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25,000 posts to be filled this year, says Omar Abdullah

by the chief minister, over 28,000 vacancies, mostly non-gazetted, exist across various departments in Jammu and Kashmir.

Of these, over 7,000 posts, including 959 gazetted and 6,340 non-gazetted positions, were referred to the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission (JKPSC) and the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB) for recruitment during 2025.

Nearly half of the vacancies are concentrated in key public service sectors, particularly the health and medical education department, which accounts for over 10,000 posts. Of these, 2,497 gazetted and 8,088 non-gazetted positions fall under the direct recruitment quota, while 898 gazetted and 3,601 non-gazetted posts are to be filled through the promotion quota.

The data revealed that the school education department is also facing a shortage of 594 gazetted and 727 non-gazetted posts under the direct recruitment quota, along with 2,683 gazetted and 3,598 non-gazetted vacancies under the promotion quota.

Other departments with significant staff shortages include finance, industries & commerce, jal shakti, power development, public works (R&B), rural development & panchayati raj, forest ecology & environment, and youth services & sports.

'MLAs can allocate up to Rs 50 lakh from CDF'

blly.

"The government has amended CDF guidelines to expand the scope of assistance. As per the revised provisions, MLAs can now allocate up to Rs 50 lakh from their CDF for providing housing assistance, including reconstruction & repair of houses for families affected by calamities, for 2026-27," he said.

The chief minister said that the assistance to an individual family was capped at Rs 1 lakh, and importantly, the benefit was not restricted to tribal or BPL families but was available to all the affected families.

Clarifying the scope of the term 'calamity' in the amended guidelines, he stated that it included all events causing significant damage or harm, including fire incidents.

Referring to Srinagar district, the chief minister said that 24 cases were received from the MLA of Habba Kadal constituency for providing assistance to fire victims under CDF scheme, involving an estimated cost of Rs 12.80 lakh. "Of these, five cases have already been cleared for additional assistance after completing all required formalities," he added.

"The remaining 19 cases are under examination and assessment in the office of the deputy commissioner, Srinagar," he said and assured that all eligible cases recommended by the MLA would be processed in accordance with the prescribed norms.

Amid global strife, India stands tall to illuminate world path: LG

profound insight, purpose, and craft, which is essential for nation-building. For India, art, spirituality, philosophy, and ethics are bridges linking generations," he said.

"This is modern history's toughest phase, and we are fortunate that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is leading the country, establishing new benchmarks in progress and welfare," he added.

"India's transformation over the past 12 years has been extraordinary. Society must accelerate this transformation collectively. In coming decades, we must harness new energy and resolve to build technologies and systems reshaping domestic and global industries," Sinha said.

"On international platforms, India has reclaimed ancient glory and confidence. Indian engineers, scientists, industrialists, and innovators now steer global discourse; their technologies and talents earn worldwide acclaim. I see this as a renaissance, reviving India's glorious history," he added.

The Jammu & Kashmir Cultural Festival featured various activities including cultural exhibition, traditional folk performances, Kisan Mela and free medical camp.

On the occasion, some individuals were felicitated for their contributions in respective fields.

Anant Shri Vibhushit Junapeethadheeshwar Acharya Mahamandaleshwar Swami Avdhesanand Giri Ji Maharaj also graced the occasion.

Sinha condoles loss of lives in drowning incident

time," the LG said.

It may be mentioned that three boys drowned in Tawi at Nagrota on March 29 while they were taking bath in the river.

Ladakh bans tobacco, intoxicants in vehicles

of intoxicants and other prohibited substances in government/official vehicles and public transport, adversely affects the safe driving, poses serious risks to road safety and public well-being, causes nuisance and leads to unhygienic conditions," a circular issued by the UT administration said.

Enforcement agencies, including traffic police and designated authorities of transport department (RTO/AR-TOs/MVIs and enforcement squads), shall conduct regular checks and inspections," says the circular.

IT dept notifies all 7 ITR forms

The last date for filing ITR for individuals and those who do not have to get their accounts audited is July 31.

ITR Form 1 (Sahaj) and ITR Form 4 (Sugam) are simpler forms that cater to a large number of small and medium taxpayers.

Sahaj can be filed by a resident individual having annual income up to Rs 50 lakh and who receives income from salary, one house property, other sources (interest) and agricultural income up to Rs 5,000 a year.

Sugam can be filed by individuals, Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs) and firms (other than Limited Liability Partnerships (LLPs)) having total annual income up to Rs 50 lakh and income from business and profession.

ITR-2 is filed by individuals and HUFs who do not have income from profits and gains in business or profession, but have income from capital gains.

