

!! Continuations from Page 1 !! Rail infra projects...

Gati-Shakti University has also been established. "As the railway network expands, new divisions and headquarters are being set up, benefiting regions like Jammu, Kashmir; Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, and Leh-Ladakh", the Prime Minister said, adding that Jammu and Kashmir is achieving new milestones in railway infrastructure, with the Udhampur - Srinagar - Baramulla rail line, which is being discussed all over the country today. He said the completion of the Chenab Bridge, the world's highest railway arch bridge, will play a key role in connecting the region with the rest of India providing convenience to the people of Leh-Ladakh.

The Prime Minister underscored that the work on modern rail networks like the Dedicated Freight Corridor is progressing rapidly in the country. He said these special corridors will reduce pressure on the regular tracks and will also create more opportunities for high-speed trains. He emphasised that the railways are undergoing a transformation with the promotion of Made in India. He said Modern coaches are being developed for metros and railways. Stations are also being redeveloped, Solar panels are being installed at stations and 'One Station, One Product' stalls are being set up at railway stations. All these initiatives are generating millions of new employment opportunities in the railway sector. "Over the last decade, millions of young people have secured permanent government jobs in the railways. The demand for raw materials in factories producing new train coaches leads to more job opportunities in other sectors as well", he added.

The Prime Minister remarked that the Anji Khad Bridge, which is the country's first cable-based railway bridge, is also part of this project. He said Chenab Bridge and the Anji Khad Bridge are unparalleled examples of engineering leading to economic progress in the region and promoting prosperity.

The Prime Minister highlighted that Odisha is blessed with abundant natural resources and a large coastline, and holds significant potential for international trade. He said that several railway projects worth over ₹70,000 crore are ongoing in the state, along with the establishment of seven Gati Shakti cargo terminals, which are boosting trade and industry. He stated that today, the foundation stone has been laid for the Rayagada Railway Division in Odisha, which will strengthen the state's railway infrastructure promoting tourism, business, and employment in Odisha specially South Odisha, where the number of tribal families is higher.

Inaugurating the Charlapalli New Terminal Station in Telangana today, the Prime Minister highlighted its potential to accelerate regional development by connecting to the Outer Ring Road. "This station, connected to the Outer Ring Road, will significantly boost development in the region," he stated. He also highlighted the station's modern amenities including its platforms, lifts, escalators, solar-powered operations, saying, "This is a step forward in creating sustainable infrastructure." He further highlighted that this new terminal will ease the pressure on existing stations in Secunderabad, Hyderabad, and Kachiguda, making travel more convenient for the people.

The Prime Minister emphasised that such projects not only enhance the ease of living but also promote the ease of doing business, aligning with India's broader infrastructure goals.

Modi noted that India is currently undergoing a massive infrastructure expansion, including expressways, waterways and metro networks. He said that the number of airports has grown from 74 in 2014 to over 150 today and that metro services have expanded from 5 cities to 21 cities across the country. He said, "These projects are part of a larger roadmap towards a developed India, which is now a mission for every citizen of this country."

Expressing confidence in Bharat's growth, the Prime Minister said, "I am certain that, together, we will accelerate this growth even further." He congratulated the citizens of India on these milestones and reaffirmed the government's commitment to nation-building.

The Union Minister of Railways, Information and Broadcasting, Electronics & Information Technology, Ashwini Vaishnav, Union Minister G Kishan Reddy, Union Minister of State for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences, and MoS PMO, Dr. Jitendra Singh, Union Minister i V. Somanna, Minister of State Ravneet Singh Bittu, Union Minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar, Governor of Odisha, Jishnu Dev Varma, Governor of Telangana, Hari Babu Kambhampati, Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, Manoj Sinha, Chief Minister of Jammu & Kashmir, Omar Abdullah, Chief Minister of Telangana A Revanth Reddy and Chief Minister of Odisha Mohan Charan Majhi were present among other dignitaries at the event.

In a key move to further boost connectivity in the region, the Prime Minister inaugurated the new Jammu Railway Division. He also laid the foundation stone of Rayagada Railway Division Building of East Coast Railway and inaugurated the Charlapalli New Terminal Station in Telangana.

