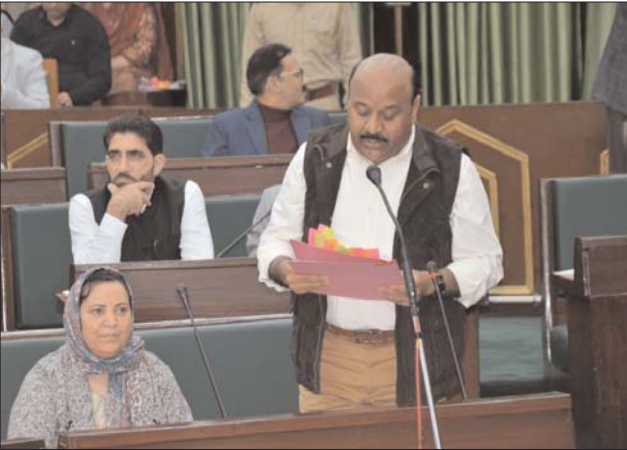


BUDGET SESSION 2026: QUESTION HOUR

Free vaccination campaigns held across Bandipora district to prevent post-calamity disease outbreaks among livestock: Government



HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS  
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The Government today informed the House that free vaccination campaigns were held across Bandipora district to prevent disease outbreaks among livestock after the last year's floods and natural calamities.

This was stated by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, while replying on behalf of the Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, to a question raised by Legislator Nizam-ud-Din Bhat in the Legislative Assembly today.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that the Department of Animal/Sheep Husbandry conducted free vaccination campaigns with 100 percent coverage against Foot and Mouth Disease, Lumpy Skin Disease, Haemorrhagic Septicaemia and Black Quarter. He added that free deworming medicines were distributed among the livestock owners to prevent post-calamity disease outbreaks.

The Deputy Chief Minister also stated that Rs. 42,250 for crop loss and Rs. 84,000 for livestock loss have been paid to the farmers affected by 2025 floods in Bandipora district, under SDRF norms.

Providing details on the relief efforts, he stated that the damage to crops and livestock had been assessed by the concerned departments and verified by a committee, adding that crop loss was reported on 40 kanal of land, and the cases of 40 farmers had been processed for compensation.

The Deputy CM also said that the loss of livestock had been assessed for 21 beneficiaries. He added that for support of affected farmers, Mobile Veterinary Units had been kept operational through a toll-free helpline (1962), providing timely veterinary and livestock healthcare services at their doorsteps, he added.

No plans to de-notify Seer-Hamdan Municipal Committee: Govt

The government informed the Legislative Assembly today that there is no proposal to de-notify the Seer-Hamdan Municipal Committee.

Replying on behalf of the Chief Minister, Minister for Education Sakeena Itoo informed the House that the process of notifying Seer-Hamdan as a Municipal Committee (MC) began in 1996 following recommendations of the District Development Commissioner, Anantnag.

After completing the necessary formalities, she said, a notification inviting objections to declare Seer-Hamdan as a town was issued vide SRO-190 dated 11-07-2005 and subsequently, Seer-Hamdan was notified as a Municipal Committee vide SRO-290 dated 04-07-2006.

"Since creation of the Municipal Committee, significant infrastructure development has taken place in the town," the Minister informed the House during Question Hour of the ongoing Budget Session of the J&K Legislative Assembly.

In reply to a query raised by MLA Anantnag East Reyaz Ahmad Khan, she stated that the projected current population of Seer-Hamdan is approximately 11,064, compared to 8,233 recorded in Census 2011, reflecting steady demographic growth.

Highlighting the town's strategic and developmental importance, she said Seer-Hamdan lies on the route to the Shri Amarnathji Shrine. She added that the broader policy framework across the country envisages strengthening and upgrading the Urban Local Bodies, including the transition from rural to urban status and from Municipal Committees to Municipal Councils.

Further, she said that during the Municipal Elections 2018 and subsequent By-Elections 2020, all wards of MC Seer-Hamdan elected their respective representatives, reflecting sustained public participation in urban governance.

