

Budget Session 2026: Assembly Proceedings

J&K Assembly passes grants for Jal Shakti, Forest, Tribal Affairs departments

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, FEB 13

Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly today passed the grants worth Rs. 3,24,177.48 Lakh for Public Health Engineering, Rs. 1,52,482.05 lakh for Forest, Ecology & Environment, Rs. 1,60,699.61 lakh for Irrigation & Flood Control and Rs. 40,600.72 for Tribal Affairs Department.

The grants were passed through voice vote after a daylong debate by the Members in the House.

Winding up the discussion on the Demands for Grants, Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology, Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, expressed gratitude to all the legislators for their active participation and valuable suggestions. He stated that the feedback and recommendations would form the basis for further strengthening the policy decisions, ensuring effective execution and impactful implementation of projects on the ground.

During his speech, Javed Rana said that the proposed allocations reflect the government's commitment towards balancing development with sustainability, ensuring resilient ecosystems, reliable water resources and targeted socio-economic empowerment of tribal communities across Jammu & Kashmir.

Elaborating on the Forest, Ecology & Environment Department, Javed Rana emphasised that forests are the lifeline of Jammu & Kashmir, covering almost half of its geographical area. He extolled that the UT's has unique distinction of hosting the country's most diverse forest types.

The Minister said that for the fiscal 2026–27, an enhanced allocation of ₹242 crore has been proposed, reflecting strong commitment towards conservation and sustainable development. He underlined that under UT Capex 2025–26, ₹168.18 crore have been approved, of which ₹141.14 crore have been released and works worth ₹56.97 crore have already been executed. He added that against the approved allocations of ₹175.06 crore under CAMPA, ₹155.14 crore have been released.

“Under the flagship initiative ‘Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam’, plantation of 71.77 lakh saplings till January 2026 has been achieved, with a target of one crore saplings to be fully achieved. In 2026–27, one crore additional saplings will be planted with active public participation”, he said.

Javed Rana asserted that significant progress has been made in forest demarcation with 1.85 lakh boundary pillars installed. Besides, digitization of forest boundaries using CORS-enabled GNSS technology has positioned J&K as a pioneer in advanced forest governance.

Maintaining that Wetland conservation remains a priority with 260 wetlands mapped using GIS and remote sensing, the Forest Minister said that revival of Wular Lake, a Ramsar site, with 5 sq km dredged and 2,952 hectares afforested, has benefitted over 5,200 fishermen.

He highlighted that wildlife conservation measures have covered 11.5 percent of the UT's area, with over 3,002 animals rescued and ₹214 crore+ compensation disbursed for human-wildlife conflict.

The Minister said that J&K continues to remain carbon positive, with air quality improvement measures resulting in PM10 reduction of 18.5 percent in Jammu and 41.3 percent in Srinagar.

Rana informed that the local communities have been empowered and 171 sale depots established under Sustainable Collection and Utilization of NTFP Policy, notified in 2022.

He added that with this 7100 families had been benefitted thereby generating an income of 792.32 lakh.

He informed that Firewood and timber supply mechanisms have been strengthened with transparency through e-auctions and digital systems with 8.69 lakh quintal of free fodder distributed in the past five years.

He said that Pollution Control Committee has integrated all services into a single-window system and auto-renewal for green category industries. He added that third-party certification frameworks have reduced procedural delays while maintaining environmental safeguards.

Regarding recruitment and promotion processes, he said that the same has been fast-tracked, with multiple Departmental Promotion Committees (DPCs) meetings convened and significant number of promotions finalized.

He maintained that in the coming year, the government will intensify efforts to further strengthen the forest conservation, biodiversity protection and eco-tourism across Jammu and Kashmir. Key initiatives like plantation of one crore saplings with the community participation, completion of survey and demarcation of forest areas, identification and development of new forest trek routes and eco-huts, promotion of eco-tourism in identified locations through local involvement would be taken up, he added.

The Forest Minister said that the year will also witness completion of SASCI projects, installation of sensor-based air quality monitoring systems, upgradation of Jambu Zoo, establishment of conservation breeding centres for endangered species and creation of wildlife protection infrastructure to mitigate human-wildlife conflict.

Rana said that vision of the government is to ensure ecological security, climate resilience, biodiversity conservation and community prosperity. Forests are not just about trees; they are about water security, livelihoods, disaster mitigation and the future of our children, he said.

He said that with the support of this august House, we shall continue to protect, preserve and enhance the natural heritage of Jammu & Kashmir for our future generations.

Speaking on grants for Public Health Engineering Department, Javed Rana said that government is committed to provide drinking water to every rural household in Jammu & Kashmir through convergence of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), NABARD, and UT Capex resources.