Creation of the Jammu Railway Division, with 742.1 KM comprising Pathankot - Jammu - Udhampur - Srinagar - Baramulla, Bhogpur Sirwal - Pathankot, Batala - Pathankot and Pathankot to Joginder Nagar sections, will significantly benefit Jammu and Kashmir and surrounding regions, fulfilling the long pending aspiration of the people and improving connectivity to other parts of India. It will create employment opportunities, infrastructure development, promote tourism and lead to overall socio-economic development of the region.

Charlapalli New Terminal Station in the Medehal-Malkajgiri District of Telangana has been developed as a new coaching terminal along with provision of second entry with a cost of around Rs 413 crore. This environment friendly terminal, having good passenger amenities, will ease congestion on the existing coaching terminals in the city like Secunderabad, Hyderabad and Kacheguda.

The Prime Minister also laid the foundation stone for Rayagada Railway Division Building of East Coast Railway. It will improve connectivity in Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and nearby areas and lead to overall socio-economic development of the region.

E Srinivas appointed...

to Baramulla. It will also cover the narrow-gauge line from Pathankot to Joginder Nagar," Dilip Kumar, Executive Director, Information and Publicity, Railway Board, said.

"The division will lead to development of railway operations in Jammu & Kashmir. The new train services that connect Kashmir valley with the rest of the country will bring more tourism. It will boost economic development of Jammu & Kashmir," he said. This new division, carved out from the Firozpur division, includes sections such as Pathankot-Jammu-Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla, Bhogpur Sirwal-Pathankot, Batala-Pathankot and Pathankot to Joginder Nagar sections with the combined length of 742.1 km.

For J&K, Railways...

important from strategic point of view. It will also stimulate economic growth, employment generation, infrastructure development and creation of new tourist circuits" he said.

Speaking on the remarkable progress achieved in developing a comprehensive railway-network in the UT, the Lieutenant Governor said the Indian Railways stands at the forefront of our journey toward a developed and self-reliant J&K.

"For Jammu and Kashmir, Indian Railways is spearheading a new era of development and integration. Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) will seamlessly connect Kashmir to Kanyakumari, boosting tourism, trade, and employment opportunities in the region," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He said, by connecting Kashmir to the national railway network, Indian Railways has laid the foundation for a prosperous and integrated future for Jammu and Kashmir.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the infrastructure development across the sectors has set new benchmarks in the UT of J&K.

"With a strong emphasis on infrastructure, sustainability, and innovation, we are laying the foundation for a future where economic growth and improved livelihoods go hand in hand and everyone is empowered to make this vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 a reality," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He said, the enhanced connectivity is already unlocking the potential of Jammu and Kashmir. Improved transportation efficiency is stimulating trade, encouraging industrialization, and enabling the movement of raw materials and finished goods.

The Lieutenant Governor highlighted that with better access to markets, the socio-economic upliftment of the region is being realized, and tourism is receiving a much-needed boost.

The Lieutenant Governor also spoke on several transformative railway projects in the pipeline for Jammu and Kashmir, demonstrating Indian Railways' unwavering commitment to improving regional connectivity and fostering socio-economic development.

Surveys are ongoing for the Anantnag-Bijbehara-Pahalgam (78km) and Avantipora-Shopian (28kms) rail lines. DPR is under examination for new line between Baramulla-Uri (46kms), Baramulla-Kupwara (39kms), Jammu-Poonch via Akhnoor, Rajouri (223kms), Manwal-Talra via Ramkote, Billawar and Dunera (117kms), Sopore-Kupwara (37kms), Pathankot-Leh (664kms), Bilaspur-Manali-Leh (489kms) and doubling of Baramulla-Banihal line, he said.

By linking key towns and regions, these projects promise to unlock the region's

untapped potential and boost local economies, the Lieutenant Governor further added.

In view of the rapid industrialization taking place in J&K and emergence of Jammu, Samba and Kathua as industrial hubs, the Lieutenant Governor emphasized that Indian Railways should explore possibilities for establishment of Railways' Private Freight Terminal to facilitate the transportation of goods and products of traders and industries of these areas.

The Lieutenant Governor lauded the efforts of every stakeholder and also recalled the contribution of Late Devender Singh Rana for a new Jammu Railway Division.

He further informed that the Z-Morh tunnel will be inaugurated by the Prime Minister soon.

The creation of the Jammu Railway Division, with 742.1 KM comprising Pathankot - Jammu - Udhampur - Srinagar - Baramulla, Bhogpur Sirwal - Pathankot, Batala - Pathankot and Pathankot to Joginder Nagar sections, will significantly benefit Jammu and Kashmir and surrounding regions, fulfilling the long pending aspiration of the people and improving connectivity to other parts of India. It will create employment opportunities, infrastructure development, promote tourism and lead to overall socio-economic development of the region.

