

## !! Continuations from Page 1 !! Decade of defence...

record levels," he said.  
The prime minister said the government has been "very sensitive" to the well-being of the ex-servicemen.  
"Hence, the allotment for the healthcare scheme exceeds Rs 12,000 crore. In percentage terms, it is a 45-per cent rise. But there is something more that I wish to place on record..." he said.  
"Since day one, our government has been clear -- we will do whatever it takes to support our defence forces and strengthen them. Yes, this year's allocation is a record high, but viewing it in isolation only provides a limited perspective," Modi said.

The prime minister noted that it was the NDA government that fulfilled the four-decade-long demand for OROP (One-Rank-One-Pension).  
"It is one of our biggest tragedies that those who ruled the country for decades used the defence sector only to enrich their own pockets, as evidenced by the number of defence-related scams during their tenure," he said in an indirect criticism of the previous Congress governments.

Modi also highlighted his government's push for defence modernisation.  
"We have been working on modernisation and self-reliance in this sector for the last 11 years. See the number of startups working in this sector now," he said.  
"We believe in giving Indian talent the opportunity to support our forces and contribute to a stronger India," he added.

With the Budget providing incentives to turbocharge investments in data centres, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday pitched India as a global hub for digital infrastructure and artificial intelligence, saying the country is ready to host the world's data and lead the next wave of the technology revolution.

"The tax incentives announced in the Budget are designed to accelerate investment in this space, lower the cost of building advanced facilities and position India as a globally-competitive destination for data infrastructure," Modi said in an exclusive interview to PTI.

In a strong global-outreach message, the prime minister said, "We invite the whole world's data to reside in India!"

In the just-unveiled Budget for the financial year starting April, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has announced that the likes of Amazon, Google and Microsoft could receive a tax holiday until 2047 on global cloud revenues if they route foreign workloads through Indian data centres.

Also, data-centre services are now eligible for a coverage under the Safe Harbour Rules, with a margin of 15 per cent, as the Budget 2026-27 has pushed to attract AI investment, boost infrastructure and jobs, while managing competition, data protection and enforcement risks.

Modi underscored the importance of data centres. "When we think of technology, we often focus on what is visible, such as applications, platforms and devices. But equally important are the foundational layers that make all such things possible. Data centres are one such critical layer," he said.

Linking this to AI, the prime minister said, "The importance of this becomes even more apparent when we look at the domain of artificial intelligence. AI needs computing power and data-centre infrastructure. By expanding capacity today, we are laying the foundations for a thriving Indian AI ecosystem."

Recognising this potential, major investments have already been announced in this space by international and Indian companies in the recent past.

"The tax incentives announced in the Budget are designed to accelerate investment in this space, lower the cost of building advanced facilities and position India as a globally-competitive destination for data infrastructure. The result of this, too, will be a massive number of jobs for our youth," Modi said in the written interview.

In a strong pitch to global investors, the prime minister added: "We invite the whole world's data to reside in India!"

His pitch came a day before India hosts the global assembly of tech tycoons, AI business leaders, policymakers, investors and innovators. The Global AI Impact Summit, to be held in New Delhi from February 16 to 20, will see a host of heads of state and government, including France's Emmanuel Macron and Brazil's Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, along with the representatives of more than 60 other countries.

Modi said India must move beyond digital adoption to digital leadership, arguing that in a technology- and data-driven world, leadership, and not mere participation, will determine inclusion, competitiveness and growth.

"The world has been undergoing significant shifts in its technological landscape. Now, nations cannot be content with just digital adoption but must also aspire to digital leadership. As we saw in the digital payments space, only with digital leadership will digital inclusion become possible," he said.

Drawing a historical contrast, the prime minister added: "During the Industrial Revolution, we were left behind due to colonisation. During the earlier manufacturing revolution, we were left behind due to neglect by post-independence governments. But now, in this technological and data-driven revolution, it is important that we take the lead."

