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# STATE TIMES

Ramadan Mubarak to all our readers

THE BOLD VOICE OF J&K

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**SOWING SKILLS**  
SHAPING INDIA

**03 Dr Jitendra hails NEP 2020 for accommodating aptitudes**

**05 Admin set to launch UT wide campaign against drug menace**

**08 Delivery of baby by tribal woman on Road in Kishtwar: DB expresses displeasure over non-filling of response by both UTs**

Website : www.statetimes.in, Email: statetimes1@gmail.com

## 48th meeting of Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board Shri Amarnathji Yatra to begin on July 3

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: The annual pilgrimage to 3,880 metres high holy cave shrine of Shri Amarnathji in south Kashmir will commence on July 3, simultaneously from both the routes - the Pahalgam track in Anantnag district and Baltal in Ganderbal district-- and it will culminate on August 9, 2025 on Raksha Bandhan.

The decision to this effect was taken at the 48th board meeting of Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board (SASB) under the chairmanship of Lt Governor Manoj Sinha at Raj Bhawan.

The meeting was attended by Swami Avdheshanand Giri Ji Maharaj, D. C. Raina, Kailash Mehra Sadhu, K. N. Rai, Pitambar Lal Gupta, Dr. Shailesh Raina and Prof Vishwamurti Shastri, Members of the Shrine Board.

The Board proposed various measures and interventions to further improve the facilities and services for the



LG Manoj Sinha chairing 48th meeting of Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board in Jammu on Wednesday.

devotees.

Considering the likely increased inflow of pilgrims for Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2025, the meeting discussed measures for the enhancement of lodgement capacity at centres in Jammu, Srinagar and other locations, operationalization of Yatri facilitation centres for e-KYC, issuance of RFID cards, on-spot registration of pilgrims at number of locations including Nowgam and Katra Railway Stations. It was further discussed that these facilities must also be suitably enhanced at

Baltal, Pahalgam, Nunwan, Pantha Chowk Srinagar, as per the requirement.

Reviewing the progress achieved on various ongoing works undertaken by the line departments, the Lieutenant Governor stressed on the need for ensuring adequate arrangements and requisite amenities at various locations enroute Yatra. He further called for increasing capacity at Yatri Niwas, Pantha Chowk, Srinagar.

The meeting also discussed ongoing projects, dissemination of Yatra-related information, insurance cover to

yatris, service providers, ponies; extension of online services by the Shrine Board; widening and maintenance of Yatra Tracks; decongestion measures at Holy Cave and Lower Holy Cave area; Disaster preparedness and mitigation measures; adequate provisioning of Heli services, medical care facilities; Weather Forecasting Infrastructure and Systems, security and surveillance and Digital Pre-paid system for hiring services.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

## RDSS being implemented to modernize power infra, curb losses: CM

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday stated that Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) is being implemented to curb losses and modernize power infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir.

Responding to a question from member Shakti Raj Parihar in the Legislative Assembly, the Chief Minister, who also holds the Power Development portfolio, said that J&K's transmission and distribution losses are among the highest in India.

He noted that these losses are significantly higher compared to neighbouring states like Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

"And until we are not able to control this situation, our current AT&C losses are around 50 per cent. For every rupee worth of electricity we supply, we face a loss of around 50 paise. We will have to gradually reduce this and bring it in line with the levels of neighbouring states.



CM Omar Abdullah replying to a question in Legislative Assembly on Wednesday.

### Gurez emerging as tourist destination

JAMMU: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday said that Gurez valley has recently gained significant recognition as a tourist destination and Tourism department would assess the need for establishing a Tourism Development Authority for Gurez.

Responding to a question by member Nazir Ahmad Khan Gurezi, the Chief Minister informed the House that Gurez Valley in Jammu and Kashmir has recently been in the spotlight as a tourist destination.

"In 2022, Gurez Valley received the 'Best Offbeat Destination' award, emphasizing its appeal as a unique and emerging tourist spot," he said.

The Chief Minister, who also holds the portfolio of Tourism Minister, further stated that

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

For this, the RDSS scheme has been implemented," he said. The Chief Minister was replying to a starred question about the total funds allocated and utilized under the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) for the member's constituency. He explained that under RDSS, in addition to smart metering works, funds have been sanctioned for various "Loss Reduction (LR)" works.

These include AB cabling, HVDS, reconductoring, feeder bifurcation, and segregation, depending on district-specific technical requirements.

The funds for LR works have been sanctioned at the district level rather than for individual constituencies, he added.

