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POONCH TODAY

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Lieutenant Governor reviews arrangements for pilgrims at Baltal Base Camp

Page 04



POONCH EDITION

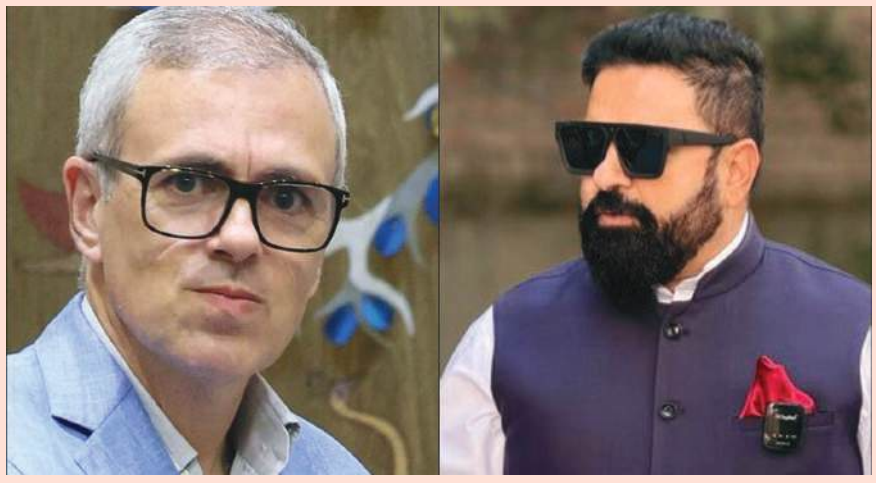
JULY 16-31, 2026

Omar Abdullah's much-awaited cabinet expansion: Will Poonch Haveli get its first cabinet minister in over three decades?

MLA Ajaz Jan's supporters expect positive response

SALIL RAINA
(POONCH TODAY NEWS)
POONCH

As Chief Minister of the J&K UT, Omar Abdullah is likely to go after its much-awaited cabinet expansion; the question arises: will the Poonch Haveli constituency get its first cabinet berth in the last more than three decades of J&K politics? It is pertinent to mention here that Surankote and Mendhar constituencies got a cabinet berth a number of times, but the Poonch Haveli constituency was denied the same for more than three decades. In the last six assembly elections, including a 2007 by-election, NC (Jan family) won the seat four times, while PDP and Congress won the seat one time each.



But unfortunately, Congress, PDP, and NC ignored the Poonch Haveli constituency and gave cabinet berths in favour of the Surankote and Mendhar constituencies. In the 2024 assembly elections, young Ajaz Jan created history by taking 41,807 votes with a 42% plus vote share, but despite taking a record number of votes never taken by anyone in the history of Poonch elections, Jan, who is representing the Poonch Haveli constituency, was not blessed with a cabinet berth. The Jan family dominated the Poonch Haveli politics for nearly three decades and won the constituency four times. Late G.M. Jan took 16,150 votes in the 1996 assembly elections with a 39.62% vote share. In the 2002 assembly elections, the late G.M. Jan, in a straight contest with the then Congress candidate, the late Yashpaul Sharma, got 27,364 votes with 47.41% of the vote share, while

CONT. ON PAGE 2

Not Chief Medical Officer Poonch, but powerful lower-rung employees are running the health department by hitting big financial shots

Health department Poonch becomes a toll plaza centre

POONCH TODAY NEWS
POONCH

The health minister of J&K has, a number of times, said that the healthcare system in entire J&K is robust and all-out efforts have been made to strengthen the system on the ground, but the health department of Poonch has other things to say, as some powerful lower-rung employees are running the department behind the curtains and used to commit big financial frauds in several lakhs to crores. The Chief Medical Officer Poonch, who reportedly has the backing of the health minister, has no control, as the department is running



through these powerful and blue-eyed lower-rung employees. Those posted in other sections have been working in the CMO office. Sources in the department told "POONCH TODAY" that experienced and dedicated officials were sidelined, and tainted ones have been given important chairs to ensure that the share from different schemes reaches the bosses on time. Some employees who joined the department at one place have spent their whole service on the same post, and it shows that the experienced employees have no takers in the department, while those expert in scripting fudged bills get important posts to feed top bosses also. On the other hand, the operation theatre has also become a toll plaza where every poor patient has to grease the palms

CONT. ON PAGE 2

Allegations of Illegal Stone Crushers and Mining Activities Raise Questions Over Enforcement in Poonch District

POONCH TODAY NEWS
POONCH



Allegations regarding the operation of illegal stone crushers and unauthorised mining activities in different parts of the Poonch district have once again triggered public concern, with residents questioning the effectiveness and transparency of enforcement by the district administration. According to local residents and reports, several stone crushers are allegedly operating without the required permissions in various areas of the district. While enforcement action has reportedly been initiated against some operators, critics allege that others, said to enjoy political or other influential backing, have continued their operations without facing similar action. The allegations have led to public concerns over the possibility of selective enforcement and unequal application of the law. While talking to "POONCH TODAY", a few prominent persons of Poonch City have also expressed concern over alleged illegal extraction of riverbed material near sensitive locations, including Kalai, Mandi, Surankote, the Poonch River, the Jhullas River, the Betar River and the Nangali Sahib area. Environmental experts have previously cautioned that unregulated mining in riverbeds can alter the natural flow of water, accelerate erosion and, if carried out near bridges or other critical infrastructure, may affect their long-term stability, and damaging a portion of Nangali Bridge during the 2014 flood was an example of illegal mining. Locals allege that unauthorised mining activities have not been effectively curbed in certain areas. However, no official inquiry or investigation report confirming these allegations has been made public so far. Another issue highlighted by residents relates to the alleged operation of a stone crusher in the Chandak area. According to those raising the concern, the unit has continued to function despite repeated complaints. Residents have maintained that enforcement should be carried out uniformly and that all operators should be treated equally under the law, irrespective of political or social influence. People have urged the district administration to enhance transparency by publishing details of licensed stone crushers, valid mining permits, inspections conducted and enforcement action taken against violators. They have also called for stronger monitoring mechanisms to prevent illegal mining and protect environmentally sensitive areas. The district administration had not issued any public response to the specific allegations at the time this report was filed. The allegations remain unverified, and no official findings establishing any violation have been released. Citizens have demanded a comprehensive, impartial and transparent inquiry into the matter, stating that effective enforcement of environmental and mining regulations is essential to safeguard public resources, maintain ecological balance and uphold public confidence in the rule of law. Locals believe that a transparent investigation and public disclosure of its findings would help address public concerns and strengthen trust in the administration.

FROM THE FRONT PAGE...

Omar Abdullah's much...

Yashpaul Sharma got 26,718 votes with 46.3%. However, after the death of the late G.M. Jan, Jahangir Mir won the 2007 by-elections as a Congress candidate by taking 20,697 votes. The late Yashpaul Sharma, who fought as an independent candidate, got 16,299 votes, while Ajaz Jan, who fought for the first time, stood third by taking 16,227 votes. However, in the 2008 assembly elections, Ajaz Jan took 28,297 votes with 39.62% of the vote share. In the 2014 assembly elections, the then PDP's winning candidate, Shah Mohd Tantray, took 19,488 votes, while Ajaz Jan got 15,976 votes. But in the 2024 assembly elections, Ajaz Jan took a record number of 41,807 votes in an almost one-sided contest with 42.72% of the vote share. The data available with "POONCH TODAY" shows that the Jan family continuously dominated Poonch politics for nearly three decades with around 40% of vote share. Despite having a massive record in favour of the National Conference, the Poonch Haveli constituency was never blessed with a cabinet berth during the last more than three decades. In the politics of Poonch district, Surankote and Mendhar assembly constituencies got opportunities to get a cabinet berth a number of times, but the Poonch Haveli constituency has never been blessed with a cabinet berth for decades, and it's a cause of big concern for the voters of Poonch Haveli, opine political pundits. As far as the cabinet berth for Poonch Haveli is concerned, which was ignored for decades, it's time for the ruling dispensation to think over this because only three leaders enjoyed the MOS/Deputy Minister status from Poonch Haveli, and they were the late M.D. Bandey, the late G.M. Mir Poonchi, and the late G.A. Ganai. The late Mohd Din Bandey also remained vice-chairman of the Pahari advisory board after the 1996 assembly elections, but as far as cabinet berths were concerned, Poonch Haveli was ignored time and again, particularly during the last few decades, while Surankote and Mendhar constituencies enjoyed cabinet berths various times. Late Choudhary Mohd Aslam, Late Lal Mohd Sabar, Nisar Ahmed, and Late Rafiq Khan enjoyed the cabinet berth, and after the 2024 assembly elections, Javed Ahmed Rana from Mendhar was given an opportunity to become a cabinet minister in Omar Abdullah's government. A large number of supporters of MLA Haveli Ajaz Jan, while talking to "POONCH TODAY", said that they expect a positive response from the Chief Minister Omar Abdullah as far as giving a cabinet berth to Poonch Haveli is concerned. Now, with more than 41,807 votes taken by the National Conference, Poonch Haveli deserves to be recognised in the cabinet because the Haveli constituency was always ignored for a cabinet berth, which shows that a huge injustice was done with this elite constituency of the border district. It's high time for the chief minister, Omar Abdullah, to address the sentiments of the people of Poonch Haveli, who were ignored for over three decades by various governments. Will Chief Minister Omar Abdullah address the most genuine issue of the people of the Poonch Haveli constituency by giving a cabinet berth to the young MLA Ajaz Jan? Only time will tell.