He said India's scale and diversity give it a unique advantage.  
"India, with an aspirational population of 140 crore people, is one of the world's largest generators and consumers of data. We are one of the most diverse nations in the world and our data also reflects this diversity. Such a massive and diverse data pool has great potential only when it can be leveraged safely and productively. So we are paying attention to every aspect of the data ecosystem, including security, skills, software and infrastructure," the prime minister said.

On safeguards, he pointed to the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023.  
"For security, we brought in the digital personal data protection law to build a safe, secure, privacy-protecting, rights-based framework that empowers citizens," he said.  
Modi said India's strength in talent and software is already recognised globally.

"As for skills and software, the talent of Indian youth in the data-science space is world-renowned," he asserted.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that with temperament, he is "never fully satisfied" and believes that public life demands a certain constructive restlessness, a constant urge to do more, to improve faster and to serve better.

Modi, however, stressed that it is also important to acknowledge the scale of progress achieved in the journey of 'Reform Express'.

In an exclusive interview with PTI, the prime minister said there is always a strong desire to achieve more for the people and to take the country forward.

Asked if he was satisfied with the progress made as India's 'Reform Express' continues to gain momentum in many sectors, Modi said, "You've asked whether I am satisfied with the progress made in the Reform Express. I must say that by temperament, I am never fully satisfied. I believe public life demands a certain constructive restlessness, a constant urge to do more, to improve faster, to serve better."

"So yes, there is always a strong desire to achieve more for our people and to take our country forward. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge the scale of progress achieved in the journey of Reform Express," the prime minister said in a written interview.

Reform is the commitment of this government, Modi said, adding that it was something "we have shown in letter and spirit".

"I am proud to say that we have moved from incremental adjustments to systemic transformation," the prime minister said.

Calling productive spending a hallmark of his government, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the just unveiled Union Budget deliberately avoided short-term populism and instead channelled record capital outlays into infrastructure to drive jobs and sustainable growth.

In an exclusive interview with PTI, Modi said his government has used its years in office to plug "structural gaps left behind by earlier administrations", pursued bold reforms and laid the foundations for a developed India. He asserted that the latest Budget marks the "next level" of that journey.

Describing the Budget for fiscal year starting April 1 as reflective of his governance approach, Modi said the document "is a good reflection of our governance style and priorities".

"This Budget represents the next level in this journey, imparting momentum to our 'Reform Express'. It is designed to accelerate momentum and prepare our youth for the opportunities of a rapidly changing world," the prime minister told PTI.

He cited the pre-Budget Economic Survey to state that capital accumulation, labour formalisation, and digital public infrastructure together have elevated India's potential growth rate to 7 per cent.

"Productive spending has been a hallmark of our government. The high capital expenditure reflects our focus on infrastructure and capital investment, which are strong engines for long-term growth," he said in the written interview to PTI.

## India outplays Pakistan...

Hardik Pandya (2/16) jettisoned big-hitting Sahibzada Farhan, Saim Ayub and Salman Ali Agha to bowl out them for 114, reducing the much-anticipated match into a no-contest. India now lead 8-1 in all T20 World Cup encounters.

Pandya started the bedlam in the first over of Pakistan's chase, as his snorter got big on Farhan and he could only sky it to Rinku Singh.

Entered the irrepressible Bumrah. The premier pacer unleashed himself on Pakistan batters in his first over itself.

Ayub could not handle a devilish inswinging yorker to get caught in front of the

wicket. Agha was as clueless as an exchange student in a foreign country against Bumrah's back of length delivery, scooping it to Panyda at mid-wicket.

Pakistan was in all sorts of trouble at 13 for three, and which soon became 34 for four after Babar Azam's horrendous slog sweep off Axar Patel saw his stumps getting rearranged.

Their Powerplay produced 38 for four compared to India's 52 for one, and that massive difference continued to widen as the match progressed.

Pakistan did not have either skill or resolve to get out of the marshy land, and continued to perish against Indian spinners through the middle overs as Kuldeep Yadav, Axar, Tilak Varma and Varun Chakravarthi kept them under an unbreakable spell.

Earlier, Kishan shared an 87-run alliance with Tilak for the second wicket in which the latter's contribution was a princely 11.

