

!! Continuations from Page 1 !! J&K touching new...

pave the way for Viksit Jammu Kashmir", the Prime Minister said, adding "Jammu Kashmir is not just a place, Jammu Kashmir is the head of India. And a head held high is a symbol of development and respect. Therefore, Viksit Jammu and Kashmir is the priority of Viksit Bharat."

The Prime Minister recalled the time when laws implemented in the country were not implemented in Jammu and Kashmir and mentioned schemes for the welfare of the poor that could not be availed by the deprived.

Highlighting the change of fortunes, the Prime Minister said that schemes for the entire nation have been launched today from Srinagar and Jammu & Kashmir is leading the way for tourism in the country. Therefore, he said, people from more than 50 places in India have joined the occasion. He touched upon the six projects that are being dedicated to the nation today under Swadesh Darshan scheme as well as the initiation of its next phase. He informed that around 30 projects have been launched for various cities in the country including Srinagar while 3 projects have been inaugurated and 14 others launched under PRASAD scheme. He further stated that the development works being carried out in the holy Hazratbal Dargah for the convenience of the people have also been completed.

The Prime Minister informed about the 'Dekho Apna Desh People's Choice' campaign where 40 places have been identified by the government to be developed as tourist destinations in the next 2 years. Under the campaign, he explained that the government would develop the most preferred tourist destinations based on public opinion. He also mentioned the 'Chalo India' campaign to encourage NRIs to come to India. Congratulating the citizens of Jammu & Kashmir for the development works of today, he said that it will help in developing the tourism industry of the region and creating new employment opportunities.

The Prime Minister said, "When intentions are noble and there is a determination to fulfill commitments, results are bound to follow."

He highlighted the successful hosting of the G-20 summit in Jammu and Kashmir:

Referring to the transformative growth in tourism, the Prime Minister noted, "There was a time when people questioned who would visit Jammu and Kashmir for tourism. Today, Jammu and Kashmir are breaking all tourism records." He further elaborated, "In 2023 alone, Jammu and Kashmir welcomed over 2 crore tourists, surpassing previous records. Over the past 10 years, the Amarnath Yatra has witnessed the highest number of pilgrims participating, and Vaishno Devi also recorded a significant increase in devotee footfall."

Highlighting the surge in foreign tourist arrivals and the growing attraction for celebrities and international guests, the Prime Minister stated, "Now, even prominent celebrities and foreign guests visit the valleys of Jammu and Kashmir to explore and create videos and reels."

Moving on to agriculture, the Prime Minister emphasized the strength of Jammu and Kashmir's agricultural produce, including saffron, apples, dried fruits, and cherries, branding the region as a significant agricultural hub. He said that the Rs 5,000 crore agricultural development program will result in unprecedented growth in the agricultural sector of Jammu and Kashmir over the next 5 years, particularly focusing on horticulture and livestock development. "This initiative will create thousands of new opportunities, especially in the fields of horticulture and animal husbandry", he said.

Additionally, he mentioned direct transfers of nearly ₹3,000 crore under the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme to the accounts of farmers in Jammu and Kashmir. To enhance the storage capacity for fruits and vegetables and ensure their prolonged preservation, significant investments have been made to increase storage facilities in Jammu and Kashmir. Furthermore, he pointed out that the commencement of the world's largest warehousing scheme, will include the construction of numerous warehouses across Jammu and Kashmir.

Noting the rapid pace of development in Jammu and Kashmir, the Prime Minister mentioned 2 AIIMS as AIIMS Jammu has already been inaugurated and work is going on at AIIMS Kashmir. He talked about 7 new medical colleges, 2 cancer hospitals and institutes like IIT and IIM in the region. He said that 2 Vande Bharat trains are running in Jammu and Kashmir and rail services from Srinagar to Sangaldan and from Sangaldan to Baramull have started. This expansion of connectivity has given a push to economic activities. Referring to new projects to make Jammu and Srinagar as smart cities, he said "In the coming times, the success story of Jammu and Kashmir will become an example for the whole world."

