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Fresh cases for registration not justified amid improved situation: Omar

migrant families, student scholarships, employment opportunities, assistance to agriculturalists and horticulturalists, and waiver of interest on loans."

The chief minister said that to facilitate the return and rehabilitation of migrants, the Centre sanctioned 3,000 posts under the Prime Minister's Rehabilitation Package (PMRP) in 2009, followed by another 3,000 posts under the Prime Minister's Development Package (PMDP) in 2015, taking the total number of posts earmarked for migrant youth to 6,000.

"Against the sanctioned 6,000 posts, appointment orders have been issued to 5,896 candidates so far, achieving about 98.26 per cent coverage. The remaining 104 posts are at various stages of recruitment and selection," he said, adding that the employment component had significantly contributed towards livelihood security and confidence-building among the migrant youth.

On transit accommodation, the chief minister said the Centre sanctioned the construction of 6,000 transit accommodation units across various districts of the valley in December 2015 for migrant government employees appointed under the PM package.

He said that out of the total 6,000 flats, 4,096 were completed till December 2025, while 1,904 units were under construction and were expected to be completed during the 2026-27 financial year.

"Out of the completed stock, 3,250 flats have already been allotted to the eligible PM package employees," he said, adding that these accommodations were being developed as planned residential complexes with essential civic amenities and security arrangements to ensure a stable and secure living environment.

The chief minister said that there was no proposal under consideration to establish any additional migrant transit camps in the valley, as the existing 6,000 units being constructed at 20 locations were intended to meet the residential requirements of migrant employees.

3 top JeM terrorists killed in Udhampur, Ktwr encounters

when the terrorists attempted to flee under the cover of darkness, officials said, adding Army reinforcements, including paratroopers and dog squads, were rushed in to further tighten the cordon.

The night passed without any firing, and security forces maintained a tight vigil over the area, particularly around the cave, using drones for surveillance, before launching a final assault on the cave this morning, officials said.

This was the second encounter in Udhampur since December 15 when a policeman was martyred in an encounter in Soan village. However, the terrorists had managed to escape taking advantage of thick foliage and darkness.

Meanwhile, one terrorist was killed in an ongoing encounter that broke out between security forces & terrorists in Bichaar area of Chhatroo.

Officials said the exchange of fire erupted during a search operation launched by security forces following specific intelligence inputs about the presence of terrorists in the area.

One terrorist had been neutralised so far, and additional forces were rushed to the spot to strengthen the cordon. The operation was still underway, the officials added.

A series of encounters, three in Kathua district and four in Chatroo forest belt in Kishtwar - occurred in January, resulting in the killing of top JeM terrorist, Usman of Pakistan, in Kathua and a paratrooper in Kishtwar amid intensified operations to hunt down terrorists hiding in the upper reaches of Jammu region.

Usman was part of the same group eliminated in Udhampur district and got separated following the Soan encounter, officials said.

Security stepped up ahead of Shah's visit

Officials said security forces sealed all entry and exit points leading to Abi Guzar locality, which houses several residential and commercial establishments, including shops.

Searches of several premises in the locality were carried out while passersby were frisked, officials said.

There was no report of apprehension of any suspect during searches, the officials added.

Jawan killed in car accident

Police later reached the spot and shifted the body to hospital for medico legal formalities.

Police had taken cognizance of the incident.

No proposal for financial assistance to young advocates: Govt

to young advocates and, if so, the timeline for the same, the minister in-charge stated that no such proposal was presently under consideration.

The government clarified that while certain forms of assistance were provided to advocates, extending regular financial support to one category of professionals could trigger similar demands from other professional and technocrat groups, many of whom were also licensed but

did not receive any such assistance.

"This would have serious financial implications for the government," the reply said.

SC notice against NEET PG cut-off percentile reduction

With over 18,000 postgraduate medical seats across the country remaining vacant, the Board revised the qualifying percentiles for NEET-PG 2025 admissions, reducing it to zero from 40 percentile for reserved categories - which will make even those scoring as low as minus 40 out of 800 to take part in the third round of counselling for PG medical seats.