He asserted that under JJM, the government is committed towards ensuring universal Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTCs), adding that 15.64 lakh households have already been provided tap water supply and remaining will be covered through completion of ongoing schemes and upgradation of existing connections.

He said that for 2026–27, a Capex Budget of Rs. 1561.9 crore has been proposed, reflecting a 10.4 percent increase over the revised estimate of Rs. 1399.5 crore.

Highlighting the progress made in the last year, he said that 69 projects, costing 302 crore were commissioned, benefiting nearly 29,000 households. He mentioned that Union Finance Minister has announced the extension of JJM till December 2028 with enhanced outlay and the Omar government is committed to complete the mission within the extended timeline.

Asserting that water quality monitoring is a core element of JJM, he said that 98 water testing laborato-



ries are functional and over 2.64 lakh water quality tests were conducted this financial year, while third-party inspections and surprise checks are being regularly conducted.

He also laid down targets for next financial year like completion of 850 ongoing JJM schemes, full operationalization of completed schemes through rationalization of existing departmental manpower and 100 percent Har Ghar Jal certification for all villages.

The Minister stated that under NABARD RIDF, 57 schemes costing ₹740.49 crore are under execution, of which, seven have been completed while the remaining schemes have been targeted for completion during 2026–27. He said that under UT Capex, 1,136 drinking water works are under execution with 419 already completed and 550 schemes targeted for completion in 2026–27.

He informed that two major water supply projects are underway to ensure uninterrupted supply to AIIMS Awantipora and AIIMS Vijaypur. The ₹54 crore water supply scheme for AIIMS Awantipora is being implemented in two phases, with Phase-I completed and Phase-II slated for completion in 2026–27. The scheme for AIIMS Vijaypur has achieved 95 percent physical progress, he added.

To address the water shortages, Jal Shakti Minister said that the tanker fleet has been strengthened with addition of 20 new tankers, supplementing 123 departmental and 85 private tankers.

The Minister further said that under SASCI, 42 projects worth ₹163 crore have been approved, ₹155.38 crore released and ₹47 crore spent so far, while flood damage works worth ₹430 crore for the year 2025 have also been identified for restoration.

Rana further said that the government's response to the devastating floods of August–September 2025 reflected effective crisis management with restoration works commencing within 24 hours.

For long-term sustainability, the Minister stated that a high-level inter-departmental committee is being constituted to ensure water security and effective flood control. The State Specific Action Plan (SSAP) on water, prepared under the National Water Mission with technical support from NIH Roorkee and IIT Jammu, has received draft approval from the Union Government and is in the final stage of approval, he said.

He maintained that the government has also strengthened the human resource management within the Jal Shakti Department. He added that all vacant posts of Chief Engineers are being filled up, Superintending Engineer posts have been

fully staffed in April 2025 and a dedicated Design, Inspection and Quality Control (DIQC) wing has been established.

Rana further said that two DPCs have been held, promoting 47 Junior Engineers besides 62 compassionate appointment orders have been issued in the past three years. Over 1,000 non-gazetted posts have been forwarded to JKSSB for recruitment, he added.

He said that these initiatives reflect the government's firm resolve to ensure safe drinking water, resilient infrastructure and sustainable water management for the people of J&K.

Regarding Irrigation & Flood Control sector, the Minister announced a substantial enhancement in capital expenditure, with Capex for 2026–27 proposed at ₹996 crore, marking a 62 percent increase over the revised allocation of ₹612 crore in the previous year. The enhanced investment reflects the government's commitment towards strengthening the irrigation infrastructure, improving agricultural productivity and ensuring robust flood management across Jammu and Kashmir, he said.

He added that concerted efforts are underway to bring 3.96 lakh hectare under assured irrigation through major and minor irrigation projects being implemented under Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana.

Under the Har Khet Ko Paani programme, the Minister stated that 143 irrigation schemes are currently in progress, of which, 50 are targeted for completion during the coming year, adding irrigation potential for nearly 13,000 hectares.

The government is also leveraging institutional support, with NABARD backing 45 ongoing irrigation projects, including 12 projects scheduled for completion in 2026–27. In addition, 20 new RIDF-31 projects amounting ₹156 crore have been approved to further expand irrigation coverage, he said.

He also highlighted that major flagship projects are nearing completion with Shahpur Kandi Dam Project in its final stage. The project is expected to provide irrigation benefits to over 32,000 hectare of land in Kathua and Samba districts.

The Minister said that the Tawi Barrage Project in Jammu, being executed at a cost of ₹64 crore, has achieved about 90 percent physical progress.