The Assembly was also informed that Municipal Committee Shangus was de-notified by the Government vide SRO-126 dated 22-03-2013.

Following its abolition, the Minister said, regular staff borne on establishment of the Municipal Committee at the time of de-notification was redeployed to the nearby Municipal Institutions for optimal utilization of their services. Movable assets of the erstwhile Municipal Committee were also distributed or transferred to other Municipal Institutions/offices as per functional requirements.

At the time of abolition of MC Shangus, she said, ten (10) CPW (Sweepers) were working in the Committee who had been engaged purely on a temporary and need basis, and such engagement did not confer any right or claim for regular appointment.



However, she added that after five years of abolition of the Municipal Committee, these 10 CPWs approached the High Court by filing SWP No. 2050/2018 titled Mohammad Ashiq Sheikh & Others vs. State of J&K seeking absorption/engagement as sweepers, which is not being considered.

MLA Pahalgam Altaf Ahmed Wani raised supplementary question, which was replied to by the Minister.

Kupwara district covered under LBDA: Javid Dar

Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Javid Ahmad Dar, stated that Kupwara district falls under the Lolab-Bangus Development Authority (LBDA) and functions as the Tourism Development Authority (TDA) for the area, with its headquarters at Kupwara.

This was stated by the Minister in the House while replying to a question raised by Legislator Mir Saifullah, on behalf of Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah.

The Minister stated that Kupwara district possesses vast tourism potential and is renowned for its breathtaking natural beauty. He added that the district is home to picturesque destinations like Lolab Valley, Bangus Valley, Keran and several other pristine locations. He added that its unspoiled landscapes, rich cultural heritage and historical significance offer the visitors an authentic Kashmiri tourism experience.

He further informed that a considerable number of domestic tourists, along with local visitors from different parts of Kashmir, have been visiting areas like Keran, Jamgand, Wagbal and Dedikote in recent years due to their scenic charm and growing popularity as offbeat tourist destinations. He added that these villages do not fall under the notified jurisdiction of any separate Tourism Development Authority.

The Minister also informed that as Kupwara district is covered under the jurisdiction of the Lolab-Bangus Development Authority (LBDA), there is no proposal to establish a separate Tourism Development Authority for the said areas.

The Minister assured the House that the government will consider all suggestions put forth by the Legislator in future to ensure development of tourist spots and the provision of necessary facilities for the visitors.

J&K govt adopts Pro-labour, pro-gender policies in contractual, regular engagements

The government has adopted pro-labour and pro-gender policies in its contractual and regular engagements in Jammu and Kashmir, Minister for Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo, stated today in the Legislative Assembly.

Responding on behalf of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, she was replying to a question by Legislator Shagun Parihar on 'Maternity Leave Benefit'.

She added that the service conditions of women employees working under different government schemes are being governed by the guidelines of these schemes or as per the terms of agreement/conditions of the contract of engagement.

The Minister further informed that for the social security and welfare benefits for all contractual employees, the J&K government has prescribed annual 15 days casual leave with wages/honorarium, 30 days leave without honorarium on account of accident and illness and 180 days maternity leave without honorarium.

100 % smart metering being implemented in MC Hiranagar under RDSS: Govt

The government today informed that 100 percent smart metering is being implemented in the Municipal Committee (MC) Hiranagar under the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS).

Replying to a question raised by Legislator Vijay Kumar in the House today, Minister Javed Ahmad Rana informed that the smart meters have been installed for 77 percent of consumers in the Municipal Committee Hiranagar, while installation for the remaining consumers is currently under progress.

He was replying on behalf of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah.

The Minister said that the provision of uninterrupted power supply is contingent upon achieving 100 percent smart metering and reducing Aggregate Technical and



Commercial (AT&C) losses below the threshold of 15 percent, as per the Load Curtailment Programme notified by the Department.

"Once 100 percent smart metering is achieved, all the consumers will be billed strictly on the basis of actual energy consumption recorded through smart meters and billing on a flat-rate basis will be completely discontinued," apprised the Minister.

