

FROM PAGE 1

After facing backlash over proposed**20% hike in power tariff, CM Omar says no such plan on cards**

200 units of free electricity to every household in Jammu and Kashmir. Today, more than a year later, instead of fulfilling that promise, his government is preparing to look people with an outrageous 20 percent increase in peak-hour consumption charges," Sharma had said.

Apni Party president Syed Altaf Bukhari had described the proposal as a "grave injustice" to the people of Kashmir.

Peoples Democratic Party MLA Waheed-ur-Rehman Pannu termed the proposal "cruel" and "catastrophic." "J&K government must do a real ground assessment before hiking electricity charges.

Peoples Conference general secretary Imran Reza Ansari had questioned the rationale behind the hike, demanding clarity on who within the Power Development Department authorized the "magical midnight-thought tariff ideas."

The Kashmir Trade Alliance (KTA) had voiced strong opposition to the proposed hike. ATA President Asif Shahidhar had termed it "arbitrary" and "unjustified," warning that such a move would severely impact the business community and the general public.

The Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) had also opposed the move, calling it unjustified and an attempt to shift the burden of systemic failures onto the people of Kashmir.

Shrine Board Medical College Row

Reacting on the controversy surrounding the selection of students for the MBBS programme at the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi (SMD) Institute of Medical Excellence, the Chief Minister stated that admissions were based on merit, not on the preference of boys and girls from any particular community.

In his remarks, CM Omar said, "When the Assembly had passed the bill to establish Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University, where was it written that boys and girls belonging to one particular community will be kept out of it? It was said that admission to the university will be done based only on merit, not on religion."

His comments came in the wake of protest triggered by the recent MBBS admissions at the Katra-based medical college, which saw 42 out of 50 seats allocated to Muslim students.

The controversy has sparked intense debate, with the BJP and several Hindu groups calling for the institution to reserve seats exclusively for Hindu students.

CM Omar took a dig at senior BJP leader and LoP Sunil Sharma, who had expressed strong reservations over the admission process.

Sharma, alongside representatives from different organisations, had met Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha last Saturday to raise concerns about the Muslim-majority admissions.

Sharma had argued that the process has sparked anger among devotees of Mata Vaishno Devi and the larger Hindu community.

—auction of limestone blocks
Meanwhile, the Chief Minister reaffirmed his government's commitment to ensuring transparency in the auctioning of mineral blocks in Jammu & Kashmir, stating that the new e-auction mechanism will unlock economic potential in some of the most underserved regions of the region.

The Chief Minister made these remarks during the launch and roadshow of the e-auction of the first seven limestone mineral blocks of J&K, held at the Convention Centre, Jammu.

The e-auction was jointly commenced by Union Minister for Coal & Mines, G. Kishan Reddy and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah.

In his address, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said that the e-auction initiative marks a crucial step towards economic revival and sustainable development in mineral-rich but economically weaker areas of J&K.

"At least, we have limestone — and that limestone lies in areas where the economic situation is very bad," he said. The Chief Minister expressed gratitude to Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy for proposing a special group within the Ministry of Mines to fast-track mineral exploration in Jammu and Kashmir.

He recalled how J&K's mineral wealth — including the famous Neelam (sapphire) of Paddar and marble deposits — have remained commercially underutilized for decades.

The CM revealed that Minister Reddy personally intervened and urged J&K to take renewed interest to complete the process.

"In between, Mr. Reddy picked up the phone from Delhi and spoke to me. He asked me to push this forward so that these e-auctions are concluded successfully."

The Chief Minister said the initiative is aimed at increasing J&K's own revenue, which currently stands at around ₹30 crore from these mineral blocks.

"When more blocks are identified, I hope our earnings will grow. I look forward to it when the Chief Minister of J&K will not have to go to Delhi seeking funds. On the contrary, we will be self-sufficient and capable of contributing to the Centre." Reiterating his commitment to good governance, Omar Abdullah added, "Our effort is to have these blocks auctioned in a transparent manner. I assure you that the J&K Government will not create any obstacles. Instead, we will ensure that this process — and the next one — is successful. I hope this programme proves beneficial for J&K and for the entire country."

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary described the day as "historic," marking a transformative step toward harnessing the mineral wealth of Jammu and Kashmir. Among others the event was also attended by Additional Secretary, Ministry of Mines, Sanjay Lohia, Additional Chief Secretary, Mining Department, Anil Kumar Singh, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Mines, Farida M. Naik, senior officials from the Government of India, J&K Government, and representatives from the mining and industrial sectors.

