the budget, saying, "It is not possible that I will stand here and start telling you about the budget."

Asked about allegations of discrimination with Jammu and the BJP's demand for the shifting of the proposed NLU from Kashmir to Jammu, Abdullah said when Jammu got IIT and IIM, what did Kashmir get.

"Then why didn't you talk about equality? Then why didn't you make a controversy that both should not be opened in Jammu? One should be opened in Jammu and one should be opened in Kashmir. Then you people did not feel bad. Now when it comes to the National Law University, you see discrimination. Leave this decision to us. No decision has been taken yet as to where to locate it. Let us take the decision and then we will see," he said.

J&K BOSE notifies...

are scheduled to conclude on March 28 and April 2 for class 12 and class 11, respectively. All students, parents and stakeholders are advised to visit the official website of the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) at www.jkbose.nic.in. for detailed date sheets.

Modi, German Chancellor...

flying with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz. After paying tributes to Mahatma Gandhi at the Sabarnati Ashram, PM Modi and Chancellor Merz went to the Sabarnati Riverfront, where the state government has organised the kite festival.

At the venue, Modi and Merz interacted with women artisans and understood the process of making kites. After the inauguration, both the leaders took a ride on the ground in an open vehicle and also tried their hands at flying kites.

As many as 135 kitists from 50 countries and nearly 1,000 kite enthusiasts from India are participating in the International Kite Festival-2026 in Ahmedabad, according to a Gujarat government release. As part of the festival, the kitists have already visited places like Rajkot, Surat, Dholavira (in Kutch) and Statue of Unity (Narmada) during the last two days and enthralled the visitors, it said, adding that the festival in Ahmedabad will continue till January 14. Last year, the festival attracted more than 3.83 lakh visitors across Gujarat.

India, Germany decide...

out of geopolitical upheaval. Following talks between Modi and Merz, the two sides inked 19 pacts, including a roadmap for defence industrial collaboration and another on expanding cooperation in the higher education sector. A separate pact was inked on engagement in the telecommunications sector.

The two leaders also pitched for early finalisation of the India-European Union (EU) free trade agreement to expand the overall trade basket. A visa-free transit for Indian passport holders for transiting through Germany was also announced to boost people-to-people ties.

The German leader, accompanied by a large business delegation, landed in Ahmedabad early this morning on a two-day visit to India. It is his first trip to Asia as the German Chancellor. "The growing cooperation in defence and security is a symbol of our mutual trust and shared vision. I express my heartfelt gratitude to Chancellor Merz for simplifying the processes related to defence trade," Modi said in his media statement.

"We will also work on a roadmap to enhance cooperation between our defence industries, which will open up new opportunities for co-development and co-production," he added.

In the talks, Modi and Merz reaffirmed their commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific, respect for international law including UNCLOS (UN Convention on the Law of the Sea), and announced a new bilateral Indo-Pacific consultation mechanism.

The move comes amid China's increasing military muscle-flexing in the region.

Modi and Merz also reaffirmed their strong support for the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), emphasising its transformational potential in reshaping and promoting global commerce, connectivity and prosperity.

In his comments, the prime minister also said that both sides are jointly advancing new projects in areas such as climate, energy, urban development, and urban mobility.

"The new mega project in green hydrogen involving companies from both countries will prove to be a game-changer for the energy of the future.

"India and Germany are working together to build secure, trusted, and resilient supply chains," he said. Modi said the growing trade and investment ties have infused "new energy" into the India-German strategic partnership as he pointed out that the bilateral trade has now reached its highest level ever and crossed the USD 50 billion mark. "More than 2,000 German companies have been present in India for a long time. This reflects their unwavering confidence in India and the immense opportunities that exist here," he said. The prime minister said both sides agreed that "terrorism is a serious threat to all humanity" and that India and Germany will continue to fight it together with "full determination".

In his remarks, Chancellor Merz extensively talked about people-to-people connections between the two countries and said the number of skilled workers, including caregivers and nurses, needed from India is increasing rapidly.

