

!! Continuations from Page 1 !! Nari Shakti's impact...

Women-Led Development has begun in the UT of J&K. Today, our Nari Shakti are scripting their own success stories and have become the active partner in the development journey of Jammu Kashmir," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He called upon the artists, artisans, NGOs, teachers, entrepreneurs and various stakeholders to work collectively for women empowerment and to ensure that the benefits of government schemes dedicated to Nari Shakti percolate to grassroots.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor felicitated the women achievers and students. He also visited the stalls put up by the women artists and artisans.

Organizations and individuals were also felicitated for their contribution to the empowerment of women. Priya Sethi, former Minister of State; Sanjogita Dogra, Founder, Buddha Art & Painting; senior officers from Police and Civil Administration; heads of various educational institutions, women achievers, artists, artisans, teachers and students were present.

Govt planning to...

host them," he said, adding, "We do not want to build massive hotels there. If big hotels are built, local people will not benefit from them."

"At present we need to focus more on homestays. For this, MLAs should help us and involve local people in this.

In response to another supplementary question from member Nazir Ahmad Khan Gurezi, the Chief Minister informed the House that the government would identify unskilled youth in border areas like Karnah, Keran, Machhil, and Gurez so that they can be trained in ITIs and the Institute of Hotel Management, Srinagar, to develop skills and trades relevant to tourism.

"In my Budget speech yesterday, I stated that our focus is on skills and entrepreneurship so that youth are equipped with skills and provided handholding to build their future in Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

Member Saifullah Mir suggested the establishment of a Tourism Development Authority to boost local tourism in these destinations.

Earlier, replying to the starred question, the Chief Minister stated that Karnah region is known for its breathtaking landscapes, rich cultural heritage and strategic location near the Line of Control (LoC), he said.

He further said that Teetwal, Karanoo in Navagabra, and Budhambal villages possess natural beauty and tourism potential.

"These areas offer breathtaking landscapes, lush meadows and have cultural significance, making them attractive destinations for tourism. These areas have the potential for nature tourism, adventure tourism, and cross-border heritage tourism," he said. He stated that the Department of Tourism has taken several initiatives to bring these villages onto the tourist map.

"In order to promote pilgrim tourism in Karnah Constituency, the J&K Tourism Department has projected the construction of 'Yatri Niwas' at Sharda Temple at Teetwal, Kupwara, along with a cafeteria," he said.

CM Omar Abdullah said that the Construction of Yatri Niwas at Sharda Temple at Teetwal, Kupwara, along with a cafeteria is currently in progress, with the preparation of the Detailed Project Report (DPR) underway. The project cost is estimated at Ra 150 Lakh.

He informed that House that the Border Tourism Festival was organized by the Tourism Department in border areas to promote tourism. "The festival was held at Teetwal in September 2022 and featured cultural and musical events, an ATV rally from Kupwara to Teetwal, nature photography sessions, trekking, camping, and horse riding," the CM said.

He added that Yoga Festival was organized by the Tourism Department in collaboration with other departments in the Teetwal area of the Karnah constituency on June 21, 2024, to promote tourism in the area.

J&K has debt...

Rs 2,38,677 crore. The public debt of Rs 83,010 crore constitutes 66 per cent of the total on-budget outstanding debt in FY 2024, including internal debt of Rs 82,300 crore and Rs 710 crore in advances from Government of India.

Another major component of the on-budget outstanding debt is the provident fund, which accounts for 21 per cent of the total debt.

The ESR also highlighted that over the past decade, the proportion of internal debt to total on-budget outstanding debt has risen from 55 per cent to 66 per cent, while the share of the provident fund has decreased from 27 per cent to 21 per cent.

The debt as a percentage of GSDP has increased from 47 per cent in FY2014 to 51 per cent in FY2024.

Bank loan against...

different gold ornaments as security for the repayment of their respective loans amounting to the tune of Rs.40 Lakhs (approx.) for Canara Bank, Branch Gangval which were proposed to be sanctioned to the said accused persons, official said adding that on the receipt of the aforesaid gold items from the accused M/S Verma Ornaments, Gold Valuer who was an approved valuer (Gold Appraiser) of the bank for assessing the gold items, was called in the office of the complainant at Canara Bank, Gangval Branch on different dates to assess the weight of the aforesaid gold items to verify the genuineness and purity of the same.