Court seeks explanation from SHO for not registering FIR against DySP accused of assaulting JKAS officer

Ahmed, Khushboo Sharma, Afia Choudhary, and Shabbab Malik. The court directed the SHO to file a comprehensive status report on the written complaint previously submitted by the BDO.

According to the complaint, Azhar Khan had been appointed as the Nodal Officer for transportation for the 77-Nagrota Assembly Constituency bye-election scheduled on November 11, 2025. On November 10, at around 12:10 PM, Khan and his team were inspecting transport routes near the distribution centre in Nagrota when they were involved in a minor road accident. The complaint alleges that DySP Sunil Jasrotia reached the spot and, despite being informed repeatedly that Khan was on authorised election duty under written orders, began shouting, abusing, intimidating, and defaming him.

Khan alleged that the DySP then physically assaulted him by slapping and kicking him in full public view, causing injuries and public humiliation. He further states that

Jasrotia, along with his FSOs and other police personnel, forcibly abducted him in a police vehicle to the police station, where he was wrongfully confined, further beaten, abused, and threatened with dire consequences. His colleague Abbas Ali, VLVW, who was part of the transport team, was also allegedly manhandled and assaulted. The complaint also states that both were subjected to caste-based insults linked to their Gujjar identity. Their phones were allegedly seized, and they were prevented from performing their official election duties.

The incident, according to the complainant, was captured in CCTV footage, which he has requested the authorities to preserve and examine.

Khan submitted written complaints first to the SHO Gandhi Nagar and then to the SSP Jammu. However, no FIR was registered, prompting him to approach the court under Section 175(3) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023. He has sought registration of an FIR under Sections 119, 124(1), 125(2), 130, 131, 133, 222, 136, 349(2), 354(1) of the BNS 2023 and Section 3 of the SC/ST Act. Senior Advocate Aseem Sawhney argued that the police refusal to register an FIR violated the mandatory directions laid down by the Supreme Court in Lalita Kumari vs. State of UP and Priyanka Srivastava vs. State of UP, which make FIR registration compulsory in cognizable offences and require sworn affidavits in such complaints—both of which the complainant has complied with.

Following the arguments, the City Judge ordered the SHO Gandhi Nagar to submit a detailed status report explaining the inaction.

Reddy congratulates J&K for joining**'mineral action' map**

ceremony, Reddy said, "Seven limestone mineral blocks were launched by us with J&K CM Omar Abdullah. J&K has joined the mineral action map today."

He said, "In 2014, the Supreme Court instructed the government to reform the mining sector with transparency. PM Modi has brought a regime for this action. This action regime is running with 100% transparency today."

The Union Minister said that today all the states have risen above politics and are working towards empowering the youth. "They are also playing a key role in improving the ease of doing business," he said.

Reddy highlighted that proactive participation by states has ensured holistic development across sectors, particularly mining. "All the state governments have come into the mineral action map," he said, adding that reforms and coordinated efforts have accelerated the pace of exploration and resource utilisation.

Reddy said, "More than 1000 mineral and coal blocks have been auctioned so far, marking a historic leap in resource management," he said.

The Union Minister praised the transparent and competitive auction process introduced by the PM-Modified government stating that it has not only boosted investor confidence but also opened new avenues for employment and industrial growth. He said the sector is now contributing significantly to revenue generation for states, thereby enabling them to enhance welfare and development programmes.

Earlier talking to the reporters, Reddy said, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah want Jammu and Kashmir to become a mineral state."

"This limestone mineral blocks auction is happening for the first time in J&K. PM Modi and Amit Shah ji want to create more and more employment opportunities for the J&K people and increase mineral activity here" he added. Reddy described the auction as a transformative milestone for the region and reaffirmed the Government's commitment to ensuring that mineral development leads to employment generation, industrial growth, and long-term socio-economic benefits for local communities.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah noted that the initiative will strengthen investor confidence, diversify the region's industrial base, and support employment and entrepreneurship avenues for the youth.

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary congratulated all stakeholders and acknowledged the collaborative role of the Centre and the UT Government in driving this reform.