ITR-3 is for individuals and HUFs earning income from a proprietary business or profession.

ITR-5 is filed by firms and limited liability partnership and cooperative societies

ITR-6 is filed by companies registered under Companies Act.

ITR-7 is filed by trusts and charitable institutions.

Body of 3rd boy recovered from Tawi

was launched soon after the incident came to the notice of the authorities concerned, the boys remained untraced.

The bodies of Bavish & Aditya were fished out from the deep river waters by the rescue teams of Army, SDRF, NDRF and local volunteers yesterday. The body of Sonam was searched out today.

Police had taken cognizance of the incident.

Modi likens Cong to 'political vultures', says India managed situation well

dends," Modi added. The Prime Minister noted that though fuel prices have risen by as much as 10 per cent globally due to the West Asia conflict, the Central government is ensuring that the burden of this impact does not fall upon people.

"The Congress desires to create an atmosphere of panic in the country, hoping that the people will be forced to queue up at petrol pumps and gas agencies," he added.

Modi asserted that India will emerge as a world leader in the renewable energy sector.

He said the circumstances in West Asia have affected every country, but India managed the situation well.

Continuing his attack on the Opposition, Modi said they want to spread anarchy.

"India is capable of facing any crisis. However, Congress is trying to instigate people to queue up at fuel pumps and spread disorder," he added.

Security scenario grave, can't be taken lightly: Rather

past incidents must guide present decisions.

Intervening during a discussion on the withdrawal of security cover to the National Conference headquarters and several legislators, he said 'those who have experienced such situations understand the risks better'.

"Despite claims of improvement, the situation still demands caution. Keeping in view past security events, we must remain vigilant. Security cannot be treated casually," Rather said.

"If the administration believes that the situation has become fully normal, it should clearly declare Jammu and

Kashmir a risk-free region," he added.

He expressed hope that the concerns raised by legislators would be taken seriously by the authorities concerned.

Talks on ending Iran war gaining strength: US Def Secy

campaign against the Islamic republic continued.

"They are very real. They are ongoing, they are active, and I think, gaining strength," Hegseth said of the negotiations.

He also said he had made an unannounced trip to visit US troops taking part in operations against Iran.

"We were on the ground in CENTCOM on Saturday for about half the day. For reasons of operational security, so those troops are not targeted, the places and bases will not be named," Hegseth said, referring to the US command responsible for the region.

"Suffice it to say, the trip was an honour. I had a chance to bear witness, and I witnessed the best of America," he said.

General Dan Caine -- the top US military officer -- spoke alongside Hegseth, saying that US forces have struck more than 11,000 targets so far.

The United States "continues to destroy Iran's ballistic missile and (drone) capabilities. We remain focused on interdicting and destroying the logistical and supply chains that feed these programs," he said.

And "we continue to assert dominance over the Iranian navy. We remain focused on targeting their mine laying capability, their naval assets," Caine added.

Technology, tradition must march hand-in-hand: Jaishankar

sity's growth, leveraging their skills and knowledge.

Acknowledging that current global debates are dominated by technology, he reminded the audience that the "human side" must never be forgotten, encapsulated in the mantra: "Vikas bhi, Virasat bhi" (Development as well as Heritage).

"The very term Nalanda evokes memories of India's intellectual heritage and cultural grandeur. A revival of that tradition in this institution is an indicator not just of the rise of India, but of Asia itself. Today, intense debates are going on about the future directions of growth and progress in the world. Much of that understandably centres around technology. But as the Nalanda spirit reminds us, we should never forget that there is always the human side. The world is becoming more multi-polar because there are many more cultures and many more societies that are making their voices heard. The Nalanda tradition can be a powerful influence in this democratisation of the global order. And, also be a reminder that technology and tradition - vikas bhi, virasat bhi - must march hand-in-hand," he said.

Jaishankar connected the graduates' achievements to India's development, emphasizing the importance of education and innovation.

He said he believed each one who is graduating from Nalanda will contribute to the university in their own way.

"I am very privileged to witness this Second Convocation of Nalanda University, that too in the august presence of the President. Each such milestone marks an evolution of an emerging institution and is a cause for celebration in itself, and it has been my personal good fortune to be associated with this University from the very start. Now, having studied in a new university myself in my time, I recognise the significance of the event for this institution's future. Each one of you receiving a degree today, each one of you contributing to a degree, by being a fellow student or by being a teacher, will have a justifiable sense of pride. I am confident that those graduating, those receiving their degrees today, would repay by contributing to Nalanda University's growth in whatever capacity you can, from wherever you will be," he said.