Not Chief Medical...

of some employees, including a tainted doctor who often remains in the news on account of his bad conduct with patients and staff posted in the operation theatre. Those holding important posts in the department from block to district level looted money in several crores over the years with the full backing of successive CMOs, BMOs and medical superintendents. One more unhealthy practice which is going on in the department is that to hide the frauds of the department, the top officials of the department regularly face media fraternity members in offices, and the said officials used to give them regular favours for not highlighting any weakness of the department. As per the report of an intelligence agency, some media persons from within and outside the district used to visit the office of the CMO and medical superintendents on a regular basis to get their share, in which some employees of the health department are involved as they manage regular visits of several media fraternity members. Moreover, to settle their internal rivalries, many employees used to leak internal information of the department to various media persons who cannot even write their names properly but have come in the field to get regular favours from officers by working as their touts. In the name of GEM purchasing, various frauds have been scripted in the department, which runs from several lacs to crores, in which some tainted and blue-eyed officials were involved. Earlier, a former medical superintendent on the eve of transfer to another district, with the help of a blue-eyed employee, withdrew several lakhs through fudge bills in no time. It shows that the practice of earning illegal money from different schemes has remained the main motto of tainted officials of the department, including powerful lower-rung employees who have not been shifted for long. Whereas those officials who are known for their work culture have been sidelined, and those known for hitting the financial deals have been given everything. A few days back, the director of health services visited the Poonch district and, on camera, appreciated the efforts of the department under the back channel compulsion, but the sources inside the department told "POONCH TODAY" that the director was fully aware of various loopholes in the department, but the said officer was taken into confidence well in time through a third powerful party from the top to say positive things about the department. "POONCH TODAY" is in possession of various GEM purchasing documents which show that huge blow was given to the government exchequer. Items claimed to be purchased on paper are not existing on the ground. On paper, the department purchased huge amounts of medicine in crores, but their whereabouts are not known, as these powerful lower-rung employees played a mischievous role in such open frauds. The list of frauds in the department scripted by the top chairs is endless, and only a high-level enquiry could bring some facts into the public domain. Those top officials who have played a mischievous role over the years by murdering the government funds under various schemes need to be brought to justice to end this hidden mafia rule in the department which is meant to provide efficient health services to the patients. The poor state of affairs in the department is that after the retirement of a senior eye specialist, the government has failed to post an eye specialist in the Poonch district for long, as there are thousands of eye patients in the district who have become a target of Kashmir-based doctors through their agents operating in the Poonch district to run after their bread and butter in a handsome manner. Will the J&K government rise from its slumber over the horrible state of affairs in the health department of Poonch?

After Massive Jammu Rally, NC Takes Statehood Battle to Delhi; Omar Leads Intensified Campaign for Restoration of J&K Statehood

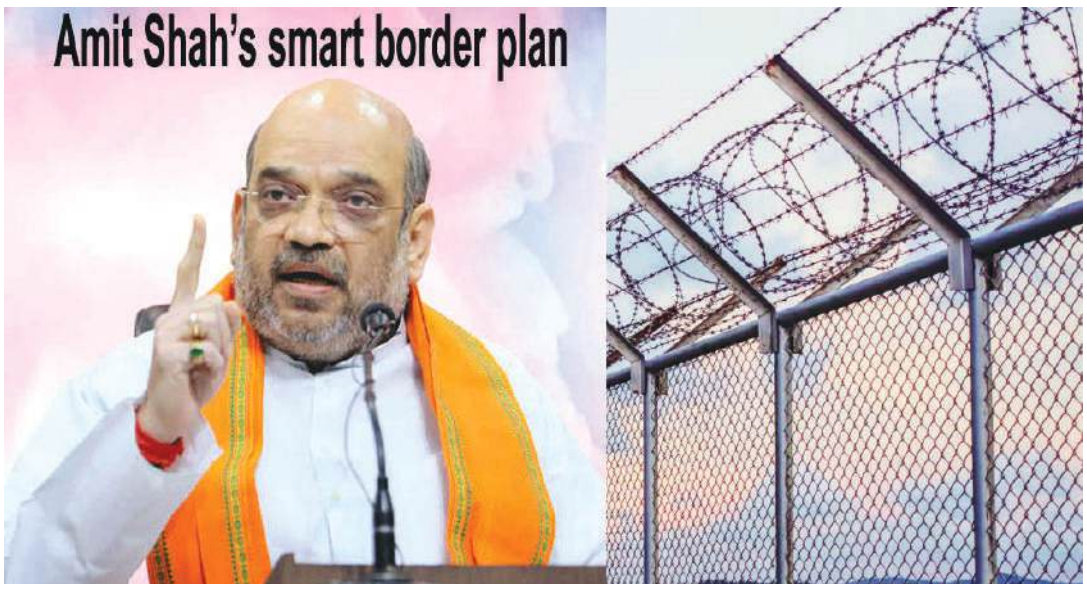
POONCH TODAY NEWS
JAMMU



Buoyed by the overwhelming response to its massive Statehood Rally held in Jammu on Sunday, the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (NC) has announced a major protest at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi, intensifying its campaign for the restoration of full statehood to Jammu and Kashmir. The party has termed the Delhi demonstration as the next phase of its democratic movement to remind the union government of its repeated commitment to restore statehood. The announcement comes just days after thousands of NC workers and supporters gathered in Jammu, where Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, ministers, legislators, and senior leaders strongly reiterated that the restoration of statehood remains the party's foremost political priority. Addressing the gathering in Jammu, Omar Abdullah emphasised that the demand for statehood is linked to the democratic aspirations and constitutional rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. He urged the centre to honour its commitment and restore the constitutional status promised to the people. Omar reiterated that the National Conference would continue to pursue the issue through peaceful and democratic means. He maintained that the party's struggle for statehood would continue until Jammu and Kashmir regains its full constitutional status. He appealed to party workers to remain united and strengthen the democratic movement. Following the successful Jammu rally, the National Conference has now decided to take the issue to the national capital. Senior party leaders said the proposed protest at Jantar Mantar will witness the participation of legislators, ministers, district presidents, office bearers, youth leaders, and workers from across Jammu and Kashmir. The party leadership said the demonstration would be peaceful and conducted within the framework of the Constitution. Despite facing tough moments after the death of Dr Mustafa Kamal, CM Omar Abdullah is likely to attend the Jantar Mantar protest as per the pre-decided schedule. According to NC leaders, the objective is to draw the attention of the union government and the nation towards the long-pending demand for the restoration of statehood, which they describe as essential for strengthening democratic governance and ensuring greater administrative accountability. The centre has, on several occasions, stated that statehood to Jammu and Kashmir will be restored at an appropriate time after the completion of the ongoing democratic process. However, the absence of a definite timeline has continued to remain a major political issue, prompting regional parties, particularly the National Conference, to intensify their campaign. Political observers believe the NC's decision to follow the Jammu rally with a protest at Jantar Mantar reflects the party's strategy of keeping the issue of statehood at the centre of national political discourse. The move is expected to draw the attention of political parties, constitutional experts, and civil society groups from across the country. Party leaders have appealed to workers from both the Jammu and Kashmir regions to participate in the Delhi protest in large numbers while maintaining discipline and the peaceful character of the demonstration. They said the movement is aimed at securing what they describe as a long-awaited democratic commitment. With Sunday's show of strength in Jammu setting the tone for the next phase of the campaign, the National Conference has made it clear that its demand for the restoration of statehood will remain at the forefront of its political agenda. All eyes are now on the proposed Jantar Mantar protest, which is expected to emerge as one of the party's biggest political mobilisations on the issue in the national capital.

