

!! Continuations from Page 1 !! Decisive action, people's...

Police Force for empowering youth through the Civic Action Program. "J&K Police's Civic Action Program isn't just a government scheme-it's a mindset showing society that lasting peace flows from mutual trust. It proves security strengthens through relationships and community involvement," he said. The Lieutenant Governor called upon every section of the society to rise up against drug abuse. "We reaffirm our vow for a drug-free J&K and J&K Police Martyrs Memorial Hockey Tournament declares that commitment," he said. He also reiterated the commitment of J&K Police and the UT administration to hold youth's hands, create brighter opportunities for them, and build a society where talent gets platforms, young energy finds direction, and dreams gain resources. Nalin Prabhat, DGP J&K; S.J.M Gillani, Special DG (Coordination); Abdul Ghani Mir, Commandant General, Home Guards, Civil Defence & SDRF J&K; Anand Jain, ADGP Armed Police; senior officials of J&K Police and Civil administration; members of Hockey associations, and eminent sports personalities attended the inaugural ceremony.

Pandemonium in LA...

Sri Lanka and Pakistan". Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary led the counter attack and rejected the allegations, accusing the opposition leaders of "playing to the gallery" and politicising a financial assistance framework intended for development.

While the chair was trying to pacify the situation and was asking a National Conference member to speak, BJP objected and tried to enter the well, alleging that they were not being given adequate time to speak and later moved out of the house. As the disorder continued, Gul adjourned the House half-an-hour before the scheduled time till 2.30 pm. Raising concerns over governance and budgetary performance, the PDP legislator said while people had high expectations from the NC government, Jammu and Kashmir was passing through "the most unprecedented times". "There is no doubt that the challenges before the NC government are immense, and it is also true that such challenges have not been faced by any government in the past seven decades," Para said.

He acknowledged that the present government was operating under serious constraints but said public expectations remained high and could not be ignored.

Referring to last year's budget of Rs 1.40 lakh crore, he said nearly Rs 40,000 crore was earmarked for revenue expenditure while capital expenditure stood at around Rs 7,600 crore. "With barely 30 days left for the financial year to end, I want to know whether the government is capable of spending nearly Rs 1 lakh crore within this short period," Para said. He claimed that only about 12 per cent of expenditure had been achieved so far and alleged that around 100 projects recorded zero spending, including in critical sectors such as agriculture, horticulture, health and education. "Allocations are meaningless unless institutional bottlenecks are addressed. The government must explain whether the failure to spend is due to dual power structures or administrative paralysis," Para said.

Highlighting the social crisis, he said nearly 70 per cent of the population comprised youth, with about 32 per cent reportedly suffering from depression.

He also demanded the refund of approximately Rs 50 crore collected as fees, questioning how families were expected to arrange such amounts as the unemployment rate in J&K is highest in the country.

Flagging substance abuse, he claimed that around 5 lakh people were affected by drug addiction and nearly 4 lakh by alcohol abuse, while alleging that the budget failed to accord priority to the issue. He also described cancer as a "silent pandemic" claiming thousands of deaths without adequate response and questioning the silence of the government on this issue.

The legislator further raised concerns over the closure of 215 schools linked to banned Jamaat-e-Islami, affecting nearly 50,000 students, and sought a detailed explanation for the decision. At the end of the days proceedings, NC chief spokesperson said SASCI is a long-term financing mechanism with a repayment period of up to 50 years, aimed at accelerating construction and infrastructure development in Jammu and Kashmir. Rejecting the "debt trap" charge, he argued that if the scheme were detrimental, other states across the country would not have opted for it.

He also took a swipe at the opposition over past budget projections, alleging that figures had earlier been inflated, and said development was now being pursued in a realistic and structured manner.

The NC leader maintained that people of Jammu and Kashmir wanted development across all sectors and asserted that SASCI would help upgrade infrastructure to metropolitan standards.

Army Commander visits...

PRO Defence said on X. He also interacted with the troops and lauded their high standards of operational preparedness, professionalism and sustained focus on rapid absorption of technology.

ULB, Panchayat polls...

vacant at present," he said, adding that the report submitted by the Jammu and Kashmir Local Bodies Dedicated Backward Classes Commission for determining the quota of reserved seats is under examination, and further steps will be taken accordingly. CM Abdullah informed the House that the term of panchayats and block development councils (BDCs) expired on January 9, while the district development council (DDC) term will end on February 24. He said the tenure of the Srinagar municipal corporation ended on November 5, 2023, while the term of Jammu's civic body also ended in the same month on November 14.

