

!! Continuations from Page 1 !! Shri Amarnathji Yatra...

felicitated the Board Members and expressed gratitude for their valuable contribution and continuous guidance in successful conduct of the yatra. Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari, Chief Executive Officer, Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board, gave a detailed presentation regarding the arrangements for the Yatra.

Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary; Shaleen Kabra, Additional Chief Secretary, Jal Shakti Department; Nalin Prabhat, DGP; Chandraker Bharti, Principal Secretary Home; Administrative Secretaries; Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; Deputy Commissioners (Ganderbal and Anantnag); Additional CEO SASB and senior officers of the UT Administration and Shrine Board also attended the meeting, in person and through virtual mode.

RDSS being implemented...

are being released by the Ministry of Power (MoP) in different tranches based on the progress of the projects. So far, Rs 17 crore has been released in two tranches, both of which have been fully utilized. Funds for the next tranche are being sought as per the norms of the scheme," he said.

Addressing concerns about the slow progress of RDSS projects, the Chief Minister explained that after the issuance of the sanction order, the package (including Doda district) was tendered for the first time on March 31, 2023.

"However, due to a poor response, the tendering process had to be extended three times. Finally, the bid was opened on August 4, 2023, and awarded on September 8, 2023," he stated.

He further informed that 12.25 percent progress has been achieved so far, and the works are moving forward at full pace with no delays.

"Going by the current pace, it is expected that the works in Doda district will be completed well within the sunset date of RDSS, which is March 31, 2026," he added.

The Chief Minister further stated that the RDSS Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) were formulated in two parts, one which includes Loss Reduction (LR) works and smart metering projects and part b which covers modernization works.

"The DPRs for both parts were submitted to the Ministry of Power (MoP). However, the sanction has been received only for Part A works," he said. Regarding Part B, the Chief Minister mentioned that the DPRs are currently at the appraisal stage with the Nodal Agency of MoP.

"Once the Part B DPRs are sanctioned by MoP, the modernization works will be awarded as per the terms and conditions specified in the sanction order," he added.

Gurez emerging as...

in September 2023, Dawar village in Gurez was honored with the 'Best Tourism Village' award in the Gold category by the Union Ministry of Tourism.

"This accolade highlights the village's cultural richness and tourism potential," he informed the Legislative Assembly.

To promote Gurez as a new tourist destination, he added, the Department of Tourism, Jammu and Kashmir, has taken several initiatives, and in 2024, commercial rafting was started in Gurez for the first time ever.

Besides, during the current financial year, the Department of Tourism, J&K, has projected the upgradation of Gurez as an offbeat destination under the current year Capex Budget (2024-25), the Chief Minister stated in his reply.

In reply to the question of member Ali Mohammad Sagar, the Chief Minister informed the Legislative Assembly that the assistance provided to victims of fire incidents is based on the revised norms under the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) and National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF). He said the assistance scale for victims of fire incidents is as per the revised norms of assistance from the SDRF and National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) issued by the Disaster Management Division, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. The Chief Minister said that these norms are reviewed every five years.

SFs, fire services...

field forces to respond promptly to any untoward incident, especially of a terror nature, the official said.

The exercise also aimed to identify areas for improvement and streamline the response mechanism, the official added.

The mock drill exercise is a part of ongoing efforts by Jammu and Kashmir Police to enhance emergency response mechanisms and provide effective services to the community, the spokesman said.

MLAs express concern...

current mechanisms, he urged the formation of an expert team and a House committee to assess and respond to the crisis effectively.

BJP MLAs Yudhvir Sethi and Arvind Gupta also sought details from the government on its efforts to combat drug addiction and called for a full discussion on the matter.

AAP MLA Mehraj Malik criticized the administration for its "utter failure" in handling the menace and said "there has been a large-scale increase in drug addiction in the region and the government has completely failed to address it".

Congress MLA Nizamuddin Bhat supported the demand for a House committee, while NC's Justice Hasnain Masoodi called for enhanced infrastructure to strengthen the de-addiction framework.