Jaishankar said that coming generations must be more connected, to be more sensitive to global developments, and that international students in particular can promote India in their respective countries when they go back.

"This University is unique in its international character. While that has always had a value, it is even more so in this age of globalisation. As we advance towards a Viksit Bharat, it is essential that India is ready for the world and equally, the world for India. This requires coming generations to be more connected, to be more sensitive to global developments, and I am sure the graduating cohorts can make a difference in this regard. International students, in particular, can promote India in their respective countries when they go back. All of you, I know, have given their best here and I know equally that you are taking a part of India back with you," he said.

Nalanda University also lauded Jaishankar's reflection on "vikas bhi, virasat bhi" which beautifully captured the Nalanda spirit.

Kansal appointed union rural development secy

as additional secretary in the Ministry of Textiles, has been elevated to the post at the Centre, following the superannuation of the incumbent.

Meanwhile, ACC also approved the in-situ upgradation of Sarita Chauhan Chand to the level of additional secretary.

She is currently serving as joint secretary in the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances under the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.

Encounter breaks out in Ganderbal woods; 2 terrorists trapped

Operation Sindoor, targeting terror hubs inside Pak territory. Several terrorists were killed and terror infrastructure was damaged in the Indian strikes.

New Delhi had then warned Islamabad to resume Operation Sindoor in case of any terror act on the Indian soil in future.

Masood Azhar's brother dies under mysterious circumstances in Pakistan

were killed in the incident.

Masood had founded JeM after his release from the high-security Kot-Bhalwal jail in Jammu in exchange for the passengers of a hijacked Indian plane that was grounded in Afghanistan's Kandhar.

After Operation Sindoor, he was said to have fled to an undisclosed location in Afghanistan as he feared threats to his life in Pakistan.

'Govt clearing liabilities regularly'

he said while replying to a question by BJP MLA Sham Lal Sharma in the legislative assembly.

He said liabilities in the form of bills presented at treasuries were being cleared on a regular basis and at periodic intervals.

"A total of Rs 18,382.26 crore have been paid so far by the department of finance," the chief minister said.

Abdullah said during 2025-26 financial year ending March 31, payments have been made across multiple heads, including Rs 7,800.58 crore towards contractor bills, Rs 5,821.43 crore under General Provident Fund (GPF), Rs 2,864.14 crore as gratuity, Rs 1,123.22 crore for commutation and Rs 773.47 crore towards leave salary.

He added that most of the bills under these categories have been cleared up to March 27, 2026, while GPF claims have been settled up to December 31, 2025 Addressing concerns regarding pending liabilities, he said dues are being systematically cleared and there is a structured mechanism in place to ensure timely payments.

On the issue of division-wise allocation, the chief minister clarified that funds are allocated and accounted for based on "Heads of Expenditure" rather than on a divisional basis, and payments in treasuries are recorded accordingly.

Phase-I of Census to have 33 questions for citizens

sion, internet access, laptop/computer, telephone/mobile/smartphone, bicycle/scooter/motorcycle/moped, and car/jeep/van will also be collected, along with the main cereal consumed and a mobile number for census-related communication, he said.

Citizens can also give information through self-enumeration in 16 languages during the 15-day window preceding the start of HLO in their respective state or Union Territory. For instance, in NDMC and Delhi Cantonment, where HLO is scheduled from April 16 to May 15, self-enumeration will be available from April 1 to April 15, he said.

To self-enumerate, the head of the household or any family member can register on the official portal -- se.census.gov.in -- using a mobile number and other basic details, select the district, mark the house location on a map, and submit the information at their convenience.

A 16-digit unique Self-Enumeration ID will be generated, which must be shared with the enumerator during the field visit for verification.

"Citizens can make corrections during the verification field visit...The option will save a lot of time," Narayan said, adding that individual data will remain confidential and cannot be used in courts or for availing government benefits.

Rs 3,340 Cr being utilized to strengthen disaster readiness across J&K

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
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Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo today chaired a high-level review meeting to assess the roadmap and ongoing initiatives aimed at strengthening disaster management mechanisms across the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.

Emphasizing a proactive and resilient approach, the Chief Secretary directed the concerned departments to effectively plan and utilize funds amounting to ₹3,340 Cr earmarked under various components of disaster management, mitigation, and risk reduction across all districts.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Finance; Additional Chief Secretary, PWD; Principal Secretary, DMRR&R; Divisional Commissioner, Jammu/Kashmir, Director CD & SDRF; CEO, ERA, and other senior officers. Deputy Commissioners from all districts participated through video conferencing.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary underscored the need for a focused and structured approach across six key verticals of disaster management including Early Warning Systems, Risk Reduction, Relief & Response, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction, and Capacity Building & Training. He called for sustained efforts to build a disaster-resilient Jammu & Kashmir through long-term, evidence-based planning.