The accused M/S Verma Ornaments Prop Kewal Krishan on different dates issued certificates certifying the gross and net weight of the gold items in the shape of gold ornaments submitted by the accused persons as security for their respective loan accounts, CB official said adding that the aforesaid certificates were issued under his stamp in presence of the accused persons.

On the strength of the aforesaid certificates, official said, the Canara Bank at Gangval Branch had processed the cases and sanctioned loan to the accused persons as per the sanctioned terms and the amount was also disbursed and credited in the accounts of accused persons on different dates which was to be repaid along with interest.

"The accused persons failed to maintain the financial discipline and could not service the EMIs in time and defaulted in making the payment. Subsequently, several requests were made by the complainant Bank through its Manager Gangval Branch to make the payment but the accused persons did not make the payment," Official said.

It is a routine of the Bank to get the Gold verified (Reappraised) on quarterly basis and in this regard, the said branch of Canara Bank got the gold items verified including the gold items of all the accused persons, but to the surprise of the complainant Bank, it was found that the net weight of the gold items submitted by the accused persons were way less than the figures given by the accused, official added.

It appeared that the Kewal Krishan (Gold Valuer) (Prop. M/S Verma Ornaments), son of Mulkh Raj, near PNB Narwal Bala, Jammu and Deepak Dhallam (Prop. M/S Deepak Jewellers), son of Romesh Chander, resident of H.No.103, W.No.10 Bishnah (Gold Valuer) Gold Valuers in connivance with the accused persons had hatched the criminal conspiracy to commit fraud by getting the credit facilities in the form of Term Loan and OD Limit from the Canara Bank by depositing the spurious/impure Gold items which had been verified as pure Gold items by the aforesaid Gold Valuers.

Senior Superintendent of Police Crime Jammu Benam Tosh confirmed that FIR 13/2025 has been registered and in-depth investigation started as the contents of the complaints and preliminary verification report prima-facie revealed commission of cognizable offence.

Chugh extends Women's...

Taking a sharp dig at the Congress party, Chugh accused them of indulging in appeasement politics and pseudo-secularism to an extreme extent. He alleged that the Congress leadership has surrendered its ideology, flag, and agenda at the office of the Muslim League, compromising the interests of the nation for political gains.

He also criticized the INDI Alliance, saying that its leaders are actively engaged in a conspiracy to divide the nation on the lines of language, region, caste, religion, and sect, with the backing of foreign toolkits.

Chugh reaffirmed the BJP's commitment to national unity and inclusive development, emphasizing that women's empowerment and national integrity remain top priorities under the Modi government.

765 school buildings...

the unsafe structures or buildings to safeguard the lives of the students and staff.

Further, the damaged or dilapidated buildings of the School Education Department are being assessed by the PW (R&B) Department on a case-to-case basis, and if any building is found unsafe, the same is declared unsafe and is not put to use, he said.

In addition, every private school is required to submit a building safety certificate to the Department of School Education for granting recognition, he said.

In the Health Department, safety audits are being done on a case-to-case basis and the repair, renovation and extension works of hospital buildings are taken up as per the need assessment and technical feasibility which inter-alia includes the safety parameters for carrying out any such work, the deputy chief minister said.

He said it is apt to mention that based on the technical opinion, in a couple of cases, Block A of the district hospital, Anantnag was concluded at G+2 level instead of G+4 and 'Rehmat-e-Alam' hospital building located at Sarnal in Anantnag was declared unsafe for hospital usage by IIT Jammu during the safety audit.

General discussion on...

Tariq Hameed Karra, while speaking on the proposed budgetary provisions, said that there is rosy positivity in the budget touching all the social sectors. However, he said that the issue of daily wagers, anganwadi workers, filling up of vacant posts, rehabilitation of Kashmiri pandits should have found due prominence in the budget.

He also talked in detail about other social aspects and economic aspects, sustainable tourism and mineral exploitation among other things. He said that we carry a profound responsibility on our shoulders towards the welfare of the people who have voted for us for the good of the community and we are duty bound to respect the mandate of the people.

Arjun Singh Raju extended his whole support to the budget presented by Omar Abdullah saying that it is a vision, roadmap and commitment to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. He said that the budget stands as a beacon of hope ensuring that no section of the society is left behind in terms of growth and development.

Tanvir Sadiq, while participating in the discussion, said that it is a historic moment that such a budget has been presented in Jammu and Kashmir despite the UT being heavily deficit.

"It is the first budget of our government and it is a good beginning despite facing a very difficult situation. All the promises made with the people will be fulfilled in a phased manner," he maintained.

Sunil Bharadwaj said that the budget does not reflect the aspirations of the people completely.