The match, which had several preceding dramatic weeks because of the admixture of sports and politics, started off on an unusual note as Pakistan skipper Agha brought himself on for off-spin and accounted for Abhishek Sharma.

The off-spin continued through Ayub (3/25) in the power play and it fetched the desired result.

Abhishek went for a loft off Agha but could not clear Shaheen Shah Afridi at the edge of the circle in the final ball of the first over.

But for the next 7.4 overs, Kishan converted the Premadasa into his own little kingdom, shots flying all around the vast corners of this venue.

The left-hander started with an arrogant chin-high pull off pacer Afridi that thundered into the hoardings beyond the mid-wicket fence.

But that was a mere appetizer. The Jharkhand man soon dismantled an armada of Pakistan spinners.

Agha and Ayub were dispatched for a four each, while leg-spinner Abrar Ahmed was carted for a six and four off successive deliveries.

The four was a spectacular shot. Despite the slowness of the deck, Kishan lent power and placement to the late cut through his malleable wrists, forcing the ball sped to the third man fence.

Later, leg-spinner Shadab Khan too was clobbered for a six as Kishan raced to his fifty in just 27 balls, impressive considering the less than ideal conditions for shot-making and an opposition, who has already played a couple of matches in this part of the world.

Tilak did not precisely struggle, but did not look entirely comfortable either as Kishan took it upon himself the duties of pushing the score ahead.

But Kishan's attempt to give himself space and carve Ayub over mid-wicket had disastrous consequences.

He missed the ball altogether to lose the bails as Pakistani players heaved a sigh of relief. From there, they clawed back, and Ayub was at the forefront of their revival.

The offie jettisoned Tilak (25, 24b) and Hardik Pandya (0) off consecutive deliveries as India suddenly slipped to 126 for four from 126 for two in the 15th over.

Skipper Suryakumar Yadav (32, 28b) and Shivam Dube (27, 17b) could not flex their whole muscle but did enough to add 33 runs to take India past the 150-run mark. Dube also handled mystery spinner Usman Tariq, who was kept back till the 11th over, stealing a couple of boundaries. Tariq too had his moment when he priced out Suryakumar in the 19th over. But a 15-run final over by Afridi in which Dube and Rinku Singh tore into him pushed India into the 170 territory.

## Jammu celebrates...



electric. Supporters of all ages came together, cheering, dancing to celebratory music, and expressing pride in Team India's stellar performance.

MLA Yudhvir Sethi reached Bharat Mata Chowk soon after the match concluded and congratulated the gathered crowd on India's emphatic win. Addressing the enthusiastic supporters, he praised the Indian team for their determination and sportsmanship, calling the victory a proud moment for the nation. His presence further energized the celebrations, with people raising slogans of "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" and "Vande Mataram." The local community wholeheartedly joined in the festivities, distributing sweets and sharing joyous moments with fellow citizens. Firecrackers lit up the evening sky as cricket fans celebrated the much-awaited win against their arch-rivals. The victory once again highlighted the passion for cricket in Jammu, where India-Pakistan matches are followed with unmatched excitement. As the celebrations continued late into the evening, the spirit of unity, patriotism, and sporting pride was clearly visible, turning the city's landmark square into a sea of tricolour and triumph.

## Social justice, equitable...

into NC folds at the party headquarters Nawa-e-Subha here.

Extending a warm welcome to the new entrants, Abdullah expressed confidence that their induction would further strengthen the party's grassroots presence across the Jammu region, particularly in Udhampur.

He said the growing support for the NC reflects the people's faith in its legacy of secularism, social harmony, and inclusive development.

The NC supremo said the party has consistently championed the cause of backward classes and marginalised sections of society through progressive measures.

He said the Omar Abdullah-led government remains committed to translating these principles into action, ensuring that development and progress reach every doorstep without discrimination.

The NC president exhorted party functionaries to work in close coordination and with renewed dedication in the run-up to the upcoming urban local body and panchayat polls, emphasising unity, discipline, and proactive public outreach as key to strengthening the party's connect with the people.