Smart Border Management Essential to Meet Emerging Security Challenges: Amit Shah

POONCH TODAY NEWS
POONCH



Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the other day, said that the adoption of advanced technology for securing India's borders has become a necessity in view of the evolving security challenges confronting the country. While chairing a high-level review meeting on border security, Shah said the Government of India is working towards establishing a smart border management system by integrating modern technology with conventional security mechanisms to strengthen surveillance and enhance the operational capabilities of security forces. He said technologies such as drones, thermal imaging cameras, ground sensors, artificial intelligence-based surveillance systems and integrated command and control centres are being deployed to maintain continuous vigil over sensitive border areas. These measures, he said, would enable security agencies to detect suspicious activities at an early stage and ensure a swift response to potential threats. Emphasising the importance of infrastructure development, the Home Minister said the government is giving priority to improving roads, communication networks and other essential facilities in border regions. Better infrastructure, he observed, would facilitate faster movement of security personnel and improve operational efficiency in remote and difficult terrain. Shah lauded the Border Security Force (BSF) and other security agencies for their dedicated service in safeguarding the nation's borders under challenging conditions. He reiterated the government's commitment to providing security forces with modern equipment and the latest technological support to enhance their effectiveness. Highlighting the need for coordinated efforts, Shah stressed closer cooperation among intelligence agencies, security forces and state administrations to effectively tackle infiltration, narco-smuggling, arms trafficking and other cross-border crimes. He said real-time intelligence sharing and coordinated surveillance are vital for strengthening the country's border security framework. The Home Minister's remarks assume significance for border districts, including Poonch and other parts of Jammu and Kashmir, where strengthening surveillance, improving border infrastructure and ensuring quicker response mechanisms have remained key priorities. Reaffirming the Centre's commitment to national security, Shah said India remains committed to maintaining peace and stability while ensuring that there is no compromise on the security and integrity of its borders. He said continuous efforts are being made to build a modern, technology-driven border management system capable of effectively addressing future security challenges. Security experts believe that the increased use of advanced surveillance technology, improved infrastructure and enhanced coordination among security agencies will further strengthen India's border security architecture and improve preparedness against emerging threats.

DC Poonch reviews arrangements for Shri Budha Amarnath Ji Yatra at Mandi

POONCH TODAY NEWS
POONCH



Deputy Commissioner Poonch Ashok Kumar Sharma chaired a comprehensive meeting at the Temple Complex Hall of Shri Budha Amarnath Ji Temple, Mandi to review the arrangements for the forthcoming Shri Budha Amarnath Ji Yatra.

The meeting was graced by the presence of Shri Shri 1008 Mahamandaleshwar Swami Vishwatmanand Saraswati Ji Maharaj.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Shri 1008 Mahamandaleshwar Swami Vishwatmanand Saraswati Ji Maharaj emphasized that any shortcomings noticed during previous editions of the pilgrimage would be rectified this year to provide better facilities to devotees. Swami Ji appreciated the district administration, police and all concerned departments for their continued support and dedicated efforts in making the annual Shri Budha Amarnath Ji Yatra a grand success every year.

Detailed deliberations were held on ensuring the smooth, peaceful and well-organised conduct of the annual pilgrimage. Participants shared valuable suggestions and highlighted various aspects requiring attention for the successful management of the Yatra. Discussions focused on strengthening road connectivity, drinking water supply, power, sanitation and cleanliness, toilet facilities, langar arrangements, vehicle parking, security arrangements, medical facilities, accommodation for pilgrims and other essential public amenities.

The Deputy Commissioner assured the gathering that every possible effort would be made to address all shortcomings well before the commencement of the Yatra. He directed all concerned departments to complete their assigned responsibilities in advance and ensure that all facilities are put in place for the convenience of devotees. He emphasized that coordinated efforts by all departments would ensure a smooth and hassle-free pilgrimage experience.

Senior Superintendent of Police Shafket Hussain Bhat assured that elaborate security arrangements would be put in place to ensure the safe and peaceful conduct of the pilgrimage. He appealed to the public to extend full cooperation to the administration for the successful conduct of the Yatra.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Tahir Mustafa Malik, Assistant Commissioner Revenue Muhammad Sayeed, officers of the district administration, police, line departments, members of the Shri Budha Amarnath Management Committee and prominent citizens of Mandi.

"Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026"

Lieutenant Governor reviews arrangements for pilgrims at Baltal Base Camp

POONCH TODAY NEWS
SRINAGAR



Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha visited the Baltal base camp and reviewed the arrangements for the pilgrims of Baba Amarnath.

The Lieutenant Governor inspected Base Camp Hospital, on-spot registration counters, tents and other facilities, along with the senior officials and directed all line departments to ensure seamless inter-departmental synergy for a hassle-free and memorable pilgrimage experience.

"The comfort of Shri Amarnathji's devotees must remain the highest priority. From registration to accommodation, from smooth movement to darshan, every step of the journey should be seamless and free of any obstacles. The Shrine Board and every department involved are united in their dedication to making this spiritual journey a safe, seamless, and deeply memorable experience for all," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor said that Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra is not only transforming the spiritual lives of devotees but also uplifting the lives of the people of Jammu Kashmir. He interacted with service providers, sanitation workers, doctors, and the volunteers who tirelessly run the langars.

"Their spirit of selfless service is truly inspiring. This year's larger crowds are also bringing new opportunities and positive economic change for local traders and service providers," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He also stated that Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra is a living symbol of aspirational Jammu Kashmir.

"It is woven into the very soul of this land, and preserving its sanctity and cleanliness is our collective duty," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor directed the authorities to take strict legal action against anyone involved in overcharging pilgrims or executing fraudulent registrations. Whether it is a service provider, a government employee, or an individual associated with any institution, make no exceptions. Register a case immediately, he said.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasized a comprehensive audit of all sanitation arrangements. He ordered officials to ensure an uninterrupted, 24/7 water supply.

The concerned officers also briefed the Lieutenant Governor about the arrangements related to security, sanitation, healthcare, accommodation, water and power supply and other essential services. It was informed that an effective feedback mechanism has been put in place and immediate steps are being taken to address issues highlighted by pilgrims.

During the review meeting, it was also informed that the number of RO water installations along the yatra track has been increased to ensure adequate availability of clean drinking water for pilgrims.

The Lieutenant Governor also interacted with the yatris and enquired about the facilities extended to them. The pilgrims appreciated the arrangements made by the line departments, administration, Shrine Board, police, army, security forces and other stakeholders for their smooth pilgrimage.

"I invite all devotees of Baba Barfani to come, experience the darshan of Lord Shiva, and let this pilgrimage be a journey of self-discovery and spiritual joy," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Speaking to media persons, Lieutenant Governor said: "Today marks the eighth day of the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra, and so far, around 1,70,000 pilgrims have paid their obeisance at the holy cave. J&K administration, Police, Army, Security Forces, Shrine Board, and all other stakeholders have worked in complete synergy to ensure that the pilgrimage is hassle-free.

Compared to previous years, a significant number of pilgrims arrived without prior registration. We have successfully facilitated their journey through the necessary protocols, ensuring a smooth process. Every effort is being made to ensure that all pilgrims return home with a positive experience. I am confident that in the coming days, devotees arriving from every corner of the country will carry back fond memories of their pilgrimage.

BJP attempting to break NC: CM Omar Abdullah

POONCH TODAY NEWS
SRINAGAR



Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Saturday claimed that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was attempting to break the National Conference by offering its MLAs cash, ministerial berths, and the promise of restoring statehood.

Addressing National Conference workers on the 26th death anniversary of Begum Akbar Jehan Abdullah (Madar-e-Meharban) at Hazratbal, Omar, as per news agency alleged that the BJP was trying to break the party by luring MLAs with assurances of statehood.

"Wherever your (BJP's) lure of money and ministerial berths doesn't work, you tell my MLA to join hands with you on the lure of restoration of statehood," he said.

The CM claimed that a Supreme Court lawyer, who he said is an office-bearer of the BJP, had approached one of their MLAs from Jammu and offered him Rs 20-30 crore for switching sides.

"One of our MLAs from Jammu told me that a Supreme Court lawyer, who is also a BJP office-bearer, offered him Rs 20-30 crore, a ministerial berth, and statehood if he joined hands with them," Omar said.