Recalling his mentions of handicrafts and cleanliness of the region in his Mann ki Baat programme, the Prime Minister underlined Jammu Kashmir's connection with lotus.

Highlighting the efforts of the government for the development of the youth of Jammu & Kashmir in every field, the Prime Minister said that new opportunities are being created ranging from skill development to sports and mentioned the modern sports facilities being built in every district of Jammu and Kashmir. He gave the example of multi-purpose indoor sports halls built in 17 districts and Jammu & Kashmir hosting many national sports tournaments. "Now Jammu and Kashmir is emerging as the winter sports capital of the country. Nearly 1000 players have participated in the recently held Khelo India Winter Games", the Prime Minister added.

"Jammu & Kashmir is breathing freely today, hence achieving new heights", the Prime Minister said, noting the abrogation of Article 370 which has led to the respect of the youth's talent and equal rights and equal opportunities for everyone. He spoke about the refugees from Pakistan, the Valmiki community and sanitation workers getting voting rights, fulfilling the demand of the Valmiki community for SC category, reservation of seats in the assembly for Scheduled Tribes, Paddari tribe, and the inclusion of Paddari tribe, Pahari ethnic group, Gadda Brahmin and Koli communities in the Scheduled Tribes.

The Prime Minister also pointed out that dynastic politics in Jammu & Kashmir deprived the right to reservation to other backward classes in Panchayat, Municipality and Municipal Corporation as provided in the government. "Today every class is being returned its rights", he added.

Dwelling on the transformation of the J&K Bank, the Prime Minister recalled the mismanagement of the past and called it a victim of dynasty politics and corruption.

He listed the reforms to restore the health of the bank. He mentioned 1000 crore rupees assistance to the bank and action against wrongful appointments. The Anti Corruption Bureau is still investigating thousands of such appointments. He highlighted the transparent recruitments in the last 5 years. As a result, the J&K Bank profit has reached Rs 1700 crores and business has reached Rs 2.25 lakh crores from Rs 1.25 crore rupees 5 years ago. Deposits also increased from Rs 80,000 crores to Rs 1.25 lakh crores. NPA that had crossed 11 percent 5 years ago has been brought down to below 5 percent. The share of the bank has also seen 12 fold rise to about Rs 140 from Rs 12 5 years ago. "When there is an honest government, the intention is for the welfare of the people, then the people can be brought out of every difficulty", he added.

Pointing out that Jammu & Kashmir has been the biggest victim of dynastic politics since independence, the Prime Minister assured the people that the development campaign for Jammu & Kashmir will not stop at any cost and the region will develop more rapidly in the next 5 years.

The Prime Minister concluded his address by extending his best wishes to the entire nation on the holy month of Ramzan. "It is my wish that everyone should get the message of peace and harmony from the month of Ramadan. Tomorrow is Mahashivratri, I wish everyone the best of this holy festival", he concluded.

Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha and Union Minister of State, Dr Jitendra Singh were present on the occasion among others.

Earlier, Nazim Nazeer from Pulwama, who is a beekeeper, described his journey to the Prime Minister about expanding his business by availing benefits from the government where he bought 25 boxes for beekeeping at a 50 percent subsidy. He also threw light on his economic growth throughout the journey where he gradually expanded to 200 boxes for beekeeping by availing Rs 5 lakhs under Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme.

This led to Nazeer building a brand for himself and creating a website that further generated thousands of orders worth about 5000 kilograms across the nation, growing his business to almost 2000 beekeeping boxes and engaging about 100 youth from the region. He further informed the Prime Minister about receiving an FPO in 2023 which has only helped him grow his business. He also thanked the Prime Minister for launching the Digital India initiative that has transformed the fintech landscape in the country. The Prime Minister lauded Nazim's effort for leading the way to a sweet revolution in Jammu & Kashmir and congratulated him on his success. Upon the Prime Minister's enquiry about getting initial support from the government to establish the business, Nazim said that even though he faced initial difficulty, the Department of Agriculture came forward and supported his cause. Noting that the business of beekeeping is a fairly new sector, the Prime Minister highlighted its benefits and said that bees, in a way, work like farm laborers making it beneficial for crops. Nazim said that landowners are ready to offer land for beekeeping at no cost as the process is also beneficial for the farmers. The Prime Minister suggested Nazim research the honey produced in Central Asia around the Hindu Kush mountains and also asked him to look towards crafting a new taste for honey by growing specific flowers around the boxes as it is a niche market. He also mentioned similar successful efforts in Uttarakhand. Prime Minister Modi expressed delight at Acacia Honey's price going up to Rs 1000 per kg from Rs 400 per kg due to high demand across the world. The Prime Minister lauded the clarity of thought and vision, and the courage shown by Nazim in running his business and also congratulated his parents. He said that Nazim is also giving direction to the youth of India and becoming an inspiration.

