

Ensure that **Reform Express** reaches grassroots level: PM Modi

NEW DELHI, Feb 27 (IANS)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said that this year's Union Budget lays the road map for a 'Viksit Bharat' — driven by technology, reforms and finance — and all the stakeholders need to collectively ensure that reforms reach the grassroots level.

Addressing a post-Budget webinar, PM Modi urged the stakeholders to transform reforms into solid results, suggesting to create a charter involving the Government, industry, financial institutions and academia to achieve the goal of 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047.

"The Union Budget 2026-27 ensures ease of doing business, makes processes simpler, and calls for tech-led governance. This is the time to ride the Reform Express with a focus on policy delivery excellence," the Prime Minister told the virtual gathering. "We need to use AI, Blockchain and data analytics

Post-Budget Webinar

for transparency, speed and accountability. We need to also focus on grievance redressal monitoring," said PM Modi.



Highlighting that the Government capex has reached record levels in the last 10-11 years, PM Modi said the

increased Government spending is also a clear message for the private sector.

The Prime Minister stated that

11 years ago, the Government capex was a mere Rs 2 lakh crore.

"Today, it has crossed Rs 12 lakh crore. At such a big scale, Government spending is a clear message for the private sector. Industry and financial institutions should come forward with new energy," the Prime Minister said. "We have kept our focus on strengthening infrastructure for the last 10 years — be it highways, railways, ports, digital networks, power systems — to create assets which will enhance productivity for several decades to come," PM Modi stressed.

"We should look for bond market reforms and mitigate risks to

attract sustained foreign capital. We need to follow global best practices and boost market confidence," said PM Modi.

The webinar is the first in a series of post-Budget webinars being organised on key themes emerging from the Union Budget 2026-27.

These webinars aim to draw lessons from past experiences and obtain structured feedback from participants to strengthen and ensure outcome-oriented implementation of the Budget announcements for FY 2026-27, drawing upon the practical experience and insights of diverse stakeholders.

Indian Army conducts artillery exercise in Arunachal to boost high-altitude combat readiness

ITANAGAR, Feb 27 (PTI)

THE Indian Army, along with the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Arunachal Scouts, Para Special Forces and the newly raised Bhairav Battalion, successfully carried out a three-day joint artillery field firing exercise at Tezu in Lohit district.

The exercise, held from February 23 to 25, significantly enhanced inter-agency coordination and operational preparedness in high-altitude terrain, a defence spokesperson said on Friday. The exercise was specifically aimed at strengthening inter-organisation synergy and boosting operational readiness in mountainous

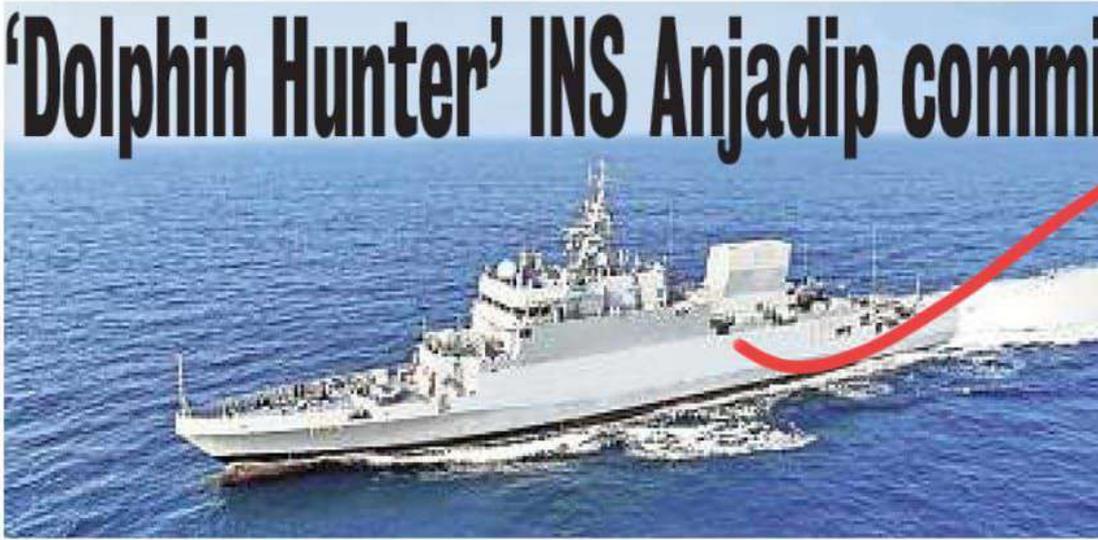
regions, which remain strategically sensitive, Defence spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Mahendra Rawat said.