Nazir Gurezi, while speaking on the occasion, said that it is an extremely balanced budget that has taken care of most of the downtrodden people.

"It is the first budget of our government and the people will witness our progress and performance in the next five years. We will address all issues in due course of time," he said.

Balwant Singh Mankotia hailed the support being provided to the UT of Jammu and Kashmir by the Union Government.

Farooq Shah said that it is a remarkable budget as it has taken care of every section of the society, particularly its focus on women empowerment, tourism, 200 units of free electricity and marriage assistance among other things. He said that Jammu and Kashmir can come up as Switzerland of Asia if we fully explore the tourism potential of the Union territory.

Kashmir received 13...

Jammu, Kashmir received more foreign tourists in the last four years, the survey said. The number of foreign tourists in J-K has risen manifold in the last four years -- from 1,650 in 2021 to 65,452 in 2024.

The Economic Survey stated that the J-K Tourism Department's extensive promotional campaigns, both within and outside J-K, have produced impressive results.

Participation in various national and international events and active digital and social media promotion has significantly increased tourist visits, it said. The 3rd Tourism Working Meeting of the G20, held in Srinagar from May 22 to 24, 2023, brought J-K into the global spotlight, marking a crucial moment for its tourism sector.

The survey also highlighted that the highest-ever number of yatrins in the last 10 years was recorded for the annual Amarnath Yatra in 2024.

"Off-beat tourist destinations and Border Area Tourist Destinations are also witnessing huge footfall. Tourism is directly/indirectly creating employment opportunities for the locals," it said.

Referring to the famous ropeway project -- the Gulmarg Gondola, the official data suggests the cable car project saw over 7.68 lakh visitors in 2024, generating Rs 103 crore in revenue.

The government said it endeavours to make tourism in J-K an enriching experience for tourists, increase livelihood opportunities for the people and position the region as a leading global destination by 2025, aiming to make it a destination that is natural in its environment, global in standards, modern in outlook, traditional in hospitality, mystical in sensibilities, and entertaining in experience.

Looking ahead to increasing tourist footfall, the government said it aims to achieve the desired results by focusing on various aspects such as high-class tented accommodations, five-star hotels, skiing products, adventure activities, eco-tourism parks, golf tourism, wellness tourism and the development of international institutes with private sector participation.

Promoting leisure sports and establishing health and wellness centers at various tourist spots are also on the agenda. Infrastructure facilities are being developed to bring new destinations and areas onto J-K's tourism map.

New trekking routes and pilgrim/Sufi circuits are also being identified and promoted to connect famous shrines with lesser-known pilgrimage places. These measures collectively aim to enhance the appeal of Jammu and Kashmir as a burgeoning tourist destination, the Economic Survey said.

Govt bound by...

anywhere else. This should not have happened," he added.

Abdullah also took aim at the media, accusing it of bias. "You should raise such issues. Your media never tells the truth. It is scared. If someone wants to suppress the truth, they do it through you," the former chief minister of the erstwhile state said.

Calling for greater women's participation in governance, he said, "Men should respect women. We passed a bill in Parliament to empower women but who knows when it will be implemented."

Abdullah also urged women to take charge in the upcoming local body and municipal elections.

"If women do not fight their own battles, they will not get their rights. Bring educated women to the forefront, those who can fight for you," he said.

Highlighting his family's contributions to education in Jammu and Kashmir, he said, "My father gave you free education from school to the university. After the formation of the Union Territory, education is free up to Class 4. I granted 50 per cent reservation in medical colleges but people went to the Supreme Court against it. You will have to fight for your rights." Abdullah also pledged to push for greater economic and social opportunities for women. "In five years of governance, we (National Conference government) will ensure the best possible growth for women in all sectors," he said.

The National Conference chief also recalled his own upbringing as he called for greater respect for women. "My father was always in jail or in the mountains. My mother raised me. She made me a human being," he said.

Women's safety our...

gang-rape case in Surat within 15 days of the incident and the culprits were sentenced to life imprisonment within a few weeks.

Modi said blessings of women were his greatest strength and protective shield.

"I am the wealthiest person in the world. My statement will raise hackles of some listeners. But I will reiterate that I am the wealthiest person in the world -- not in terms of money, but because of the blessings from crores of mothers, sisters and daughters. These blessings are my greatest strength, capital, and protective shield," Modi said.

Respecting women is the first step towards the development of society and the nation. India is now walking on the path of women-led development for the rapid progress of the country, Modi said.

