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Legislative Assembly Proceedings: Budget Session 2026

Minimum wages revised across J-K in 2022: Dy CM

EARTH NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary today said that the Jammu and Kashmir has revised the minimum wages in respect of the scheduled employments in October 2002 and any further revision will be done as and when the GoI notifies and implements the National Floor Wages under Code on Wages 2019, which shall be applicable to Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Deputy Chief Minister, said this while replying to a question on enhancement of minimum wages, raised by Legislator Ali Mohammad Dar in the Legislative Assembly.

He said that the Government of India, through the Ministry of Labour and Employment and the office of the Chief Labour Commissioner (Central), has issued notifications revising the minimum wage structure applicable under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948.



ister said that under the latest available central notifications (effective October 1, 2024 and subsequently updated), the minimum wage rates for workers employed in the unorganized sector and scheduled employments have been revised upwards for all skill categories including unskilled, semi-skilled, and skilled workers along with higher rates for highly skilled workers.

He added that these revised wages take into account both basic wage and VDA components, as notified by the Government of India.

The Deputy CM also said that, under the Code on Wages, 2019 (now in force w.e.f 21st of November 2025 in pan India also in J&K as part of the consolidated labour codes), the Government of India has established provisions for national floor minimum wage and strengthened mechanisms for periodic revision of minimum wages based on socio-economic criteria.

He added that these revisions are based on adjustments to the Variable Dearness Allowance (VDA), which is linked to the Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW), and aim to address inflationary pressures and cost-of-living across skill for workers in various categories.

The Deputy Chief Min-

Rs 289.39 Cr under SDRF, Rs 100 Cr under UT Capex released for flood restoration works

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary today said that Rs 289.39 crores were released during the current financial year, 2025-26, under the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF), besides an amount of Rs. 100.00 crores (Rs 5.00 crore for each district) has been released under the UT Capex Budget (2025-26) of DMRU under the activity "Flood Relief Measures" to undertake urgent flood restoration works across Jammu and Kashmir.

The Deputy Chief Minister said this while replying to a question, on behalf of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, raised by Legislator Rajiv Jasrotia in the House.

He informed the Assembly that no funds till date have been released by the Government of India for flood restoration works

'128 Brick Kilns out of 199, deposit royalty in Budgam'

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary today informed the House that there are 199 Brick Kilns in the district Budgam out of which 128 Brick kilns have deposited the royalty in District Mineral officer Budgam on account of Consumption of Brick earth during the current financial year.

The Deputy Chief Min-

ister said this while replying to a question regarding Brick Kilns, raised by Legislator Dr. Shah Ahmad Wani in the Legislative Assembly.

He informed the house that the Geology and Mining Department is entrusted to monitor the raw material procured by the unit holders for processing and its transportation comes from legitimate sources

The Deputy CM added that as per records provided by DMO, Budgam, 107 Crusher unit holders and 44 Hot wet mix plants are registered on the departmental web portal, geologyminingjk.gov.in with updation of legal quantity and its sale/transportation through proper e-challans/ e-permits only.

While replying to a supplementary, the Minister said that consideration would be given to include Tral in the network, once new fleet of buses is received by the department.

Tarigami flags 'disempowerment' of Assembly, seeks all-party meet, debate on reservation

Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader and MLA M Y Tarigami on Tuesday expressed concern over what he termed the "disempowerment" of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, claiming that, despite receiving a public mandate, elected representatives were finding it difficult to exercise authority.

During a discussion on the lieutenant governor's address in the Assembly on Tuesday, Tarigami acknowledged that while the speech appreciated the public mandate resulting from the assembly elections held after seven years, the reality on the ground indicated that the State was not sufficiently empowered.

"I read today's address of the lieutenant governor, and while I could not bring its copy with me, I do have last year's address. Even today's address is extremely important in context. Last year, when the governor delivered the customary address, two things were specifically mentioned: first, appreciation of the public mandate received in the assembly elections; and second, that these elections were held after seven years," he said.

Expressing concern, he said, "I only wish to submit this — wherever the Honourable LG may be, perhaps he should hear this — that ministers re-

peatedly say today that they are disempowered, but what pains me even more is how disempowered this entire House feels."