Despite the minister's initial opposition to further discussion citing her detailed response, Speaker Rather insisted on a half-hour debate to allow members to present their suggestions.

The minister outlined various initiatives taken to curb drug addiction, including adoption of a drug de-addiction policy, formation of a state-level policy, Implementation Committee and massive awareness campaign -- Nasha Mukt J&K Abhiyan.

She informed the House that 11 Addiction Treatment Facilities (ATFs) are functional in Kashmir and 9 in Jammu.

"OPD services are operational in all 20 districts, while inpatient services are available in all nine Government Medical Colleges (GMCs), catering to both male and female patients. Psychiatrists are available in all GMCs in J&K," she said.

She said that 25 medical officers (12 from Jammu and 13 from Kashmir) have been trained at NIMHANS, Bengaluru, and deployed to de-addiction centers across the UT.

To enhance monitoring and intervention, real-time surveillance using Google Sheets has been introduced to track trends and measure the effectiveness of interventions, she added.

The minister highlighted the ongoing awareness efforts, including seminars, workshops and programs in schools, colleges and universities, in collaboration with district administrations, NGOs and volunteers.

She also emphasized the TeleMANAS initiative, a helpline set up across all 20 districts to provide mental health support and addiction counseling.

Under 'Project Najaath', launched in November 2023 in Jammu and Pulwama, the government has partnered with J&K Bank to combat drug abuse. The initiative aims to educate communities on the dangers of drug addiction and promote prevention, treatment and support services.

She said the government's proactive approach, including policy reforms, treatment facilities, real-time monitoring and community engagement, aims to tackle the drug menace effectively.

Day not far...

far when India will become a USD 5 trillion economy."

He also stressed the importance of making right investments in the right direction to continue expanding the economy.

Modi underlined the critical role of implementing budget announcements in achieving this vision and acknowledged the significant contributions of all stakeholders.

He stated that capacity building and talent nurturing act as the foundation stone for national development and in the next phase of growth, greater investment in these sectors is essential.

"The vision of 'investment in people' stands on three pillars -- education, healthcare, and skill development," he said adding that today, India's education system is undergoing a transformation.

He said this year's Budget serves as a blueprint for India's future, and that investments have been prioritized equally across infrastructure,

industries, people, economy, and innovation.

Modi highlighted the PM Internship Scheme that was launched to provide new opportunities and practical skills to youth.

"We must ensure that businesses at every scale actively participate in this scheme. In this year's Budget, we announced 10,000 additional medical seats, with a target of adding 75,000 seats in the medical field over the next 5 years."

Modi also talked about the government's decision to give infrastructure status to the tourism sector, saying that it will generate jobs for youth.

He urged industry to invest in the healthcare sector and also talked about the potential of medical tourism to create jobs.

Modi also emphasized the establishment of daycare cancer centres and the development of digital healthcare infrastructure to ensure quality healthcare reaches the last mile.

Modi highlighted that the tourism sector has the potential to contribute up to 10 per cent to India's GDP and create employment opportunities for crores of youth.

"50 destinations across the country will be developed with a focus on tourism," said the Prime Minister adding that granting infrastructure status to hotels in these destinations will enhance ease of tourism and boost local employment.

Highlighting the expansion of the Mudra Yojana to support homestays, Modi also stressed on initiatives like 'Heal in India' and 'Land of the Buddha' to attract global tourists. "Efforts are being made to establish India as a global tourism and wellness hub."

"To cater to a larger population, planned urbanisation is essential. We have decided to allocate Rs 1 lakh crore to the Urban Challenge Fund. The private sector, especially the real estate industry, must focus on planned urbanisation," he said.

The government has given importance to skill development at par with the infrastructure sector, he added.

AI, he said could contribute lakhs of crores to the economy. "In this direction, we have allocated Rs 500 crore for AI-driven education and research in the budget."

He also stated that India will set up National Large Language Model for development of AI capacity.

"India has become the third-largest startup ecosystem in the world," said the Prime Minister, adding that several measures have been introduced in this budget to promote startups.