## Ending social divides...

In the face of civilizational threats, the world will turn to India for grounding," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor also called upon all the sections of society to discharge their shared duty to eliminate economic gaps and social division and embrace inclusion and constitutional values for true harmony.

Responding to the demands, the Lieutenant Governor reiterated the commitment of the Government of India to resolve the issues of reservation in promotion and a gazetted holiday on Sant Kabir Jayanti in UT of J&K.

Dr Rajeev Bhagat, Member of Legislative Assembly from Bishnah; Faqir Chand Bhagat, Chairman, Shiromani Sant Kabir Bhavan; Vipen Kumar, Chairman All Jammu Based Reserved Category Employees Association, senior officials, prominent citizens and people from all walks of life were present.

## Bhaderwah-Basohli NH...

machinery round-the-clock to restore traffic well ahead of the usual seasonal schedule, the spokesman mentioned.

He emphasised that the timely reopening has ensured the safe movement of essential supplies, emergency services, local commuters and private vehicles, providing significant relief to residents and businesses in the region.

With the road now open to traffic, normal movement has resumed along the corridor, reinforcing BRO's motto of delivering infrastructure excellence under the most demanding conditions, the spokesman said.

## Hard work, clear...

of the Constitution, and the principles of justice.

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

The Golden Jubilee year is not merely an occasion for celebration, but a time for introspection and new resolutions for the future, he said.

In line with the National Education Policy, the university prioritises multidisciplinary education, skill development, innovation, and research, enabling students to become globally competitive, he said.

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, Singh said.

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.

The CJI inaugurated the newly constructed Golden Jubilee Gate on the MDU campus. Built to commemorate the university's Golden Jubilee Year, the gate symbolises the institution's achievements, progress, and glorious legacy, according to a statement.

He also planted a sapling, conveying a message of environmental conservation, and appreciated the green and clean environment of the campus.

## Drug peddler arrested...

charas-like substance, wrapped in corn husk, was recovered from his possession, the spokesperson said. A case under relevant sections of law has been registered at Budgam police station, and investigation has been initiated, he added.

## India global centre...

differences in customs, attire and traditions do not create divisions because of the underlying cultural unity.

"We consider Bharat as our mother. The same divine consciousness resides in everyone. That bond keeps us united despite our distinct identities," he said.

He added that social harmony, not merely law enforcement, sustains society. Referring to the RSS completing 100 years, Bhagwat said the milestone was not a matter of celebration but introspection.

He called for block-level meetings two to three times a year to strengthen social cohesion and urged communities to work for the larger Hindu society beyond caste concerns. "Society must act on its own. The Sangh will assist, but responsibility lies with society," he said, adding that India has always extended help to other nations in times of crisis without selfish motives.

Representatives from various communities shared their views during the meeting. Bhagwat later joined them for a community meal.

## Maha Shivratri celebrated...

festival for the Kashmiri Pandit community. It is observed on the 13th day of the dark fortnight of the lunar month of Phalguna, and marks the divine wedding of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. An essential ritual of Herath involves soaking walnuts in clay vessels, symbolising fertility, prosperity, and divine blessings.

"This festival is celebrated with fervour in Bihar and other places. We feel blessed to be here on the occasion," Pooja said, a tourist from Bihar. Another tourist, Upesh, said they had planned their trip to Kashmir specifically for the festival. "We feel blessed to have darshan here today," he added.

## Police inducts six...



SSP Doda Sandeep Mehta flagging off vehicles.

He said the deployment of the ERSS vehicles is aimed at reducing response time, improving on-ground policing efficiency, and ensuring prompt assistance to citizens in emergency situations. The vehicles are manned by trained police personnel and equipped with essential communication and response tools, the spokesman said.

"The public safety remains the top priority of Police...the misuse of the emergency helpline through false or prank calls may attract legal action," the SSP said.

He said the police remain committed to its motto "people first" and continue to adopt proactive, technology-driven, and citizen-centric measures to ensure safety, enhance security, and strengthen public trust.