The CPI(M) leader mentioned that the perception of officers not listening to elected representatives spanned across party lines and was privately acknowledged by members from both the ruling and opposition sides.

"If this situation continues, then what is the meaning of a Union Territory? This is not an issue of one party. I have repeatedly urged the chief minister to convene an all-party meeting to discuss why, despite a historic mandate, the Assembly is being weakened, and the region is not being empowered," Tarigami said.

He also raised concerns about ecological vulnerability in Jammu and Kashmir and called for greater attention to environmental protection, describing the region's ecosystem as "extremely fragile."

"I request the chief minister to bring a separate climate budget on the pattern of some states," he said.

Tarigami addressed the pressing issue of unemployment, noting that both the government and opposition discuss youth-related matters, but questioned

the effectiveness of measures taken for job creation. He highlighted that the unemployment rate in Jammu and Kashmir is among the highest compared to other states and Union Territories, and called for the government to prioritise job creation.

On the subject of reservation, Tarigami asserted that it is the right of socially underprivileged communities, but cautioned against neglecting meritorious students, which could lead to unrest. He sought a detailed debate in the Assembly on the issue and asked the government to clarify when the report of a committee constituted on reservation rationalisation would be implemented.

Referring to flood damage in parts of Jammu and Kashmir, Tarigami said that disaster relief and restoration efforts had been inadequate. "Floods had destroyed houses as well as agricultural livelihoods, including apple orchards and crops, and urged the government to provide adequate assistance to affected families."

The MLA also raised concerns about the security situation in the Valley, alleging the harassment of individuals based on minor or unverified allegations.

QUESTION HOUR

G&B Hostels ready for admissions in Kupwara, Handwara: Rana

Government today informed the Legislative Assembly that Gujjar & Bakerwal Girls Hostel Zangli, Kupwara and Gujjar Bakerwal Boys Hostel, Handwara are completed and are ready to commence admission process from next academic session.

Replying to a question raised by Choudhary Mohammad Akram in the House, Minister for Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana stated that twin hostels are complete and are ready for admission



of the students.

He said that the budgetary Provision for dietary items, bedding and other miscellaneous expenses to run the hostels have been projected in revised estimates 2025-26 and budget estimates for the year 2026-27.

Regarding the construction of Gujjar & Bakerwal Girls Hostel Budgam and Gujjar & Bakerwal Girls Hostel Baramulla, Minister informed that the Hostels are at finishing level

and will be completed soon.

However, some works related to electricity, power, water connection are pending and the matter has been taken up with concerned executive agency, so that the admission process can be initiated from the next academic session.

The Minister also said that land has been transferred in favour of Tribal Affairs department for the construction of ST/G&B Girls Hostel at Srinagar.

Strengthening of existing medical infra Govt's top priority: Sakeena

Minister for Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoh today remarked that strengthening of existing medical infrastructure is top priority of the Government and creation of any additional Medical Blocks shall be considered subject to requirement, feasibility, availability of manpower and infrastructure.

The Health Minister said this while replying to a question of Legislator Sheikh Ahsan Ahmad on Medical Blocks during ongoing Budget Session of J&K Legislative Assembly.

The Minister informed the House that district Sri-

nagar, having a population of over 15 lakh, is presently having one Medical Block and four Medical Zones and these four Medical Zones are functioning directly under the administrative control of Chief Medical Officer, Srinagar. She added that the administrative, supervisory and field-level implementation of health programmes in district Srinagar is being carried out smoothly and satisfactorily with existing manpower and infrastructure, with no major impediments reported in the delivery of health care services under the present administrative setup.



The Health Minister also informed the House that District Srinagar is administratively covered by four Medical Zones and

one Medical Block, collectively catering to the eight Assembly Constituencies of district Srinagar.

She added that the existing health care delivery mechanism in the district is being adequately supported by the presence of premier tertiary and secondary health care institutions like Government Medical College Srinagar, Gousia Hospital, SKIMS Soura, SMHS Hospital, JLNM Hospital and SKIMS Bemina, which significantly enhance patient care services and help in managing the patient and service load across the district.

Govt approves liquidation of SCARD Bank; no rehab plan for employees yet

The Jammu and Kashmir government on Tuesday said it has approved the liquidation of the J&K State Cooperative Agriculture and Rural Development (SCARD) Bank.