Atesham Majid Bhat of Srinagar is a bakery entrepreneur who through a food technology skill development programme brought in new innovations in bakery.

She was supported by the incubation center at Government Polytechnic for Women Skill Development. Government single window system helped her and her team in getting all the NoCs from various departments. The Prime Minister told her that in the last 10 years, the

government has been providing all the support to the crores of youth in realizing their start-up dreams. The Prime Minister praised her for involving her friends from different districts in her entrepreneurial ventures. "It is our efforts that the ideas of our youth do not suffer from the deficiency of resources and finance. They should move with confidence. These daughters of Jammu and Kashmir are creating new inspiring examples for the youth of the entire nation", the Prime Minister said. He praised them for taking care of the under-privileged daughters.

Hamida Bano of Ganderbal is involved in the dairy business. She informed the Prime Minister that she benefited from National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) and opened a processing unit for milk products. She employed other women also.

She also informed the Prime Minister about the quality check, packaging and marketing of products. Her milk products are devoid of preservatives and she informed the Prime Minister about the elaborate way of marketing her fragile product. The Prime Minister praised her for her business acumen and also for carrying on the work of nutrition. He also complimented her for taking care of quality and doing her business in an environment-friendly way.

Background

In a step that will provide a major boost to the agri-economy of Jammu and Kashmir, the Prime Minister dedicated 'Holistic Agriculture Development Programme' (HADP) to the nation. HADP is an integrated program encompassing the full spectrum of activities in the three major domains of agri-economy viz Horticulture, Agriculture and Livestock husbandry in Jammu and Kashmir. The programme will equip about 2.5 lakh farmers with skill development via a dedicated Daksh Kisan portal. Under the programme, about 2000 Kisan Khidmat Ghars will be established and robust value chains will be put in place for the welfare of the farming community. The programme will lead to employment generation benefiting lakhs of marginal families in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Prime Minister's vision is to improve the overall experience of tourists and pilgrims visiting prominent pilgrimage and tourism sites nationwide by building world-class infrastructure and amenities at these sites. In line with this, the Prime Minister dedicated to the nation and launched multiple initiatives under the Swadesh Darshan and PRASHAD schemes worth more than Rs 1400 crore. The projects being dedicated to the nation by the Prime Minister include development of 'Integrated Development of Hazratbal Shrine' in Srinagar; J&K; tourism facilities developed in Northeast circuit in Meghalaya; Spiritual Circuit in Bihar and Rajasthan; Rural and Tirthankar Circuit in Bihar; development of Jogilamba Devi Temple, Jogilamba Gadhwal District, Telangana; and development of Amarkantak Temple, Amnupur District, Madhya Pradesh.

To create world-class infrastructure and amenities for pilgrims and tourists visiting the Hazratbal Shrine, and to enhance their holistic spiritual experience, the project Integrated Development of Hazratbal Shrine' has been executed. The key components of the project include site development of the entire area including the construction of boundary wall of the Shrine; illumination of Hazratbal shrines precinct; improvement of Ghats and Devri Paths around the Shrine; construction of Sufi interpretation center; construction of Tourist Facilitation Centre; installation of signage; multilevel storied car parking; construction of public convenience block and entrance Gateway of the Shrine among others.