The Chief Minister informed the House that the sanctioned cost for LR works in Doda District is Rs 86.28 crore, with the works awarded in September 2023. "The funds for these works

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

## Day not far when India will be USD 5 trillion economy: Modi

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said that the day is not far when India will turn a USD 5 trillion economy as he urged all stakeholders to invest in people, economy, and innovation to create jobs and boost growth.

Speaking in a post-Budget webinar on employment, Modi said the government has provided skill training to

3 crore youth since 2014 and decided to upgrade 1,000 ITIs and set up five centres of excellence.

Referring to an IMF report of February 2025, Modi noted that between 2015 and 2025, India grew by 66 per cent, making the country a USD 3.8 trillion economy.

Observing that the country's growth surpassed

that of several major economies, he said "the day is not

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9



## MLAs express concern over rising drug addiction in J&K, Speaker orders discussion

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: Cutting across party lines, the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly members on Wednesday expressed grave concern over the rising drug addiction in the region, prompting Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather to order a discussion to seek suggestions from the House on anti-drug measures.

Several MLAs questioned the effectiveness of existing mechanisms to combat the drug menace. They called for the establishment of an expert panel and a House committee to examine the issue in depth.

Minister for Health Sakina Itoo acknowledged the severity of the problem but highlighted the impact of the 'Nasha Mukht Abhiyan' launched in September 2022.

"There has been an alarming increase in drug addiction among the youth of J&K. However, after the launch of 'Nasha Mukht Abhiyan', records indicate a slight decline in new registrations," Itoo said in the House while responding to a question by National Conference (NC) MLA Mubarak Gul during the Question Hour.

She informed the House that 25,402 drug addicts

have been receiving treatment at various centers in Jammu and Kashmir over the past three years. This includes 9,775 in 2022, 8,702 in 2023 and 6,925 in 2024.

The minister said while outpatient (OPD) drug addiction cases have shown a declining trend over the past three years, inpatient (IPD) cases have significantly increased. She attributed this rise to the expansion of inpatient services in de-addiction centers, leading to better access to care.

CPI (M) MLA M Y Tarigami, Congress MLA

Nizamuddin Bhat, AAP MLA Mehraj Malik, BJP MLAs Arvind Gupta and Yudhvir Sethi, and NC MLA Justice Hasnain Masoodi raised supplementary questions, demanding answers on the alleged failure of agencies tackling the crisis.

"It is a very important issue. Over the last several years, drug addiction has drastically increased. Who ruled this region for the past ten years? They must answer for this rise. What measures have they taken to address it?" asked Tarigami. Calling for a review of the

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

## SFs, fire services conduct mock drill at Kulgam railway station

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

SRINAGAR: Security forces, along with Fire and Emergency Services, conducted a mock drill at a railway station in Jammu and Kashmir's Kulgam district on Wednesday to evaluate emergency response mechanisms.

Personnel from Kulgam police, Army, Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF), Railway Protection Force (RPF), Fire and Emergency Services participated in the drill at Wanpoh Railway Station, Anantaag, to evaluate the

readiness in handling critical situations, a police



spokesperson said. The drill was held to prepare

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

## Avalanche in Sonamarg, no loss of life reported

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

SRINAGAR: An avalanche occurred in Sonamarg tourist resort on Wednesday, officials said. No loss of life or damage has been reported so far.

The avalanche occurred in Sarbal village, the last village of the Kashmir valley, they said. The avalanche caused panic among the people of the area, they added.

## BJP members stage walkout from LA amid uproar over 1931 'martyrs'

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: The BJP on Wednesday walked out of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly here after Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather announced expunging of "derogatory remarks" of the leader of opposition about the July 13, 1931 'martyrs' amid pandemonium in the House.

BJP leader and LoP Sunil Sharma made the remarks on the 1931 'martyrs' after PDP legislator Waheed-ur-Rehman Para demanded restoration of the public holiday on July 13 besides the December 5 holiday to mark



BJP MLAs walking out from J&K Legislative Assembly on Wednesday.

the birth anniversary of National Conference founder Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

Both the holidays were

serapped by the lieutenant governor-led administration following abrogation of Article 370 and the

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

## Terrorists hurl grenade at police post in Baramulla; no casualty

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

SRINAGAR: Terrorists have hurled a grenade at a police post in Baramulla district, but there was no damage to property or loss of life in the incident, police said on Wednesday.

"A blast was heard from the rear side of the police post at Old Town in Baramulla around 9:20 pm on Tuesday, causing concern among the public," a police official said.

Police immediately cordoned off the area in coordination with other security agencies and a search operation was launched, the

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

## Kedarnath, Hemkund Sahib ropeway projects; boon for pilgrims: Chugh

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

AMRITSAR: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) National General Secretary Tarun Chugh on Wednesday hailed the approval of the Kedarnath and Hemkund Sahib Ropeway Projects by the Union Cabinet under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a historic step.