According to the notice published by NBEMS, the NEET PG cutoff for the general category has been reduced to seven percentile from 50.

The top court was hearing a plea filed by social worker Harisharan Devgan, Dr Saurav Kumar, Dr Lakshya Mittal and Dr Akash Soni which submitted that the cut-off reduction violates Article 14 and Article 21.

The plea contended that eligibility criteria cannot be altered after commencement of the selection process, as aspirants prepared, competed, and made career choices based on the originally notified cut-offs.

The petition says that PG medical education cannot be treated as a commercial exercise and that regulatory authorities are required to prevent dilution of standards.

Several sections of the medical community have termed as "unprecedented and illogical" the NBEMS's decision to drastically reduce the cut-off percentile for candidates across all categories for NEET-PG 2025-26.

Civil services exam rules part of evolving framework: Jitendra

He was responding to a query seeking details of any proposal under the government's consideration to exempt aspirants from Ladakh from qualifying Indian language paper as part of civil services (main) examination.

The civil services examination is conducted annually in three stages - preliminary, main and interview - to select officers of Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Foreign Service (IFS) and Indian Police Service (IPS), among others.

In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, Singh, the Union Minister of State for Personnel, said that the Indian language paper is not compulsory for candidates hailing from the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Sikkim.

His response came on a question as to whether candidates from these six states are exempted from the qualifying language papers in the civil services examination conducted by the Union Public Service Commission.

Singh said that the examination is conducted by the UPSC annually in accordance with the civil services examination (CSE) rules notified by the Department of Personnel and Training.

"As per CSE Rules-2025, the Paper A on Indian Language is not compulsory for candidates hailing from the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim," he said.

To a question whether there is any proposal to extend a similar exemption from qualifying language papers to candidates from Ladakh, Singh said CSE Rules are part of a dynamic and evolving framework.

"To ensure a level playing field for the aspirants nationwide, the government continuously undertakes reforms and remedial measures," the minister added.

Jaishankar, Rubio welcome trade deal; discuss energy, critical minerals

ergy, nuclear, defence, critical minerals and technology. Agreed on the early meetings of various mechanisms to advance our shared interests," he wrote.

A readout of the bilateral meeting provided by State Department Principal Deputy Spokesperson Tommy Pigott said that Rubio and Jaishankar "welcomed the trade deal reached between President Trump and Prime Minister Modi.

The two leaders emphasised the importance of our democracies working together to unlock new economic opportunities and advance our shared energy security goals."

Pigott said that Rubio and Jaishankar "discussed formalising bilateral cooperation on critical minerals exploration, mining and processing."

Rubio and Jaishankar "concluded their meeting by expressing their commitment to expanding bilateral and multilateral cooperation through the Quad. They acknowledged that a prosperous Indo-Pacific region remains vital to advancing our shared interests," the readout said, referring to the four-nation grouping of Australia, India, Japan and the US.

In an X post, Rubio said he met with Jaishankar to "discuss our bilateral cooperation on critical minerals exploration and work together to unlock new economic opportunities between our two countries. We also commended the trade deal between the United States and India."

Jaishankar is on a visit to the United States from February 2-4 and will participate in the Critical Minerals Ministerial being convened by Rubio.

During the visit, he will also hold meetings with senior members of the US administration, the Ministry of External Affairs had said.

The meeting between Jaishankar and Rubio came a day after Trump announced on Truth Social that India and the US agreed to a trade deal under which Washington will bring down reciprocal tariff on Delhi from 25 to 18 per cent.

At the inaugural Critical Minerals Ministerial, the US will welcome delegations to advance collective efforts to strengthen and diversify critical minerals supply chains.

"This historic gathering will create momentum for collaboration to secure these critical components vital to technological innovation, economic strength, and national security," the State Department has said.

US Vice President J D Vance, Rubio, Special Assistant to the President of the United States and Senior Director for Global Supply Chains David Copley, and Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs Jacob Helberg will deliver opening remarks at the ministerial.