"Do they (BJP) think our faith is weak? You will not find a single person on this podium who will sell his conscience even for Rs 100 crore," he added.

Slams Centre over delay in restoration of statehood

Questioning the delay in restoring statehood, Omar said he had consciously chosen dialogue over confrontation after assuming office, despite knowing that many expected a more aggressive political approach.

"I repeatedly said we wanted to secure our rights through dialogue, not conflict. I consciously gave the Centre time to fulfil its promises. But today we are compelled to speak of protest because something has clearly changed," he said.

The CM said that while many expected him to confront New Delhi immediately after the elections, he instead gave the Centre an opportunity to honour its commitments.

Omar said the Union Government itself had outlined a three-stage roadmap comprising delimitation, Assembly elections, and restoration of statehood.

"Delimitation has been completed, elections have been conducted, and a popular government has assumed office, yet the final promise remains unfulfilled. What is our fault now? Why is the promise of restoring statehood still pending?" he asked.

"Our demand is simple: restore the statehood of Jammu and Kashmir. Our patience remains, but it should never be mistaken for surrender," Omar said.

Omar said the prevailing situation had conveyed a message that nothing could be achieved without protest.

"Today, we are being told, knowingly or unknowingly, that nothing can be achieved without protest. We compare our situation with Ladakh and are forced to ask questions," he said.

He pointed out that while the Centre was willing to discuss constitutional safeguards for Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir continued to await restoration of statehood.

"We are told there should be one system in one country, yet Ladakh is being offered constitutional safeguards while Jammu and Kashmir is denied even statehood," he said.

The Chief Minister said he had consistently raised the issue of statehood with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and every senior Union minister he met.

He said he had also raised the issue during the Prime Minister's visit to Sonamarg and at subsequent meetings but was repeatedly told that statehood would be restored at an "appropriate time."

"There has not been a single meeting with the Prime Minister, Amit Shah, or any senior Union minister where I have not raised the issue of statehood. Every time we are told it will happen at an appropriate time. I ask them-what exactly is that appropriate time?" he said.

Omar challenged the BJP to publicly declare that statehood would only be restored after it forms the government in Jammu and Kashmir.

Responding to criticism over the announcement of the July 20 protest, Omar said the programme did not belong solely to the National Conference but to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

He said restoration of statehood was a collective demand and not a partisan issue.

Paying tributes to his grandmother, Begum Akbar Jehan Abdullah, Omar said she remained steadfast through some of the most difficult phases in Jammu and Kashmir's political history and taught the National Conference that patience should never be mistaken for weakness.KNO

DIG-P RP Range Chairs Crime, Intelligence and Security Review Meeting at DPO Poonch

Reviews Operational Preparedness and other Robust Counter-Terror Measures

POONCH TODAY NEWS
POONCH



In continuation of the ongoing efforts to strengthen the security grid across District Poonch, particularly in view of the prevailing security scenario and the forthcoming Shri Buddha Amarnath Ji Yatra, DIG Rajouri-Poonch Range, Shri Sandeep Wazir, IPS, today chaired a comprehensive Crime, Intelligence and Security Review Conference at the District Police Office (DPO), Poonch, to review the operational preparedness, intelligence mechanisms and crime control measures in the district.

The meeting was attended by SSP Poonch, Shri Shafqat Hussain (JKPS), DySP Headquarters Poonch, SHO Police Station Poonch, SHO Police Station Mandi, SHO Police Station Loran, Investigating Officers, and other senior police officers.

During the conference, the DIG conducted a detailed review of the prevailing security scenario, intelligence gathering mechanisms, crime trends, anti-terror operations and security arrangements for the forthcoming Shri Buddha Amarnath Ji Yatra. The officers briefed the chair regarding the existing security architecture, operational preparedness, intelligence inputs, area domination measures, naka deployment, and ongoing efforts to identify, prevent and neutralise any threat to public safety and security.

Emphasising the need for sustained vigilance, the DIG directed all officers to maintain a high level of alertness, strengthen coordination among various police units and security agencies, and ensure seamless flow of actionable intelligence. He stressed the importance of further reinforcing both human intelligence (HUMINT) and technical intelligence (TECHINT), besides intensifying area domination, surprise checking, night patrolling and surveillance in vulnerable areas to effectively counter terrorist activities and safeguard peace in the district.

A comprehensive review of crime was also undertaken, with special focus on the investigation of cases registered under the UAPA, NDPS Act and other heinous offences. The DIG directed the Investigating Officers to conduct professional, impartial and time-bound investigations by making optimum use of scientific evidence, forensic examination, digital investigation techniques and the provisions of the new criminal laws to ensure successful prosecution of offenders.

The DIG also stressed the importance of maintaining strict vigil against narcotics trafficking, anti-national elements and organised criminal networks. He reiterated that District Police Poonch shall continue to adopt a zero-tolerance approach against terrorism, drug trafficking and all forms of organised crime while ensuring people-friendly policing, public outreach and close interaction with local communities to further strengthen public confidence and maintain lasting peace in the district.

SSP Poonch assured the chair that all directions issued during the conference would be implemented in letter and spirit, and that District Police Poonch remains fully committed to maintaining a robust security environment through proactive policing, effective intelligence-based operations and professional investigation of criminal cases.

POONCH TODAY

EDITORIAL

A Wake-Up Call

India's ranking of 176th out of 177 countries in the 2026 Environment Performance Index (EPI) is alarming, but it should be viewed with both caution and seriousness. While the Government has repeatedly questioned the methodology of the index, arguing that it overlooks historical emissions and development challenges, the environmental concerns highlighted by the report cannot simply be dismissed.

The EPI does have limitations. Its methodology changes over time, making comparisons difficult, and it focuses on current environmental conditions rather than the historical responsibility of developed nations. India, with its low per capita emissions and the challenge of providing affordable energy to a vast population, faces a very different reality from wealthier countries. These concerns deserve recognition in any global assessment.

However, the ranking also reflects undeniable facts. India's struggle with severe air pollution, rising health impacts from fine particulate matter, increasing exposure to harmful gases, and weakening marine ecosystems are well documented. Every winter, millions experience hazardous air quality in northern cities, while rivers, coastlines, and biodiversity continue to face mounting pressure. These are not merely statistical findings but everyday realities affecting public health and livelihoods.

The challenge lies in balancing economic growth with environmental protection. India has made significant commitments towards renewable energy, clean mobility, and climate action. Solar power capacity has expanded rapidly, and the country's transition towards greener energy is underway. Yet implementation often falls short of ambition, and dependence on coal remains high due to growing energy demand.

Improving environmental performance requires stronger enforcement rather than stronger rhetoric. Air quality monitoring must become more effective, industries must strictly comply with emission standards, and renewable energy adoption should accelerate. Coastal and marine conservation deserves greater attention, while grasslands and other neglected ecosystems must become part of national conservation priorities. Equally important is the creation of a transparent and credible domestic environmental data system that allows India to evaluate its own progress and engage confidently with international assessments.

Rather than rejecting global rankings outright, India should use them as an opportunity for introspection and constructive engagement. Even an imperfect index can serve as a useful benchmark if it encourages better policies and stronger accountability.

Environmental protection is no longer separate from economic development. Clean air, healthy ecosystems, and sustainable natural resources are essential for long-term prosperity and public health. India's future will depend not on where it stands in a global ranking, but on how determined it is to improve the quality of its environment for the generations to come.

The next flashpoint in global geopolitics



BY ASHOK K MEHTA

The ship tracker in Kota Kinabalu, where I am – on the eastern edge of Malaysia – shows that 281 ships passed through the Malacca Strait on July 14, compared with 134 ships which used to cross the Strait of Hormuz daily before the blockade. Four countries – Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore – monitor and regulate traffic across the Malacca Strait. Before its twin blockades by the US and Iran, the Strait of Hormuz was free for international passage. Iran has found it can use the choke point as leverage and even impose tariffs. As I write, the issue over passage rights remains unresolved despite tit-for-tat bombings and a fragile ceasefire. Not since the Suez Canal crisis of 1956, which led to a geopolitical tsunami, has another choke point rediscovered its importance.