He mentioned the approval of a Rs 1 lakh crore corpus fund to boost research and innovation. This will increase investments in emerging sectors.

Modi noted the provision of 10,000 research fellowships at IITs and IISc, which will foster research and provide opportunities for talented youth.

The Prime Minister also highlighted the role of the National Geo-spatial Mission and the National Research Foundation in accelerating innovation, stressing the need for collective efforts at all levels to elevate India to new heights in research and innovation.

Underlining the significance of Gyan Bharatam Mission in preserving India's rich manuscript heritage, Modi announced that over one crore manuscripts will be digitized under this mission, leading to the creation of a National Digital Repository.

This repository will enable scholars and researchers worldwide to access India's historical, traditional knowledge and wisdom.

The Prime Minister also mentioned the establishment of a National Gene Bank to preserve India's plant genetic resources.

This initiative aims to ensure genetic resources and food security for future generations. He urged for expansion of such efforts and called on various institutes and sectors to actively participate in these initiatives.

Kedarnath, Hemkund Sahib...

new employment opportunities in Uttarakhand. The construction and operation of this ropeway will create significant job prospects in hospitality, travel, food and beverage (F&B), tourism, and related industries, he said.

He noted that Kedarnath Jyotirlinga is one of the 12 sacred Jyotirlingas of India, located in Rudrapur district at an altitude of 3,583 meters (11,968 feet). The temple remains open for pilgrims from Akshaya Tritiya (April-May) to Diwali (October-November) and attracts over 2 million devotees annually.

Chugh also announced that the Rs 2,730 crore Hemkund Sahib Ropeway Project, approved by Prime Minister Modi, would significantly improve accessibility to this sacred Gurudwara, located at 15,000 feet in Chamoli district, Uttarakhand.

The 12.4-kilometer-long ropeway will connect Govindghat to Hemkund Sahib, reducing the strenuous mountain journey for devotees, he said and explained that Hemkund Sahib is the meditation site of the tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, and is also renowned as the meditation site of Lord Lakshman, brother of Lord Ram. The Gurudwara remains open from May to September each year, and in 2023, approximately 1.77 lakh devotees visited this holy site, he added.

This project will also benefit Ghangaria, a key stop on the Hemkund Sahib route, which serves as the gateway to the "Valley of Flowers", a UNESCO World Heritage Site. With the ropeway, access to this valley will become more convenient, boosting both religious and ecological tourism.

Chugh remarked that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, India's key religious sites are being modernized with world-class infrastructure. These projects will not only enhance pilgrimage experiences but also elevate Uttarakhand's tourism industry and local economy. He said that the Kedarnath and Hemkund Sahib Ropeway Projects will serve as pillars of balanced socio-economic development in Uttarakhand, ensuring connectivity to remote mountainous areas.

He said that the Modi government, following the policy of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' (Inclusive Growth for All), is committed to promoting spiritual and religious tourism on a global level. These historic projects will provide a major boost to spiritual and ecological tourism, creating vast employment opportunities for local communities, he added.

Expressing gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Central Government, Chugh said that these projects would place these sacred sites on the global spiritual tourism map, offering pilgrims an unparalleled travel experience.

Terrorists hurl grenade...

official said. During the search, a grenade pin was recovered, he said, adding no loss of life or property damage was reported.

A thorough inquiry has been initiated and search operations are underway, the police official added.

BJP members stage...

bifurcation of the erstwhile state into two Union territories in August 2019.

Taking part in a debate on the motion of thanks to LG's address at a time when NC president Feroz Abdullah reached the visitors' gallery to watch the proceedings, Para sought restoration of the two holidays and highlighted the importance of the July 13, 1931 when 22 men fell to the bullets of Dogra Maharaja's soldiers outside Srinagar central jail and the contribution of the NC founder.

"They have sacrificed their lives against autocracy and for democracy and the House, irrespective of party affiliation and ideology, should come together to restore the July 13 holiday and also Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's holiday given his political stature and the contribution," Para said.

BJP's Sharma reacted angrily to Para's statement and opposed the restoration of holiday on July 13.

