

Cont. From Page 1

God willing, we'll initiate regularisation of daily wagers this year: Omar

to take J&K out of the present challenges," he said. He underlined that the government's foremost responsibility was towards the poorest and the most vulnerable sections of society.

"The first responsibility of every government is to help the weakest and the poorest. Through this budget, we have tried to provide comfort to those who need it the most," he said.

Rejecting criticism over not announcing certain populist measures, he stated firmly that the government's priority remains social justice and targeted welfare.

Clarifying a major welfare promise, Omar announced that the government would provide free LPG cylinders from its own budgetary resources, without depending on any central scheme.

"I want to put it on record that we will give these cylinders with our own money and resources. We do not need to take money from the central government for this," he said.

Responding to allegations that the budget contains only centrally-sponsored schemes, the chief minister highlighted several unique initiatives funded directly through the J&K budget.

"We have said that those who have lost both parents, or who have lost the sole breadwinner, will be declared orphans. If they are not covered under any other scheme, they will receive Rs 4,000 per month," he said.

"Similarly, scholarships for tribal children and poor students have been introduced where no other coverage exists," he said and recalled the success of free bus ridership for women announced last year.

"This was not a Government of India scheme. We introduced it through our own budget, and it has been very successful," he said.

"This year, the government has extended free ridership relief to persons with disabilities," he added.

He also spoke about expanding environment-friendly EV bus service while ensuring balanced growth for other transport sectors.

"If we can make EV buses reach more areas, autos and taxis will also run. By closing one thing, we cannot increase the economy," he said.

Refuting claims that the budget was shrinking, Omar clarified expenditure figures and said misleading comparisons were being drawn.

"It is wrong to say we have spent only 12 per cent. If we look only at capital expenditure, it has reached 36 per cent, and by March 31 we will bring it close to last year's level," he informed.

He explained that last year's revenue expenditure was higher due to settlement of expensive loans, which was not the case this year.

"To say that we are shrinking our economy is not true at all. We have put our money where it is most needed," he asserted.

Emphasising that Jammu and Kashmir lives in its villages, the chief minister said the budget gives special attention to strengthening the rural economy.

"As long as village areas do not develop, J&K will not develop," he said.

He listed key thrust areas including agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, fisheries and dairy development. He announced a new dairy scheme aimed at increasing milk production by one lakh litres.

"The central government has praised this initiative and even wants to support us further through the National Dairy Development Board," he said.

He also spoke about improving livestock quality, backyard poultry, and enhancing productivity.

In horticulture, he highlighted the introduction of weather-based crop insurance for the first time.

"If there is nothing in our budget, why did this not happen before?" he asked.

During his address, Omar raised serious concerns over provisions of the Indo-US trade deal, stating it could adversely impact Jammu and Kashmir's dry fruit and horticulture economy.

"Tree nuts-walnuts and almonds-are the origin of Jammu and Kashmir. Allowing them duty-free imports raises questions about sympathy for our farmers," he said.

He added that even apples should have been protected. On the SAsCI scheme, the chief minister said it provides Jammu and Kashmir access to interest-free financial support for the next 50 years, calling it a responsible fiscal measure.

"The value of money after 50 years can be imagined. This is a significant relief," he said.

He cited figures from Punjab and Himachal Pradesh to explain how states have benefited under the scheme.

He also underscored his government's strong focus on youth empowerment through Mission YUVA, a flagship initiative aimed at creating sustainable livelihood opportunities, promoting entrepreneurship and enhancing skill development across Jammu and Kashmir.

He said the scheme was designed to harness the potential of young people by supporting start-ups, self-employment ventures and targeted training programmes, enabling the youth to become active partners in the region's economic growth.

Addressing criticism that the budget is Kashmir-centric, he termed such assertions meaningless and misplaced, stating that his government remains equally committed to balanced development across all regions.

He pointed out that the government would not have restored the Darbar Move to Jammu if it did not intend to correct the wrongs done with Jammu and ensure equitable attention to its aspirations and needs.