The 900 km long and 65 km wide Strait of Malacca is flanked by Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia, with which PM Modi signed a landmark BrahMos deal this week; it carries 24 per cent of global sea borne trade, 45 per cent of sea borne oil and 23 per cent of cargo shipments, and contains the world's most critical port infrastructure: Singapore's Port Klang, which is the world's second busiest container hub, one of the busiest container trans-shipment points and the world's largest ship refuelling hub. That the Malacca Strait remains free of disruption is critical for China, the US, India and Japan especially, and ASEAN; notably for the four custodian states, for whom control or leverage over it is necessary. They have been working on keeping the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean that the Malacca Strait connects, open and tranquil.

Tensions in the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait are magnifying after the ongoing Gulf War, as Chinese coastguards have introduced new sea patrols off Taiwan's eastern coast. China's claims over the entire South China Sea are in violation of an UNCLOS ruling in 2016, which was re-endorsed by the West last week but rejected by China. For Beijing, Taiwan is an inalienable and vital component of its One China policy. China has maritime disputes with seven ASEAN countries but enjoys cordial relations with all; North Korea is its only good-weather friend. China has long delayed accepting a South China Sea code of conduct first sought by ASEAN in 2003, and, like hedging with India over delineation of the LAC, China has dodged ASEAN over the code until it was nailed to a 2026 deadline by the ASEAN chair, the Philippines. Chinese President Hu Jintao, during an economic conference in 2003, first mentioned Beijing's "Malacca dilemma", as 80 per cent of crude oil, 70 per cent of gas and $1.5tn of its exports pass through it. As its disruption would be catastrophic for China, it has been searching for alternate routes to reduce dependency on it.

First, detours from the south of the Malacca Strait through the Sunda and Lombok Straits within Indonesian waters. Maritime, geological and time and cost overrun issues have discounted these routes. Second, constructing oil and gas pipelines: the USD 62bn China-Pakistan Economic Corridor connecting Xinjiang with Gwadar Port; the USD 2.5bn China-Myanmar Economic Corridor from Kyaukphyu Port in the Indian Ocean to Yunnan, which are operational but in disuse due to civil war in Myanmar. In addition, oil pipelines from Kazakhstan and Russia are available. At this month's World Peace Forum in Beijing, the centrality of the Malacca Strait was amply discussed.

Stung by its failure to keep open the Hormuz Strait, the US is taking no chances in ensuring freedom of passage across the Malacca Strait. On April 14, 2026, the US and Indonesia, the key watchkeeper of the waterway, announced a major defence cooperation partnership, strengthening their military ties. After renaming the US Department of Defence as the Department of War, it has reverted from the US Indo-Pacific Command to the old nomenclature, US Pacific Command – deleting "Indo" – and undertaken several defence and security projects with allies and partners in safeguarding the Malacca Strait. Indonesia's vast archipelago sits astride the Malacca Strait and other vital sea routes of the world. The narrowest portion of the Malacca Strait is the 2.8 km Phillips Channel near Singapore, which is a vulnerable point. Contingency plans for keeping it free of disruption are available and are being augmented by the new entity "ASEAN Maritime Centre for Protection of Strait of Malacca and South China Sea from Encroachment by Major Powers", set up in May 2026. This will be similar to the Information Fusion Centre for the Indian Ocean Region at Gurugram, India.

On June 18, 2026, Thailand's Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul highlighted the criticality of strategic maritime choke points like the Malacca Strait. ASEAN countries were all affected by the closure of the Hormuz Strait except Petronas-rich Malaysia. Thailand announced on 18 June the revival of the pending USD 36bn land corridor project connecting two deep sea ports - Ranong in the Andaman Sea, Indian Ocean, with Chumphon in the Gulf of Thailand, South China Sea in the Pacific Ocean.

China, one of the investors, would be a key beneficiary of this alternate route. The corridor will reduce logistics costs by nearly 30 per cent and cut transit time by 14 days, especially for large cargo containers. But Singapore will lose its pivotal position as the infrastructural hub along the key waterway.

India sits 40 nautical miles on the 6-degree channel covering the western approach to the Malacca Strait. The controversial USD 5bn Great Nicobar Project, involving construction of a deep-water port at Galathea Bay, will become the pivotal hub of global shipping and a new international container transshipment port near the entrance to the Malacca Strait. On July 4, former naval chief and LG of Andaman Adm DK Joshi and Nicobar Adm DK Joshi examined its strategic value with advisers. INS Baaz, India's southernmost air and naval base, is close by but the runway is still not fit for large jet aircraft.

I recall my visit with Defence Planning Staff in 1989 when Indonesia protested India's proposal to enlarge the air base and the issue became a Time magazine cover story. PM Modi's recent visit to Indonesia has turned the tide. Many ideas have recently been floated about blunting Chinese advantage along the LAC by augmenting China's Malacca dilemma, should India have the political will and military finesse for it.

PM Modi's recent visit to Indonesia has turned the tide. Many ideas have recently been floated about blunting Chinese advantage along the LAC by augmenting China's Malacca dilemma, should India have the political will and military finesse for it

The writer, a retired Major General, served as Commander, IPKF (South), Sri Lanka, and was a founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, now the Integrated Defence Staff; Views presented are personal.

Closed tourist destinations likely to reopen after Amarnath Yatra: CM Omar

POONCH TODAY NEWS
SRINAGAR



Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday exuded hope that the tourist destinations closed following the April 22, 2025, Pahalgam terror attack would reopen after the Amarnath Yatra ends,

Talking to reporters after launching the official merchandise for the Kashmir Marathon 2026, Omar, as per the news agency, said Union Home Minister Amit Shah had assured him during a security review meeting in Jammu that the remaining tourist destinations would be reopened during the summer season.

"You will recall that during the Assembly session in Jammu, the Home Minister chaired a meeting on security and development where he assured that the remaining tourist destinations, including Aharbal, Sintan Top, parts of Doodhpathri and some areas of Gulmarg, would be reopened. I hope that once the Amarnath Yatra concludes and the forces deployed for the pilgrimage are redeployed, these places will be opened," he said.

The Chief Minister said the government is working to diversify tourism by promoting different segments instead of relying on a single model.

"A marathon is an event in itself. Organising a marathon does not automatically mean destination weddings or conferences will follow. Every form of tourism has its own identity and potential," he said.

He said the government wants to build unique tourism identities for different destinations, with Gulmarg known for skiing and the Gondola, Pahalgam for white-water rafting and angling, and Sonamarg and Doodhpathri for their distinct attractions.

KASHMIR MARATHON, JAMMU HALF MARATHON TO BECOME NATIONALLY RECOGNISED SPORTING EVENTS

CM Omar said the government intends to develop the Kashmir Marathon and Jammu Half Marathon into nationally recognised sporting events.

Drawing a comparison with the Ladakh Marathon, he said runners from almost every state and Union Territory travel to participate in that event, expressing hope that the Kashmir Marathon would also attract participants from across the country.

"Kashmir is safe, comfortable and welcoming. People who come here to participate in the marathon will return as ambassadors of Kashmir," he said, while encouraging people, including journalists, to take part in the event.

Asked about political developments related to the National Conference, the Chief Minister declined to comment, saying the interaction had been organised to discuss the marathon.

"This is not a National Conference press conference. We have a major party programme tomorrow where all political questions will be answered," he said.

On religious tourism, CM Omar said the ongoing Amarnath Yatra has witnessed an overwhelming response, with more pilgrims arriving than the number registered, making it challenging for the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board to adhere to the Supreme Court-mandated daily ceiling on the number of pilgrims allowed on the track.

He also said the Kheer Bhawani Mela witnessed a significant rise in participation this year compared to last year, with around 10,000 devotees staying overnight and over 30,000 visiting the shrine during the fair.

The Chief Minister said religious tourism continues to grow across both Jammu and Kashmir and reiterated that while the government does not interfere in the management of pilgrimages, it provides all necessary support through infrastructure development, inter-departmental coordination and tourism-related funding.

"Our responsibility is to support the Shrine Boards. Tourism is the nodal department for pilgrimages, and every department has a role in ensuring smooth conduct of these events," he said.

CLIMATE CHANGE EFFECTS BECOMING INCREASINGLY VISIBLE IN J&K

Replying to a question on climate change, Omar described it as a global challenge whose effects are becoming increasingly visible in Jammu and Kashmir.

"We are struggling with unprecedented summer heat. Earlier, snow remained visible on the mountains even during summer and lasted much longer during the Amarnath Yatra. Today it disappears much earlier. Climate change is a reality, and the world must first acknowledge it before it can be addressed," he said.

He said the problem cannot be tackled by Jammu and Kashmir or India alone and called for collective global action, noting that industrialised nations also have a major responsibility in addressing the crisis.