BJP MLAsaccuse Speaker of bias, walk out of assembly

Before walking out of the House, a heated argument ensued between BJP legislators and the members of treasury benches who accused the national party of divisive politics and shunting down the Mata Vaishno Devi Medical College after the majority of the students selected were from Muslim community.

As the Speaker was trying to pacify the situation, BJP leaders questioned the time given to NC legislator Sajad Shaheen, who was speaking at that time on the motion of thanks on the LG's address.

BJP legislators alleged that members of the ruling party were being given more time, while their own members were being repeatedly ignored.

The Speaker, however, rejected the allegations, asserting that he was running the House strictly in accordance with established rules and conventions.

BJP's Khemchand sworn in as Manipur Chief Minister

state is trying to move forward towards normalcy.

Congratulating Khemchand Singh and his two deputies, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "I am confident they will work diligently towards furthering development and prosperity for my sisters and brothers of Manipur." Manipur has been witnessing ethnic violence since May 3, 2023, after a tribal solidarity march was taken out in the hill districts, in protest against the majority Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status.

Since then, at least 260 people, including members of both the Kuki and Meitei communities as well as security personnel, have been killed in the violence, while thousands become homeless.

Talking to reporters at the Lok Bhavan soon after taking oath, Khemchand Singh said Manipur comprises 36 communities and that the state was taken care of for long by them.

"Our hope now is for all to help in bringing a peaceful atmosphere. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah have placed great faith in me, and I want to take that faith forward," the two-time BJP legislator said.

Khemchand Singh is a long-time RSS functionary and an organisation-focused leader who has held key constitutional and ministerial positions in the state.

Apart from politics, he has had a long association with Taekwondo. A black belt holder, he is a former vice-president of the Taekwondo Federation of India and has been involved in the promotion of the sport in the Northeast.

Deputy CML Dikho told reporters that inclusiveness is the new mantra of the government.

Asked whether action would be taken against armed groups that have issued threats to Kuki legislators participating in government formation, Dikho replied, "Why not?" The BJP's Govindas Konthoujam and K Loken Singh of NPP were sworn in as ministers. Kipgen took the oath virtually from Manipur Bhavan in New Delhi.

BJP Manipur spokesperson Laimayum Bashanta Sharma said the formation of a new government will pave the way for peace, normalcy and development in the state.

"The formation of a new government will pave the way for peace, normalcy and development in the state once more. We have known the chief minister for such a long time. He is very much in touch with leaders of different communities," he told PTI.

The restoration of a popular government also says that the Centre knows what is best for Manipur, Sharma said.

A Manipur University professor said, "I just wanted Nemcha Kipgen to come to Imphal. There is no threat to any community in the Imphal valley. Her oath-taking should not have been done virtually from New Delhi. It shows that there is a certain lack of will on the part of the Centre to enforce unity in the state."

During the President's Rule, the state witnessed a decline in gun-firing incidents between the two warring groups. Security forces launched widespread operations in the hills and valley districts of the state against armed miscreants and militants, leading to the arrest of over 1000 of them and recovering more than 3000 arms.

Women oppn MPs gherao treasury benches, force adjournment

The confrontation followed hours of protests by the opposition over Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi being disallowed from quoting the unpublished memoir of former Army chief M M Naravane, leading to multiple adjournments through the day.

Opposition members were raising slogans as P P Chaudhury of the BJP rose to speak on the motion.

Sandhya Rai, chairing the House, adjourned the proceedings within minutes.

Displaying banners and placards, Congress and other opposition members were standing in the Well as well as the aisles.

Earlier, the House was adjourned till 5 pm following an uproar over remarks by BJP MP Nishikant Dubey targeting the Gandhi family.

As the House re-assembled at 2 pm, TDP MP Harish Balayogi resumed his address on the motion of thanks on the President's address.

After Balayogi, Krishna Prasad Tenneti, who was in the Chair, called on Dubey to speak.

Dubey said that while Rahul Gandhi wants to speak about an unpublished book, he has brought a series of books to expose the Gandhi family.