Terms of all municipal councils and committees expired between October and November 2023, the CM added.

Abdullah said that panchayat halqas were delimited prior to the 2018 Panchayat elections on the basis of the 2011 census. "As per the panchayati raj act, fresh delimitation of panchayat halqas can be undertaken only after publication of the population figures of the general census. Since no census has been conducted after 2011, there is no proposal for fresh delimitation at present," he said.

He further said delimitation of 77 urban local bodies (ULBs) has been taken up as per instructions of the housing and urban development department, adding that the process has been completed for 72 ULBs and is underway for the remaining five.

On the reservation, the CM said rotation of sarpanch and panch wards will be carried out by the rural development department, while reservation of municipal wards will be undertaken by the SEC after approval and notification of the OBC commission report. He said that electoral rolls for panchayat elections have already been revised with January 1, 2025, as the qualifying date, while revision of municipal electoral rolls will be taken up after completion of delimitation and directions from the government.

Abdullah also informed that the tender process for the procurement of election material for panchayat polls has been completed and is underway for DDC elections. He said 30,000 ballot boxes have been purchased and distributed to districts, while an MoU has been signed with the Madhya Pradesh State Election Commission for providing 7,000 multi-post electronic voting machines for ULB elections. Highlighting reforms in the panchayati raj system, Abdullah said the Union territory has operationalised a three-tier structure with elections conducted for 4,291 sarpanches and 33,597 panchs, besides the constitution of BDCs and DDCs. He said the government has undertaken construction of 600 panchayat bhavans with internet connectivity and trained over 7.25 lakh participants in governance, planning and financial management between 2022 and 2025. Amendments to the laws have ensured reservation for women, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward classes, he added.

Abdullah further said that digital platforms such as eGramSwaraj and initiatives like the SVAMITVA scheme have been introduced to enhance transparency, accountability and provide a record of rights to rural households.

Counterfeit currency probe...

Bari Brahmana police state. During the investigation, police obtained bank account statements of the accused who is presently residing at Jalalabad locality of Sunjwan in Jammu. Scrutiny of the accounts revealed balances of about Rs 18 lakh in J&K Bank and Rs 2.40 lakh in PNB, the spokesman said, adding a special investigation team was set up by the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Samba Varinder Manhas to ascertain the source of the bank balances, given that the accused was working as a driver by profession.

During questioning, he said the accused disclosed that he is selling cocaine since long and had earned the said amount through drug trafficking.

Police recovered two packets of cocaine, weighing approximately 1937.80 grams, in cardboard wrapped with cello tape hidden in the garage at his workplace in Bari Brahmana, the spokesman said, adding relevant sections of NDPS Act were added in the case. More arrests and recoveries are expected at the disclosure of the arrested drug peddler, he said.

Meanwhile, two drug peddlers were arrested along with about 55 grams of heroin during vehicle checking at Chenani in Udhampur district this morning, the spokesman said. He said the arrested accused were on way to Srinagar from Jammu in a car when they were intercepted by police, leading to the recovery of the narcotic substance.

Northern Railway extends...

travel more convenient and comfortable for passengers and strengthening rail connectivity between Jammu and Kashmir.

On February 3, the chief minister while welcoming rail connectivity between the two regions of Jammu and Kashmir had said the frequency of the trains and the number of coaches needed to be increased. The special train number 04688 will continue to operate between Budgam and Banihal as per the existing schedule, with no change in timings or stoppages. From Banihal, the train will depart at 10:10 am and arrive at Katra station at 1 pm on February 11, halting at Khari, Sumber, Sangaldan, Sawalkot, Dugga, Bakkal and Reasi stations en route.

On the return journey, the special train number 04687 will depart Katra station at 1:45 pm and reach Banihal at 5:30 pm. The onward run from Banihal to Budgam will continue as per the existing schedule, with stoppages between Katra and Banihal remaining unchanged, the statement said.

Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Uchit Singh, said the main objective is to facilitate the movement of local people and tourists from Budgam to Katra, and to improve connectivity to Kashmir. "Passengers are requested to obtain accurate train information from the official website, by dialling 139, or through NTES before commencing their journey," he said.

