

CM reviews stock position of LPG, petrol, essential commodities amid middle-east crisis

■ Reviews arrangements for Eid, Navratras
■ Directs strict vigil against hoarding, black marketing; asks administration to keep public regularly informed

STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday chaired a high-level meeting to review the stock position of essential commodities and petroleum products in Jammu and Kashmir in view of the upcoming festivals of Eid and Navratras and the prevailing geopolitical situation in West Asia.

The meeting was attended by Ministers Sakina Itoo and Satish Sharma, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Principal Secretary Home, Commissioner Secretary Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Commissioner Secretary Information, heads of departments, Deputy Commissioners of all districts, Director Information, Executive Director Indian oil Corporation Ltd Ashutosh Gupta, representatives of oil companies, and other concerned officers. The outstation officers attended the meeting through online mode.

During the meeting, the Chief Minister reviewed the availability and supply position of petroleum products, Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and other essential commodities across Jammu & Kashmir.

Addressing the officers, the Chief Minister emphasized that the administration must remain vigilant and proactive to ensure that no artificial scarcity, hoarding or black marketing is allowed to take place in any district.

"I think the administration as a whole is well aware of the situation and also on top of things. I would just like to reiterate that while the Food and Supplies Department does its work, this must be complemented and supplemented in the districts," the Chief Minister said. He directed all Deputy Commissioners to main-



Chief Minister Omar Abdullah chairing a high-level meeting at Srinagar.

tain strict oversight at the district level to ensure smooth supply and fair distribution of essential commodities. "Ensuring that there is no hoarding, artificial scarcity or black market conditions created will require strong oversight at the district level. Since all districts and Deputy Commissioners are connected to this meeting, please take these instructions on board," he said.

The Chief Minister further stressed that the administration must remain alert as the duration of the current crisis remains uncertain.

"We don't know how long this will last. It could last a couple of days, it could last a few weeks. Let us assume it may last longer than we are comfortable with. Therefore, the alert that we are on must continue to ensure that no artificial scarcity or black marketing situations are created," he said.

He also directed the Information Department to keep the public regularly informed about the stock position and supply of essential commodities to prevent rumours and panic buying.

"Ensure that the Information Department keeps people informed on a regular basis so that we keep reassuring people about our strong position and the available supplies.

By detailing the steps taken and the stock position, we can ensure that elements trying to misuse the situation are not able to do so," the Chief Minister said.

The Chief Minister also directed the administration to maintain constant vigil over the availability of commercial LPG, particularly in view of the ongoing Navratras, the upcoming Eid and the beginning of the tourist season. He called for taking inputs from stakeholders such as restaurateurs and hoteliers before any rationing of commercial LPG supply is undertaken in view of tourist inflow expected and festive seasons ahead.

Earlier during the meeting, Minister Satish Sharma, who holds the portfolio of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, shared inputs and drew attention to certain elements that may attempt to exploit the prevailing situation. He assured the meeting that any unscrupulous elements trying to take advantage of the circumstances would be dealt with strictly and made an example of.

Similarly, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo stressed that Deputy Commissioners must ensure that no violations such as black marketing, hoarding or profiteering occur in their respective districts. He directed them to extend all possible support to

the Legal Metrology and Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs departments to ensure effective monitoring and enforcement during the current situation.

Commissioner Secretary Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Saurabh Bhagat gave a detailed presentation on the supply and stock position of petroleum products and LPG in Jammu and Kashmir.

The presentation highlighted that despite the global disruptions affecting the stock position of petroleum products and LPG in Jammu and Kashmir remains stable.

The meeting was informed that adequate reserves of petrol, diesel and LPG are available across storage facilities and distributorships in J&K.

To ensure sustained availability and prevent misuse, several regulatory measures have been implemented.

The meeting was also informed that the Delivery Authentication Code (DAC) system has been introduced to ensure that LPG cylinders are delivered only to genuine consumers. Oil marketing companies have also launched an e-KYC campaign to verify customer authenticity and identify inactive or duplicate LPG connections.

Regarding non-domestic LPG supplies, a temporary cap of 20 percent of the average monthly consumption has been placed, while ensuring uninterrupted supply to essential institutions such as hospitals and educational establishments.

The presentation further informed that the Government of India has provided an ad-hoc allocation of 468 kilolitres of PDS Superior Kerosene Oil (SKO) for cooking and lighting purposes, primarily targeting vulnerable groups including Antyodaya Anna Yojana families.