He emphasised that industries benefiting from the incentives and support provided by the Jammu and Kashmir government must also contribute meaningfully to local employment generation.

He noted that industrial units receive substantial facilitation in the form of subsidies, land, power supply and other concessions, and therefore have a responsibility to prioritise the recruitment of local youth.

The government, he said, has impressed upon such industries to ensure that the people of Jammu and Kashmir, particularly the younger generation, are given adequate employment opportunities so that industrial growth translates into inclusive development and real benefits for the region.

He concluded by reiterating that the Budget 2026-27 is a roadmap for inclusive growth, long-term development and social justice, and that his government remains fully committed to delivering results on the ground for the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

India ranks 2nd globally in enterprise AI usage

tech leaders, policymakers, and innovators, is slated to be held in the national capital from February 16-20 and will see global tech leaders in the likes of NVIDIA CEO Jensen Huang, OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, Google CEO Sundar Pichai, Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei, and Qualcomm CEO Cristiano Amon.

CRPF cop found dead

nizance of the incident and launched a probe to ascertain the cause of death, the officials added.

Man detained for 'disrespecting' national flag

attracts provisions of the Prevention of Insult to National Honour Act, 1971, a case was registered against him at Doda police station on the directions of SSP, Doda, officials said.

Further investigation into the matter was underway and legal action would be taken as per law, the officials added.

Rs 3,450 cr earned from bars, wine shops in 3 yrs

Singh Mankotia.

It also warned of adverse effects on tourism, hospitality, transport and manufacturing sectors, besides loss of livelihoods for thousands of people associated with the liquor trade.

In Jammu district, there were 140 wine shops and 84 bars in 2022-23, generating a revenue of ₹71,262.41 lakh. In 2023-24, the number increased to 151 wine shops and 93 bars, with revenue of ₹70,826.31 lakh. For 2024-25, the district had 153 wine shops and 97 bars, generating ₹72,292.83 lakh, the highest in the UT.

In Kathua, revenue stood at ₹12,367.06 lakh in 2022-23 with 28 wine shops and 33 bars. The figures for 2023-24 were ₹12,217.17 lakh from 33 wine shops and 36 bars, while in 2024-25, revenue rose to ₹12,694.98 lakh with 31 wine shops and 37 bars.

Samba district recorded revenue of ₹8,229.14 lakh in 2022-23, which increased to ₹9,825.74 lakh in 2023-24 and further to ₹10,299.42 lakh in 2024-25, with wine shops rising from 14 to 19 over the three years.

In Udhampur, revenue increased steadily from ₹10,777.00 lakh in 2022-23 to ₹12,410.00 lakh in 2023-24, and ₹12,987.50 lakh in 2024-25, supported by 26-28 wine shops and 22-25 bars.

Reasi district generated ₹3,125.00 lakh in 2022-23, ₹3,375.00 lakh in 2023-24, and ₹3,450.50 lakh in 2024-25, with wine shops increasing from 6 to 11, though bars reduced to zero in the latest year.

In Doda, revenue remained stable at ₹2,545.01 lakh in 2022-23, ₹2,696.85 lakh in 2023-24, and ₹2,685.29 lakh in 2024-25, with 10 wine shops and 3 bars throughout.

Kishtwar recorded ₹1,216.76 lakh in 2022-23, rising to ₹1,731.39 lakh in 2023-24, and ₹1,964.09 lakh in 2024-25, while Ramban generated ₹2,722.86 lakh, ₹2,545.58 lakh, and ₹2,702.16 lakh respectively during the same period.

In Rajouri, revenue was ₹5,887.27 lakh in 2022-23 and ₹5,268.78 lakh in 2023-24, but saw a sharp jump to ₹15,232.04 lakh in 2024-25, with 18 wine shops and 25 bars.

Poonch generated ₹2,254.91 lakh in 2022-23, which dipped to ₹1,617.37 lakh in 2023-24, before slightly improving to ₹1,889.92 lakh in 2024-25.