"Our government places utmost importance on 'samman' (honour) and 'suvidha' (facilities) for women. We built thousands of toilets and gave dignity to women. Our government brought in stringent law against triple talaq and saved lives of lakhs of Muslim women from being destroyed," the prime minister said.

He stressed the need to empower women from rural parts.

"(Mahatma) Gandhiji used to say that the country's soul lies in its villages. I would like to add that women are the soul of our rural areas, and the soul of rural India resides in empowerment of rural women," Modi said. Our government has prioritised women's rights and opportunities, he said. During the Navsari programme, the PM disbursed Rs 450 crore in financial assistance to more than 2.5 lakh women from over 25,000 SHGs. A security force comprising only women police personnel was deployed at the event to mark International Women's Day.

Three Jr Scale...

presently posted as Under Secretary, Culture Department, has been transferred and his services are placed at the disposal of Transport Department, for further Posting; and Mohsina Irshad, Jr. Scale JKAS, presently posted as Assistant Director; Handicrafts, Srinagar, has been transferred and her services are placed at the disposal of Hospitality and Protocol Department for further posting.

JKBOSE registers 37 unfair-means cases in one day

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Continuing its inspection drive to enforce discipline in the conduct of the examinations, the JKBOSE officials have framed unfair-means cases against 37 erring students on Saturday. The Board had constituted 40 teams, which fanned over across the length and breadth of the union territory for guarding integrity of the examinations and ensuring a strict check over the invigilation staff.

The Board had asked the School Education department also to constitute vigilance teams to supplement the efforts of the Board in ensuring transparency in the examinations. The BOSE has cautioned the centre superintendents to be extra cautious in discharging their duties and help the Board in the conduct of the smooth and transparent examinations.

MLA Ramnagar calls J&K Budget as visionless, misleading

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Dr. Sunil Bharadwaj, legislator from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Ramnagar Constituency, delivered a speech in the Jammu & Kashmir Assembly on Saturday, critically analyzing the budget presented by the government. He highlighted the transformation of J&K since the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A in 2019 and credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah for bringing stability, investment, and development to the region.

Dr. Bharadwaj pointed out that the government itself has acknowledged the instability, lack of private sector participation, and economic stagnation that plagued Jammu & Kashmir for 70 years. However, post-2019, there has been a drastic shift, leading to improved security, economic growth, and governance. He emphasized that the state's economy has grown from ₹1 trillion in 2015 to ₹3 trillion today.

Dr. Bharadwaj accused the Chief Minister of misleading the Assembly by claiming that the budget aligns with the aspirations of the people. He rejected this outright, arguing that the budget is identical to last year's bureaucratically drafted budget and lacks any forward-looking vision. He criticized the government for failing to consult MLAs from different constituencies while drafting the budget, making the entire process an "eye-wash."

The budget, he claimed, completely ignores Kashmiri Pandits, casual labourers, Adhoc workers, school cooks, and 69% of the youth in the UT. He also noted that the revenue and capital expenditure allocation is only 29%, questioning the state's financial planning.

SKUAST-J celebrates International Women's Day

STATE TIMES NEWS

REASI: Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology-Jammu (SKUAST-J) celebrated the International Women's Day at Aghar Jitto village (Reasi) which was attended by a large number of rural women of the district. The programme was organised under the dynamic stewardship of Vice Chancellor Prof.B.N. Tripathi and able guidance of Director Extension Prof.Amrish Vaid of SKUAST-J.

Director Research, Prof. S.K Gupta and Dean of Student Welfare, Dr. Sudhakar Divedi of SKUAST-J also graced the occasion. The programme was inaugurated by the Chief Guest, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor Prof.B.N. Tripathi. He spoke on the significance of event and spoke in length on gender equality and women's rights. The programme was coordinated by Dr.HemaTripathi, Associate Director Extension, who stressed on the empowerment of rural women as they play a crucial role in raising the economy of the nation.

Special Guest of the event, Mission Director, JKRLM, Dr. Shubhra Sharma stressed on the female literacy and asked participants to provide quality education to their female children. Prem Lata, Sarpanch, Aghar-Jitto spoke on entrepreneurship development in agriculture and stressed on the post-harvest technologies by which extra income and employment can be created among the rural women.

Dr. Anil Gupta, Health Officer, Dr.Sushma Gupta also spoke on the occasion.