As part of the roadshow, MECL presented detailed technical and geological assessments of the identified blocks, SBI Capital Markets explained the transactional framework, and MSTC demonstrated the e-auction process, ensuring that potential bidders are adequately informed and supported.

SIGNIFICANT STEP IN IMPLEMENTING MINING REFORMS

Notably, the launching of mineral blocks marked a significant step in implementing the mining reforms introduced under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act (MMDR Act), 2015 and has positioned Jammu & Kashmir among States and UTs adopting a transparent, digital, and auction-based system for mineral resource allocation. An official said, "Seven limestone blocks, spread across the districts of Anantnag, Rajouri, and Poonch, were put up for auction. These blocks, classified under G3 and G4 stages of the United Nations Framework Classification (UNFC), cover approximately 314 hectares and are anticipated to generate significant industrial interest, particularly in the cement and construction sectors."

The auction, he said, is being conducted under subsections (4) and (5) of Section 11 of the MMDR Act, represents a major step forward in unlocking the mineral wealth of Jammu & Kashmir, which is now entering the national competitive bidding ecosystem for the first time. "The limestone auction in Jammu & Kashmir aligns with the Central Government's broader development push for the Union Territory. Under the Prime Minister's Industrial Development Scheme, J&K is being positioned as an emerging investment hub with a clear focus on job creation and transparent industrial processes. Jammu & Kashmir is witnessing improvements in connectivity and infrastructure, which support mining and allied sectors. The successful auction is expected to boost local industry, generate employment, and contribute to the government's vision of fast-tracking economic growth in Jammu & Kashmir," he added.

The sale of Tender Documents will begin on November 28, 2025, with the pre-bid conference on December 12, 2025. The last date for purchase of Tender Documents is January 19, 2026, and the last date for submission of bids is January 20, 2026 via the MSTC online auction platform. The official said that this initiative reflects the Government of India's continued commitment to transparency, technology-enabled regulation, and sustainable resource utilization—advancing the vision of a self-reliant mineral sector and contributing to the broader national goal of Viksit Bharat 2047/Jammu & Kashmir.

For more details on auction terms, timeline, and participation, visit the MSTC auction platform at <https://www.mstccommerce.com/auctionhome/mnch> / —

NIA Court Forfeits J&M Hideout Linked to 40 CRPF personnel Deaths

—killed 40 CRPF personnel. The court declared the property "proceeds of terrorism" under Sections 25-26 of the UAPA and barred any transfer or third-party interest.

Presiding Judge Sandeep Gandotra (Additional Sessions Judge, Special Judge under the NIA Act) allowed an application moved by NIA's Chief Investigating Officer (CIO) Sh. Rajiv Om Parkash Pande, IPS, seeking forfeiture of the 9.5-marlas residential house (Khasra No. 492 min) registered in the name of Naseema Bano, wife of accused Peer Tariq Ahmed Shah. In court, the NIA was represented by Special Public Prosecutor (SPP) K. S. Pathania. On the non-applicant's side, Adv. Syed Azad Andrabi filed objections; however, he later stated he was not counsel for Bano, after which she failed to appear and was ruled absent.

Investigators established that J&M terrorists Muhammad Umar Farooq, Sameer Ahmed Dar and Adil Ahmed Dar used the Hakirpora house before and after the convoy bombing, with household members allegedly providing shelter that advanced the conspiracy. The court directed that the ownership by the principal accused is not necessary for forfeiture—use of a property to facilitate terrorism suffices under the UAPA.

The case stems from FIR No. 20/2019 (Awantipora), registered by the NIA as RC-02/2019/NIA/JMU on an application dated November 22, 2025. The court directed that the asset "shall neither be transferred by any mode nor encumbered" until the culmination of the main NIA trial, and forwarded a copy to the Deputy Commissioner, Pulwama for compliance. Property: Residential house, 9.5 marlas, Khasra No. 492 min, Hakirpora (Kakpora), District Pulwama (JNF).

India's tri-services form trinity of strategic strength. On Sinoir its apt example. Army Chief

armed forces," he added. He further said that in the age of multi-domain operations, the country's ability to act in concert from the depths of the ocean to the highest frontier will determine the security influence of the Indian republic.

Following the commissioning of INS Mahe, the Army Chief said that the Indian Navy plays a key role in the neighbourhood as well as in the global environment in far-off lands where the Army's efforts can play both a supplementary and a complementary role in soft and hard diplomacy.