In the Kashmir division, Srinagar recorded ₹3,086.77 lakh in 2022-23, which more than doubled to ₹7,360.17 lakh in 2023-24 and increased further to ₹7,632.90 lakh in 2024-25, with 7 wine shops and 4 bars currently operational.

Anantnag generated ₹162.50 lakh in 2022-23, rising sharply to ₹1,403.50 lakh in 2023-24 and ₹1,999.95 lakh in 2024-25, despite having only two wine shops and no bars.

In Baramulla, revenue increased from ₹418.07 lakh in 2022-23 to ₹1,147.23 lakh in 2023-24, while ₹1,135.84 lakh was recorded in 2024-25. Ganderbal generated ₹170.14 lakh, ₹223.44 lakh, and ₹319.69 lakh respectively over the three years.

Kupwara had no liquor outlets in 2022-23, but recorded ₹415.66 lakh in 2023-24 and ₹442.96 lakh in 2024-25 with one wine shop.

The government further informed that Pulwama, Shopian, Bandipora, Budgam and Kulgam had no bars or wine shops during the last three financial years.

Govt examining proposal to hike honorarium of MLAs' PAs

orarium and entitlements like TA/DA at par with staff of other parliamentarians, and if so, the details and timeline for its consideration.

In its reply, the department said, "A proposal has been received from Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Department, regarding enhancement of monthly honorarium of personal assistants engaged with MLAs. The proposal is under examination in Finance Department."

Govt-Oppn logjam breaks, LS takes up discussion on Budget

Narendra Modi's seat on February 4.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju shared the footage, highlighting opposition MPs, led by Congress' Jyothimani, positioning themselves directly in the PM's path.

"Congress Party is proud of the most degrading behavior by their MPs!! If we had not stopped all BJP MPs and allowed the Women MPs to confront Cong. MPs, it would have led to very ugly scene. We have very high consideration, to protect the dignity & sanctity of the Parliament," Rijiju said.

Congress has accused the Speaker of bias, claiming he exaggerated the threat posed by opposition women MPs and objected to the suspension of eight of its members.

On Monday, women MPs of the opposition wrote to Birla alleging unfair targeting. However, Lok Sabha secretariat sources defended the Speaker, saying he made a reasonable call in urging PM Modi not to come to the House, as any untoward incident could have occurred with women MPs blocking his path.

Fact sheet on India-US trade deal released

regarding reciprocal and mutually beneficial trade, the White House issued a fact sheet outlining the "path forward" for the newly concluded "historic trade deal" with India.

The agreement was announced last week after a telephonic conversation between PM Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump when they agreed on a framework for an Interim Agreement.

Under the arrangement, India will benefit from lower duties on a broad range of exports, including textiles and garments, leather and footwear, plastic and rubber products, organic chemicals, home decor items, artisanal goods and certain categories of machinery.

In return, New Delhi will eliminate or cut tariffs on US industrial goods, along with a large group of agricultural and food products. These include dried distillers' grains, red sorghum used as animal feed, tree nuts, fresh as well as processed fruits, soybean oil, and wine and spirits.

3 days before polls, Hindu trader hacked to death in Bangladesh

former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in a mass uprising in August 2024.

The group recorded at least 61 killings, 28 instances of violence against women, among them rape and gang rape, and 95 attacks on places of worship involving vandalism, looting and arson. It has also accused the Yunus-led administration of routinely dismissing or downplaying reports of such violence.

Bangladesh will hold parliamentary elections on February 12 - the first since the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in massive country protests in August 2024.

Oppn submits no-trust motion against LS Speaker

The notice against the Speaker underlines the deep distrust between the ruling BJP and those in the opposition in recent sessions. That distrust broke through again last week after Rahul Gandhi was denied permission to speak - he wanted to read from ex-Army chief General MM Naravane's memoir on the 2020 Ladakh border row with China - and escalated into ferocious protests in Parliament.

The protests led Prime Minister Narendra Modi to cancel his Lok Sabha speech.