The proceedings of the programme were carried by Ms.Pooja Nair, Deputy Director, SAMETI, SKUAST-J. The programme was attended by Dr.Banarsi Lal, Chief Scientist & Head, KVK Reasi, Dr.Pooja, Associate Professor, Div. of Vegetables Science, SKUAST-J, Dr. Vijay Kumar Sharma, DDE, Dr. Lalit Upadhyay, Dr. Mandeeep Singh Azad, Dr. Sanjay Koushal, Adarsh Gupta, DDM, NABARD, Jugal Magotra, Nodal Officer, JKRLM and others. The programme was assisted by Dr. Jagdish Kumar, ManoharLal and Md. Iqbal and concluded by Dr. Banarsi Lal with the formal vote of thanks.

Bodies of 3 missing persons found near waterfall

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Bodies of a teenager and his two relatives were recovered near a waterfall in the higher reaches of Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district on Saturday, three days after they were reported missing during a marriage function at their home, officials said. The bodies of Varun Singh (15) of Dehota, his uncle Yogesh Singh (32) and maternal uncle Darshan Singh (40) were sighted in Ishu Nallah in Malhar area by drones during a joint search operation by police and the Army late this afternoon, the officials said.

The bodies were later retrieved from the scene after a hectic effort as the area was steep, the officials said, adding preliminary investigation ruled out terror angle as there were no visible marks of injury on the bodies. The exact cause of their death would be known only after a postmortem, they said.

The officials said Darshan's brother Brijesh was getting married and the trio had left in advance for the bride's home at Lohai Malhar in the Billawar Tehsil at around 5.30 pm on the fateful day. However, Darshan made the last call to his home around 8.30 pm, informing them that they had lost their way. As they failed to return home, a search operation by police and the Army was launched to trace them as the area witnessed several terror incidents, including an attack on an Army vehicle that left five soldiers dead, last year. B/JP legislator Satesh Sharma had raised the issue in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly on Friday. "I want to inform the House about three missing civilians. We seek answers from the government," Sharma said.

On February 16, bodies of two villagers -- Shamsheer (37) and Roshan (45) -- were found at village Kohag in Billawar and their postmortem revealed they were strangled to death.

Haq Insaaf Council honours trailblazing women at Women Achiever's Award 2025

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Jammu Kashmir Haq Insaaf Council (Movement for Right and Justice) successfully hosted the prestigious Women Achiever's Award "Woman of Substance" 2025 at the Amar Singh Club, Jammu on International Women's Day.

The event celebrated the remarkable contributions of women who have demonstrated strength, leadership, and resilience across various fields.

Divisional Commissioner Ramesh Kumar, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest, recognizing the outstanding accomplishments of the awardees. The program was further dignified by the presence of Prof. Monika Sethi from University of Jammu; SP South Ajay Sharma and Rafiq Jaral, SDM South Jammu as Guest of Honour; Dr. Sayantan Mondal from IIT Jammu attended as the Special Guest. The event commenced with welcome address by Advocate Zeshan Syed, Chairman of Haq Insaaf Council, and was hosted by Momina, who ensured seamless proceedings. The "Woman of Substance" award was conferred upon outstanding women for their exceptional achievements. The awardees included Dr. Sunniya Wani (JKPS), Dr. Monica Narang , Dr. Mehar Rather, Dr. Upasana Sharma, Dr. Rajneesh Khajuria, Ms. Anuradha, Dr. Monika Bharadwaj, Preeti Sharma, Sherya Sareen, Dr. Kartika Bakshi, Dr. Pooja Sharma, Sakshi Sawhney, Yogita Sharma, Arvinder Kour, Rupali Puri, Adeela Khan, Shalini (JKAS), Advocate Upasna Thakur, Advocate Alisha Kohli, Advocate Supriya Singh Chauhan, Advocate Sugandh Gandotra, Preeti Choudhary and renowned singer Sonali Dogra. Dr. Mehar Rather presented her vote of thanks.

Divisional Commissioner Jammu Ramesh Kumar commended the extraordinary courage and determination of the awardees, stressing that recognizing their accomplishments is essential for fostering an equitable society. Professor Monika Sethi highlighted the transformative power of education and legal awareness in empowering women and dismantling structural barriers.

The event's success was made possible through the dedicated efforts of the organizing committee, which included Dr. Nitan Sharma, Basharat Hussain, Waseem Qureshi, Rumak Zeshan, Sameer, and others. Saima Qazi, a journalist, shared her insights on the challenges faced by women in media, and senior journalist Pankaj Khajuria was also present, adding further significance to the occasion.