As Dubey kept listing books and what they said about various members of the Gandhi family, Tenneti said he cannot allow this as the Speaker had already given a ruling, disallowing such comments.

Tenneti cited Rule 349 to not make such remarks. Rule 349 bars members from reading from any book, newspaper or letter except in connection with the business of the House.

As opposition members strongly protested and with Dubey unrelenting, Tenneti adjourned the House till 5 pm.

After the House was adjourned, Congress MPs met Speaker Om Birla to protest the Chair's decision to allow Dubey speak against the Gandhi family.

Outside the Parliament building, Congress MPs demonstrated demanding that Gandhi be allowed to speak on the President's address.

Earlier, proceedings were adjourned till 2 pm following vociferous protests by Opposition members over certain issues related to the unpublished "memoir" of former Army chief M M Naravane.

As soon as the House re-assembled at 12 noon, opposition members were on their feet raising slogans against the government over the issue of the stand-off with China in 2020.

Amid the din, Speaker Birla allowed the laying of parliamentary papers on the table of the House. Later, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal made a statement on the India-US trade agreement.

Congress members had brought banners and posters featuring the former Army chief and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, while Rahul Gandhi was seen flashing a book in the House.

Amid the sloganeering, the Speaker urged members to maintain dignity of the House and slammed the opposition members for displaying banners and posters.

As the opposition members were unrelenting, the Speaker adjourned the proceedings till 2 pm.

Before that, the House witnessed similar protests during the Question Hour.

Amid the protests, Birla said members should be allowed to ask questions and that everyone should respect the proceedings as well as maintain decorum in the House.

One question and its supplementaries were taken up during the Question Hour that lasted for around five minutes.

As the din continued, the Speaker adjourned the proceedings till 12 noon.

On Tuesday, eight Opposition members, including seven from the Congress and one from the CPI-M, were suspended for the remainder of the Budget session for unruly behaviour.

Since Monday afternoon, the House has been witnessing uproar after Gandhi was disallowed from quoting an article that cited the unpublished "memoir" of Naravane on the 2020 India-China conflict.

Assembly adjourned for 15 minutes

during an interview with a portal.

Several legislators, including independents, Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary and minister Satish Sharma, joined Ahmed to raise the demand, which was strongly opposed by BJP legislators.

Speaker Rather tried to pacify the angry legislators but many of them tried to move towards the Well of the House and came face-to-face. Later, he adjourned the House for 15 minutes.

Talking to reporters outside the Assembly, Congress MLA said that unless the LoP does not tender an apology, they will not allow the House to run. "He has disrespected the people of Pir Panjal," he said, referring to the Poonch and Rajouri districts.

He said the people of Pir Panjal have laid down their lives while defending the borders and he has "insulted the martyrs" of Pir Panchal.

National Conference MLA Aijaz Jan also demanded an apology from the LoP on the Floor of the House. "He has hurt the people. We will be on protests till he apologises. We will not tolerate insult to those people defending the borders of this country," he said.

Ukraine, Russia, US negotiators gather in Abu Dhabi for war talks

precondition of any deal.

It also wants international recognition that land seized in the invasion belongs to Russia.

Kyiv has said the conflict should be frozen along the current front line and has rejected a unilateral pull-back of forces.

The talks -- set for Wednesday and Thursday -- were postponed from last weekend due to what the Kremlin called scheduling issues between the three sides.

Ukraine's delegation will be headed by Security Council chief Rustem Umerov, a shrewd negotiator hailed by colleagues as a worker of diplomatic "wonders."

Russia's top negotiator will be its military intelligence director Igor Kostyukov, a career naval officer sanctioned in the West over his role in the Ukraine invasion.

At a previous round of talks in Abu Dhabi last month, the US team was led by President Donald Trump's ubiquitous envoy Steve Witkoff.

Russia, which occupies around 20 percent of its neighbour, has threatened to take the rest of the Donetsk region if talks fail.

Ukraine has warned that ceding ground will embolden Moscow and that it will not sign a deal that fails to deter Russia from invading again.

