

Chief Secy reviews mining sector reforms; Calls for stronger surveillance to curb illegal mining

JAMMU BULLETIN NEWS
JAMMU, MAR 11:

Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a high-level meeting to review the ongoing reforms in the mining sector and assess measures aimed at curbing illegal mining across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Mining; Chairperson of the Jammu and Kashmir Pollution Control Committee; Divisional Commissioner, Jammu/Kashmir; Secretary, IT; IGP Jammu; Managing Director, Jammu and Kashmir Minerals Limited; Director, Geology and Mining; and other senior officers. The Divisional Commissioner Kashmir and Deputy Commissioners of various districts participated in the meeting through video conferencing. During the meeting, the Chief Secretary reviewed the progress achieved under various mining sector reforms aimed at strengthening surveillance mechanisms, preventing illegal extraction of minerals and enhancing revenue realization from the sector. The Chief Secretary also took a live demonstration of the Integrated Mining Surveillance System (IMSS), a digital platform designed to monitor the movement of vehicles transporting mining material across different districts of Jammu and Kashmir.



While appreciating the initiative, he observed that there is still scope for further improvement in the system to ensure stricter checks against illegal mining activities. Emphasizing the need for strengthening the technological framework, the Chief Secretary directed the department to share a clear problem statement with BISAG-N so that appropriate triggers can be developed to detect instances of illegal mining or extraction beyond permissible areas. He also called for increasing the frequency of such automated alerts to weekly intervals, enabling the department to take timely corrective action on the ground. He further asked the department to specify a clear timeline for achieving the desired improvements in the surveillance system. While reviewing the progress of e-auctioning of mineral blocks, the Chief Secretary under-

scored the importance of closely following up pending matters with the concerned Union Ministry to ensure timely completion of the auction process. He also interacted with Deputy Commissioners regarding the status of clearances for identified minor mineral blocks in their respective districts. The Chief Secretary urged the district administrations to expedite the process of granting the necessary clearances so that the auctioning of minor mineral blocks could be completed at the earliest. He reviewed cases pending at different stages, including those awaiting Environmental Impact Assessment, approvals from the Pollution Control Committee and forest clearances from the concerned department. Stressing the need to augment the availability of construction material and enhance revenue

generation, the Chief Secretary directed the officers to examine each pending case on priority and explore possibilities of operationalizing all non-operational minor mineral blocks across the districts. He further called for effective implementation of all reforms envisaged under the mining policy and the guidelines of the Union Ministry, reiterating that robust enforcement and surveillance mechanisms must be put in place to completely curb illegal mining in the Union Territory. Additional Chief Secretary, Mining, Ashwani Kumar, informed the meeting that the department is actively working on upgrading the IMSS in coordination with BISAG-N. He emphasized that both enhanced surveillance and a foolproof enforcement mechanism are essential to effectively regulate the sector and prevent illegal mining. He

added that the IMSS dashboard is being integrated with the e-challan and e-market systems, which will enable generation of relevant alerts at shorter intervals and facilitate swift action by field functionaries. Earlier, Director, Geology and Mining, S.P. Rukwal, in a detailed presentation, apprised the meeting about the current status of mining activities across Jammu and Kashmir. He informed that investigations related to minerals such as graphite, granite, sapphire, shallow gas and lithium are being carried out by the concerned agencies. The meeting was informed that out of 235 identified minor mineral blocks in the Union Territory, 81 are currently operational. Extension of Letters of Intent (LoIs) has been issued to 10 blocks, while eight cases are pending before the competent authorities for issuance of LoIs. Mining leases in favour of four blocks are expected to be granted shortly, cumulatively projected to generate revenue of around ₹57 Cr for the UT. Regarding the identification of new blocks, it was informed that seven minor mineral blocks have been auctioned by the Deputy Commissioner Anantnag, while 22 more are in the pipeline and 47 blocks are awaiting No Objection Certificates from different departments across the districts.