Under the Comprehensive Flood Management Project of River Jhelum, the Minister stated that flood-carrying capacity between Sangam and Padshahibagh in Srinagar has been enhanced from 31,800 cusecs to 41,000 cusecs, significantly improving the flood safety. Further,

under PMDP Phase-II (Part A), 31 bank protection works worth ₹276.61 crore are under execution, with 17 works already completed, he added.

He further said two regulatory gates at Hokersar wetland have been completed at a cost of 28.45 crore, aiding ecological restoration.

To address long-term flood risks, the Minister said that floodplain zoning measures are being implemented in line with recommendations of the Central Water Commission.

Under the UT Capex programme, the Minister said that over 1,000 irrigation and flood control works are presently under execution, of which, nearly 350 works have already been completed during 2025–26.

He reiterated his call for collective responsibility, urging the citizens to conserve water, protect natural resources and support sustainable development. He emphasised that every drop of water saved today secures the future for generations to come.

Regarding the grants for Tribal Affairs department, Javed Rana said that Omar Abdullah government has made the inclusive and dignity-centric development of tribal communities a top priority. “Our government is focused on bridging the developmental gaps, ensuring socioeconomic empowerment and safeguarding the rights of tribal populations,” Rana said.

He said that Jammu and Kashmir is home to a significant tribal population including Gujjars, Bakerwals, Gaddis, Sippis, Pahari Ethnic Group, Paddaris and other indigenous communities. He said that government is abreast with the geographical problems faced by the tribal communities. He reiterated that difficult geography and mobility must not become barriers to education, healthcare, infrastructure and economic opportunity.

The Minister said that for 2026–27, the Tribal Affairs Department will focus on four key pillars; Education and Human Development, Livelihood and Economic Strengthening, Infrastructure and Migration Support besides Cultural Preservation and Institutional Strengthening.

He enumerated major gains during 2025–26 in education, infrastructure and livelihood support. Under scholarship schemes, ₹8.75 crore have been disbursed to 4,552 Scheduled Tribe students under the Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme, ₹41 lakh supported 1,328 students under the Pre-Matric Scheme for Classes IX and X while ₹10.20 crore have been released through DBT to 1.95 lakh students from Classes I to VIII, he said.

To support the students from remote and migratory families, Javed Rana said that 28 Scheduled Tribe hostels are currently operational, 26 new hostels are under construction and 10 are nearing completion. Additionally, six Eklayva Model Residential Schools (EMRS) are functioning across the Union Territory, demonstrating strong academic outcomes for tribal students when provided quality facilities, he added.

The Minister said that under UT Capex 2025–26, ₹78 crore have been released and around 2,000 infrastructure works have been undertaken, including livestock units, hand pumps, bore wells, power lines, rural roads, bridges, culverts, milk villages and transit accommodations.

Under PM Van Dhan Yojana, ₹14.57 crore have been released for establishment of 1,000 Van Dhan Vikas Kendras, he said. He added that ₹40 crore have been proposed for Post-Matric Scholarships to support over 17,000 students, while ₹30.23 crore have been proposed for Pre-Matric Scholarships covering about 2.82 lakh students from Classes I to

IX.

Regarding livelihood and economic strengthening, Javed Rana said that under Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan, 393 tribal-majority villages across 20 districts are currently covered, with ₹88 crore proposed for 2026–27.

“To enhance the market access, five Tribal Multi-Marketing Centres have been proposed at Ganderbal, Kupwara, Reasi, Poonch and Rajouri with an outlay of ₹5 crore. In the dairy sector, 10 Milk Villages with an outlay of ₹8 crore have also been proposed, benefiting around 410 ST households, alongside completion of three Milk Chilling Plants at Shopian, Ganderbal and Poonch besides support to 1,500 mini sheep, goat and dairy units”, the Minister said.

Javed Rana said that for 2026–27, ₹60 crore have been proposed for 1,000 small infrastructure works including roads, bridges, drinking water and power supply schemes to enhance infrastructure and migration support.

To support the migratory tribes, seven transit accommodation units are under construction with completion of two while the rest are expected to be completed during 2026–27, benefiting over four lakh migratory tribal persons.

The Minister also said that cultural preservation and institutional strengthening remains a core focus of the Tribal Affairs Department, adding that Tribal Research Institute (TRI), Khimber, continues to function as a hub for research, documentation and policy support. He said that tribal youth will be trained as eco-guides, creating livelihoods while promoting sustainable tourism.

The Minister said that strategic collaboration has been initiated with IIT Jammu for entrepreneurship development, business planning, value addition, branding and technology adoption.