## Three drug peddlers arrested with 7.85 grams heroin

### STATE TIMES NEWS

SAMBA: Continuing its drive against drug smugglers & peddlers, Samba Police has arrested three drug peddlers in the jurisdiction of Police Station Vijaypur and recovered approximately 7.85 grams heroin like substance from their possession.

A Police team of Police Station Vijaypur during vehicle checking naka at Tarapur near Shamsan Ghat, Rakh Barotia Vijaypur, intercepted a car bearing registration No. JK09D-2038 (Baleno) for its checking. During checking, approximately 7.85 grams of heroin like substance was recovered from the possession of three persons travelling in the said car. The drug peddlers identified as Shahid Shafiq S/O Shafiq Ahmed R/o Kupwara Tangdar; Younis Rafiq S/O Mohd Rafiq R/o Rawalpura, Gulzar Pura, district Srinagar and Kamran Farooq S/O Farooq Ahmed R/o Gulshan Nagar, Nowgam, district Srinagar have been arrested. The contraband item alongwith vehicle has also been seized. A case FIR No. 26/2026 under relevant sections of the NDPS Act has been registered at PS Vijaypur.

## Drug peddler arrested; contraband substance recovered

### STATE TIMES NEWS

BUDGAM: Continuing its drive against drug trafficking, Police in Budgam have arrested a drug peddler and recovered contraband substance from his possession.

A police team from Police Station Budgam at a checkpoint established at Bathar crossing near the Railway Footbridge, intercepted a suspicious individual. He has been identified as Rayees Ahmad Mir of Mohanpora Ompora, Budgam. During search, 31.93 grams of charas-like substance, wrapped in corn husk, was recovered from his possession. Accordingly, a case vide FIR No. 35/2026 under relevant sections of law has been registered at Police Station Budgam, and investigation has been initiated.

## MLA Rajeev starts developmental works in Bishnah Constituency

### STATE TIMES NEWS

BISHNAH: In a major push towards strengthening infrastructure and improving civic amenities, Dr. Rajeev Kumar Bhagat, MLA Bishnah, started multiple developmental works in the Bishnah constituency at an approximate cost of ₹72 lakhs for the financial year 2025-26. The initiatives mark another significant step in accelerating grassroots

development and fulfilling long-pending public demands in the area. During his visit to Kotli Charkan, the MLA formally launched the macadamisation work under the City and Town Plan at an estimated cost of ₹31.82 lakhs. The project aims to improve road connectivity and ensure smoother transportation for residents, thereby enhancing both daily commuting and local economic activity.

On the same occasion, Dr. Bhagat also inaugurated the construction of a vital culvert on the canal near Chorli, being executed under SHI-3342 at a cost of ₹39.88 lakhs. The culvert is expected to address water flow management issues and provide safer and more reliable connectivity for the surrounding villages, particularly during the monsoon season. Addressing a mammoth gathering at Kotli Charkan, the MLA reiterated his unwavering commitment to the holistic development of the Bishnah constituency. "I am committed to providing every facility at the doorsteps of the people, including better healthcare, quality education, construction of lanes and drains, and other essential developmental works," he stated.

Dr. Bhagat was accompanied by Rafique Ahmed, AEE R&B Bishnah; Pankaj, AEE R&B Bishnah; Sumit Sadotra, Mandal Pradhan Bishnah; Abhishek Jamwal, Mandal Pradhan Bishnah Rural; Surjeet Singh, District General Secretary Jammu Border; Kuldeep Sodhi, General Secretary Bishnah Mandal; Arjun Charak, General Secretary Mandal Bishnah Rural; Supinder Sharma, General Secretary Arnia Mandal; Ex-Corporator Surinder Singh; Kapil Mahajan; Ex-Sarpanch Chak Bana Surjeet Singh; Ex-Naib Sarpanch Chorli Ranjit Singh; Ex-Sarpanch Jagtuchak Nanak Chand; Ex-Sarpanch Naugran Surinder Singh; Naresh Kumar; SC Moreha Arnia Mandal President, and several other senior party leaders.