Protests by the opposition have forced repeated adjournments of both Houses over the past two weeks and caused high drama, including claims by Om Birla that some women members of the opposition had planned to "do something" against the Prime Minister in Parliament.

Final voters' list out in Assam

names deleted from their previous polling stations or constituencies. If they could not apply for shifting of their names before the deletion, they can now apply for inclusion at their new address under this provision," an official said.

Applications can be filed with the final electoral roll at the end of the SR exercise being published, he added.

The final electoral roll comprises nearly 1.25 crore men, 1.24 crore women and 343 third gender voters.

At the end of claims and objections, the final roll has been published with a total of 2.49 crore voters, a decrease of 0.97 per cent from the draft roll, said a statement issued by the office of the Assam Chief Electoral Officer (CEO).

In the final list, over 2.43 lakh names were deleted from the draft roll, according to the statement.

The draft list, published on December 27 last year, had 2.52 crore enrolled voters.

The Assam assembly elections are due in a few months. ECI extends SIR in poll-bound Bengal by 2 weeks

stalling of special intensive revision (SIR) of voter rolls in 12 states, but said it was open to suggestions to ensure genuine voters are not left out.

The CJI-led bench extended by a week the February 7 deadline for submission of documents by voters issued notice by EC, including 1.36 crore voters categorised under "logical discrepancy".

It also sought a personal affidavit from the Bengal DGP on EC's charge of TMC functionaries making attempts to derail SIR. "We hope the state remembers the laws of the land," it said.

The bench of CJI Surya Kant, Justices Joymalya Bagchi and N V Anjaria, which had heard West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee passionately argue for discontinuing SIR, frowned upon the state govt for not providing the names of 8,500 group B cadre officials to EC for assisting electoral revision officers (EROs) and assistant EROs in the massive document verification work.

The displeasure had a dramatic effect as the West Bengal government provided the list within minutes to EC in the court and said it would verify the suitability of the officials.

The court also dismissed the fear expressed by Banerjee's counsel Shyam Divan who told the bench that the process adopted by EC would lead to mass exclusion of voters given the fact that 50 per cent of the cases of voters facing "logical discrepancy" scrutiny are misspelling of names, which happened due to translation errors.

"This is a speculative apprehension," the bench said, and allayed it by saying suitable officials, inducted by EC from among the 8,500 officers provided by the state government, would assist the EROs and AEROs about the cases where notices have been issued merely because of spelling errors in names and facilitate their inclusion in voter lists.

India, China discuss trade concerns, stress peace to rebuild ties

sues".

Though Jaiswal did not elaborate on the "sensitive issues", it is understood that the Indian side has been concerned over China's export control measures relating to rare earth minerals.

An Indian readout of the Misri-Ma meeting said the discussions primarily "focussed on the recent progress made in stabilising and rebuilding bilateral ties and ways to take bilateral engagement forward." "Both sides underscored the importance of peace and tranquillity in the border areas for overall progress in bilateral relations".

"They reiterated their commitment to implement the guidance provided by their leaders including on the need to proceed from a political and strategic direction to approach issues and concerns related to bilateral trade," it said.

The MEA said Misri noted the successful resumption of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra and hoped for the continued expansion of the scale of the Yatra.

"Both sides recognised the need for an early conclusion of an updated air services agreement. The two sides agreed to continue to take practical steps for visa facilitation and promote people-to-people contacts," it said.

Misri and Ma also discussed various regional and international issues.

In the last few months, India and China have initiated a series of measures to normalise their relations after ending the military face-off along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in October 2024.

2 IAS officers transferred, posted

hankar Pratyush Pathak.

The decision has been taken in the interest of administration, says the order.

Govt makes AI-generated sexual abuse images punishable

within three hours, reduced from 36 hours, according to a gazette notification issued by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

User grievance redressal timelines have also been shortened.

The rules require mandatory labelling of AI content. Platforms enabling creation or sharing of synthetic content must ensure such content is clearly and prominently labelled and embedded with permanent metadata or identifiers, where technically feasible, it said.