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, Earth Sciences (Independent Charge), MoS PMO, DoPT Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Atomic Energy, Space, Dr Jitendra Singh; Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah; Member of Parliament, Jugal Kishore Sharma; Members of Legislative Assembly Sunil Sharma and Vikram Randhawa; Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo; General Manager Northern Railways, Ashok Kumar Verma; senior officials, political leaders and prominent citizens from all walks of life were present during the UT level function at Railway Station Jammu.

HIGHLIGHTS...

Rail Link (USBRL) will seamlessly connect Kashmir to Kanyakumari, boosting tourism, trade, and employment opportunities in region

Enhanced connectivity already unlocking potential of J&K. Improved transportation efficiency stimulating trade, encouraging industrialization, enabling movement of raw materials, finished goods

Highlights that with better access to markets, socio-economic upliftment of region being realized, tourism receiving much-needed boost

By connecting Kashmir to national railway network, Indian Railways has laid foundation for prosperous and integrated future for J&K

Says, several transformative projects are in pipeline for J&K, demonstrating Indian Railways' unwavering commitment to improving regional connectivity and fostering socio-economic development

Surveys are ongoing for Anantnag-Bijbehara-Pahalgam (78km) and Avantipora-Shopian (28kms) rail lines

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By linking key towns and regions, these projects promise to unlock region's untapped potential, boost local economies.

HMPV not new...

has been observed in the country.

In a video message, Nadda said in the wake of the recent reports of HMPV in China, the Health Ministry, the ICMR, the country's apex health research body, and the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) are keeping a close watch on the situation in China and other neighbouring countries.

The WHO has "taken cognisance of the situation and will share the report shortly with us", he said.

"The country data for respiratory viruses available with ICMR and integrated disease surveillance programme has also been reviewed and no surge in any of the common respiratory virus pathogens is observed in India," Nadda said.

The joint monitoring meeting was held under the Chairmanship of DGHS on January 4 to review this situation.

"The health systems and surveillance network of the country remain vigilant in ensuring the country is ready to respond promptly to any emerging health challenge. There is no reason to worry we are closely monitoring the situation," he said.

He said that health experts have clarified that HMPV virus is not a new virus. It was first identified in 2001 and it has been circulating in the entire world. HMPV spreads through the air by way of respiration, Nadda stated.

This can affect persons of all age groups, he said.

The virus spreads more during winter and early spring months.

Two infants in Karnataka and one in Gujarat along with two children in Tamil Nadu have tested positive for HMPV, health officials said on Monday.

The Indian Council of Medical Research detected the two cases of HMPV in Karnataka through routine surveillance for multiple respiratory viral pathogens, the Union health ministry said on Monday.

A three-month-old female infant with a history of bronchopneumonia was diagnosed with HMPV after being admitted to Baptist Hospital in Bengaluru.

She has already been discharged, the ministry said.

An eight-month-old male infant with a history of bronchopneumonia tested positive for HMPV on January 3 after being admitted to Baptist Hospital. He is now recovering, it said.

It is important to note that neither of the patients have any history of international travel, the ministry underlined.

It emphasised that HMPV is already in circulation globally, including in India, and cases of respiratory illnesses associated with it have been reported in various countries.

The ministry said it is monitoring the situation through all available surveillance channels. The ICMR will continue to track trends in HMPV circulation throughout the year. The recent preparedness drill conducted across the country has shown that India is well-equipped to handle any potential increase in respiratory illnesses and public health interventions can be deployed promptly if needed, the ministry stated.

Setting up AFT.

Surya Kant. The top court asked the Centre to collate data of the total sanctioned strength of tribunals and vacancies in these quasi judicial bodies, and furnish suggestions on systematically filling these posts.

The Centre was further directed to furnish the details of the ongoing processes for filling the posts in the tribunals within four weeks.

The top court was hearing an application for a direction to the Centre to expeditiously appoint members of the AFT.

Senior advocate Vikas Singh, appearing for an intervenor, said one of the members was transferred from Chandigarh to Kolkata, and the position was lying vacant.

Venkataramani said the chairman of AFT, Chandigarh, could decide on setting up of circuit benches and informed the process of filling posts in tribunals happened round the year. He said the vacancy in AFT, Chandigarh, would be filled soon.