"Mediation for the Nation 2.0" meet held HC pushes for mediation in banking disputes

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: On the directions of Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, a meeting in connection with the nationwide initiative "Mediation for the Nation 2.0" was convened on Monday under the chairmanship of M K Sharma, Registrar General, High Court of J&K and Ladakh at High Court of J&K and Ladakh, Jammu. The meeting was attended by Faizan Iqbal, Coordinator, Main Mediation Centre & Sunil Kumar, Secretary, High Court Legal Services Committee besides Divisional/Branch Managers of various public and private sector banks and the Insurance Companies. It was aimed at strengthening the role of mediation as an effective alternative dispute resolution mechanism, particularly in banking and financial disputes.

During the meeting, the Registrar General emphasized the significance of mediation as a cost-effective, speedy and consensual dispute resolution mechanism, particularly in matters involving banks and financial institutions, where prolonged litigation often results in avoidable delays and increased burden on courts as well as stakeholders. The participants were sensitized about the aims and objectives of the "Mediation for the Nation 2.0" campaign, which seeks to promote mediation as a preferred mode of dispute resolution and foster a culture of dialogue and settlement.

The Coordinator, Main Mediation Centre, briefed the participants about the functioning of mediation centres, the procedure involved in mediation proceedings and the categories of disputes that can be effectively resolved through mediation. He laid emphasis on early referral of suitable cases to mediation and the need for close coordination between the banks and mediation centres.

The participating bank officials appreciated the initiative and assured full cooperation in furthering the objectives of "Mediation for the Nation 2.0", in alignment with the vision of the Chief Justice to strengthen alternative dispute resolution mechanisms within the justice delivery system.

The meeting concluded with a reaffirmation of collective commitment to make the mediation initiative a success through sustained coordination, awareness and institutional support.

Law student kills woman classmate inside classroom, shoots himself

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

CHANDIGARH: A first-year law student in Punjab's Tarn Taran district on Monday allegedly shot dead his fellow female student in the head inside the classroom before turning the gun on himself and pulling the trigger, as horrified classmates watched. The weapon used in the crime appeared to be illegal, police said, adding that the accused, Prince Raj, 20, -- the son of a retired Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel -- was critically injured and undergoing treatment, while Sandeep Kaur, 19, died on the spot.

Both Prince and Sandeep were first-year law students and classmates at Mai Bhago Law College in Usma village in Tarn Taran.

A family member of Sandeep alleged that Prince had been harassing her for some time and had even followed her home on one occasion. Preliminary investigation suggests that Raj had feelings for Sandeep, who was already engaged to another man. Deputy Superintendent of Police Jagbir Singh said Prince opened fire on Sandeep inside the classroom shortly before the class was to begin and then turned the gun on himself. Prince was taken to Guru Nanak Dev hospital in Amritsar, where his condition was stated to be critical, police said.

Tarn Taran Senior Superintendent of Police Surendra Lamba said an investigation was underway to determine the motive behind the killing.

"Prima facie, they appear to have been friends. Possibly, the friendship turned bitter. It is all part of the investigation," he said, adding that police will question the friends and family members of the duo.

The SSP said an FIR has been registered under Section 103 (punishment for murder) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Samhita and relevant sections of the Arms Act. Police have also seized the duo's mobile phones for further investigation.

The entire incident was captured on a CCTV camera installed in the classroom. The footage showed Prince, Sandeep, and another female student sitting together, while some other students could also be seen around.

Suddenly, Prince got up, took out a pistol from his bag and shot Sandeep. He then shot himself in the head and fell on the floor. The shocked student, sitting with Sandeep, got up and checked on her, but she was motionless.

A few students rushed inside the classroom after hearing the gunshot, but fled upon seeing Sandeep. Sandeep's mother, Harjinder Kaur, said she got a call from the college authorities, informing her that her daughter had been injured.

"I was not told that she was shot," Harjinder told reporters, adding that when she reached the college, she found her daughter lying motionless. She questioned how a student managed to bring a firearm into the college.

A widow and the sole breadwinner of the family, Harjinder has seven daughters, including Sandeep, and a son. Prince hailed from Mallian village, while Sandeep was a resident of Naushehra Panmuan village. Police have deployed additional force on the campus and called a forensic team. Investigators are probing how the accused procured the weapon and how it was brought into the college premises, officials said.

SSP reviews anti-terror grid, security preparedness in Kishtwar

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kishtwar Naresh Singh chaired a comprehensive security review meeting on Monday with a primary focus on strengthening the anti-terror grid and overall security preparedness in the district, officials said. The meeting, part of a series of strategic review exercises, assessed compliance with previous directives, evaluated the prevailing security scenario and reviewed preparedness to counter any potential terror threats, officials said.