On the National Conference's programmes, Omar said the party would hold its event on Saturday, where he would respond to political questions, including those related to support from other parties. He also said another programme is planned for July 20, subject to administrative permission–(KNO)

BJP won't join NC's Delhi statehood protest: LoP Sunil Sharma

POONCH TODAY NEWS
SRINAGAR



Leader of Opposition and senior BJP leader Sunil Sharma on Friday described the ruling National Conference (NC)-led government's proposed statehood protest at Delhi's Jantar Mantar as an "eye wash" aimed at diverting public attention from alleged corruption, unfulfilled election promises and the "appointment scam."

Addressing a press conference here Sharma, as per the news agency, questioned the fate of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's promised signature campaign for restoration of statehood.

"What happened to the signature campaign for restoration of statehood that the Chief Minister had promised last year?" he asked, alleging that the ruling dispensation was using the statehood issue to escape accountability over governance failures.

Sharma alleged that corruption had become rampant during the present government's tenure, claiming that transfers and postings had turned into a "money-making industry" and accusing ministers and officials of collecting money through official processes.

He urged independent investigating agencies to probe the allegations, saying it was the responsibility of agencies to investigate while it remained the Opposition's duty to raise issues concerning the public.

Targeting the government's outsourcing policy, Sharma termed it an "appointment scam", alleging that deserving and meritorious youth were being denied employment while appointments were allegedly being made through the backdoor.

"This is not merely a backdoor entry; it is an appointment scandal. First people are appointed through outsourcing and later demands are raised for their regularisation, leaving deserving candidates deprived of opportunities," he said.

Demanding an immediate rollback of the outsourcing order, Sharma warned that the BJP would launch a mass agitation if the government failed to withdraw the policy.

He announced that the party would soon begin a protest campaign from Kashmir with a 'gherao of the Civil Secretariat', saying the movement would subsequently be expanded across every district and region of Jammu and Kashmir.

"The fight is for the rights of the youth. We appeal to young people across political affiliations, religions and regions to join this movement against injustice and protect merit," Sharma said.

The BJP leader also accused the government of reneging on its election promises, including providing 200 units of free electricity, 10 kilograms of free ration, one lakh government jobs and 12 free LPG cylinders.

"More than two years have passed, but people have received none of these promises. Instead of answering these questions, the government is staging political dramas," he alleged.

Referring to the proposed NC-led demonstration at Jantar Mantar, Sharma said restoration of statehood remained BJP's commitment but insisted it would come only through Parliament.

"Statehood cannot be restored through protests at Jantar Mantar. It is Parliament that has the authority to restore statehood, and BJP remains committed to fulfilling that promise," he said.

Asked whether the BJP would participate in the NC-led protest in Delhi, Sharma categorically ruled it out.

"Why should we go to Jantar Mantar with thieves, fraudsters, looters and murderers? BJP will not stand with such people," he said while rejecting any possibility of joining the protest.

Sharma also alleged widespread corruption in departments including mining and other government offices, claiming that money was being collected at various administrative levels. However, when asked to produce evidence, he said the government itself had admitted in the Assembly to making thousands of appointments and maintained that it was for investigating agencies to probe the allegations.

"I am not an investigating officer. My responsibility as Leader of the Opposition is to raise public issues and expose failures of the government. Investigation is the job of independent agencies," he said.

On the National Conference's appeal for all political parties to unite for the restoration of statehood, Sharma reiterated that BJP's commitment to statehood remained intact but rejected the NC's approach, alleging that the ruling party was using the issue to conceal governance failures and corruption.

He appealed to the youth of Jammu and Kashmir to unite against what he described as injustice in recruitment and corruption, asserting that BJP would continue its agitation until the outsourcing order was withdrawn and the interests of deserving candidates were protected–(KNO)

IRCS J&K organises drug de-addiction and CPR awareness programme at Mendhar under 100-Day Nasha Mukt Campaign

POONCH TODAY NEWS
POONCH



The Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) Jammu & Kashmir in collaboration with the District Red Cross Society Poonch, today organised a Drug De-Addiction Awareness and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Awareness Programme at Government Higher Secondary School (Boys), Mendhar, as part of the 100-Day Nasha Mukt Campaign launched under the guidance of the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir.

The programme aimed to educate students on the harmful effects of drug abuse, promote a healthy and drug-free lifestyle and equip participants with life-saving skills through CPR training.

Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Mendhar Imran Kataria and Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Mendhar attended as chief guests and appreciated the initiative, urging students to stay away from drugs, adopt healthy lifestyles and contribute towards building a drug-free society. The SDM highlighted the social and health consequences of drug addiction and appealed to students to become ambassadors of the campaign by spreading awareness within their families and communities.

A special team from IRCS Jammu, comprising Dr Rita Kumari (Medical Officer), Vironica Marwah (Field Officer), Ashok Chandel (Head Assistant) and Surinder Kumar (Helper) conducted the awareness sessions. Dr Kumari delivered a practical demonstration on CPR, explaining correct techniques and noting that timely CPR can significantly improve chances of survival before professional medical assistance arrives. Ms Marwah spoke on the objectives, principles and humanitarian services of IRCS and encouraged students, teachers and members of the public to enroll as Red Cross members and participate in humanitarian and community service initiatives.

Principal of Government Higher Secondary School (Boys) Mendhar Saleem Hussain Shah addressed the students, highlighting the importance of staying away from drug abuse and contributing to society through humanitarian service.

A large number of students, teachers and local residents attended and participated in the interactive sessions, pledging to spread awareness about drug de-addiction and life-saving first aid practices in their communities.

Chief Secretary assesses status of arrangements for ongoing Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra

Directs for comprehensive audit of facilities across both routes

POONCH TODAY NEWS
SRINAGAR



Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a high-level review meeting to assess the arrangements put in place for the ongoing Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026 and issued directions for further strengthening the facilities and services being provided to the pilgrims to ensure the safe, smooth and hassle-free conduct of the annual pilgrimage.

The meeting was attended by senior officers from the Civil Administration, Shrine Board, and security establishment, including Administrative Secretaries, senior officers of Police, CAPFs, BRO/BEACON, Heads of Departments, Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, Deputy Commissioners/SSPs of Anantnag and Ganderbal; Director Information; besides other concerned officers.

Reviewing the progress of the Yatra, the Chief Secretary took note of the extensive arrangements made and their further augmentation in view of the unprecedented response from pilgrims this year. It was informed that the pilgrimage has witnessed an overwhelming turnout since the commencement of yatra this year.

The meeting held detailed deliberations on the recommendations presented by the Chief Executive Officer, Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board, Dr. Mandeep K. Bhandari based on the reports of various committees constituted to assess the status of arrangements on the ground. The discussions focused on identifying additional measures required to make the arrangements more robust, reliable and responsive to the needs of the pilgrims.

The meeting reviewed the status of infrastructure and facilities at Yatra camps, langars and along both the Baltal and Pahalgam routes. It was highlighted that the recommendations include complete tiling of the pilgrimage track up to the Holy Cave Shrine to enhance the safety of pilgrims, widening of narrow stretches of the track and bridges at vulnerable locations to prevent overcrowding, construction of retaining walls in landslide-prone areas, augmentation of rain shelters and waiting sheds, installation of iron barricades for effective queue management, and ensuring adequate availability of palkis and stretchers for prompt evacuation during medical emergencies.

The meeting also comprehensively reviewed the availability of essential public amenities across the Yatra camps and holding areas. These included adequate toilet and bathing facilities, uninterrupted drinking water supply, regular sanitation and cleanliness of camps, scientific waste management, and efficient functioning of first-aid and medical facilities.

Moreover the need for installation of additional digital display boards for dissemination of advisories, strengthening fire fighting infrastructure, and enhancing disaster preparedness through adequate mitigation equipment and emergency response mechanisms was also discussed.

During the meeting concerned heads of the departments presented updates regarding the facilities created by their respective departments and informed the meeting about the progress achieved in implementing the recommendations made by the committees.

The Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, along with the Deputy Commissioners of Anantnag and Ganderbal, apprised the meeting of the overall conduct of the Yatra and the arrangements made on the ground.

Emphasising the need for continuous monitoring and timely corrective action, the Chief Secretary directed all the line departments to constitute dedicated audit teams to undertake regular inspections of facilities and infrastructure along both the Yatra routes. He instructed these teams to identify any deficiencies or implementation gaps and ensure their immediate rectification.