RAJYA SABHA POLLS Soon



Dr Darakhshan chairs meetings with Administration for arrangements on Eid

STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Waqf Board Chairperson Dr Syed Darakhshan Andrabi chaired the meeting with the officers of different government departments at the Central Office of the Board in Srinagar for taking stock of the Eid-al-Fitr and Shab-e-Qadr today.

The meeting was attended by Assistant Commissioner Pulwama Shahbaz Ahmad Bodha, Assistant Commissioner Revenue Ganderbal Dr Salahuddin Senior Superintendent of Police CID Peerzada Naveed, Superintendent of Police Security Kashmir Saleem Jahangir, Superintendent of Police Headquarters Umar Shah, Chief Medical Officer Tahir Sajad, Deputy Director Health Services Dr Saba Wani, Deputy Director Divisional Commissioner's Office Ashiq Hussain Bhat, Chief Animal



Husbandry Officer Dr Suhail, DySP Traffic Srinagar Mehboob Ahmad, Chief Proctor Kashmir University Riyaz Ahmad Qureshi, District Srinagar head Animal Husbandry Dr Mohammed Ashraf, Information Officer DIPR Shabbir Ahmad, Zonal Sanitation Officer Srinagar Municipal Corporation Mohammed Lateef Shah, Poultry Development Officer Dr Arjumand, Engineer Munawar Ahmad Bhat & Engineer Mohammed Yousuf from Power Development Department & Public Health

Engineering Department respectively. Waqf Board Executive Magistrate Ishfaq Mohiuddin was also present in the meeting.

After a broad base review of the arrangements for Shab-e-Qadr and Eid-al-Fitr in whole of the Kashmir division, a roadmap for coordinated efforts by all departments along with the management of the Waqf Board was discussed and a few decisions were taken.

Speaking on the occasion, Waqf Chairperson Dr Andrabi said that we are always tested by the huge expectations from the people and our hard work and proper management can only fetch us the desired results.

Waqf Chairperson thanked the administration and the people for their support to the Board in finalising the fool proof arrangements for the festivals at all major places of religious importance.

Devyani Rana inaugurates Mathwar FPO Office at Agore, calls for strengthening farmers through cooperative initiatives

STATE TIMES NEWS

MATHWAR: MLA Nagrota Devyani Rana on Monday inaugurated the office of the Mathwar Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO) at Agore and launched a one-day awareness programme to educate farmers about the functioning and benefits of Farmer Producer Organisations.

Describing the occasion as a "dream come true," the MLA recalled the vision of her late father Devender Singh Rana, former legislator of the constituency, who had worked tirelessly for the welfare of farmers in the region. She said it was his commitment and determination that led to the registration and sanctioning of The Mathwar Farmer Producer Organisation Cooperative Limited, laying the foundation for institutional support to the farming community.

Rana said that the inauguration of the FPO office marks the realization of that vision and a significant step towards empowering farmers through collective initiatives and cooperative efforts.

The Mathwar FPO has been established with financial assistance from the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC), a Government of India institution that promotes cooperative develop-



MLA Nagrota Devyani Rana inaugurating office Mathwar Farmer Producer Organisation at Agore.

ment across the country. The initiative aims to empower farmers by enabling them to work collectively, improve productivity, access better markets and enhance their income through organized agricultural activities.

Speaking on the occasion, Devyani Rana said that Farmer Producer Organisations have emerged as an important instrument for strengthening the rural economy and improving the socio-economic condition of farmers. She emphasized that the cooperative model encourages collective action, strengthens bargaining power and enables farmers to benefit from economies of scale.

"FPOs provide a strong platform for farmers to come together, share resources and collectively address challenges faced in agriculture. Through such organisations, farmers can

access quality inputs, modern technologies, credit facilities and improved marketing opportunities," she said.

Addressing progressive farmers of Block Mathwar during the awareness programme organized under the Central Sector Scheme for Promotion of FPOs, the MLA said cooperatives embody the true spirit of collective progress by uniting individuals, pooling resources and creating opportunities for equitable development.

She observed that in recent years the cooperative sector has received significant institutional support at the national level, revitalizing grassroots organisations and enabling them to play a vital role in promoting rural prosperity, entrepreneurship and self-reliance.

The newly inaugurated Mathwar FPO office at Agore is expected to serve as

a key hub for farmers of the surrounding areas, enabling them to coordinate activities, receive technical guidance and expand agricultural enterprises through cooperative efforts, she added.