The Prime Minister also launched about 43 projects that will develop a wide range of pilgrimage and tourist sites across the country. These include important religious sites like the Annayaram Temple in Kakinada district of Andhra Pradesh; Navagraha Temples in Thanjavur and Mayiladuthurai District of Tamilnadu and Karaikal district of Puducherry; Sri Chammundeswari Devi Temple, Mysore District, Karnataka; Karni Mata Mandir; Bikaner District Rajasthan; Maa Chintpurni Temple, Una District, Himachal Pradesh; Basilica of Bom Jesus Church, Goa, among others. The projects also include development of various other sites and experience centers like Mechuka Adventure Park in Arunachal Pradesh; Rural Tourism Cluster Experience at Gunji, Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand; Ecotourism zone at Ananthagiri forest, Ananathagiri, Telangana; Meghalayan Age Cave Experience and Waterfall Trails Experience at Sohra, Meghalaya; Reimagining Cinmamara Tea Estate, Jorhat, Assam; Ecotourism experience at Kanjli Wetland, Kapurthala, Punjab; Julley Leh Biodiversity Park, Leh, among others.

During the programme, the Prime Minister announced 42 tourist destinations selected under Challenge Based Destination Development (CBDD) Scheme. The innovative scheme, announced during Union Budget 2023-24, aims to provide end-to-end tourist experiences by catalyzing the development of tourist destinations while also promoting sustainability and ushering competitiveness in the tourism sector. The 42 destinations have been identified in four categories - 16 in Culture & Heritage Destination, 11 in spiritual destinations, 10 in Ecotourism and Amrit Dharohar and 5 in Vibrant Village.

The Prime Minister launched the first-ever nationwide initiative to identify the pulse of the nation on tourism, in the form of 'Dekho Apna Desh People's Choice 2024'. The nationwide poll aims to engage with citizens to identify the most preferred tourist attractions and understand tourist perceptions across 5 tourism categories - Spiritual, Cultural & Heritage, Nature & Wildlife, Adventure, and other categories. Besides the four main categories, the 'other' category is where one can vote for their personal favorites and help uncover hidden tourism gems in the form of unexplored tourism attractions and destinations like Vibrant Border Villages, Wellness Tourism, Wedding Tourism etc. This poll exercise is being hosted on the MyGov platform, the citizen engagement portal of the Government of India.

The Prime Minister launched the 'Chalo India Global Diaspora Campaign' to inspire the Indian diaspora to become Incredible India ambassadors and promote tourism to India. The campaign is being launched based on the clarion call of the Prime Minister; wherein he requested Indian diaspora members to encourage at least 5 non-Indian friends to travel to India. With more than 3 crore overseas Indians, the Indian diaspora can serve as a powerful catalyst for Indian tourism, acting as cultural Ambassadors.

PM building Khushaal...

Rs 4500 cr is going on which will provide round the year connectivity to Sonamarg, phase-I of Srinagar Ring Road at a cost of Rs 2920 cr will be completed in the month of August, phase-II worth Rs 961 cr of Srinagar Ring Road to be completed by June 2025 and the work on Delhi-Amritsar-Katra expressway costing Rs 10,995 cr is expected to be completed in the month of November 2025.

He said Qazigund-Shopian-Pulwama- Srinagar NH444 will be constructed at a cost of Rs 849 crore, Khanabal-Phalgam-Chandanwari NH501; new highway of Poonch-Uri Road, Baramulla- Kupwara- Tangdhar NH701 have been approved and work on Srinagar bypass, Sanatnagar; Bemina and Nowgam Flyovers worth Rs 132 cr is going on.

The Lieutenant Governor said that in Kashmir valley only, Rs 26,300 cr worth highway and tunnel projects are going on, under PMGSY, in the last 4 years, we have been successful in constructing road length of 4926 km at a cost of Rs 3440 cr and connecting every village with 500 population with road, Rs 1000 cr worth projects under Srinagar Smart City and 428 projects under NABARD costing Rs 2531 cr are ongoing while in last four years, more than 36000 recruitments for government jobs have been made in a transparent manner:

Govt extends Rs...

Piyush Goyal told reporters here.

The move, likely to benefit nearly 10 crore families, will cost the government Rs 12,000 crore.

The general elections are due in April-May.