Stressing the importance of seamless coordination among all stakeholder departments and agencies, the Chief Secretary called for prompt resolution of issues through effective inter-agency coordination. He asserted that there should be no scope for delays, complacency or lackadaisical approach in the discharge of responsibilities, reiterating that the safety, security and convenience of every pilgrim remain the highest priority of the administration.

Amarnath Yatra living symbol of aspirational Jammu Kashmir: LG Sinha

POONCH TODAY NEWS
BALTAL



Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said that Amarnath Yatra is a living symbol of aspirational Jammu Kashmir and it is woven into the very soul of this land.

According to the details available with the news agency LG Sinha today visited the Baltal base camp and reviewed the arrangements for the pilgrims of Baba Amarnath.

The Lieutenant Governor inspected Base Camp Hospital, on-spot registration counters, tents and other facilities, along with the senior officials and directed all line departments to ensure seamless inter-departmental synergy for a hassle-free and memorable pilgrimage experience.

LG Sinha while chairing a meeting to review the arrangements said, "The comfort of devotees must remain the highest priority. From registration to accommodation, from smooth movement to darshan, every step of the journey should be seamless and free of any obstacles. The Shrine Board and every department involved are united in their dedication to making this spiritual journey a safe, seamless, and deeply memorable experience for all,"

The Lieutenant Governor said that Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra is not only transforming the spiritual lives of devotees but also uplifting the lives of the people of Jammu Kashmir. He interacted with service providers, sanitation workers, doctors, and the volunteers who tirelessly run the langars.

"Their spirit of selfless service is truly inspiring. This year's larger crowds are also bringing new opportunities and positive economic change for local traders and service providers," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He also stated that Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra is a living symbol of aspirational Jammu Kashmir. "It is woven into the very soul of this land, and preserving its sanctity and cleanliness is our collective duty," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor directed the authorities to take strict legal action against anyone involved in overcharging pilgrims or executing fraudulent registrations. Whether it is a service provider, a government employee, or an individual associated with any institution, make no exceptions. Register a case immediately, he said.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasized a comprehensive audit of all sanitation arrangements. He ordered officials to ensure an uninterrupted, 24/7 water supply.

The concerned officers also briefed the Lieutenant Governor about the arrangements related to security, sanitation, healthcare, accommodation, water and power supply and other essential services. It was informed that an effective feedback mechanism has been put in place and immediate steps are being taken to address issues highlighted by pilgrims.

During the review meeting, it was also informed that the number of RO water installations along the yatra track has been increased to ensure adequate availability of clean drinking water for pilgrims.

INTERACTS WITH PILGRIMS

The Lieutenant Governor also interacted with the yatris and enquired about the facilities extended to them. The pilgrims appreciated the arrangements made by the line departments, administration, Shrine Board, police, army, security forces and other stakeholders for their smooth pilgrimage.

"I invite all devotees of Baba Barfani to come, experience the darshan of Lord Shiva, and let this pilgrimage be a journey of self-discovery and spiritual joy," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Speaking to media persons, Lieutenant Governor said: "Today marks the eighth day of the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra, and so far, around 1,70,000 pilgrims have paid their obeisance at the holy cave. J&K administration, Police, Army, Security Forces, Shrine Board, and all other stakeholders have worked in complete synergy to ensure that the pilgrimage is hassle-free.

Compared to previous years, a significant number of pilgrims arrived without prior registration. We have successfully facilitated their journey through the necessary protocols, ensuring a smooth process. Every effort is being made to ensure that all pilgrims return home with a positive experience. I am confident that in the coming days, devotees arriving from every corner of the country will carry back fond memories of their pilgrimage.

100-bed hospitals, located at Baltal and Chandanwari, have been fully operational, handling an average of 1,300 to 1,400 OPD patients daily. These hospitals are playing a critical role in safeguarding the health of both the pilgrims and the dedicated personnel deployed along the routes.

Coordinated action critical for maintaining robust security grid: DGP Prabhat

POONCH TODAY NEWS
SRINAGAR



Asserting that coordinated action and the timely dissemination of actionable intelligence remain critical for maintaining a robust security grid, Director General of Police (DGP) Nalin Prabhat on Friday reviewed the overall security environment and the effectiveness of the multi-tier security arrangements put in place for the safe and peaceful conduct of the ongoing annual Amarnath Yatra.

Chairing a security review meeting at Police Control Room Kashmir with senior officers from the Army, CAPFs, intelligence agencies, and the Jammu & Kashmir Police, DGP Prabhat, according to the news agency reiterated the importance of synergy among security forces and called upon all participating agencies to work in close coordination, ensuring seamless intelligence sharing, real-time information exchange, and joint operational planning to achieve better operational outcomes.

The meeting was attended by GOC 15 Corps, BB Cantt Srinagar; Spl. DG Coordination J&K; Spl. DG CRPF J&K; ADGP CID J&K; AX SIB J&K/L; IGsP of Kashmir Zone, Security J&K, Railways J&K, Traffic J&K & CID J&K, IGs of BSF Ftr Hqrs Kashmir, CRPF KOS, NHW ITBP, and CRPF Srinagar; Commissioner SB; Addl. Commissioner SB Srinagar; GOC CIF (K) Shariefabad Srinagar; GOC CIF (V) Awantipora; GOC 19 Inf Div Baramulla; GOC 28 Inf Div Kupwara; all Range DIGs of Kashmir Zone; DIGs of SSB Srinagar, CRPF (South) Srinagar, CRPF (North) Srinagar, and ITBP Srinagar; Dy. GOC 31 Sub Area, BB Cantt Srinagar; SSP PCR Kashmir; all District SSPs of Kashmir Zone; Col GS (IS) 15 Corps; DPT J&K; SP Cargo Srinagar; and other senior officers.

Senior officers presented detailed assessments of the security measures currently in place and shared updates on field-level preparedness across the Kashmir Valley.

DGP Nalin Prabhat emphasized that coordinated action and the timely dissemination of actionable intelligence remain critical for maintaining a robust security grid. The DGP instructed all agencies to intensify anti-terror operations across the Valley and maintain relentless pressure on terrorist networks and their support structures.

DGP Prabhat directed officers to keep a close watch on terrorist aides and other anti-national elements and to take timely preventive and legal action, wherever required, in accordance with the law.

The DGP further emphasized the importance of area domination, enhanced night domination, and increased surveillance in vulnerable areas to deter any attempt to disturb peace and public order.

DGP Prabhat also directed the establishment of effective naka checkpoints at sensitive locations across the Valley to strengthen access control, improve surveillance, and facilitate the interception of suspicious movement.

The DGP laid special emphasis on strengthening security at vulnerable stretches of the Yatra route, key transit points, and other strategically significant locations.

DGP Prabhat also called for enhanced security oversight of the National Highway and railway infrastructure to ensure uninterrupted movement and the overall safety of yatris.

The Director General of Police also instructed field officers to conduct regular operational briefings for deployed personnel. The DGP directed officers to intensify public awareness initiatives at base camps and transit locations by educating pilgrims about safety guidelines and precautionary measures.

DGP Prabhat reiterated the need for sustained coordination, operational preparedness, and proactive policing among all security agencies.

Akhnoor Gets Major Infrastructure Boost as MLA Mohan Lal Bhagat Lays Foundation Stone for Rs 4.95 Crore Development Works

POONCH TODAY NEWS
AKHNOOR



In a significant push towards strengthening civic infrastructure, MLA Akhnoor Mohan Lal Bhagat on Thursday laid the foundation stone for development works worth Rs 4.95 crore at Nirdosh Chowk, Akhnoor. The project, sanctioned under the Disaster Management Scheme (SASCI), envisages the construction and repair of lanes, drains, roads, protection walls, iron gratings and other allied civic infrastructure across various locations within the Municipal Committee Akhnoor.

The foundation stone was laid in the presence of Director, Urban Local Bodies Jammu, Kapil Sharma (JKAS).

Addressing the gathering, Mohan Lal Bhagat said that the initiative has been taken to restore and strengthen the town's infrastructure, which suffered extensive damage during last year's floods. He said the project would significantly improve civic amenities and enhance the quality of life for the residents of Akhnoor.

The MLA urged citizens to actively monitor the execution of the works and immediately report any compromise in quality or irregularities to him or the concerned department. He emphasized that public participation is essential to ensure transparency, accountability and quality in developmental projects.

Highlighting the Government's long-term vision for Akhnoor, Bhagat announced that the modernisation of the Akhnoor Bus Stand, rejuvenation and beautification of ponds and parks, and road widening from Jia Pota to the Old Bridge will also be undertaken in the coming months.