Officers from the sub-divisions of Kishtwar, Chatroo, Atholi and Marwah, which are currently under massive search operations to track down terrorists, attended the meeting and briefed the SSP on ground-level security concerns, operational challenges and progress achieved in maintaining area domination.

Emphasising counter-terror operations, Singh stressed the need for sustained field presence, enhanced community engagement and strict adherence to law-and-order protocols to maintain peace and security in the district.

He directed officers to remain extra vigilant in sensitive and vulnerable areas and generate actionable intelligence to pre-empt attempts by anti-national elements to disturb peace. A detailed assessment of the overall security environment, including vigilance in remote and border areas, checkpoint operations and quick response mechanisms, was carried out during the meeting, officials said.

Officials noted that security forces were maintaining sustained dominance through cordon-and-search operations (CASOs), intensified night patrolling and close coordination with Army and CRPF units.

The SSP directed further strengthening of Quick Reaction Teams (QRTs) and expansion of CCTV surveillance in high-risk zones to enhance real-time monitoring and rapid response capability. Reviewing the counter-militancy strategy, Singh stressed heightened inter-agency coordination and proactive patrolling, particularly in vulnerable pockets of Chatroo and Marwah sectors, to prevent any militant movement or regrouping attempts. He also emphasised strengthening the beat system through regular patrolling, maintenance of updated beat books and the generation of real-time field intelligence to support counter-terror operations.

The meeting also reviewed follow-up action on previous security directions, recent crime trends, investigation progress and disposal of cases to ensure prompt and lawful action. Singh further reviewed enforcement drives against narcotics trafficking and illegal transportation of bovines, directing officers to intensify operations, stating that such activities often have links to organised crime networks that can impact the overall security environment.

Govt committed to provide electricity to all remote habitations: CM

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday said that with rising population, expansion of villages and new habitations coming up, it will take time, but the Government is committed to reaching every household and providing electricity.

"The population is increasing, villages are spreading, and new houses are being built. Electrifying them is not a matter of one day. It takes time for DPRs to be prepared. There is no village which is completely un-electrified. However, in some villages, certain habitations or parts remain without electricity and they need to be electrified," the Chief Minister told the Legislative Assembly.

The Chief Minister, who also holds the Power portfolio, was replying to a question raised by MLA Billawar Satish Kumar Sharma regarding un-electrified habitations in his constituency.

He said that electrification is being carried out through centrally sponsored schemes as well as under the UT CAPEX programme. "This is an ongoing process. The DPRs for the areas named by the honourable MLA are also being prepared. Every effort will be made to ensure that there is no house without an electricity connection, but this process will continue," he added.

The Chief Minister further informed that some rural and remote habitations/morhas - not entire villages - such as Thingmen, Kanodi and Hanok of Panchayat Madoon/Dehota in Billawar area remain un-electrified or partially electrified.

"Expansion of habitations in remote areas is a continuous process, which requires extension of the LT network at regular intervals," he said.

He stated that these un-electrified households under the jurisdiction of JPDCL Electric Division Kathua were proposed for electrification under the DA-JGUA scheme. Electrification of most of the un-electrified households has been approved under the scheme and is being executed through JPDCL Project Division, Jammu.

However, some habitations like Thingmen, Kanodi and Hanok were dropped from the final sanctioned DPR of the DA-JGUA scheme due to cost escalation of the work. Responding to another part of the question, the Chief Minister said that all villages in Jammu Division of J&K are electrified, either through On-grid or Off-grid mode. "No village as a whole remains un-electrified. However, some habitations/morhas/households that have recently come up are still without electricity. Efforts are underway to electrify these un-electrified or partially electrified habitations under centrally sponsored scheme DA-JGUA and UT Capex," he said.

The Chief Minister added that DPRs for habitations like Thingmen, Kanodi and Hanok of Panchayat Madoon/Dehota are currently being prepared.

Govt considering de-freezing of teacher posts: Sakeena

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Education Minister Sakeena Itoo on Monday informed the Legislative Assembly that the de-freezing of teacher posts is under active consideration of the government to overcome shortage of teachers in schools across Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister said this while replying to a question of Legislator Pawan Kumar Gupta, regarding shortage of teaching staff, in the House.

The Education Minister said that recruitment of teacher posts were freed by State Administrative Council decision taken in year 2018 and the government is actively working to de-freeze these posts so that fresh recruitment is expedited in the department.