Calling for ban on illegal AI content, it said platforms must deploy automated tools to prevent AI content that is illegal, deceptive, sexually exploitative, non-consensual, or related to false documents, child abuse material, explosives, or impersonation.

Intermediaries cannot allow removal or suppression of AI labels or metadata once applied, it said.

DC Kishtwar finalises comprehensive arrangements for Maha Shivratri and holy month of Ramzan

**KISHTWAR, FEBRUARY 10:** To ensure smooth, peaceful and hassle-free observance of the forthcoming Maha Shivratri and the holy month of Ramzan, co-ordination meetings were held today under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar, Pankaj Kumar Sharma.

Religious heads and representatives from both communities, including the Majlis-e-Shoura Committee, Kishtwar, led by Imam Jamia Masjid Kishtwar, Farooq Ahmed Kitchloo Sahib and the Sanatan Dharma Sabha, Kishtwar, led by its President Mahant Ram Sharan Dass Ji Maharaj, shared issues related to water supply, electricity, market checking and other concerns.

The Deputy Commissioner patiently heard all issues raised.

At the outset, he directed all line departments to ensure that necessary arrangements and public facilities are put in place well in advance.

Stressing the importance of communal harmony, he called for close coordination between the civil and police administration

to ensure peaceful, organised and festive observance of the religious occasions across the district.

The Jal Shakti Department Kishtwar was directed to ensure uninterrupted supply of clean and safe drinking water with proper chlorination. Standby water tankers were ordered to remain available round the clock to address any supply disruptions.

The Executive Engineer, JPDCL Kishtwar, was directed to ensure 24×7 uninterrupted electricity supply, particularly during peak hours of Sehri and Ifari and on the eve of Maha Shivratri. Dedicated linemen and supervisory staff were directed to remain on standby.

The Chief Medical Officer Kishtwar and Medical Superintendent, District Hospital Kishtwar, were directed to ensure that all PHCs, CHCs and sub-centres remain fully functional, adequately staffed and well equipped. Special medical camps were directed to be established at Gori Shankar Mandir and Shiv Mandir on the eve of Maha Shivratri.



The Police Department was directed to ensure adequate deployment of security personnel in Kishtwar town and other subdivisions and tehsils. Foolproof security arrangements were ordered at all religious places where large congregations are expected.

tion drives in villages hosting religious congregations.

The Assistant Director, Fire and Emergency Services Kishtwar, was directed to keep fire tenders on standby, fully equipped and filled with water.

The Assistant Director, Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Kishtwar, was directed to ensure uninterrupted availability of ration, LPG cylinders and other essential commodities during the festive period.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasised market checking, price regulation and availability of essentials and directed inter-departmental teams comprising Revenue, Police, FCS and CA, Legal Metrology and Food Safety officials to conduct intensive market inspections before Ramzan and on the eve of Maha Shivratri. Surprise checks during peak hours were ordered to curb black marketing, hoarding and overpricing, with strict action against violators.

He directed constitution of a committee to fix rates of mutton, chicken, vegeta-

bles and dairy products before February 14, in consultation with market associations. Further directions were issued to SSP Kishtwar, ARTO Kishtwar and traffic authorities to regulate vehicular movement and ensure smooth traffic flow on peak days.

All Sub-Divisional Magistrates and Tehsildars were directed to ensure similar arrangements in their respective jurisdictions and personally monitor implementation. The Deputy Commissioner reiterated that uninterrupted electricity supply, clean drinking water, fair market prices, availability of essentials and public safety remain top priorities of the district administration.

The meeting was attended by ASP Kishtwar, Pardeep Singh, CEO KDA Kishtwar, Kaiser Bhawani, ACR Kishtwar, Idrees Lone, ACD Kishtwar, Manoj Kumar, AD FCS and CA Kishtwar, Shafqat Ali Keen, ExEn JPDCL Kishtwar, Abdul Hamid, AC Legal Metrology Kishtwar, Anil Gupta, ExEn PMGSY, Marwah Tilak Raj and other officers.