The integrated exercise was validated through multiple live artillery fire missions conducted in realistic battlefield scenarios, he said.

Lt Col Rawat said that the exercise marked a significant milestone in strengthening joint operational integration and cross-arm cooperation among the participating forces.

The training emphasised the integration of advanced technologies, next-generation equipment and refined procedures in the application of artillery firepower, he said.

'Dolphin Hunter' INS Anjadip commissioned



INS Anjadip, the third vessel of the eight-ship Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC) project, formally commissioned at Chennai Port, in Chennai. (@PIB_India X/ANI)

CHENNAI, Feb 27 (PTI)

THE Indian Navy on Friday commissioned INS Anjadip, also named as "Dolphin Hunter" a warship aimed at augmenting its anti-submarine warfare capabilities and coastal surveillance and one that comes with state-of-the-art combat features.

Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Dinesh

KTripathi commissioned the ship at the Chennai Port. This is the third of the eight vessels being built under the anti-submarine warfare shallow water craft project.

The ship is packed with an indigenous, cutting-edge Anti-Submarine Warfare weapons and sensor package, including the hull-mounted sonar Abhay, and armed with Lightweight Torpedoes and ASW Rockets.

The vessel is engineered to act as a "Dolphin Hunter", focused on the detection, tracking, and neutralisation of enemy submarines in coastal areas.

DRDO carries out flight trials of VSHORADS missile systems

NEW DELHI, Feb 27 (PTI)

THE Defence Ministry on Friday said three flight-trials of a very short-range air defence missile system were conducted successfully from Chandipur off the coast of Odisha.

It said the trials were carried out to 'revalidate' the capability of the VSHORADS (Very Short-Range Air Defence System) missile system in neutralising high-speed threats flying at varying speed, range, and altitude.

The VSHORADS is a man-portable air defence system designed and developed indigenously by Research Centre Imarat (RCI) in collaboration with other DRDO (Defence Research & Development Organisation) laboratories and Indian industry partners.

"During all the flight-tests, the missiles intercepted and destroyed the high-speed aerial

targets mimicking enemy aircraft in various threat scenarios meeting all extreme engagement points," the Ministry said.

"The tests were carried out in final deployment configuration, where target acquisition and missile firing were carried out by field operators," it said.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh congratulated the DRDO, armed forces and the industries for the successful flight-tests of the missile system.

The three consecutive flight trials of VSHORADS are a great success, and the system can soon be inducted into armed forces, he said. "The flight data captured by various range instruments like telemetry, electro-optical tracking system and radars deployed by Integrated Test Range, Chandipur, validated the effectiveness of VSHORADS against a wide range of aerial threats," the Ministry said.

IAF showcases combat prowess at Exercise Vayu Shakti

JAISALMER, Feb 27 (PTI)

THE Indian Air Force demonstrated its combat prowess and firepower capabilities, and presented glimpses of missions undertaken during Operation Sindoor through simulated strikes at the Pokharan Field Firing Range under Exercise 'Vayu Shakti' in the presence of President Droupadi Murmu on Friday.

The day-dusk-night demonstration, held in the Thar desert of western Rajasthan near the India-Pakistan border, is also being attended by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Rajasthan Governor Haribhau Bagade and Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, among other dignitaries.

A presentation on Operation Sindoor was made at the beginning of the exercise, followed by a detailed display of day target layouts spread across a three-kilometre area. The simulated targets included an enemy runway, a petroleum storage facility, bunkers, radar sites, tank and armoured convoys, a communication centre, a terror camp, ammunition storage, a hangar and



A demonstration being executed by the Indian Air Force as a part of Exercise 'Vayu Shakti', near the India-Pakistan border, in Jaisalmer district, Rajasthan on Friday.

(PTI)

a command-and-control centre.

Fighter jets and attack helicopters carried out synchronised operations, displaying strategy formulation, target identification and calibrated destruction. The IAF showcased a calibrated response for controlled escalation and precision strikes as part of the simulated mission.