The Minister said that under prevailing JERC Tariff Orders, only those consumers where smart meters are yet to be installed, are being billed on a flat-rate basis.

"This arrangement is purely temporary and shall continue only until smart meters are installed for all such consumers, where-after billing shall be undertaken exclusively on a metered basis in conformity with the regulations in force," he stated.

The Minister attributed the frequent power cuts to scheduled load curtailment under the Load Curtailment Programme (LCP), linked to Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) loss levels. Feeders with 15 to 40 percent billing efficiency face 3-hour cuts, while those above 40 percent face 6-hour cuts.

He informed that apart from scheduled curtailment, occasional power interruptions also occur due to curtailment imposed by SLDC owing to system constraints for maintaining grid stability, planned shutdowns undertaken for execution of new system strengthening and augmentation works under various schemes and unforeseen technical faults in the distribution network.

The Minister outlined measures to tackle frequent power interruptions, including strengthening HT/LT networks by adding poles and replacing worn-out conductors, implementing smart metering for 100% coverage, and enforcing drives against power theft to reduce AT&C losses, aiming to improve power supply reliability.

He added that the expected timeline for completion of installation of Smart Meters is September 2026.

Govt issues robust guidelines to strengthen, protect service interests of PM Package employees

The government has issued robust guidelines to regulate various issues related to seniority, cadre management, postings and career progression as well as strengthen and protect the service interests of PM Package employees across Jammu and Kashmir.

This was informed by the Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary in House today while replying on behalf of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, to a question raised by Legislator Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami.

The Deputy CM said that with large-scale appointments made under the Package, a need was felt to put in place a clear service management framework. Accordingly, government order number 34-JK(DMRRR) 2022 dated 22.06.2022 was issued to regulate the seniority, cadre management, postings and career progression of PM package employees.

He said that the order consist of provisions including maintenance of a separate seniority list, creation of pre-facto supernumerary posts for promotions, treating all PM Package posts as Divisional Cadre posts of Kashmir Division and extension of in-situ promotion avenues. He added that these provisions are protective and enabling in nature and ensure that PM Package employees are not disadvantaged vis-à-vis regular employees.

The Deputy CM also said that recruitment and initial appointment of Kashmiri Migrants under the Prime Minister's Package are being governed by the J&K Migrants (Special Drive) Recruitment Rules, 2009 notified vide SRO-412 dated 30.12.2009 and creation of 6000 supernumerary posts sanctioned vide Government Order No. Rev/MR/147 of 2009 dated 28.10.2009 (3000 posts) and Government Order No. 58- JK(DMRRR) of 2017 dated 29.07.2017 (3000 posts).

He also informed the House that there is no inconsistency between the government order number REV/MR/141 of 2009, dated 26.10.2009, government order number 58-JK(DMRRR) of 2017 dated 29.07.2017 and government order number 34-JK(DMRRR) of 2022 dated 22.06.2022. He added that the latter only supplements the earlier orders by providing a comprehensive mechanism for service regulation after appointment.

He further said that the matter relating to further improvement in service management and possible absorption into the regular cadre structure has already been taken up with the General Administration Department and Fi-



nance Department for examination and appropriate measures under rules.

The Deputy Chief Minister also said that as per the report submitted by the Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, no land is acquired without adhering to the prescribed land acquisition procedures, including prior notification and verification. All such acquisitions are assessed in accordance with the applicable land acquisition laws. He added that as per the Jammu and Kashmir Migrant Immovable Property (Preservation, Protection Restraint on Distress Sales) Act, 1997, the concerned District Magistrates have been designated as the custodian of the Migrant Properties.

He also informed that a Screening Committee headed by Administrative Secretary, Home Department, has been re-constituted which had held series of meetings and has given its recommendations in respect of all the provisional registration cases and there is no inordinate delay in the matter. He added that as the process involves security and threat-perception assessment, each case requires detailed verification by the CID and District Administration, as such the time taken is procedural.

The Deputy CM also said that the Relief Organization (Migrant) provides free ration to the migrants registered under the Relief Category. He added that the integration of registered migrant families including pensioners into the NFSA database has enabled the eligible pensioner migrants to receive entitled food grains under Public Distribution System.

