

## !! Continuations from Page 1 !! Pratham Pooja for...

services, laying of crash barriers and safety railings along vulnerable stretches on both routes and the progress achieved on various ongoing works undertaken by different departments.

Reviewing the maintenance, restoration and development of Yatra tracks by Border Roads Organization, the Board was informed that the BRO has registered a significant progress, achieving comfortable track width on both Baltal and Pahalgam routes.

Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari, Chief Executive Officer, Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board, gave a detailed presentation regarding the arrangements for the upcoming Yatra.

The meeting was attended by Members of the Shrine Board- Swami Avdhesanand Giri Ji Maharaj, Prof. Kailash Mehra Sadhu, K.K.Sharma, K.N.Rai, Mukesh Garg, Dr. Shailesh Raina, Dr. Simridhi Bindroo, Suresh Haware and Prof. Vishwamurti Shastri.

Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary; Shaleen Kabra, Additional Chief Secretary, Jal Shakti Department; Shailendra Kumar, Additional Chief Secretary, Power Development Department; Nalin Prabhat, DGP; Chandraker Bharti, Principal Secretary Home; Santosh D. Vaidya, Principal Secretary, Finance; Administrative Secretaries; Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; IGP; Deputy Commissioners (Ganderbal and Anantnag); Additional CEO SASB and senior officers of the UT Administration, BRO and Shrine Board also attended the meeting, in person and through virtual mode, at Lok Bhavan Jammu.

## BSF, Pak Rangers...

sides reiterating their commitment to maintaining peace and stability along the border, the officials said. They describe the interaction as part of established mechanisms to address operational issues and avoid any misunderstanding.

## Police recovers another...

Arnia district Jammu and recovered one pistol alongwith 05 live cartridges and approximately 20.23 grams of heroin-like substance (chitta) from his possession. Accordingly, a case FIR No. 12/2026 u/s 111 BNS, 8/21/22 NDPS Act and 3/25 Arms Act was registered at PS Rangarh and investigation started.

During the course of investigation, the accused "Ranju Choudhary" was put to sustained questioning and on his disclosure, police has recovered one more pistol from his residence at Kathar .

## GOC White Knight...

undertook a comprehensive review of the prevailing security environment and operational preparedness along the LoC, Jammu-based White Knight Corps said in a post on X.

Amidst the rugged terrain and challenging conditions, the GOC interacted with steadfast troops deployed on the LoC and was apprised of their high state of readiness, intensive training regimen and enhanced measures to sharpen surveillance, precision engagement and combat effectiveness, the Army said.

Commending their unwavering resolve, Lt Gen Mishra underscored the imperative of relentless vigilance, uncompromising preparedness and continuous professional excellence to decisively meet emerging threats, the social media post said.

Meanwhile, security forces launched a search operation at Dharanji in Sarthal area of Kishtwar district following information about suspected movement of two terrorists this afternoon, officials said.

They said a similar search operation continued for the second day in Katsoso and Donadi in Thathri area of Doda district. The operation was launched on Wednesday following information about movement of three suspected persons, the officials said.

## House passes grants...

growth under the Mining sector.

He highlighted that development of quality and extensive road network in Jammu and Kashmir is vital, given the topography of the UT and limited scope for development of alternate means of transportation.

Speaking on grants of Public Works Department, the Deputy Chief Minister said that the PW(R&B) Department is mandated to develop a robust road network, connecting the habitations. He added that a well-developed network of roads is necessary not only for economic development of the UT but for its social, political and cultural development.

"Besides, constructing eco-friendly and cost effective government buildings, major thrust is being given to the schemes envisaging road connectivity to inaccessible and difficult areas for equitable development," maintained the Deputy Chief Minister. The government has created over 40,000 km of road network in Jammu and Kashmir to improve surface connectivity, he said.

"Under Chief Minister's guidance, we have achieved major milestones in J&K's road infrastructure, completing several long-pending projects and improving the regional connectivity," he said.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that 18 major MoRTH projects are in the pipeline during the current financial year. He added that 22 strategically important projects, primarily bridges have been inaugurated. "These assets have enhanced the civilian access to remote areas while simultaneously strengthening the defense preparedness and operational mobility," he said.