Kyiv still controls around one-fifth of the Donetsk region.

Russia also claims the Lugansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions as its own, and holds pockets of territory in at least three other Ukrainian regions in the east.

On the battlefield, Russia has been notching up gains at immense human cost, hoping it can outlast and outgun Kyiv's stretched army.

On Tuesday, a Russian drone strike on the southern Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia killed three and wounded at least 11 people, regional governor Ivan Fedorov said on Telegram.

Meanwhile, a 68-year-old man and 38-year-old man were killed in a drone attack on the Dnipropetrovsk region, Mykola Lukashuk, head of the regional administration, said on the messaging platform.

Sergiy Lysak, who leads the Odesa military administration, confirmed more than 20 residential buildings, two kindergartens and one school were damaged in an attack in the southern Ukrainian city overnight. No one was killed but two people were injured.

Hundreds of thousands have been left without heat and power in the Ukrainian capital this year after massive Russian strikes severely damaged Kyiv's energy grid.

Following the first round of US-brokered talks in Abu Dhabi last month, Ukrainians were doubtful any deal could be struck with Moscow.

"I think it's all just a show for the public," Petro, a Kyiv resident, told AFP.

"We must prepare for the worst and hope for the best."

Sino-Russian foreign policy 'tandem' key factor of global stability: Putin

Putin pointed to growing all-around cooperation with China, including in the energy sector.

Briefing reporters on the Putin-Xi video call, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said, "The good tradition of video calls has been going on since 2020. The leaders cherish and maintain the tradition and always hold video calls before the Chinese New Year."

The two leaders had a confidential conversation on the entire range of international issues and bilateral relations.

'No end to encounters even in 2026'

gunfights in the Jammu region in the past three weeks to five.

Earlier, one Pakistani terrorist was killed in Kathua district on January 23, while an Army paratrooper also laid down his life in a gunfight in Kishtwar on January 18.

"It just keeps going on. They (terrorists) were killed, fine, but where did they come from? How did they reach Udhampur? Since when were they there? And how long will this continue? We were told that after 2019, this cycle would end. But now, even in 2026, it has started again and is not stopping," the chief minister told reporters on the sidelines of a function here.

He was responding to a question about the killing of two JeM terrorists in a two-day-long operation in Ramnagar forest in Udhampur district.

"On the contrary, areas that were completely free of terrorism before 2014-15 are now witnessing such incidents. So, how did they reach Udhampur? Since when were they present there? Somewhere, we must get answers to these questions," the chief minister said.

Asked about the upcoming three-day visit of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Abdullah said he would not like to discuss it in the media. "We will sit across the table and talk. There are many issues that need to be discussed face-to-face. We will do that." In response to another question related to the rise in cancer cases in the Union Territory, the chief minister said there was no dispute over the fact that cancer incidence was rising, and the reasons behind it could only be determined by medical experts.

Outlining the government's role in curbing the number of such cases, he mentioned three key responsibilities that needed urgent attention.

"The first is increased funding for research and development, along with the creation of proper infrastructure. The second is strengthening the healthcare system to ensure that state cancer institutes function effectively, have adequate infrastructure, and allow doctors to work efficiently." The third priority, he said, is supporting financially weaker sections for whom cancer treatment had become extremely difficult due to the high cost of medicines.

DG ITBP calls on LG Ladakh



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Issues related to border management, security challenges in high-altitude areas, and coordination with the civil administration were also discussed.

The Lieutenant Governor appreciated the role of ITBP in safeguarding the nation's borders under extremely challenging terrain and climatic conditions. He lauded the force for its commitment to national security and for its contributions to disaster response and community outreach in the region.

Dr. L. Franklin, Secretary to HLG was also present.

Shatruijit Kapur, Director General, Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), accompanied by Akhoon Sabarwal, Inspector General, ITBP, today paid a courtesy visit to the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh in Leh.

During the meeting, the Director General briefed the Lieutenant Governor on the operational preparedness, deployment, and welfare measures concerning ITBP personnel stationed in the Union Territory of Ladakh.