Deputy Chief Minister acts tough against river bed mining violations

Deactivates e-challan portals of five crusher units in Rajouri



JAMMU BULLETIN NEWS
RAJOURI, MAR 11:

Acting tough against violations related to river bed mining, Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary today deactivated the e-challan portals of five stone crusher units at Chityari and adjoining areas of District Rajouri. To assess the mining activities in the area, the Deputy Chief Minister conducted a surprise inspection of stone crusher units to ensure that the operations are being carried out in compliance with the prescribed rules and regulations. He was accompanied by the Joint Director,

Geology and Mining Department, Jammu along with other concerned senior officers. During the inspection, it was found that five stone crusher units including Mir Stone Crusher Dogani, Mehta Stone Crusher Dogani, KGN Stone Crusher Dogani, Border Stone Crusher Dogani and Shakti Stone Crusher Saranoo had carried out excavation below the natural surface level of the river bed after exhausting their legally permitted stock, which is a clear violation of the prescribed mining norms. Taking serious notice of the violations, the e-challan por-

tals of all the five units were deactivated with immediate effect.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that the portals will remain suspended until a detailed verification of their operations is completed and further action is taken by the department as per the rules.

He stated that the government will ensure strict enforcement of mining regulations and protection of natural resources, cautioning that illegal mining activities will be dealt with firmly in accordance with the law.

During the inspection, several heavy excavators (Poklain machines) were also found stationed at the premises of these units.

"All heavy machines which are not allowed to operate for mining activities shall be moved away immediately and handed over to the owners in presence of Chowki Officers," maintained the Deputy CM.

The Deputy Chief Minister directed the Geology and Mining Department to initiate a detailed verification of functioning and compliance status of the concerned units. "Appropriate action will be taken against any violation found during the verification process," he said.

Rana expresses gratitude to Chief Minister for sanctioning helipad, waiting lounge at Mendhar

JAMMU BULLETIN NEWS
JAMMU, MAR 11:

Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, today expressed gratitude to Chief Minister Omar Abdullah for sanctioning construction of a helipad along with a waiting lounge facility at Qasab in Mendhar, Poonch district.

The project, sanctioned at an estimated cost of ₹3.35 crore, marks a significant step towards strengthening the critical infrastructure in the border area along LoC.

Rana, representing Mendhar Assembly, stated that establishment of the helipad and accompanying waiting lounge will play a crucial role in enhancing emergency response capabilities, improving accessibility and facilitating swift movement during medical emergencies, disaster management operations and other urgent situations. The facility will also support administrative and relief operations in the area, which often face geographical and logistical challenges due to its remote and hilly terrain.

Expressing appreciation, Rana said the timely sanction by the Chief Minister reflects his strong commitment to balanced regional development and the welfare of people living in far-flung and border areas. He noted that improved connectivity infrastructure such as helipads can be life-saving in emergencies, particularly in regions where road access can be limited or affected by weather conditions. "The sanctioning of this project will significantly enhance the capacity of the administration to respond promptly to emergencies and ensure better connectivity for the people of Mendhar and surrounding areas. I sincerely thank Chief Minister for his continued support and vision for strengthening infrastructure in remote areas along LoC," the Minister said. The Minister reiterated that the government remains dedicated towards strengthening the infrastructure, improving accessibility and ensuring that developmental initiatives reach every corner of Jammu and Kashmir, especially the underserved and border areas.

DIPR condoles demise of Subhash Gupta

JAMMU BULLETIN NEWS
JAMMU, MAR 11:

The Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) Jammu and Kashmir, under the chairmanship of Director Nitish Rajora, today expressed profound grief over the demise of Subhash Gupta, father of Vijay Gupta, Editor-in-Chief of Young Bites newspaper. The Director conveyed heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family in this hour of grief and prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul. Other senior officers of the department, including Joint Directors Dr. Zahoor Ahmed Raina and Deepak Dubey, Deputy Directors Javed Ahmed Rather and Ashu Kumari, besides other officials, also conveyed their condolences to the bereaved family.

Water being released in Ranbir, other Canals on March 16

JAMMU BULLETIN NEWS
JAMMU, MAR 11:

The Irrigation Department has decided to release water in all major canals of Jammu province starting March 16, 2026.