To make Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), a clean cooking fuel, available to rural and deprived poor households, the government launched Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) in May 2016 to provide deposit-free LPG connections to adult women of poor households.

While the connection was provided for free, the beneficiaries had to purchase LPG refills at market price.

As fuel prices soared, the government in May 2022 provided a Rs 200 per cylinder subsidy to PMUY beneficiaries. This was increased to Rs 300 in October 2023.

Ahead of assembly elections in five states, including Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, the government had in late August cut cooking gas prices by Rs 200 per cylinder. After this, the LPG cylinder price came down to Rs 903.

For Ujjwala beneficiaries, the price was Rs 603 after considering the Rs 300 per cylinder subsidy, which is directly paid into the bank accounts of connection holders.

The targeted support to PMUY consumers encourages them for continuous use of LPG. The average LPG consumption of PMUY consumers increased 20 per cent from 3.01 refills in 2019-20 to 3.68 in 2021-22.

All PMUY beneficiaries are eligible for the targeted subsidy scheme.

Centre hikes DA...

increase ceiling of Rs 25 lakh from the existing Rs 20 lakh.

The burden on the exchequer due to an increase in various allowances would be Rs 9,400 crore annually. The increase in DA and DR in accordance with the accepted formula, is based on the recommendations of the 7th Central Pay Commission.

The decision is likely to benefit 49.18 lakh central government employees besides 67.95 lakh pensioners as Dearness Relief (DR) has been increased at the same rate.

Construction at Ram...

ground floor of the temple was built in December last year:

A meeting of the temple construction committee was held recently and it was decided to complete all the constructions in the Ram Jannabhoomi complex by the end of this year; Mishra said.

The sanctum sanctorum is on the ground floor of the temple and the court of Lord Ram will be installed on the first floor as after having 'darshan' of Ram Lalla, devotees will be able to have 'darshan' of Lord Ram's court, he said.

The work of building the main spire and another spire of the grand temple is going on at a fast pace, while the peaks will be ready in 300 days, the temple trust member said.

There will be a total of five peaks in the temple, of which three peaks were prepared before the consecration ceremony, Mishra said, adding that the main peak is being built 161 feet high with a layer of gold on it.

The 'parkota' of the temple will also be ready before the arrival of monsoon to protect devotees from rain and sun, he said.

At the complex, temples of six gods and goddesses will be built along the parkota, besides temples of seven sages will also be constructed, he said.

He said that L&T, the company which is constructing the temple, is going to field an army of workers, currently 1,500, from Rajasthan, Gujarat, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

Temples of Hindu saints described in ancient religious texts, including Valmiki, Vashishtha, Vishvamitra, Agastya, along with Nishadraj and Ahilya, are also to be built in the complex, Mishra said.

Apart from this, the road from Tdhi Bazaar at the western end of the Ram Jannabhoomi to a post office via Ashrafi Bhawan and Vibhishan Kund will be widened by 15 metres. This road is being widened in view of the rising number of devotees, Ayodhya's District Magistrate Nitish Kumar said.

More than two lakh devotees are visiting the Ram temple on Tuesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, whereas on other days around 1.5 lakh devotees are arriving, Prakash Gupta, officer in-charge of the Ram temple trust, said.

4 vehicles including excavator seized for illegal mining

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SAMBHA: Tightening noose against illegal mining, Samba Police has seized four vehicles including one excavators in the jurisdiction of Police Station Ghagwal, Police Station Vijaypurand Police Station Samba which were being used for illegal transportation/mining of the construction material.

A police party of Police Station Ghagwal headed by SHO PS Ghagwal while performing patrolling duty in its jurisdictional area has seized one JCB without registration No and one tractor trolley without regd. No.for illegal mining/transportation of construction materials in the area.

Similarly, a police party of Police Station Vijaypur headed by SHO PS Vijaypur while performing patrolling duty in its jurisdictional area has seized one tractor trolleys bearing registration no JK21J-9948 for illegal mining /transportation of construction materials in the area.Whereas, a Police party of Police Post Goranheaded by Incharge Police Post Goranwhile performing patrolling duty in its areas has seized one tractor Trolley without registration No for illegal mining/transportation of construction materials. The above mentioned vehicles have been seized by Samba Police and handed over to Geology & Mining Department, Samba for further action.