Under PMGSY, 3,742 projects having aggregate length of 22,581 km have been sanctioned, 3570 projects have been completed thereby achieving a length of 20250 Km. Besides, the department has identified 2,513 eligible habitations for providing all-weather road connectivity, he added.

The Deputy Chief Minister said 1,145 NABARD projects worth Rs. 5,245 crore have been sanctioned, with 525 completed, including 372 projects completed during the last two years, and 620 ongoing. Under CRIF, 294 projects were sanctioned, with 211 completed upto March 2025 and 83 ongoing and over 100 new projects are in the pipeline.

The Deputy CM said that 41 projects (32 roads, 9 bridges) have been sanctioned under SAsCI, with 4 completed and 37 ongoing. Under Capex 2025-26, 7,068 works were sanctioned, with 3,932 targeted for completion by March 2026.

"The ddepartment has received 2276 works having tentative cost of Rs. 2333.7 crore from the Finance Department on account of demand submitted by the MLAs during budget discussion 2025-26," told the Dy CM.

He said J&K faced unprecedented rainfall during August 2025, damaging the road infrastructure, mostly in Jammu region. The department, led by the Chief Minister, aims to restore it permanently and has submitted an estimate of over Rs1,000 crore to the Finance Department for SAsCI funding. In the meantime, the department has authorized the field agencies to initiate execution process for works worth over Rs 500 crore under priority-I," he said.

"I personally monitored the restoration of Tawi 4th Bridge and Jammu-Surinsar-Mansar road revival," he said.

The Deputy Chief Minister highlighted key completions including Sanatnagar fly-over, 5 bridges in Kupwara, Trenz and Rohomo bridges, Joothana in Kathua and Saipahgla Bridge in Jammu besides two other bridges. Five more bridges are expected to be completed in March 2026, he added.

He said that 35 PMGSY-III bridges have been completed, with 15 more due for completion by March 2026. Over 2,500 km of road has been macadamized this financial year.

The Dy CM said that effective measures are underway including two elevated corridors one each at Jammu and Kashmir which have been proposed to decongest both the cities.

Regarding human resources, the Deputy Chief Minister said key posts like Secretary Technical and 7 Chief Engineers were filled up after 2 years besides several promotions. The department has filled up 34 Superintending Engineer and 89 Executive Engineer posts. It is also in process of filling up of posts of over 125 Assistant Executive Engineer and 150 Assistant Engineer in next 2 months.

Speaking on grants for Industries and Commerce Department, the Deputy CM said that this year department is focusing on grounding investments, strengthening MSMEs, easing business, promoting start-ups and protecting traditional sectors like handloom and handicrafts. "Under Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, J&K recorded its highest ever investment realization in a single financial year. During 2025-26, investments worth Rs5,349 crore have been grounded till January 2026, which is nearly twelve times the annual average investment prior to 2020," he said.

Under the Central Industrial Development Package (NCSS) of Rs 28,400 crore, a total of 971 applications involving an investment of Rs 14,292 crore have been registered.

"Ease of doing business continues to remain a priority. In November 2025, Jammu and Kashmir secured 5th rank at the national level, emerging as a top achiever in the Business Reform Action Plan," he said.

He said that for the first time, Jammu and Kashmir's MSME Health Clinic has been launched in collaboration with IIM Jammu. Besides, data of 417 MSME units has been uploaded on the portal and in the first phase, 70 sickness prone units have been identified for focused revival interventions.

He added that MSME formalisation has seen a major push, Udyam registrations have increased to 6 lakh this year. J&K has been ranked second among the Small

States, North-Eastern States and Union Territories in the Export Preparedness Index 2024 released by NITI Aayog. He said that during the current financial year, against a target of 6,221 units, 6,144 units have already been established under PMEGP.

The Deputy CM further said that the startup ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed a significant transformation adding that the number of registered startups has increased from 69 in 2020 to 1,342 in 2025-26, including 490 women led startups.