BJP MP from Jammu asks 4 times more questions

According to PRS Legislative Research, a New Delhi-based non-profit organisation, BJP's Jammu MP, Jugal Kishore Sharma, has asked 100 questions since his election from the Jammu Lok Sabha seat in 2024. In comparison, the MP from the Kashmir region, including the Anantnag-Rajouri seat, who were simultaneously elected with Sharma in 2024, have together asked a total of 24 questions.

Among the Kashmir MPs, Srinagar MP Aga Ruhullah Mahdani asked 10 questions. Mian Altaf has asked nine, and Er. Rashid has asked five. Rashid, who is currently in jail in a terror funding case, has attended only two sessions of Parliament in 2025.

This means Sharma alone has asked over four times more questions than all Kashmiri MPs combined. The BJP MP Jugal Kishore is also leading other J&K MPs in terms of participation in debates. Since the 2024 election, Sharma has participated in 17 debates, while Ruhullah, Altaf, and Rashid have taken part in 13, nine, and six debates, respectively.

In terms of questions, Ruhullah tops the list with 93 percent, followed by Jugal Kishore Sharma (88 percent), Mian Altaf (60 percent), and Er. Rashid (9 percent). The term of these MPs began on June 9, 2024. They will complete one and a half years of their term on December 9, 2025.

Supreme Court seeks Centre, Election**Commission's response on plea against cash donation to political parties**

hearing after four weeks.

During the hearing, the bench asked senior advocate Vijay Hansaria, who appeared for petitioner Bhatti, as to why they did not approach the High Court first. Hansaria said the plea concerned all political parties and the funding to them across the country.

The bench agreed to hear the plea and issued notices to the poll panel, the Centre and others, including several political parties including the BJP and the Congress.

The counsel argued that transparency in political funding has been recognised as a fundamental right of voters in the electoral bonds case and there is a huge discrepancy in the income tax returns and contribution reports filed by all the political parties. Hansaria further argued that exemption from income tax received by the political parties was on the basis that they declared details of all the contributors with PAN numbers and bank details. In the petition filed by Jayesh K. Unnikrishnan, direction has been sought against the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) to scrutinise the income tax returns and the audit reports filed by political parties under the Income Tax Act, 1961, for the last five years and initiate appropriate proceedings for levy of tax, penalty and prosecution for failure to comply with the requirements of full disclosure, he pointed out. The counsel argued that with the phenomenal increase in digital payment in India, there is no justification for permitting cash donation up to Rs 10,000 per year per voter. Information Bureau on July 26, 2025, in June 2025 alone, UPI transactions were to the tune of Rs 24.03 lakh crore spread over 1,839 crore transactions and in the last six financial years, they were to the tune of Rs 120.00 lakh crore spread over 65,000 crore digital transactions.

"Thus, with the advent of the UPI revolution in the country, political parties should not be allowed to receive cash donations. For example, Bahujan Samaj Party has disclosed nil contribution in its contribution report for the last 18 years and the entire amount has been shown in cash as membership fee," he said. The plea has also sought a direction to the Election Commission to prescribe as a condition for registration of a political party and allotment of the election symbol that no amount can be received in cash by any political party. It contended that lack of transparency undermined the purity of the election process as it deprives voters of the crucial knowledge about the source of political funding, including the donors and their motives, preventing them from making a rational, intelligent and fully informed decision while casting their votes.

It also sought direction that the political parties must disclose the name and all other particulars of the person paying any amount of money to it, and no amount can be received in cash so as to maintain transparency in political funding.

The plea sought the striking down of clause (d) of Section 13 A of the Income Tax Act, 1961, as unconstitutional, and also referred to the apex court's 2024 judgment which scrapped the electoral bonds scheme.

DC Rajouri orders deduction of one day salary of absentee employees

During a surprise inspection at the Office of the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Sunderbati, the Deputy Commissioner found four employees absent from duty without authorization. Strict directions were issued to seek an immediate explanation from the absentee officials and the controlling officer was instructed to initiate action as per rules.

The DC also inspected the Block Development Office (BDO) Siot, where he reviewed the attendance register, ongoing works and public service delivery mechanisms. Later, during an inspection at Lamba, eight employees were found absent. Taking serious note of the absenteeism, the Deputy Commissioner ordered deduction of one-day salary from all such employees and reiterated that negligence of duty, particularly in public-facing departments, would not be tolerated.