An agreement on skill partnership inked following the Modi-Merz talks is expected to facilitate the mobility of more Indian healthcare professionals to Germany, which is home to around 300,000 Indian expatriates and 60,000 students.

"We are experiencing that great powers use supply chains and raw materials increasingly as instruments of power. Together we want to oppose this," Merz said.

"We reduce unilateral dependencies of our supply chains and that makes both our economies more resilient," he said.

In his remarks, Modi described the Indo-Pacific as an area of "high priority" for both countries. The two leaders also discussed in detail a range of global and regional issues, including the conflict in Ukraine and the situation in Gaza.

"India has always advocated for the peaceful resolution of all problems and disputes, and supports all efforts being made in this direction," Modi said. "India and Germany agree that reforming global institutions is crucial for addressing global challenges. Our joint efforts through the G4 group to reform the UN Security Council are a testament to this shared belief," he said. On mobility of talents, Modi said special emphasis has been placed on enhancing migration, mobility and skilling. "India's talented young workforce is making a significant contribution to Germany's economy." The prime minister said the comprehensive roadmap on higher education will give a new direction to the partnership in the education sector: "I invite German universities to open their campuses in India," he said.

27-day-long...

after Eid-ul-Fitr in March and April. Ramzan is expected to begin on February 18 or 19, subject to the sighting of the moon.

February, which will have 18 days of business, will witness the presentation of the budget for the financial year 2026-27 and the Supplementary Statement of Expenditure for 2025-26 by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on February 6, it said.

March and April will have five and four days of business, respectively, according to the Assembly calendar. The Assembly Secretariat has requested MLAs not to submit more than 10 starred and 10 unstarred questions by January 12, not more than two Bills by January 15, and not more than four resolutions by January 17.

General Budget on...

after the president's address. According to the provisional calendar issued by the Lok Sabha Secretariat, the House will also meet on January 29.

The finance minister will present the General Budget on February 1, which has been designated as the Budget Day by the government. Earlier, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju had said the Budget session will begin on January 28 and continue till April 2. The first part of the session will conclude on February 13 and reconvene on March 9, allowing time for the scrutiny of Budget proposals by parliamentary committees.

Ministry notifies NSG...

They have also been allowed to delay any pending election process till the end of this year for a smooth transition.

The ministry mandates at least four SOM, two of them women, in the General Bodies of national sports bodies. Athletes who have won at least one of any gold, silver or bronze medal in the Summer Olympic Games or Winter Olympic Games have been placed in Tier I. Tier II is for those who have participated in two or more editions of the Olympics or the Winter Olympics. Tier III would be for applicants who have participated in at least one edition of the Olympics or Winter Olympics.

Winners of Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award or an Arjuna Award are in Tier IV, while Tier V is for applicants who have won at least a gold, silver or bronze medal or equivalent placing, in a World Championship or "equivalent competition". There are a total of 10 tiers in descending order of achievements.

With the implementation of the Act notified, a three-member National Sports Board, from which the NSF's will have to seek affiliation for grant of government funds, will take shape in the days to come. A five-member search-cum-selection headed by the Cabinet Secretary will assess candidates. Persons convicted of any offence by a court of law will continue to be barred from contesting elections to the Executive Committee and the Athletes Commission of national federations.

"A person shall be disqualified from being a member of the General Body, or of any committee of a National Sports Body, and shall not be eligible for contesting for election to the Executive Committee or the Athletes Committee, if such person is- (a) declared insolvent under applicable law; or (b) subject to a conviction by a court of competent jurisdiction in India for an offence, followed by a sentence of imprisonment..." the rules stated.

The sports persons applying to be designated as SOMs should not be less than 25 years of age and must have retired from active sports.

"They should have not participated in any competitive sport event which leads to selection to represent a district, State or India for at least one year prior to the date of application," the ministry stated.