On the challenge to the Tribunal Reforms Act of 2021, senior advocate Arvind Datar said the provisions of 2017 Finance Act related to service conditions of members of tribunals which was struck down by this court and was reproduced in subsequent legislations.

The bench asked Datar to mention the issue before the Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna for listing the issue.

Rail link to...

this connectivity under the leadership of the Prime Minister," the Chief Minister said.

Referring to the significance of the new connectivity, Chief Minister Abdullah remarked, "We recently received the good news that a trial train is being run from Srinagar to Katra. It is hoped that it will become fully operational soon, benefiting the people of Jammu and Kashmir immensely."

Addressing concerns that the rail connection to Kashmir might adversely affect Jammu, the Chief Minister provided reassurance, stating, "I want to assure the people of Jammu that while there may be challenges, the benefits-including boosts to trade and tourism-will far outweigh them."

He emphasized that the new rail division would bring administrative control closer to Jammu, reducing reliance on Firozpur, and would also create local recruitment opportunities.

He further noted that the inclusion of parts of Punjab and Himachal Pradesh in the new division fosters greater regional cooperation.

Highlighting the transformative potential of the project, the Chief Minister stated, "Rail connectivity will bring immense benefits to Jammu and Kashmir. It will boost trade, tourism, and industrial growth. During harsh winters, when road closures disrupt transport, railways will provide a reliable alternative, reducing dependency on costly air travel. The new division will also facilitate cargo transfer and make travel more affordable, especially during winter when airfare skyrockets."

Concluding his speech, Chief Minister Abdullah expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Modi and Railway Minister Vaishnav for their commitment to the region's development. "On behalf of myself and the government, I congratulate the people of Jammu and Kashmir on this historic achievement and assure them that the bene-

fits of this initiative will be far-reaching," he said.

Modi Govt transforms...

not only enhanced the commuting experience but also improved freight movement between destinations, reducing costs and transportation time," Chugh said, adding that efficient transportation of perishable goods, such as fruits and vegetables, will curb hoarding and black marketing while stabilizing the prices of essential goods across various cities, especially during challenging times.

Highlighting the project's economic potential, Chugh stated, "The rail network, with an estimated investment of Rs 40,000 crore, will catalyze the development of Jammu and Srinagar as twin economic hubs, opening new avenues for businesses and accelerating existing ventures. Additionally, multiple small business hubs will emerge at various train halts, further stimulating the region's economy."

He said the Modi government's unwavering commitment to Jammu and Kashmir's holistic development continues to bring tangible benefits to the region, setting it on the path of unprecedented growth and prosperity.

Canada's PM Justin...

a very important one for our party and the country. But I do this job because the interests of Canadians and the well being of democracy is something that I hold dear," he said.

He said Parliament, which had been due to resume Jan 27, would be suspended until March 24. The timing will allow for a Liberal Party leadership race.

All three main opposition parties have said they plan to topple the Liberal Party in a no-confidence vote when Parliament resumes, so a spring election after the Liberals pick a new leader was almost assured.

Attack on Hotel...

multiple sections of the IPC, including assault and grievous injury. Officials have assured the public that no one will be spared.

"Mohit and Shashank Aggarwal underestimated the reach of the law. We are tracking their movements and will apprehend them soon," said an investigator.

"This is not the first time the Aggarwal family has faced public ire. Rakesh Aggarwal's alleged involvement in the infamous Anara sex scandal continues to haunt the family, further fueling the backlash against them.

The Aggarwal brothers' attempts to evade justice have placed them at the center of a growing storm. The police are expected to conduct more raids in the coming days, with public pressure mounting for swift action.

Flight ops resume at Srinagar airport after disruption

Night temperatures rise across Kashmir after snowfall

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Flight operations at the Srinagar International Airport, disrupted on Monday due to heavy overnight snowfall in the Kashmir valley, have resumed, officials said.

"Operations at the Srinagar airport have resumed with the first flight arriving from Amritsar," an Airports Authority of India (AAI) official said.

The flights were delayed early on Monday following heavy overnight snowfall, and men and machinery worked to clear the snow from the runway.

"The snow clearance operations are in progress at the runway. All airlines have pushed their flights after 9:30 am," the AAI official had earlier said.

The airport's operations were hit by dense fog on Saturday and Sunday, leading to flight delays, diversions and cancellations.