"I can feel the pain of Para after his party's performance (in assembly elections). You are enjoying the state of Maharaja (Hari Singh)...," he said, triggering protests by treasury benches led by NC, PDP and several independent members and slogan shouting from both sides.

Later, the Speaker announced expunging of the "derogatory remarks" following which all 28 members of the BJP staged a walkout.

"This is their wrong notion that the peace in Kashmir is hollow. The terrorism is taking its last breath, while separatism and Jamaat are buried. The foot is not on the spring but at a smooth surface and Indian security forces have promised to restore peace in J&K," Sharma told reporters outside the assembly.

He said the BJP did not consider those killed in 1931 uprising against Maharaja as "martyrs". "The Maharaja was a justice loving king and anyone who rose up in rebellion is a traitor and we are proud of him. Why are they not shedding tears for those killed in their rule in 2010 and 2016."

Vehicles carrying illegal mining material seized

STATE TIMES NEWS

POONCH: The District Police Poonch continues its relentless crackdown on illegal mining activities in the Poonch. As part of ongoing efforts, police teams of BPP Ajote have detained 02 vehicles to ensure no unauthorized mining activities take place in the area.

The District Police have reiterated their commitment to maintaining strict compliance with mining regulations. Regular inspections, surprise raids, and the confiscation of equipment used in illegal mining operations have become routine measures. Any individual or entity found violating the law will face strict legal action.

The district police has further emphasized that no illegal mining will be permitted under any circumstances. Residents are encouraged to cooperate with authorities to protect the region's natural resources and ensure sustainable development.

For further updates and to report any incidents of illegal mining, the public can contact the local police in their respective areas.



OGW booked under PSA

STATE TIMES NEWS

RAMBAN: The Jammu and Kashmir Police have taken strong action against anti-national activities by booking one OGW namely Manzoor Ahmed@Furqan son of Ghulam Mohd Naik resident of Dalwah, Tehsil Gool, District Ramban under the Public Safety Act (PSA). He was involved in anti-national and anti-social activities in Gool and surrounding areas.

The necessary sanction was obtained under Section 8 of the PSA 1978 vide order dated 04.08.2024. The above named OGW was absconding and evading his arrest and avoiding the execution of PSA warrant. A special police team was constituted and the team by making the best possible efforts executed the PSA Warrant. Consequently, Manzoor Ahmed@Furqan was detained under the PSA and lodged in District Jail Jammu.

It's worth noting that the PSA allows for preventive detention to prevent individuals from acting in a manner prejudicial to the security of the state or the maintenance of public order.

Chronic drug peddler arrested, 20 grams of heroin recovered

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Continuing crackdown on drug peddling, the Janipur police station in Jammu has arrested a chronic habitual drug peddler, Arshid Ahmed Mizag son of Wali Mohd resident of Nawhatta Rainwari Srinagar, and recovered 20 grams of heroin from his possession. This arrest is part of the police's ongoing efforts to combat drug abuse and peddling in the region.

According to the police, Mizag was arrested while he was on his way to attend a court hearing for a previous case registered against him under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. The police team, led by SHO Inspector Vikram Sharma, seized the heroin and arrested Mizag on the spot.

Further investigation revealed that Mizag has been involved in selling narcotics for several years, generating undue profits in the local area of Jammu. The police have registered a case under FIR No. 31/2025 and are conducting a thorough investigation to dismantle the entire ecosystem of drug peddlers and syndicates in the area.

e-FIR registered at Police Station Mandi

STATE TIMES NEWS

POONCH: Poonch Police has registered an Electronic First Information Report (e-FIR) in connection with a land dispute and a scuffle between two parties. The complaint was received at Police Station Mandi via WhatsApp, filed by Sitra Bi, wife of late Mohd Ashraf, resident of Chella. The e-FIR (No. 13/2025) has been registered under sections 126(2)/115(2)/329(3)/125/351(2)/3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), and an investigation has been initiated to ensure justice and maintain law and order in the area.

3 drug peddlers nabbed, heroin recovered

STATE TIMES NEWS

DODA: Doda Police achieved a significant breakthrough in their fight against drug menace by apprehending three suspects and recovering approximately 14-16 grams of heroin from their possession.