Speaking on the occasion, Lalit Goel, Regional Director NCDC, informed that the Mathwar FPO has been sanctioned a management cost assistance of Rs 42 lakh along with an equity grant of up to Rs 15 lakh to strengthen its institutional functioning and support member farmers. He said the FPO will also be eligible under the 85 percent Credit Guarantee Scheme, facilitating easier access to credit for agricultural activities.

He further informed that Automatic Weather Stations (AWS) worth Rs 4.50 lakh each will be installed at the FPO office to provide real-time weather data for better crop planning and risk management.

On the occasion, Vikrant Dogra, Chairman of Unati Agri Allied and Marketing Multi-State Cooperative Society Ltd. and Chairman and CEO of the Jammu and Kashmir Dairy Cooperative Federation Ltd., also addressed the gathering and highlighted the role of the Cooperative Department in strengthening farmer-based organisations.

CSIR-IIIM launches three-day Hands-on Training Programme on HPLC to boost scientific skills

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A three-day Hands-on Training Programme on High Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC) began on Monday at the CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (CSIR-IIIM) in Jammu under the CSIR Integrated Skill Initiative, bringing together researchers, scholars and students from various institutions across Jammu and Kashmir and other parts of the country.

The training programme aims to enhance technical skills and provide practical exposure in advanced analytical techniques widely used in pharmaceutical research, natural product chemistry and quality control of medicinal formulations.

Addressing the inaugural session, Director of CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine, Dr. Zabeer Ahmed, welcomed the participants and highlighted the importance of skill-based scientific training in strengthening research capacity and innovation in the country.

He noted that participants from institutions such as All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, Central University of Jammu, Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University, and several other academic and research organizations have joined the programme.

Dr. Ahmed said the training would be conducted as a two-way interactive learning process, encouraging participants to actively engage with experts and gain hands-on experience rather than simply attending lectures.

He also spoke about the institute's pivotal role in drug discovery and natural



Director CSIR-IIIM, Dr. Zabeer Ahmed with participants and others.

product research, stating that CSIR-IIIM has been contributing significantly to the development of new pharmaceutical molecules and technologies derived from plant and microbial sources.

Highlighting the importance of analytical techniques such as HPLC, he said such technologies are essential for ensuring quality control, standardization and safety of medicines, particularly in traditional Indian systems of medicine such as Ayurveda, Unani and Siddha.

Proper analytical validation, he added, helps identify active molecules, detect impurities such as heavy metals, and ensure that formulations meet global quality standards.

Dr Ahmed also emphasised the growing importance of integrating traditional medicinal knowledge with modern scientific techniques, noting that such collaborations are key to developing phytopharmaceuticals and globally competitive healthcare products.

Earlier, Head of the Quality Management and Instrumentation Division, Rajkishor Rai, delivered the welcome address and outlined the objectives of the programme. Maqsood Ahmed, Senior Scientist, introduced

the participants and presented an overview of the training schedule.

Abdul Rahim, Chief Scientist and Head of RMBD and IST at the Srinagar branch of CSIR-IIIM, also shared his remarks during the inaugural session, highlighting the need for advanced instrumentation training in modern research laboratories. The vote of thanks was delivered by Nasir ul Rasheed, Principal Scientist.

The first day of the programme featured a detailed lecture on "Introduction to HPLC: Principles, Instrumentation and Applications", followed by laboratory orientation and an overview of the institute's analytical facilities. Participants later took part in hands-on training on sample preparation and analysis using HPLC systems under the guidance of experts and technical officers.

The training programme will continue for the next two days, focusing on practical demonstrations, advanced analytical workflows and real-time experimentation, enabling participants to develop essential skills required for research in pharmaceutical sciences, biotechnology and quality assurance laboratories.

SMVDSB reviews arrangements ahead of Chaitra Navratras

STATE TIMES NEWS

KATRA: In view of the forthcoming Chaitra Navratras commencing from March 19, 2026, the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) as per the directions of the Chairman, SMVDSB (Lt. Governor, JK-UT), convened a meeting to review the arrangements for ensuring the smooth conduct of the Yatra and facilitating the large influx of pilgrims expected to visit the Holy Shrine during the Navratras.

The meeting was presided over by Sachin Kumar Vaishya, Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB, at the Spiritual Growth Centre, Katra. Detailed deliberations were held on various aspects of Yatra management including crowd regulation, security deployment, disaster preparedness and pilgrim facilitation along the entire track leading to the Holy Shrine.