Govt strengthening forest conservation; encroached lands being reclaimed: Javed Rana

Minister for Forests, Ecology & Environment, Javed Ahmad Rana, today informed the Legislative Assembly that the government of Jammu and Kashmir is implementing multiple UT and Centrally Sponsored Schemes aimed at conservation, preservation and sustainable management of forests, wildlife and ecology across J&K.

Replying to a question raised by Legislator Rajiv Jasrotia, the Minister said that key schemes currently operational included the Capex Budget, Green India Mission (GIM), Forest Fire Prevention & Management Scheme (FFPM), Nagar Van Yojana (NVY), Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI), CAMPA and the National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems (NPCA). He also gave out the district-wise details of funds released and expenditure incurred during 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 in his reply.

The Minister stated that procurement and execution of works follow General Financial Rules (GFR) and government guidelines. Materials like barbed wire, poles and plants aren't purchased separately; instead, works like fencing and plantation are tendered through composite NITs, he added.

Forest Minister further said that the entire process follows prescribed tendering procedures with due approval of the competent authority. The Lowest Bidder (L1) provides materials as per the approved specifications, ensuring transparency and financial discipline, he added.

Regarding regulation of Khair trees, the Minister stated that felling is governed by the Jammu and Kashmir Non-Forest Land Khair Trees 'Acacia catechu' (Management Plan) Rules, 2016, framed in compliance with recommendations of the Central Empowerment Committee and directions of the Supreme Court. He further said that under Rule 8(5) of the said Rules (SRO-111 of 2016), farmers are permitted to sell Khair wood outside the UT in accordance with the prescribed provisions.

The Minister informed the House that 19,496.73 hectare of forest land in J&K is under encroachment as on 31-12-2025. He emphasized that the Forest Department has launched sustained measures to retrieve encroached land, including detailed surveys and demarcation of forest boundaries, issuance of notices under Section 79(A) of the Indian Forest Act, 1927, eviction drives, fencing and restoration of retrieved land with indigenous species, enhanced vigilance by Territorial Wings and Forest Protection Force besides use of modern technology such as remote sensing, GPS and drones.

Reaffirming the government's commitment, the Minister said that sustained efforts are being made to strengthen the forest governance, prevent illegal encroachments and promote ecological sustainability for long-term environmental security in Jammu and Kashmir.

DC Doda inaugurates AI-Khidmat Diagnostic Lab

**DODA, FEBRUARY 17:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Doda, Harvinder Singh today inaugurated the AI-Khidmat Diagnostic Laboratory located opposite the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Office, Doda.

The diagnostic facility established under the ownership of Nusrat Banoo aims to strengthen healthcare services in the district by providing accessible and reliable diagnostic testing facilities to the public.



The laboratory is equipped with modern diagnostic equipment and is

expected to benefit patients by ensuring timely and accurate medical investiga-

tions locally. The Deputy Commissioner appreciated the initiative, stating that the establishment of quality diagnostic facilities plays a vital role in improving healthcare delivery and reducing the need for patients to travel outside the district for medical tests.

He emphasized that such private healthcare initiatives complement government efforts in enhancing medical infrastructure and public health services.

SBI RSETI Kishtwar organises Jagruta Pakhwada Camp

**KISHTWAR, FEBRUARY 17:** SBI RSETI Kishtwar organized a Jagruta Pakhwada awareness camp at ITI College to promote financial literacy and entrepreneurship among students.

The Director, SBI RSETI Kishtwar, Sanjay Kumar, highlighted the functioning of RSETIs and informed participants about various short-term skill development programmes. He also explained that after suc-



cessful completion of training, RSETI facilitates credit linkage support for trainees

willing to start their own ventures. The Lead District Man-

ager (LDM), Kishtwar, Harsh Rawal discussed government-sponsored schemes such as PMEGP and JKREGP and explained the process of availing subsidized loans. Participants were also sensitized about KYC compliance, CKYC, pension schemes, insurance and prevention of cyber fraud.

The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from students and staff.