Reiterating the commitment of the district administration towards efficient governance, the Deputy Commissioner instructed all officers to maintain regular attendance, ensure timely delivery of public services and uphold the highest standards of accountability.

The Deputy Commissioner also stated that such inspections will continue in the coming days to ensure effective implementation of government schemes and responsive administration at all levels.

J&K Govt to begin budget discussions**from December 01**

proposals from December 01. In a communication, a copy of which is in possession of news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the Finance Department has informed administrative secretaries that the budget discussions with departments will begin on December 01.

The Finance Department will hold deliberations with 36 departments before culminating the exercise on December 16, 2025. The discussions will cover both revised estimates for 2025-26 and budget estimates for 2025-27, including revenue and capital expenditures such as Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS), Prime Minister's Development Programme (PMDP) and loan provisions. As per the communicate, the departments have been advised to furnish the Action Taken Reports (ATRs) on the budgetary announcements, if any, besides complete details on Establishment Budget & FRBM to the Finance department much ahead of the scheduled date of discussion.

The departments have also been directed furnish point-wise presentation (PPTs) containing data on staffing (sanctioned, in place, contractual, etc.), trends in scheme-wise revenue and capital expenditure, revenue receipts (over the last five years and scope for enhancement), details of major projects and initiatives, and the total liabilities of ongoing projects—

Parallel Remedies Impermissible: HC Bars Writ**against Sealing during Tribunal Appeal**

8(1) of the Act. Challenging the demolition and sealing, the petitioner filed an appeal before the J&K Special Tribunal on June 19, 2025, seeking a stay. The Tribunal, on June 20, 2025, while the demolition order, while deferring decision on the sealing order until JDA presented its record and submissions.

Despite having chosen the appellate route, the petitioner filed WPC No. 167/2025 before the High Court seeking quashment of the sealing order dated May 26, 2025. The Court, however, refused to entertain the writ, holding that "the petitioner cannot sail in two boats simultaneously" by pursuing identical reliefs before two forums.

Justice Rabul Bhatti ruled that once the petitioner opted for the statutory remedy provided under the 1988 Act and the matter is already pending before the Tribunal, the sealing order must be adjudicated solely in that appellate proceeding, not through writ intervention. Consequently, the writ petition was found misconceived and dismissed. (JNF)

JMC authorities in deep slumber, 3 storied**commercial structure comes up against****approved residential site plan at 212/7, Ward****No. 50, Channi Himmat**

the sanctioned use of a building. The Jammu Master Plan-2025 also designates land use zones, and a commercial use like a school would require a change in the permitted residential use.

As per the sources, the owner, however, has not obtained any such permission or NOC from the Housing Board or JMC authorities to open and run 'Ankuram' on 212/7, Channi Himmat residential colony.

The owner has clearly violated Supreme Court guidelines and high court decisions from time to time, which indicate that opening a kindergarten in a residential area may violate land use rules and is often not permitted unless specifically allowed by local authorities and zoning plans. Courts have upheld the closure of unauthorized schools in residential zones. If the kindergarten is in a residential colony with other residential houses, the owner must get a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the other occupants, as they have a stake in the building's common areas, security, and overall atmosphere.

It's been over a fortnight since the 'Ankuram' kindergarten has started functioning but the concerned enforcement inspector and enforcement officer in ward No. 50 didn't bother to initiate any action under building by-laws.

The JMC had recently introduced two-tier system to strengthen the enforcement wing but that, too, remained, ineffective.

The owner Shukla Kohli has now started making a playground for the children of the kindergarten—'Ankuram' on her adjoining residential plot 211/7 Channi Himmat Housing Board colony, which belongs to the same family.

The aggrieved locals, who reside in the colony, said that given blatant violations by the owner, the JMC should have contemplated notices and initiated action against Shukla Kohli under UBBL 2021 and JMC Act 2000.

"Channi Himmat Housing Colony is rapidly turning into a hub of commercial activities including schools and every alternate day, new schools, nurseries and shops are being opened up by the owners of residential houses. It looks as if there is a free for all situation and there is no regulatory authority in place," they said.

It may be stated here that Shukla Kohli's son Ashwani Kohli is already running "AK Health care" chemist store from rented accommodation in Guru Nanak Complex in Channi Himmat Jammu in sector-3.