Night temperatures across Kashmir rose by several degrees following overnight snowfall, but the mercury remained below the freezing point, officials said.

The minimum temperature in Srinagar settled at minus 0.5 degrees Celsius, two degrees above the previous night's minus 2.5 degrees, the Meteorological Department said.

Gulmarg, a tourist resort town known for skiing activities in north Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 4.5 degrees Celsius, unchanged from the previous night, it said.

In Pahalgam, one of the base camps for the annual Amarnath Yatra in south Kashmir, the minimum temperature rose to minus 1.4 degrees Celsius from 3.2 degrees the night before, the weather office said.

Qazigund, the gateway town to the valley, logged a low of zero degrees Celsius while Konibal in Pampore town registered a minimum temperature of minus 1.0 degrees, it added.

Kupwara in north Kashmir recorded a minimum of minus 0.3 degrees Celsius while Kokernag in south Kashmir saw the mercury settle at minus 0.4 degrees Celsius -- a sharp rise from previous night's minus 8.1 degrees Celsius the department said.

Kashmir is currently in the grip of 'Chillai-Kalan' -- the harshest period of winter -- that began on December 21. During the 40 days of 'Chillai-Kalan', the chances of snowfall are the highest and the temperature drops considerably.

'Chillai-Kalan' ends on January 30, followed by a 20-day 'Chillai-Khur'd' (small cold), and a 10-day 'Chillai-Bachha' (baby cold).

CS reviews implementation of PM Gati Shakti in J&K

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, while chairing a meeting of all the Administrative Secretaries and Deputy Commissioners about the implementation of PM Gati Shakti (PMGS) Master Plan, on Monday remarked that departments should take lead in adding as many layers as possible by mapping all their projects besides those among the social sector.

He called upon the Administrative heads to onboard themselves on the local portal of this national plan to add specific layers pertaining to their departments. He advised them to be innovative in adding these layers as they can take cue from other States/UTs as well.

Dulloo enjoined upon them to go through the portal developed by Jal Shakti Department to have idea about the procedure to map their assets. He encouraged them to add every new project to it besides those existing already.

The Chief Secretary maintained that there is a great scope to add hundreds of new layers for the Departments like social sector layers in addition to the infrastructural assets owned by them. He stressed on adding polygon data instead of simple points while creating geo-referenced maps of the same.

He maintained that such mapping on the PMGS portal would make our planning process quite effective and result-oriented for these maps in addition to physical infrastructure would give us clear idea about other social indicators prevalent in the specific area.

The Chief Secretary also advised the Department of Industries & Commerce, which is the nodal department for its implementation, to work out modalities for designating a threshold limit of Rs 20 Cr for PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan Portal for planning of projects here.

The Commissioner Secretary, I&C, Vikramjit Singh gave an overall view of the performance made by the UT in the implementation of PMGS in J&K. He made out that all the 38 departments of the UT had been onboarded that in turn had added more than 600 data layers to it till date.

He further apprised the meeting that J&K is among the top 3 States/UTs at national level. It has also been categorised as 'Fast Mover' in LEADS (Logistics Ease across Different States)2024 report launched by DPIIT while it was ranked as 'Aspirer' consecutively for last 3 editions.

Regarding adoption of PMGS at district level the meeting was informed that a session was conducted with all DCs and CPOs there. A handbook of PMGS area development planning was also shared with them to enhance their capacity for making the process easy for all the districts.

In a first, Kupwara was selected from J&K in a pilot phase of PMGS District Master Plan to adopt it at district level. The same model in future is going to be adopted by other districts as well.

As far as the performance of different departments is concerned H&UDD and Jal Shakti Department were said to stand as major achievers in the UT with all of their assets mapped. It was further given out that all the departments had almost mapped their offices and other major assets over the UT Master Plan portal.

It was further revealed that 50 projects across 10 departments had been discussed in TSU/NPG meetings till date. Orientation session and portal demonstration on project planning was also held earlier in 2024 for the understanding of nodal officers.

As far as the future prospects of the PMGS is concerned it was given out that the integration for issuance of intra department NOCs and clearances would be done through the PM Gati Shakti portal.

In addition, development of district level portals would be accomplished with focus on usage of existing data to identify infrastructure gaps in the district.

Moreover, geo-referencing of all 6500 revenue maps would also be achieved in the year ahead. The PMGS under Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP) would enhance coordination between various government departments for seamless execution of projects here in J&K.