"The Tiered criteria has been kept broad enough to meet requirements of different sports disciplines," it added.

National Sports Election Panel

The rules provide that the roster of the National Sports Election Panel must have at least 20 members at all times. "The fee of the electoral officer, selected from the Election Panel, will be decided by the National Sports Body on the basis of mutual agreement with the Electoral Officer, subject to a maximum amount of Rs. five lakh," it stated. The rules authorise the central government, on receipt of the application from a National Sports Body, to relax the provisions of the rules for a period of 12 months. The reasons must be recorded in writing for any waiver.

CB registers FIR...

the complaint, Sanjay Parihar said, a preliminary verification was conducted, which revealed that the accused persons, with criminal intent from the very inception, had misrepresented facts and dishonestly induced the complainant to part with his hard-earned money.

Accordingly, a case has been registered at Police Station Special Crime Wing, Crime Branch Jammu under Sections 318(4) and 61(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) against the above-named accused persons, Sanjay Parihar said adding that further investigation of the case has been entrusted to Inspector Kali Charan, Investigating Officer, Special Crime Wing, Crime Branch Jammu.

The SSP appealed general public to remain cautious and aware of such fraudsters and their tempting offers.

J&K leads country...

Secretary, Tourism; Secretary, School Education; Director, School Education, and other senior officers of the concerned departments. Deputy Commissioners from all districts participated in the meeting through video conferencing.

During the review, the Chief Secretary highly appreciated the exemplary performance of all districts during Phase-I, which enabled Jammu & Kashmir to emerge as the top-performing region in the country, surpassing even the largest States in terms of scale, participation and overall impact of the celebrations.

He lauded the coordinated efforts of district administrations, along with the School and Higher Education Departments, for successfully organizing large-scale patriotic and cultural programmes that effectively showcased the historical, cultural and emotional significance of VandeMataram as a powerful symbol of India's freedom struggle and national unity.

Encouraging the Deputy Commissioners to sustain the momentum, the Chief Secretary urged them to ensure equally stellar performance during Phase-II, beginning January 19. He emphasized that the second phase should further deepen public engagement, particularly among youth, students and community groups, and strengthen the spirit of national pride, unity and patriotism across the Union Territory.

While reviewing the Action Plan for Phase-II, the Chief Secretary underscored the importance of effective publicity, documentation and outreach. He directed that a robust and structured publicity campaign be undertaken through the Directorate of Information & Public Relations (DIPR). Special emphasis was laid on uploading maximum photographs and videos on the dedicated Government of India portal www.vandemataram150.in, along with enhanced outreach through official social media platforms using a common hashtag to maximize visibility at the national level.

Earlier, Principal Secretary, Culture Department, Brij Mohan Sharma, briefed the meeting about the successful conduct of Phase-I celebrations (November 7-14, 2025), in which a mammoth participation of around 1.22 Cr participants was witnessed followed by UP with a participation of 19.35 lakhs and then other states.

Moreover he added that the celebrations here also included grand inaugural and valedictory events at Abhinav Theatre and M.A. Stadium, Jammu, respectively. These events witnessed participation of over 20,000 students, artists and citizens, featuring mass singing of VandeMataram, vibrant patriotic cultural performances and extensive youth participation.

He further informed that the key activities planned during Phase-II include Vande Mataram Torch Relays across all districts to symbolize unity and national pride; mass singing of Vande Mataram at educational institutions, government offices, Panchayat Ghars and community centres; and integration of the Vande Mataram theme in all Republic Day programmes at the UT, district, tehsil and institutional levels.

Additionally, a range of special programmes such as essay writing, poster-making and debate competitions, Vande Mataram exhibitions, and youth marathons will be organized to ensure maximum public participation and awareness, especially among young citizens.

Reiterating his directions to all district administrations and concerned stakeholders, the Chief Secretary stressed that the commemoration of 150 years of Vande Mataram should be observed not merely as a series of events but as a people's movement to reconnect citi-

zens with the ideals of freedom, unity and national pride. He called upon all departments to work with dedication and commitment to make Phase-II celebrations impactful, inclusive and memorable.