For effective implementation of the Forest Rights Act, the Tribal Affairs Department has been designated as the Nodal Department. An allocation of ₹3.77 crore has been proposed for establishment and operationalisation of FRA Cells in all districts, which will assist claimants and ensure timely disposal of claims, he said.

Concluding the grants speech, the Minister stated that the framework for 2026–27 is structured, focused and outcome-oriented, aimed at expanding the education, strengthening livelihoods, improving infrastructure, supporting migration needs, preserving culture and safeguarding legal rights. He said that the objective is to ensure that tribal communities stand at the centre of Jammu and Kashmir's developmental journey, participating fully and with dignity in its growth.

Legislators Javid Hassan Baig, Nazir Ahmad khan (Gurezi), Sham Lal Sharma, Ali Mohammad Dar, Peerzada Feroz Ahmad, Nizam-ud-Din Bhat, Rajiv Jasrotia, Muzaffar Iqbal Khan, Sajad Gani Lone, Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Mir, Balwant Singh Mankotia, Rafiq Ahmad Naik, Vikram Randhawa, Altaf Ahmad Wani, Zafar Ali Khatana, R S Pathania, Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami, Payare Lal Sharma, Arjun Singh Raju, Ajay Ahmad Jan, Narinder Singh Raina, Irfan Hafiz Lone, Abdul Majeed Bhat, Sheikh Khursheed Ahmad, Devyani Rana, Sajad Shaheen, Dr Rameshwar Singh, and Dr. Shafi Ahmad Wani, participated in the discussion over Grants.

Later, the MLAs withdrew their cut motions on the grants after the Minister assured the House that the issues raised would be duly addressed.

CS reviews progress of outreach-based ‘Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyan’

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 13: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo today reviewed the progress and impact of the outreach-based Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyan spearheaded by the Information Department in close collaboration with key departments across the Union Territory.

The meeting was attended by the Principal Secretary, Home; Commissioner Secretary, Information & GAD; Commissioner Secretary, Youth Services & Sports; Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare; Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD); IGP Crime; Commissioner, Jammu Municipal

Corporation (JMC); Director, Information & Public Relations; DG, YS&S and senior officers from the School Education, Health and Youth Services & Sports Departments.

Deputy Commissioners from all districts participated through video conferencing.

While reviewing the initiative, the Chief Secretary emphasized the need to link the Nasha Mukta J&K portal with the National Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA) portal to enhance visibility, ensure seamless data sharing and enable effective monitoring of activities across platforms.

He underscored the impor-

tant of mapping trained counsellors to their respective educational institutions, Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), Panchayats and health institutions on the portal. He directed that their qualifications, training capacities and upcoming training schedules should also be prominently reflected to facilitate easy public access and efficient coordination.

The Chief Secretary stressed upon the Health Department to identify and design certified courses on ‘De-addiction and Counselling’ for professional manpower across departments so that trained human resources are effectively utilized

in combating substance abuse.

He directed the Head of Department, IMHANS Srinagar, to introduce diversified and certified courses in de-addiction and counselling and to take concrete steps for expanding training facilities in Jammu Division as well. He called for the formulation of a comprehensive roadmap to strengthen the counsellor base by introducing structured and certified training programmes to build robust human resources capable of addressing drug addiction as a public health challenge.

He further urged the concerned departments to develop high-quality, age-specific and

profession-specific content tailored for ASHA workers, Self-Help Group (SHG) members, youth, elderly citizens, government employees, police personnel and those associated with prosecution.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary took a live demonstration of the Nasha Mukta J&K portal and appreciated its rich and diverse content. Describing it as an immensely significant public platform, he directed that the portal be hosted on the State Data Centre to ensure reliability, security and enhanced accessibility.

Commissioner Secretary, Information, M. Raju took this oc-

casional to inform the meeting that eight key departments including Health, Education, Rural Development, Social Welfare, Urban Development, Youth Services, Police and Excise are actively contributing to the campaign. He highlighted their role in mobilising grassroots-level workers to disseminate the message of making Jammu & Kashmir drug-free.

He disclosed that over 9,000 awareness and outreach events have been conducted across Panchayats, ULBs and educational institutions, witnessing participation of 4,51,520 individuals. As part of rehabilitation efforts, 218 individuals

were successfully rehabilitated. Additionally, 1.83 lakh bulk SMS messages were sent to participants acknowledging their involvement in the campaign.

Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare Department, Sarma Hafeez, highlighted the department's coordinated efforts with other agencies, including hundreds of joint inspections of chemist and drug shops with Police, special drives against illicit cultivation, and large-scale awareness programmes such as rallies, nakkad natak and community outreach campaigns across districts of the Union Territory in collaboration with concerned departments.