The Dy CM said that the Handloom and Handicraft sector has thrived, with J&K winning the National ODOP Gold Award 2024 for the second consecutive year. Unity Malls are sanctioned and Rs27.01 crore has been disbursed to support artisans and weavers under various schemes till January 2026, benefitting the artisans and weavers across J&K.

"I would like to emphasize that Omar Abdullah government is proposing amendments to the J&K Industrial Policy to further strengthen the industrial ecosystem in the UT," he said.

"With focused policy implementation, institutional reforms and sustained coordination with the Government of India, we are committed to inclusive industrial growth, employment generation and strengthening the economic foundation of Jammu and Kashmir," asserted the Deputy Chief Minister.

He added that various milestones were achieved in the industries sector during 2025-26 including an investment worth Rs 5,349 crore (till Jan 2026) which is highest ever in any fiscal and is 12 times the average investment before 2020. He said that in November 2025, Jammu & Kashmir secured 5th rank nationwide, emerging as a top achiever in Ease of Doing Business.

The Dy CM said that J&K Startup has witnessed transformation growing from 69 startups in 2020 to 1342 in 2025-26 including 490 women led startups, a surge of over 1800 percent. Besides, 853 new startups have been registered in 2025-26.

"With procurement of new machinery, GI labelling and certification has increased from 20 to 100 per day in 2025, marking a 400 percent increase over the previous count. Efforts are on to further reduce the waitlist. During 2025-26, loan worth Rs 21.06 crore has been disbursed by the banks to 1011 artisans/weavers ending December 2025 under Credit Scheme for Artisans and Weavers," said the Dy CM.

He said the J&K Industrial Policy 2021-30 will be amended to recalibrate incentives and sustain growth, local employment and income security post-NCSS closure.

He said financial support to JKTPPO for buyer-seller meets boosts market access, stable incomes and sustains artisans' skills. The department has prepared revival plans for JK Industries and SICOP, he added.

Speaking on the grants of Mining department, the Deputy CM said the government has prioritised effective policy formulation and sustainable mineral resource use, leveraging J&K's limestone, gypsum, marble and other minerals vital for cement, construction, fertilisers and more. Effective policies are in place for environmentally responsible mining, he added.

He added that the government has implemented the Integrated Mining Surveillance System (IMSSS) and Mobile Application Portal to enhance monitoring, transparency and enforcement of mining rules. "Using satellite imaging, GPS, geospatial tools and a Command-and-Control Centre, the system tracks operations and detects illegal mining while e-Challan PoS machines, introduced with J&K Bank, enable on-the-spot penalties", he said.

The Deputy Chief Minister said 144 satellite alerts had led field checks and Rs1.10 crore in penalties. Besides, 3,065 GPS devices have been installed in mineral transport vehicles, with 2,473 linked to the Mining Surveillance System. Over 40 non-compliant vehicles were seized, Rs2.50 lakh recovered, 7,500 above seizures made and 234 FIRs lodged against the violators this year.

The Department of Geology and Mining has auctioned 238 RBM blocks since 2020-21, granting 208 mining leases. Besides, E-auction of 7 limestone blocks (Anantnag 3, Rajouri 3 & Poonch 1) is underway and 5 more are being processed, expected to generate over Rs70 crore in 2026-27.

He said that under the SAsCI 2025-26 scheme, the government has completed key mining reforms and the Union Ministry for Mines has sanctioned Rs100 crore as an incentive to the Mining Department.

To improve ease of doing business, several digital reforms and regulatory changes to simplify mining operations have been introduced. "Studies and e-auction of Lithium in Reasi, Lignite and Marble in Kupwara and biogenic shallow gas in the Karewa Basin have been targeted by June 2026 while Sapphire in Paddar and Granite besides Graphite in Doda and Ganderbal are also being prepared for early auctioning," he said.