CS sets Feb'...

Directors of School Education, Chief Engineers, and other senior officers concerned. During the review, the Chief Secretary assessed the infrastructure created under various schemes aimed at ensuring adequate sanitation facilities for girl students, emphasizing that access to clean and functional toilets is a critical factor in promoting attendance, retention and dignity of students in schools.

The Chief Secretary took a detailed assessment of the number of toilets constructed, those under execution and their present functional status. He stressed that mere creation of infrastructure is not sufficient and underlined the need to ensure that all existing toilets are fully functional, with assured water supply and other allied utilities.

Directing strict adherence to timelines, the Chief Secretary instructed that all ongoing works related to construction and upgradation of girls' toilets must be completed by 15th February. He further asked the School Education Department to ensure that toilets already constructed are made operational in every respect well before the stipulated deadline.

To ensure effective implementation at the ground level, the Chief Secretary ordered the constitution of zone-level committees, comprising officers from both the School Education Department and the Roads & Buildings (R&B) Department. These committees will conduct joint inspections of schools to identify gaps, assess repair and improvement requirements, and oversee execution of necessary works to make the facilities fully functional.

The Chief Secretary underscored that access to clean and functional sanitation facilities is essential for creating a safe, inclusive and girl-friendly learning environment and called for close inter-departmental coordination and continuous monitoring to ensure timely completion and sustained maintenance of the facilities.

During the meeting, Additional Chief Secretary, PWD, Shri Anil Kumar Singh, informed that the department is committed to completing all assigned works within the prescribed timeframe. He added that in locations where conventional construction is not feasible within the deadline, prefabricated toilet structures will be installed to ensure availability of facilities well before the stipulated date.

Giving a detailed presentation, Secretary, School Education Department, Ram Niwas Sharma, informed that out of a total of 18,724 government schools across the Union Territory, 18,023 schools (99.25%) have toilet facilities. He further stated that 17,403 schools (92.29%) have separate toilets for girls, while just 1,321 schools (7.71%) are presently without such facilities.

It was also informed that construction of 265 girls' toilets is currently under execution, while the remaining 1,056 schools without separate toilet facilities for girl students are being taken up in a time-bound manner. These works will be completed before the start of the academic session in winter-zone areas and by 15th February in summer-zone schools across the Union Territory.

Transforming J&K's cultural...

Jammu Kashmir's cultural and spiritual soul into a global art hub is a shared responsibility. I believe art is a bridge to connect diverse cultures and to revive our ancient spiritual and cultural legacy," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor highlighted the vital role of artists, thinkers, painters, sculptors as the "conscience of society," inspiring public participation in democracy and the nation's development journey.

The Lieutenant Governor stated that art forms like painting and sculpture are not mere entertainment and luxuries but vibrant forces that determine how a society thinks and moves forward. Throughout human civilization, art has given voice to emotions that transcend language, fostering empathy and social cohesion, he said.

He called upon the young generation to use the power of art for positive change.

"Art is both a mirror and a guide for society. Youth must embrace art as a medium to preserve their cultural identity, ensuring they remain rooted while contributing to the vision of a Viksit Bharat," the Lieutenant Governor further said.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor inaugurated a painting exhibition and also felicitated various artists.

Padma Shri Dr. SP Varma; Brij Mohan Sharma, Principal Secretary Culture; Shruti Awasthi, Regional Director, IGNSA; KK Sidla, Director Archives; Harvinder Kour, Secretary JKAACL; Dr. Javaid Rahi, Secretary, Kala Kendra Jammu; senior officials, prominent artists and citizens from different walks of life were present.

Trump says Iran...

violence, without offering evidence. "That's why the demonstrations turned violent and bloody to give an excuse to the American president to intervene," Araghchi said, in comments carried by Al Jazeera. The Qatar-funded network has been allowed to report live from inside Iran, despite the internet being shut off.