Stressing the importance of expert-driven policy formulation, he directed the department to undertake detailed analysis through the constituted expert committee for developing precise, actionable recommendations tailored for each department. He further emphasized leveraging mitigation funds under Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF), landslides, and floods, to reduce vulnerabilities and enhance preparedness.

Highlighting the approaching monsoon season, the Chief Secretary instructed all Deputy Commissioners to identify vulnerable areas in advance and implement preventive measures based on past experiences. He also laid emphasis on strict enforcement of disaster management laws, calling for the formulation of Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) and their effective implementation at the district level to ensure compliance and accountability.

Additional Chief Secretary, Finance, Shailendra Kumar,

stressed the need to safeguard critical connectivity infrastructure along with life and property. He advocated for adoption of modern, technology-driven early warning systems and recommended detailed studies of vulnerable regions, particularly the Chenab basin, to guide mitigation strategies.

Additional Chief Secretary, PWD, Anil Kumar Singh, highlighted the department's efforts towards permanent restoration of damaged infrastructure and implementation of mitigation measures aimed at ensuring minimal disruption to connectivity during disasters.

Principal Secretary, DMRR&R, Chandraker Bharti, informed that comprehensive mitigation guidelines have already been issued, urging departments to formulate projects in accordance with these guidelines to secure funding. He also indicated that fresh allocations would soon be released to districts to address emergent situations.

Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, Ramesh Kumar, highlighted the importance of training and capacity building of volunteers, especially in remote and far-flung areas, to significantly reduce response time. Similarly Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, Anshul Garg, called for strengthening early warning mechanisms, flood zoning, and modelling, along with early operationalization of the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) at Budgam.

Director SDRF, Imtiyaz Hussain Mir, emphasized the need for augmenting manpower and strengthening logistical capacity, including procurement of advanced equipment to enhance disaster response capabilities across the UT.

The CEO, ERA, Shreya Singhal apprised the meeting about the current status of completion of the EOC at Budgam assuring that the department is trying its best to partially handover the same for use by April end after construction of boundary wall and completing it fully by August this year. She also divulged that the necessary procurement of equipment has also been undertaken for its smooth operation soon.

Deputy Commissioners also shared field-level insights, highlighting requirements related to consultancy support, equipment, and capacity building, while also detailing measures taken in response to past disasters.

Earlier, the Department presented a comprehensive roadmap for upgrading disaster management systems in the UT. It was informed that a Multi-Hazard Vulnerability and

Risk Assessment is currently underway, with pilot districts including Ramban, Kishtwar, and Srinagar. A dedicated expert committee has been constituted, and a Risk Atlas is being developed to identify critical hazard hotspots.

It was added that the Department has also secured substantial financial assistance, including over ₹330 Cr from the High-Level Committee on the basis of IMCT report besides over ₹1,579 Cr had been approved by the Ministry of Home Affairs for recovery and reconstruction of infrastructure here in J&K. Additionally projects worth ₹1,431 Cr under SASCI had been allocated for restoration of damaged infrastructure too.

In order to institutionalize the mechanism the UT has established a Directorate of Disaster Management, while steps are underway for the creation of an Urban Disaster Management Authority. A dedicated Mitigation Fund has been operationalized, supported by project appraisal committees to facilitate targeted interventions.

In a significant step towards strengthening institutional capacity, the Department has signed an MoU with UNDP for technical support and is working closely with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to develop hyper-local early warning systems. The Incident Response System (IRS) has been notified up to the tehsil level, complemented by regular mock drills and capacity-building programmes.

Key capacity-building initiatives include specialized training programmes for engineers, officers, and community stakeholders, along with a focus on gender-inclusive disaster risk reduction strategies. Priority is also being given to landslide risk mitigation and structural safety assessments.

Line departments such as Housing & Urban Development, Public Works (R&B), and Jal Shakti are actively integrating disaster-resilient features into infrastructure planning, including earthquake-resistant construction, floodplain mapping, slope stabilization, and installation of advanced flood monitoring systems.

The UT Government has also initiated critical policy reforms, including strengthening building bye-laws, enforcing land-use regulations, floodplain zoning, and mandating disaster risk reduction measures in all major developmental projects, reaffirming its commitment to building a safer and more resilient Jammu & Kashmir.