He said that the vision for 2026-27 is to build a stronger and more transparent mineral revenue system through better royalty collection, revised royalty, stricter penalties and wider enforcement powers to civil and police officers at district level.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that the government is committed to economic growth, governance reform and sustainable resource management, making the mining sector transparent, efficient and sustainable. He said that efforts will be continued to strengthen this sector as a key source of economic stability while ensuring that natural resources are used responsibly and safeguarded for future generations.

Speaking during the grants, the Deputy Chief Minister said that the Labour and Employment department remains steadfast in its commitment to safeguard the interests of workers and empowering the youth of Jammu and Kashmir through inclusive and reform-oriented policies.

He said that based on the historic success of Mission YUVA during the financial year 2025-26, this Department shall continue to implement the program with renewed energy to promote entrepreneurship and generate sustainable employment opportunities across the UT.

He said that 36.28 lakh unorganized workers have been registered on e-Shram Portal besides 13281 new registrations and 9125 renewals have been made under various Labour Acts through online services.

"The present government is committed to improve the living conditions, safety and welfare of migrant and seasonal labourers from remote areas. Funds amounting Rs 244.64 lakh have been spent on labour Sarais at Rajouri and Kathua which are being completed within this financial year," added the Dy CM.

He said that 1.35 lakh entrepreneurship units are being created which will generate employment for 4.5 lakh youth over the next 5 years.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that 49,000 applications have been approved and 17,200 enterprises have been sanctioned by various banks, with nearly Rs1000 crore already disbursed.

"Omar Abdullah administration has launched capacity building programme where over 8,000 entrepreneurs have been trained and 5,000 more are currently undergoing entrepreneurship development courses. The JK Building & Other Construction Workers Welfare Board has paid ex-gratia relief of Rs69.29 crore in favour of 1.05 lakh beneficiaries," he said.

He said that night shelter facilities have been proposed at Labour Sarai Anantnag, Pulwama and Budgam and a fully equipped Model Labour Sarai at Nowshera is being executed with an estimated cost of Rs 423.39 lakh.

"This government has been consistently striving for exploring employment opportunities for educated youth both in Government as well as Private Sector. In this regard, the startup policy has been notified for encouraging the young entrepreneurs by providing them financial support as well as business platform," he said.

During his speech, the Deputy Chief Minister said that the Department of Skill Development plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of our youth by providing industry relevant technical and vocational education. He said that through a robust network of Polytechnics, Industrial Training Institutes and flagship Central schemes, the department is committed towards aligning the skills with market demand while preserving the traditional crafts and encouraging entrepreneurship.

The Deputy CM highlighted said the major achievements of the department for the year 2025-26. These included training of 90,000 youth in traditional and new-age skills, including AI, cyber security and green jobs, supported by Aadhaar-based digital attendance and monitoring systems under PMKVY 4.0. He said that 7851 Self help Group candidates have been trained and Heritage Craft Courses have been revived in 25 units. "Under the Chief Minister's Scheme for Heritage Courses a first-of-its-kind initiative in the Union Territory has been introduced in 15 skill institutes across J&K," he said.

He said that Industry engagement has been significantly strengthened with 541 establishments are active under the Apprenticeship Training Scheme, with over 600 apprentices currently undergoing training. He said that at the India Skills Competition 2024, Jammu & Kashmir secured 3 Gold Medals, 4 Bronze Medals and 6 Medallions of Excellence.

He said that the Government Polytechnic Jammu was honored with the Outstanding Institution Award at the national level, reflecting the quality and credibility of technical education in the Union Territory.

He said that during financial year 2026-27, the Department intends to strengthen the Government Polytechnics at Srinagar, Jammu and the Women Polytechnics at Jammu and Srinagar through procurement of modern machinery, tools and laboratory equipment, strictly as per AICTE norms.

Among other initiatives up-gradation of infrastructure in Government ITIs with modern equipment and tools in accordance with DGT/MSDE norms, introduction of futuristic and market-driven trades, improve access for students from remote and rural areas, construction of a 50-bedded hostel at Government ITI Nowshera and a 100-bedded hostel at Government Polytechnic Bandipora, establishment of Language Laboratory at Government Polytechnic Pulwama and transforming

Skill and Entrepreneurship are being undertaken by the department, he added.