However, Araghchi said Iran was "open to diplomacy." Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said that a channel to the US remained open, but talks needed to be "based on the acceptance of mutual interests and concerns, not a negotiation that is one-sided, unilateral and based on dictation."

Meanwhile, pro-government demonstrators flooded the streets on Monday in support of the theocracy, a show of force after days of protests directly challenging the rule of 86-year-old Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Iranian state television aired chants from the crowd, which appeared to number in the tens of thousands, who shouted "Death to America!" and "Death to Israel!"

Iran's attorney general has said prosecutors will levy such charges against protesters, which carry the death penalty.

Trump and his national security team have been weighing a range of potential responses against Iran, including cyberattacks and direct strikes by the US or Israel, according to two people familiar with internal White House discussions who weren't authorised to comment publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

"The military is looking at it, and we're looking at some very strong options," Trump told reporters on Air Force One on Sunday night. Asked about Iran's threats of retaliation, he said: "If they do that, we will hit them at levels that they've never been hit before."

Trump said that his administration was in talks to set up a meeting with Tehran, but cautioned that he may have to act first as reports of the death toll in Iran mount and the government continues to arrest protesters.

"I think they're tired of being beat up by the United States," Trump said. "Iran wants to negotiate."

Iran, through the country's parliamentary speaker, warned Sunday that the US military and Israel would be "legitimate targets" if Washington uses force to protect demonstrators.

More than 10,600 people also have been detained over the two weeks of protests, said the US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency, which has been accurate in previous unrest in recent years and gave the death toll. It relies on supporters in Iran cross-checking information. It said 503 of the dead were protesters and 69 were security force members.

With the internet down in Iran and phone lines cut off, gauging the demonstrations from abroad has grown more difficult. The Associated Press has been unable to independently assess the toll. Iran's government hasn't offered overall casualty figures.

Those abroad fear the information blackout is emboldening hard-liners within Iran's security services to launch a violent crackdown. Protesters flooded Tehran's streets and its second-largest city on Saturday night into Sunday morning. Online videos purported to show more demonstrations Sunday night into Monday, with a Tehran official acknowledging them in state media.

At 2 pm Monday, Iranian state television showed images of demonstrators thronging Tehran toward Enghelab Square, or "Islamic Revolution" Square in the capital. It had been airing statements all morning from Iranian government, security and religious leaders to attend the demonstration.

It called the rally an "Iranian uprising against American-Zionist terrorism," without addressing the underlying anger in the country over the nation's ailing economy. State television aired images of such demonstrations around the country, trying to signal it had overcome the protests.

In Tehran, a witness told AP that the streets were empty at the sunset call to prayers each night. By the Isha, or nighttime prayer, the streets are deserted.

Part of that stems from the fear of getting caught in the crackdown. Police sent the public a text message that warned: "Given the presence of terrorist groups and armed individuals in some gatherings last night and their plans to cause death, and the firm decision to not tolerate any appeasement and to deal decisively with the rioters, families are strongly advised to take care of their youth and teenagers."

Another text, which claimed to come from the intelligence arm of the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, also directly warned people not to take part in demonstrations. The witness spoke on condition of anonymity due to the ongoing crackdown.

The demonstrations began December 28 over the collapse of the Iranian rial currency, which trades at more than 1.4 million to USD1, as Iran's economy is squeezed by international sanctions in part levied over its nuclear programme. The protests intensified and grew into calls directly challenging Iran's theocracy.

Meanwhile, video circulating online purports to show dozens of bodies in a morgue on the outskirts of Iran's capital.

People with knowledge of the facility and the US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency said Monday that the video shows the Kahrizak Forensic Medicine Centre.

In the footage, people are seen walking by dozens of bodies in bags laid out in a large room, attempting to identify those there. In some cases, bodies can be seen lying outside on blue tarps. A large truck can be seen in part of the footage.