While reviewing decoration arrangements, emphasis was laid on the use of non-synthetic materials to curtail fire hazards. The representative of the Fire and Emergency Services was directed to conduct a comprehensive fire safety audit of the track and the Shrine area and ensure



CEO, SMVDSB, Sachin Kumar Vaishya chairing a meeting.

the operational readiness of fire-fighting vehicles and personnel at strategic locations to strengthen emergency response during the Navratras.

The concerned quarters were directed to strictly enforce the RFID-based Yatra Cards, ensuring that only pilgrims possessing valid RFID cards are permitted to undertake the Yatra. To facilitate effective implementation, additional personnel will be deployed at key checkpoints and regular public announcements will be made to guide and sensitize pilgrims. It was also decided that during periods of heavy rush, the alternate tracks will be optimally utilized to regulate pilgrim movement and ensure effective crowd management. The CEO further emphasized the

need for close coordination among all stakeholders to establish a robust and responsive security framework in line with the requirements.

The meeting further emphasized stringent verification of Pithoos and Ponywalls including regular documentation checks, to prevent impersonation and ensure that only authorized service providers operate along the Yatra track.

The deployment of additional security personnel was also deliberated to further strengthen area domination and maintain strict vigil. Besides, the use of advanced wireless communication sets for seamless coordination during monitoring through the Integrated Command and Control Centre was discussed, aimed at enhancing real-time communication,

surveillance and overall security management in and around the Shrine area.

Special attention was also drawn towards addressing traffic congestion caused by unauthorized parking and it was decided that a special enforcement drive will be undertaken to tow away such vehicles. Besides, arrangements for effective crowd management at the Railway Station, Katra were also reviewed in detail in view of the anticipated surge in pilgrim arrivals during the Navratra period.

The Senior Superintendent of Police, Reasi, assured foolproof security arrangements and presented a detailed security grid which includes deployment of Quick Response Teams (QRTs) and a multi-tier security setup comprising Police, CRPF and other security agencies.

Among others, the meeting was attended by the Addl. Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB; SP Katra; SDM Bhawan; Assistant CEOs, SMVDSB; Tehsildars, Katra and SMVDSB; SDPOs Katra and Bhawan; officers from CRPF and Army; ACE, SMVDSB and representatives from Fire & Emergency Services and other allied agencies.

Manuscript preservation in J&K gains momentum

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Department of Archives, Archaeology & Museums in collaboration with Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA), Regional Centre J&K, on Monday organised a 3-day workshop-cum-training program on 'Gyan Bharatam Mission' and launch of National Survey of Manuscripts at Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (IIIM), Canal Road Jammu. Principal Secretary, Culture Department, Brij Mohan Sharma, highlighted various aspects of implementation of the central sponsored flagship programme besides importance of this awareness cum training programme regarding survey and conservation of manuscripts. The Principal Secretary said that this GoI's flagship programme was launched by the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi in September 2025 at an International Conference in Delhi. The program aims to identify, catalogue and digitize approximately one crore manuscripts across the country and conserve them using scientific technology, making the documents accessible in the public domain for scholars worldwide. He observed that around 35,000 manuscripts have been identified in Jammu and Kashmir, with cataloguing complete. Besides, digitization is underway at private institutions and Kashmir University's Persian Department, accelerated by a GoI cluster centre. Director, Archives, Archeology and Museum, Kuldeep Krishan Sidha highlighted the objectives of launching of

GYAN Bharatam and National Manuscripts Survey. He also elucidated the key activities including conservation, capacity building, technology and digitization, linguistic and translation, research, publication and awareness. He highlighted various other aspects regarding National Manuscripts Survey, scope of the Survey, organisational support, survey execution process, role of responsibility, ethical guidelines, monitoring and other important aspects of the programme. Dr Jahagir Iqbal, HOD and Cluster Head Gyan Bharatam Mission, Department of Persian, Kashmir University, gave comprehensive detail about the roadmap to the concerned officers and participants about how to collect the information about Manuscripts and its conservation during surveys in their respective areas. Coordinator, Regional Cluster Centre, Gyan Bharatam Shashvat Art Gallery, Museum and Manuscript Library, Upper Bazar Jammu, Dr Suresh Abrol, encouraged the participants about the working in the field of survey and conservation, documentation and digitization of Manuscripts under Gyan Bharatam Mission. Professor and Head (Conservation), IGNCA, Professor Achal Pandya, also gave a PowerPoint Presentation regarding how to collect manuscripts. Among others, Assistant Professor Dr Satyender Kumari, IGNCA; Project Managers, IGNCA, Jitendra Chauhan and Dr Nitin Kumar; Deputy Director, Archive, Archaeology and Museum, Dr Sangeeta Sharma were present in the program.