A notice issued today reads "As suggested by Director Agriculture Production and Farmers Welfare Jammu vide his letter No. Agri/DAJ/Dev-32/2025-26/9189 dated: 11-03-2026, it is notified for the information of public in general and farmers in particular that the water in Ranbir Canal, New Partap Canal, Kathua Canal and their distribution network of Jammu province shall be released from 16-03-2026. All the concerned Superintending Engineers and Executive Engineers are directed to plan their activities to ensure completion of the ongoing works well before the recharging of Canal. The Executive Engineer of Irrigation Division No I Jammu, Irrigation Division No II Jammu, Irrigation Division Akhnor and Irrigation Division Kathua are further directed to frame teams which shall move along with water in the Canal/distribution Network during the opening as it reaches their jurisdiction to ensure safe passage of water up to tail end to avoid any untoward incidence."

Healthcare reach being expanded across J&K: Sakeena Itoo

Inaugurates newly constructed PHC at Kharote Kathua



JAMMU BULLETIN NEWS
KATHUA, MAR 11:

Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo on Thursday dedicated a newly constructed Primary Health Centre (PHC) at Kharote to the public bringing healthcare closer to rural communities in the district. Built at an estimated cost of Rs. 1.67 crore, the health facility is expected to ease the difficulties faced by residents of Kharote and nearby panchayats who earlier had to travel long distances for basic medical care. The centre will now provide accessible primary healthcare services at their doorstep.

Addressing a large gathering after inauguration ceremony, the Minister underlined that the government led by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is placing special emphasis on strengthening healthcare and education sectors, describing them as the backbone of public welfare.

"Our focus is to ensure that quality healthcare reaches every citizen, especially those living in remote and rural areas," she stated. She added that upgrading and improving medical infra-

structure across Jammu and Kashmir remains a key priority of the government.

Highlighting recent healthcare initiatives, the Health Minister said that advanced diagnostic facilities like MRI, Cath Lab and CT Scan services are being installed in major hospitals on priority. She added that Dialysis units have also been set up in several hospitals to provide relief to kidney patients who earlier struggled for access to treatment.

The Minister stressed that government hospitals must become reliable and efficient institutions for common people and underlined the need to strengthen existing facilities by ensuring adequate doctors, paramedics and essential medical equipment.

Responding to public demands raised during the event, the Minister directed the Director Health Services to provide an ambulance for PHC Kharote. She also assured that the feasibility of starting an ultrasound facility, along with the required staff, would be examined.

She also instructed the district administration to undertake blacktopping of the approach road leading to the

health centre to improve accessibility.

Emphasising patient-friendly healthcare, the Minister said that additional ultrasound units are being planned for Government Medical Colleges to reduce waiting time and improve patient access.

Speaking regarding education sector, the Minister noted that college enrolment in Kashmir's winter zone has increased by nearly 12 percent, while examination results for Classes 10th, 11th and 12th have also shown marked improvement. She expressed optimism that similar progress would soon be seen in the Jammu region's summer zone.

The Minister also called for collective action against drug abuse, urging teachers and professors to play an active role in spreading awareness among youth. She said the health department is strengthening rehabilitation, counselling and treatment services, while police efforts remain crucial in tackling the menace.

Earlier, the MLA Kathua, Dr. Bharat Bhushan expressed gratitude to Minister for personally intervening to complete the PHC building, stating that the facility would benefit thousands of residents in the area.

Deputy Commissioner, Kathua, Rajesh Sharma; Director Health Services Jammu, Director Family Welfare, Director Social Welfare Jammu, senior officers of district administration and large number of locals were also present on the occasion.

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Secretary RDD reviews SASCI implementation, calls for fast-tracking rural infrastructure projects

JAMMU BULLETIN NEWS
SRINAGAR, MAR 11:

Secretary, Rural Development (RDD) and Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, today chaired a review meeting to assess the progress of projects sanctioned under the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investments (SASCI) in the Union Territory.

The meeting was informed that Rs 21.10 crore has been sanctioned for various Rural Development and Panchayati Raj infrastructure projects across Jammu and Kashmir. The Secretary emphasised that at least 75 percent utilisation of sanctioned funds is mandatory, failing which non-performing projects would be reallocated.

He directed officials to ensure timely completion of ongoing works and stated that funds from slow-moving projects would be re-appropriated to fast-moving schemes to ensure full utilisation before March 31, 2026.

The Secretary also cautioned implementing agencies against submitting inflated fund requests and directed



that proposals for additional funds must be accompanied by written undertakings certifying full utilisation within the stipulated timeframe. Senior officers from the Rural Development Department, including Directors, Finance officials and engineers from PWD (R&B) and REW, attended the meeting.



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