Earlier, legislators Ajaz Ahmad Jan, Saif-ud-din Bhat, Surjeet Singh Slathia, Iftkar Ahmad, Shamim Firdous, Aga Syed Muntazir Mehdi, Satish Kumar Sharma, Shabir Ahmad Kullay, Tanvir Sadiq, Dr. Sajjad Shafi, Darshan Kumar, Sajad Gani Lone, Hilal Akbar Lone, Kuldeep Raj Dubey, Riyaz Ahmad Khan, Javaid Iqbal Choudhry, Vijay Kumar, Ghulam Mohi-ud-din Mir, Sheikh Ahsan Ahmed Pardesi, Mian Mehar Ali, Sunil Bhardwaj, Choudhry Mohammad Akram, Rafiq Ahmad Naik, Khurshid Ahmed, Nizam-ud-din Bhat, Mohan Lal, Irshad Rasool Kar, Sheikh Khurshid Ahmad, Thakur Randhir Singh, Mir Mohammad Fayaz, Irfan Hafiz Lone, Arjun Singh Raju, Mushtaq Guroo and Pawan Kumar Gupta participated in the discussion over Grants.

Later, the MLAs withdrew their cut motions on grants after assurances by the Deputy Chief Minister.

## Govt releases new...

Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES) 2023-24.

At the all-India level, NSO said, the number of weighted items has increased from 299 to 358 in CPI 2024, goods items increased from 259 to 308, and services items increased from 40 to 50.

The new additions in the 2024 series are rural housing, online media service providers/streaming services, value-added dairy products, barley and its products, pen-drive and external hard disk, attendant, babysitter, and exercise equipment.

Meanwhile, the new series has removed VCR/VCD/DVD players, hiring charges, radio, tape recorder, clothing second-hand, CD/DVD audio/video cassettes and coir/ropes. Weights of different item groups, too, have been aligned with household expenditure patterns as captured in HCES 2023-24, it said. Share of food and beverages has declined in the new series to 36.75 per cent from 45.86 per cent in the CPI 2012. However, it remains the largest component of the CPI basket.

## Over 1400 illegal...

Jammu Development Authority, Jammu Municipal Corporation and revenue authorities followed by 19 in Ramban district by National Highway Authority of India, 10 in Anantnag by Pahalgam Development Authority, seven in Kathua and four in Shopian, Abdullah said.

He said three structures each were demolished in Kulgam, Ganderbal and Udhampur, two in Budgam and one each in Baramulla and Kupwara districts.

The commercial property in Baramulla and three houses in Ganderbal were demolished on the directions of the high court.

"The encroachments are regularly removed as per the provisions of J-K Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act, 1988 and other relevant laws. Any unauthorised construction is dealt under rule, as per the provisions of Control Of Building Operations (COBO) Act, 1988. This is done on a regular basis by way of service of notices, conducting sealing and anti-encroachment/demolition drives," the chief minister said.

He said adequate time is accorded to the violator or encroacher as per the relevant section of J-K Public Premises Act and COBO Act.

Asked about the reasons for permitting construction of such structures in the first place, he said, "No such construction is permitted, without proper permission. "However, in some cases, due to legal intervention, lack of timely police assistance, construction at odd hours and deviation from approved plans, delay occurs, due to which the offender succeeds in raising construction to the next level," he said.

## MMC operational in...

and online news channels does not fall under the mandate of the Information Department, adding that the imposition of penalties or fines on organizations spreading misinformation is outside its purview.

The Minister also made it clear that the Information Department does not recognize or authorize any private Fact Checking Unit (FCU), nor does it verify or grade such entities.

Referring to the evolving media landscape, she said that suitable provisions have been proposed in the draft New Media Policy-2026 to establish a regulatory framework for news and social media along with print media and draft policy is currently under inter-departmental consultation for finalization.

Sharing inputs from the Information Technology Department, the Minister said that comprehensive measures have been undertaken to strengthen the cyber security infrastructure across government departments/institutions and provide them sustained support against the emerging cyber threats and digital manipulations.