While giving detail, SSP Doda Sandeep Mehta JKPS has said that on 04-03-2025, Police party of Police Station Doda headed by DySP Ajay Anand and SHO Doda Insp Parvaiz Khandey were conducting routine vehicle checking at Naka point near petrol pump Doda. During vehicle checking at about 21:30 hrs one tempo traveler bearing registration No. JK06-3627 which was coming from Pul Doda towards Doda City stopped for checking, beside driver 02 other persons were also sitting in the vehicle in question. On initial enquiry, driver of tempo disclosed his name as Ashfaq Hussain S/O late Noor Hussain Wani R/O Bhalla whereas, other persons disclosed their names as Sayed Shadab S/O Ghulam Hussain Shah R/O Akramabad Doda and Himayoun Sager S/O late Fatah Mohd R/O Akramabad Doda. All of them were put to extensive Personal search and during the personal search of suspects 1. Sayed Shadab and Himayoun Sager approx 5 grms Heroin like drug recovered from possession of each, whereas approx 4 grms of heroin like drug was recovered from the possession of driver Ashfaq Hussain. Total approx 14 grms of Heroin was recovered from the possession of all 03 suspects, which was kept by these suspected drug peddlers in their illegal possession for illegal sale among the youths in Doda town, thus committed the offences under section 8/21/22/29 of NDPS act. Accordingly, a case FIR No 56/2025 under relevant sections of NDPS act registered at PS Doda and investigation has taken up. This operation is part of Doda Police's special drive to eradicate drug peddling, manufacturing, and selling of drugs and illicit liquor in the district. SSP Doda, Shri Sandeep Mehta, JKPS has urged the public to cooperate with the police and provide information about any suspicious activities, enabling timely action against these suppliers of drugs and Narcotic Substances.



Railway police Jammu books drug peddler under PITNDPS

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Railway Police Jammu slapped PITNDPS against notorious drug peddler Vishal Kumar, son of Mangat Ram, resident of Rajasthan, A/P Ward No. 80, Rajeev Nagar, Narwal, Bahu Fort, Jammu. Four FIRs stand registered against the accused in different Police Stations of district Jammu, Gurdaspur Punjab and Police Station GRP Jammu. He is a notorious drug peddler having links in different places in Rajasthan, Punjab and Jammu and selling the banned drugs to consumers. The warrant of arrest under PITNDPS Act 1988 was issued by Divisional Commissioner Jammu and has been executed by Police Station GRP Jammu, accused has been lodged in District Jail Rajouri. GRP Jammu launched a vigorous drive to break the nexus between drug peddlers and consumers in their jurisdiction at Railway Stations and peripheral areas. In the last less than one year GRP Jammu has lodged fifteen FIRs under NDPS Act and arrested 13 accused and has also arrested 12 absconders under warrants of section 512 CrPC and executed 1st warrant under PITNDPS.



'You are in my heart and younger brother': Omar to AAP MLA

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: "You are in my heart and a younger brother," Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah told sulkung Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) legislator Mehraj Malik after he complained about being provided a seat behind the opposition BJP members in the House.

Abdullah made the remarks shortly after Malik, who represents the Doda Assembly constituency, intercepted the Chief Minister who was responding to a question about revamped distribution sector scheme (power) during the Question Hour in the House.

Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather warned Malik to behave properly or otherwise he will be marshalled out for intercepting the members.

Malik first raised his voice during a question on

drug addiction and demanded winding up of liquor wholesale stores. When the chief minister was replying to a question, he intercepted him and raised the issue of the government failure to improve power distribution in Doda and ensuring power and water supply to the consumers.

Malik, in the meanwhile, expressed his displeasure at being provided a seat behind the opposition BJP members and said he was shifted from the treasury bank to this side.

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary decried Malik for not honouring the leader of the House and suggested him to behave properly.

The chief minister responded to Malik and informed him that it is the Speaker as custodian of the House who decides the seating arrangements for the members.