Jaguar and Mirage fighter aircraft struck designated targets simultaneously, replicating coordinated attack patterns demon-

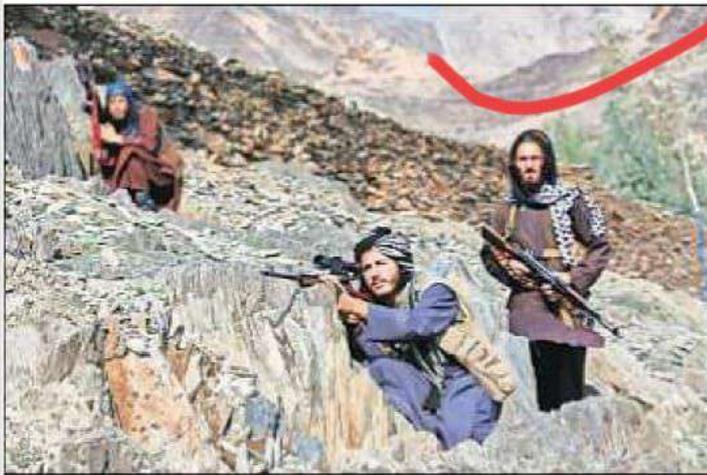
strated during Operation Sindoor. A Sukhoi fighter aircraft carried out a strike on a simulated terror camp, while suppression and destruction of enemy air defence systems were demonstrated to neutralise hostile capabilities. The demonstration also featured decoy operations and loitering missions akin to those undertaken during Operation Sindoor. A radar cluster was neutralised in a simulated strike to "blind" enemy surveillance systems. Rapid deploy-

ment of fighters was displayed, and a simulated airborne target was successfully engaged and destroyed. The indigenously-developed HAL Light Combat Helicopter Prachand demonstrated its agility by striking a simulated refuelling point. Apache attack helicopters, Mirage fighter jets and Mi-17 V5 helicopters also participated in the coordinated operations, underlining the IAF's multi-platform integration capability.

Afghan forces kill 55 Pak soldiers

Pakistan says, it has killed over 270 Afghan Taliban fighters

There is now 'open war' with Afghanistan: Pak's Defence Minister



Afghan Taliban soldiers look toward the Pakistani side, with one peering through the sight of his rifle, on Afghan side of the Torkham border crossing with Pakistan in Torkham on Friday. (AP/PTI)



Taliban fighters look up while manning an armed pickup truck at the Afghan side of the Ghulam Khan crossing with Pakistan in Khost province, Afghanistan, on Friday. (AP/PTI)

ISLAMABAD, Feb 27 (Agencies)

AFGHANISTAN'S Taliban government spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said that Afghan forces killed 55 Pakistani soldiers and targeted what he described as "important military objectives" inside Pakistan. They also captured two bases along with 19 posts

The Afghan Taliban attacked several check posts along the border late on Thursday, apparently to avenge the air strikes carried out by Pakistan in Afghanistan's border areas on Sunday. Pakistan responded by hitting targets in Kabul, Kandahar and Paktia under 'Operation Ghazab lil Haq' early on Friday.

Pakistan on Friday said it was in an "open war" with

Afghanistan after its forces killed more than 270 Taliban fighters and injured over 400 others in airstrikes in response to what Islamabad described as the cross-border attack by the Afghan Taliban.

According to the Ministry, the attacks took place on Thursday night in response to Pakistan's strikes on Afghan territory, which killed women and children. The retaliatory operation by Afghan forces targeted posts of Pakistani military forces in the east and south-east directions, across the Durand Line. During these operations, the Ministry said, the Afghan forces destroyed two Pakistani military bases and 19

posts, forcing soldiers to flee from four additional posts. It added that over the course of the four-hour battle, 55 Pakistani soldiers were killed, several others were captured alive, and many others managed to escape.

"In these operations, dozens of light and heavy weapons, ammunition, and military supplies were seized by Afghan forces. Additionally, an enemy tank was destroyed, and a large military transport vehicle was captured," the Ministry stated.

Additionally, it said, 8 Afghan soldiers were killed, and 11 others were injured during the operation. The Ministry also mentioned that 13 Afghan civilian

citizens, including women and children, were injured in a missile attack by Pakistani forces on a refugee camp in the Afghan province of Nangarhar.

At least three explosions were heard in Kabul, but there was no immediate information on the exact location of the strikes in the Afghan capital. Government spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said Pakistan also carried out airstrikes in Kandahar to the south and in the southeastern province of Paktia. The 2,611-km-long border between Pakistan and Afghanistan is known as the Durand Line, which Kabul has not formally recognised. Army spokesperson Lt Gen Ahmad Sharif Chaudhry said Pakistani forces "killed 274

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