He said that these projects would greatly ease the pilgrimage journey, providing enhanced convenience for devotees, while also giving a new boost to tourism and the local economy in Uttarakhand.



Chugh said that the 12.9-kilometer-long Sonprayag-Kedarnath Ropeway Project, approved by the Union Cabinet, will be constructed at a cost of Rs 4,081.28 crore. This ropeway will have a capacity of 1,800 passengers per hour per direction,

allowing the transportation of 18,000 pilgrims daily.

He highlighted that at present, pilgrims have to undertake a challenging 16-kilometer trek to reach Kedarnath, which takes around 8-9 hours. With the construction of this ropeway, the journey will be reduced to just 36 minutes, providing immense relief, especially for the elderly and differently-abled individuals, he added.

Chugh emphasized that this project is not only environmentally friendly and convenient for pilgrims but will also generate

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

**ROZA TIMING**

SEHR TIME: 05:33 (MARCH 07)  
IFTAAR TIME: 06:43 (MARCH 06)

**WEATHER**

Temperature (Jammu)  
Max: 23.2°C Min: 6.5°C

Humidity  
Max: 82 Min: 36

Temperature (Srinagar)  
Max: 14.1°C Min: -1.5°C

Humidity  
Max: 92 Min: 39

Sunset: 18:30 Hours  
Sunrise: 06:54 Hours

## Not the time to go back to square one - J&K wants to move on

**ANCHOR**  
ST  
DOST KHAN

In the past few days, an acrimonious debate has resumed on the issues of the merits and demerits of abrogation of Article 370 and whether J&K

deserves statehood or not. As the issue of the statehood has been put forth by the National Conference Government of Omar Abdullah before Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, it is imperative that issues of the people should not be lost in the debates, which can have damaging effect on society, and handover advantage to the inimical forces outside.

Several members of the Legislative Assembly have raised question marks over the abrogation of Article 370 on August 5, 2019, and BJP members, as it was expected, have reacted very sharply to the critics of the decision. Such a message emanating from the Legislative Assembly at the time when it is about to deliberate on the first-ever budget of the elected government in the past seven years, spoils the atmosphere. Let it be conceded and understood in clearest terms that there is no way which can lead to the restoration of Article 370. The abrogation adopted by Parliament had the backing of the whole of the country. The Supreme Court had put a stamp on its legal validity. And, apart from that an unprecedented majority in the country has given it thumbs up. There, at the moment, or the decades later, nothing is going to happen to reverse August 5, 2019 decision of abolition of Article 370. This thought is too imaginary to be given any consideration.

The revival of debate on Article 370 is uncalled for. It is part of history the pages of which will not be read again.

### NEWS ANALYSIS

The world is moving and so should J&K. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah have put every effort to put J&K on path of progress by making it a land of opportunities for future, which can be assessed in two ways. The peace that has dawned on this land after decades of turmoil that brought only disaster. This peace is a magnet for investment, which will create opportunities of new world visiting J&K. Second, the youth of the UT will get to know the technological and scientific advances of the world from very close quarters. That will prepare them to avail opportunities to shape their future outside J&K. That is what the whole underlined idea of integration was. That has been given wings with the removal of Article 370 from the constitution where it sat for

70 years. At this point in time, when the budget session is on, the members from treasury and opposition benches must realize that the people from all their constituencies had been waiting for the elected MLAs to highlight their issues, what their constituency needs and how that can be fulfilled. The highlighting of the issues is important and at the same time it is important that how these people-centric issues are weaved into a politically positive narrative. That will demonstrate how serious and smart is the leadership in placing newer and positive things in the public domain, where they shed the impression, and that is needed too, that they talk about their past and conflict only. Time to come out of the mindset of conflict.

J&K needs an image makeover. It needs positive narrative and real-time discussion on real issues so that the people in the central government can

understand things better. The Centre can respond with more positive measures. It is not necessary that J&K should be known only by its history of acrimonious d-old debates. That dig the gold in the old narratives would land J&K nowhere. Those seeking to do that would be doing a great injustice to their people, who elected them to air their grievances and day-to-day issues. How would a debate on the Article 370 benefit tourism sector or economy or bring infrastructural development. That will not result in adding new schools, hospitals and other institutions. Then, we are back to square one. Help avoid that.

BJP too would have to restrain itself from overreaction. The party should have its agenda. Since it has got all its seats from Jammu region, it must have a roadmap for the people of this region, which has always been victim of the political games. No longer. They also do not want to go back to square one.