Police reunites missing woman with family

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SAMBHA: Police on Thursday reunited a missing woman with her family whose missing report was lodged at Police Station Bari Brahmana.

As per details, On January 14, 2024, a written report was lodged at Police Station Bari Brahmana by the husband of missing woman , a resident of Rakh Badoi, Bari Brahmana stating therein that hiswife has gone to Bari Brahaman market and did not return home. All efforts were made out by the family members but the whereabouts of the missing lady could not be ascertained.

Acting on complaint, a missing report vide DD No. 07 dated 14.01.2024 was entered at Police Station Bari Brahmana and search started to trace out the said missing lady. With continuous strenuous efforts, a police team of Police Station Bari Brahmana has traced out the said missing lady and handed over to her legal heirs after completing all legal formalities.

Woman injured while working near firing range

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

REASI: A 37-year-old woman suffered an injury likely from a splinter while she was working near a small firing range in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district on Thursday, a police spokesperson said.

Sita Devi, a resident of Khudri Chinkah village, "sustained splinter-like injury when she went near the firing butt in Rudd Pull for cutting grass" in the morning, the official said.

She was admitted to a hospital by a team of the Arnas police station, the spokesperson said and added that preliminary inquiry rules out a terror angle to the incident. Further investigation is underway, the official said. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Mohita Sharma appealed to the people to stay away from rumour mongering. Any person found involved in creating fake news will be dealt with strictly, the officer said.

Police seize 150 sleepers of deodar in Doda; accused on run

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

BANIHAL: A total of 150 sleepers of deodar trees were seized from a house in Doda district of Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday, police said.

The beams of wood were said to be worth lakhs of rupees, the police said.

A police team was on patrol duty in at Bathri in Tanta area of Gandoh when it received a tip-off about one

Shah Mohd illegally axing green standing deodar trees in Tanta forest and hoarding them near his house for selling purpose, they said.

Upon receiving the information, the police team rushed to the spot, searched the area and found 150 deodar sleepers which the accused had kept near his house, the police said. The sleepers were seized and a case under was registered relevant sections at Gandoh Police Station, they said. Efforts are underway to nab the accused who is absconding, they added.

Jammu police beat drums, make announcements against proclaimed offender

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Police on Thursday beat drums and made announcements against proclaimed offender at Bishnah.

As per details, an accused person namely Faquir Chand, son of Jeet Raj, resident of Pasgal Bishnah Jammu who was evading his arrest in FIR No 42/1990 under section 302 RPC 4/25 A Act of Police Station Bishnah for which the court of JMJC Bishnah has declared him " Proclaimed Offender" to proceed further into the matter, a poster of his proclamation was pasted in public places as well as on the gate of house of the accused person was done and announcements regarding the same was also made, by beating the drums in and around the vicinity of his house, to aware the general public with the request that if anyone has information with regards to the whereabouts of the Proclaimed Offender may kindly be shared with PS immediately, otherwise his property would be attached under section relevant provisions of law.

Burglar arrested, stolen property over four lakhs recovered

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

RAJOURI: Working out case of theft, police in Rajouri has arrested a notorious thief recovering stolen property over four lakh rupees from his possession.

On 4th of March, a written application was lodged by one K h a l i d Hussain Shah son of Gulzar Hussain Shah resident of Kheora that he runs a well furnished service station at Bela colony under the name and style 'Two Brothers Service Station Rajouri'. In the intervening night of 3rd and 4th March, some burglars broke open the front door of the service station and decamped with goods worth rupees four lakhs (which included grinders, polishing machines, car accessories etc). On receipt of this application FIR no 84/ 2024 U/Ss 457/380 IPC was registered at PS Rajouri and investigation set in motion. During investigation one suspect was zeroed in who during questioning admitted to the crime and on his disclosure all the stolen items were recovered. The accused has been identified as Raja Ather Hussain Mirza son of Mohib-ul - Hassan Mirza resident of Dhandkote Darhal in Rajouri.