She added that mandatory security audits of websites and web applications hosted on State Data Centre and NIC Mini Data Centre have been conducted besides redundant websites have been decommissioned.

She added that Cyber Crisis Management Plans have been prepared by all the departments while capacity building initiatives such as cyber drills, trainings, Cyber Jagrookta Divas observance and mandatory iGOT cyber security courses are being carried out across the Union Territory.

In a supplementary reply, the Minister said rebuttals against fake or misleading news are also issued for publication in the immediate next edition of newspapers besides being uploaded on the official DIPR website.

She further highlighted that the J&K Media Policy 2020 authorizes DIPR to monitor content for fake news, plagiarism and unethical or anti-national activities and de-empanel media houses or withhold government advertisements in such cases. She added that if such entities are registered by the Press Registrar General of India under Press & Registration of Periodicals Act, 2023, their de-registration is recommended under this Act.

## HC to hear...

Justice Mohammad Yusuf Wani heard the arguments of state counsels Sunil Sethi and Monica Kohli on Thursday. The court listed the case for further hearing on February 19, Advocate Appu Singh Slathia told reporters after the court hearing. The court had part heard the arguments of the state counsels last week.

Malik, the MLA from Doda, was arrested under the Public Safety Act in September last year. The Aam Admi Party had challenged his detention in the high court.

## Crackdown on illegal mining; multiple vehicles, machinery seized

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: During routine patrolling, naka checking, and targeted night operations on the intervening night of 10/11 February 2026, the Jammu Police South Zone, under its intensified drive against illegal mining and unlawful mineral transportation, executed a series of coordinated actions across multiple PPs as part of "Operation Ploughing." The operation, focused on intercepting vehicles and machinery operating without mandatory permits (especially Form-A), led to the seizure of several transport vehicles and heavy equipment in clear violation of mining regulations which include one (01) Mahindra tractor trolley, one (01) excavator (JCB Komatsu), multiple dumpers having Regd. NOs :JK02CU-7578, JK02-CJ8809, JK02-DH8221, JK02CU-2425, JK02DH-7425, JK03-J0023, one (01) hydraulic excavator (JCB), and two (02) tippers having Regd. Nos: JK02DN-8695 and JK02CW-9774.

On inspection, drivers/operators failed to produce the required Form-A and other relevant documents for lawful mineral transportation. Consequently, all vehicles and machinery were seized on the spot and appropriate legal proceedings initiated under relevant law. In each case, the District Mineral Officer (DMO) has been informed for further action.

Meanwhile, a police party from Police Post Pomichek intercepted and detained one Dumper bearing registration No. JK02CE-8891, which was found loaded with minerals without any valid permission. The vehicle was detained on the spot.

In a similar action, a police party from Police Post Chinore seized two vehicles ,one Tractor Trolley and one Tipper bearing registration number JK02CC-9756, which were found involved in illegal transportation of mining minerals and were seized accordingly. Further, during checking at ICBPP Ganjansoo, two Dumpers bearing registration numbers JK02AG-8300 and JK21J-9391 were found transporting mining minerals illegally and were seized on the spot.

## Missing youth traced, reunited with family

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Jammu Police, City South Zone, successfully traced a missing youth and reunited him with his family after sustained and concerted efforts.

On January 31, 2026, a written application was received at Police Post Bathindi from Shri Prem, S/o Kala, a resident of Nepal presently residing at Sunjawan, Bathindi, Jammu. In the application, he reported that his younger brother, Suraj, aged about 18 years, had gone missing from home.

Acting swiftly on the complaint, a missing report was entered into the Daily Diary vide DD No. 07 dated 31/01/2026, and a search operation was immediately launched. Police teams conducted extensive inquiries at various locations, developed and verified leads, and coordinated with allied agencies to trace the missing youth.

As a result of sustained and diligent efforts, the missing person was successfully traced on February 11, 2026. After completing all necessary legal formalities, the youth was handed over safely to his elder brother.