She informed the House that 594 posts of Lecturers in 27 disciplines have been referred to JKPSC, besides 727 non-teaching and 43 posts of MTS have been referred to Finance Department for revival/concurrence.

Regarding filling up of vacant posts of Teachers, she apprised that all these posts have been frozen for transition of RRE/Ts, Teacher Grade II/III to clear the salary issue of Teachers who were engaged under SSA.

The Education Minister also said that in 2025-2026, a total of 258 Senior Lecturers have been elevated as in-charge Principals besides 56 PG Masters/Teachers have been elevated as in-charge Lecturers. She added that 551 PG Masters/Teachers were placed as in-charge Headmasters and a proposal for placement of more than 500 additional Masters as Headmasters is currently under process in the department.

The Minister said that 80 Headmasters were elevated as in-charge Zonal Education Officers. In non-gazetted cadre, she said that 1170 Teachers have been elevated as Masters in 2025-26.

Regarding Udhampur district, the Education Minister said that 42 positions of Principals out of 43, 8 posts of ZEOs out of 11 and 243 posts of Lecturers out of 538 have been filled in the district. She added that engagement of CRCs as well as rationalisation of staff is under process to overcome shortage of staff in schools across J&K. The Minister further said that the Pupil Teacher Ratio in respect of Schools of Udhampur West constituency is 1:16, which shows sufficient staff is available as per enrolment. She added that for academic quality enhancement subject specific teachers, CRCs, online classes are being arranged. The Minister attributed the improved performance of Jammu Division in the 10th and 12th board exams to the government's initiatives, saying these efforts have led to a notable academic upswing, with results surpassing those of previous years. Legislator Ranbir Singh Pathania raised supplementary question.

Juvenile among 2 arrested for stealing electronic gadgets

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Police on Monday arrested two persons, including a juvenile, for allegedly breaking into a shop and stealing electronic gadgets and mobile phones in Shopian district, officials said here.

In his complaint to the Shopian police station, Mohammad Altaf Wani alleged that last Saturday night, unknown persons had broken into his electronics shop and stolen devices, including several mobile phones, the officials said.

Acting on the complaint, police registered a case and took up investigations, they said. During the investigation, the police team successfully traced and apprehended one accused identified as Umar Akbar, a resident of Khasipora, Shopian and on his disclosure, five mobile phones, a tablet, an Apple watch, and other mobile accessories were recovered from his possession," the officials said.

Subsequently, police arrested Akbar, they said, adding that it also came to light that he had another associate in the commission of the crime.

The police arrested Akbar's associate, a juvenile, later, they said. Since the offender is a juvenile, police have withheld their identity.

"Necessary action has been initiated according to the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act," they added.

Pak national repatriated after inadvertently crossing over IB at Samba

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A 45-year-old Pakistan national was handed over to the Rangers on Monday, a day after he was apprehended by Border Security Force (BSF) personnel while crossing into India across the International Border (IB) in Samba district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. Zaffar Iqbal, a resident of Pindi village of Zafarwal tehsil in Sialkot, was apprehended on Sunday evening and questioning revealed that he had inadvertently crossed into India under the influence of intoxicants, officials said. They said the BSF established contact with their Pakistan counterparts and cross-checked the information with the authorities. Accordingly, the individual was repatriated to Pakistan during a flag meeting with Rangers, they added.

Four absconders arrested in Udhampur, Poonch

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Police on Monday arrested four absconders in Udhampur and Poonch districts of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said.

In Udhampur district, police arrested three proclaimed absconders who were wanted in different criminal cases and had been evading arrest for a considerable period, they said. An absconder identified as Gourav Bandral was wanted in a dowry case registered against him in 2025, they said, adding that he was arrested after being declared an absconder by the munsiff court, Udhampur.

In another case, police arrested Parkash Singh, who was involved in a theft case registered in 2020 and had been absconding since then, they said. He was arrested on a warrant issued by the sub-judge court, Udhampur.

Tamana Sharma, a resident of Gandhi Nagar in Jammu, was also apprehended in connection with a dowry case registered in 2025. She was produced before the munsiff court, Udhampur, they said.

Police said they remain committed to tracing absconders and bringing them to justice. In Poonch district, police arrested an absconder in connection with multiple criminal cases. A police team arrested Mohd Imtiyaz, who was absconding in a case registered in 2018 for trespass and causing injuries to a person in Poonch, they said.

Officials said the accused was arrested following sustained efforts and on the basis of specific and credible inputs. He will be produced before the competent court for further legal proceedings.