In a written reply to the Assembly, minister-in-charge for cooperatives Javed Ahmed Dar said the decision was taken by council of ministers on December 3, 2025. He was responding to a question by PDP MLA Aga Syed Muntazir Mehdi.

"As of now, the department has not formulated any proposal for the rehabilitation, absorption or provision of compensation to the employees working in the J&K SCARD Bank," Dar said.

However, he assured that the inter-

ests of employees will be safeguarded in accordance with the provisions of the Jammu and Kashmir Cooperative Societies Act, 1989, and the rules framed thereunder, subject to future policy decisions or instructions of the government.

Dar further said that measures have been initiated to safeguard the interests of depositors and borrowers of the SCARD Bank.

"The issues affecting the bank have been examined in detail by the department in consultation with NABARD, and a structured, closely monitored and legally compliant course of action has been advised to ensure an orderly and transparent process," he said.

Discussion on Motion of Thanks on LG's address commences in Legislative Assembly

JAMMU: The discussion on Motion of Thanks on Lieutenant Governor's Address commenced in Legislative Assembly today.

The motion was moved by MLA Showkat Hussain Ganie and seconded by MLA Dr. Rameshwar Singh.

Initiating the debate, Showkat Hussain Ganie stated that more than 7000 people have been employed since Omar Abdullah assumed office, while around more than 23000 more are currently in the process of recruitment. He acknowledged that the tourism sector had suffered initially, but noted that over two crore tourists have since visited the region, reflecting sustained efforts by the government to revive the sector.

Highlighting infrastructure development, he referred to construction of major roads and tunnels, including Sonamarg Tunnel, Shopian-Surankote National Highway and several flyover projects, aimed at improving connectivity and boosting economic activity. He further mentioned key welfare measures, including the free ration schemes and the enhancement of old-age pension, asserting that these initiatives were in line with the commitments made in the election manifesto.

Rameshwar Singh who seconded the motion, reflected the achievements in terms of education, health, rural infrastructure said that the present government has accepted the challenges and the work it has done is praise worthy.

He also expressed serious concern

over the growing menace of substance abuse and drug addiction in the Union Territory, describing the figures as alarming.

Singh further emphasized that collective efforts are essential to ensure unity and sustained progress in Jammu and Kashmir.

Mohammad Yousuf Rather (Tariq) highlighted that the Budget should have a provision for separate climate fund for Jammu and Kashmir, on the lines of provisions made in other States and Union Territories, to effectively address climate-related challenges.

Sham Lal Sharma said that people need respite from unscheduled power cuts and more efforts need to be taken in this direction as there has been significant increase in revenue realization in the power sector. He also said that JMM schemes need to be completed so that people will have regular water supply. He further said that more avenues need to be created for generating employment for the youth of Jammu and Kashmir.

Gulam Ahmad Mir, while participating in the debate, asserted for more efforts from the government for restoration of statehood. He added that business rules shall also be finalized as soon as possible for smooth functioning of the Government.

Ajaz Ahmad Jan while speaking on the motion, said that pre-budget meetings were held by Chief Minister with all stakeholders so that the upcoming budget reflects aspirations of

the people.

Ajrun Singh Raju said that the government has made significant strides in development across various sectors, including power infrastructure, reduction of transmission and distribution losses, roads, education, health, and other key areas, particularly in Ramban district.

Speaking during the debate on Motion of Thanks, Baldev Raj Sharma spoke about various constituency specific issues.

Rafiq Ahmad Naik, in his address said that the Pre-Budget consultations of Chief Minister with Legislators is an encouraging step for charting the developmental road-map of Jammu and Kashmir. He also raised various constituency specific issues during the debate.

Salman Ali Sagar, while speaking in favour of the motion, said that Omar Abdullah led Government has laid great focus on socio-economic upliftment of people across all sections of society and has been working tirelessly for the holistic development of Jammu and Kashmir.

While participating in the debate, Shakti Raj Parihar said that the Government should give focus on the development of Chenab Valley, including Doda district.

Speaking in support of Motion, Pirzada Farooq Ahmad Shah said that due to strenuous efforts of Government, particularly Chief minister Omar Abdullah, tourism sector has revived across J&K.