He further informed that two tourism projects at Jia Pota Ghat are already under execution by the Tourism Department. He said sustained efforts are being made to establish Akhnoor as a major tourist destination. As part of these initiatives, the District Administration Jammu, under the Raahi Hope programme during the ongoing Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra, is facilitating visits of pilgrims to Jia Pota Ghat, Akhnoor Fort, Pandav Gufa and Ambaran to showcase the region's rich historical, cultural and religious heritage.

Speaking on the occasion, Director Urban Local Bodies Jammu Kapil Sharma said that nearly Rs 5 crore is being invested in strengthening civic infrastructure in Akhnoor town and several more development projects have already been sanctioned and will commence shortly.

He appealed to residents, particularly the business community, to cooperate with the administration in maintaining cleanliness and protecting public assets. Referring to the recent sanitation workers' strike, Sharma acknowledged the inconvenience faced by the public and assured that the department is working towards a permanent resolution of the issue.

Among those present were BJP District President Kuldeep Sharma, former Municipal Committee Chairman Deepesh Singh, former councillors Rakesh Malhotra, Bharat Bhushan Gupta, Baldev Mehra, Shiv Mahajan, Jugal Dogra, Sudesh Magotra, Vinod Sharma, Babbu Magotra, Anil Sharma, Ashok Sharma Tinu, Ayush Singh, Sushil Sharma, Thodu Ram Sharma, Advocate Pankaj Gupta, Ranjeet Rohmetra, Sonia Verma, Anu Manhas, Pawan Saraf, Dharampal Gupta, Ashok Gupta, Ashok Mishra, D.N. Abrol, Sham Magotra, Ashok Langar, former Sarpanches Vijay Sharma, Ganesh Dass, Kashmir Singh, Kishori Sharma, Kuldeep Singh, Varinder Kumar, Suleman Choudhary, Balwinder Singh Bindu, Ravinder Choudhary, Aman Mahajan, Udayman and several prominent citizens.

Executive Officer, Municipal Committee Akhnoor, Mohammad Yaqoob, Assistant Executive Engineer Sunil Baogia, along with officers and officials of the Urban Local Bodies Department, were also present on the occasion.

Jasrota gets major development boost as Jasrotia unveils Rs 96-Lakh infrastructure package

POONCH TODAY NEWS
SRINAGAR



Reinforcing his commitment to accelerating grassroots development and improving the quality of life in rural areas, BJP MLA from Jasrota, Rajiv Jasrotia, on Thursday dedicated a series of development initiatives worth over Rs 96 lakh to the people of his constituency. The day-long programme included the laying of foundation stones for key road projects, inauguration of upgraded educational infrastructure, and a Public Darbar aimed at directly addressing the concerns of local residents.

The MLA laid the foundation stone for the newly sanctioned Public Works Department (PWD) road from Chilkh West, Badholi Road to Mohalla Barber, to be constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 58 lakh. The road is expected to significantly improve connectivity for several habitations, reduce travel time, facilitate easier movement of agricultural produce, and provide better access to schools, healthcare facilities, and markets.

Jasrotia also laid the foundation stone for another important road project connecting Badholi to Kirmichi, which will be executed at a cost of Rs 20 lakh. The project is expected to strengthen the rural road network and provide safer, all-weather connectivity to residents, thereby supporting economic activities and enhancing the region's overall development prospects.

Continuing his developmental outreach, the MLA inaugurated the newly constructed infrastructure at Government Middle School, Galli, completed at a cost of Rs 18.02 lakh. The upgraded facilities include improved classrooms and essential educational infrastructure designed to create a more conducive learning environment for students and teachers alike. The initiative reflects the government's continued focus on strengthening public education and ensuring quality infrastructure in rural schools.

Speaking on the occasion, Rajiv Jasrotia said that infrastructure development remains the cornerstone of the government's vision for a prosperous and self-reliant Jammu and Kashmir. He stated that every development project undertaken in the constituency is guided by the objective of improving public convenience, creating opportunities for economic growth, and ensuring equitable development across urban and rural areas."The real measure of governance lies in how effectively it transforms the lives of ordinary people. Better roads improve connectivity, education infrastructure strengthens the future of our children, and continuous public engagement ensures that governance remains accountable and people-centric," he said.

The MLA reiterated that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the guidance of the Jammu and Kashmir administration, unprecedented emphasis is being laid on strengthening rural infrastructure, modernising educational institutions, and ensuring that developmental benefits reach every village without discrimination.Later, Jasrotia held a well-attended Public Darbar (Jan Samvad) at Badholi, where people from different villages and panchayats presented issues relating to roads, drinking water supply, electricity, irrigation, healthcare, education, revenue matters, pensions, and other civic concerns.

Listening patiently to every representation, the MLA assured the gathering that all genuine grievances would be taken up with the concerned departments and resolved on priority. He directed officials accompanying him to initiate immediate action on matters requiring urgent attention and emphasized that governance must remain accessible, transparent, and responsive to the aspirations of the people.He also urged officers to maintain close coordination with local representatives to ensure the timely execution of developmental works and effective implementation of welfare schemes at the grassroots level.

Residents expressed satisfaction over the developmental initiatives and appreciated the MLA's regular interaction with the public. They said the newly sanctioned road projects and improved educational infrastructure would significantly enhance connectivity, educational standards, and the overall quality of life in the area.Senior officers from the Public Works Department, Education Department and other line departments, local BJP leaders, panchayat representatives, and a large number of residents were present during the programme.

District admin Rajouri organises mega Awareness Programme-cum-Workshop on POSH Act 2013

POONCH TODAY NEWS
RAJOURI



District Administration Rajouri, in collaboration with the Social Welfare Department and District Legal Service Authority, today organised a Mega Awareness Programme-cum-Workshop on the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH Act, 2013) to spread awareness about the legal provisions of the Act and promote a safe, dignified and harassment-free work environment.

The programme was presided over by Additional Deputy Commissioner Rajouri Ravi Kumar Sihag.

Among others present were Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Mohammad Jahangir Khan; District Social Welfare Officer Abdul Raheem, Advocates Ashfaq Lone and Deepakshi from the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), officers from different departments, employees and other stakeholders.

At the outset, DSWO Abdul Raheem delivered a detailed presentation on the objectives and key provisions of the POSH Act, 2013. He elaborated on the rights of women at the workplace, the responsibilities of employers, the constitution and role of Internal Committees, complaint redressal mechanisms, timelines prescribed under the Act and the legal safeguards available to victims of workplace sexual harassment. He emphasised that awareness of the law is essential to ensuring dignity, equality and justice for every working woman.

Addressing the gathering, the ADC highlighted the significance of the POSH Act in safeguarding the rights, dignity and safety of women in workplaces. He said that every institution and organisation has a moral and legal responsibility to provide a secure, respectful and inclusive working environment where women can perform their duties without fear of harassment or discrimination.

The ADC stressed the need to sensitise all employees about the provisions of the Act so that awareness translates into responsible behaviour and mutual respect at workplaces. He urged all departments to organise similar awareness programmes at regular intervals and ensure that the message of workplace safety reaches every employee. He also called upon the participants to act as ambassadors of awareness by disseminating information about the Act within their respective offices and communities.

The ACR also addressed the gathering and underscored the importance of creating safe, respectful and gender-sensitive workplaces. He emphasised that awareness of the provisions of the POSH Act, 2013, coupled with collective responsibility and institutional accountability, is essential for preventing workplace harassment and ensuring a secure and dignified working environment for all employees. He urged participants to actively disseminate awareness about the Act and contribute towards fostering a culture of equality, respect and mutual trust in every workplace.

Advocate Ashfaq spoke about the legal framework of the POSH Act, explaining the rights of aggrieved women, the procedure for filing complaints and the legal safeguards available under the Act. Advocate Deepakshi sensitised the participants on the importance of gender equality, workplace ethics and the need to foster an environment of dignity, mutual respect and zero tolerance towards sexual harassment. She encouraged employees to remain aware of their rights and responsibilities and to contribute towards building safe and inclusive workplaces.

The composition, roles and functioning of the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) and the Local Complaints Committee (LCC) under the POSH Act, 2013 were explained in detail. The procedure for filing complaints, mechanism for inquiry and redressal and safeguards available to aggrieved women were elaborated upon. It was highlighted that every establishment employing ten or more persons is mandated to constitute an Internal Complaints Committee, while the Local Complaints Committee serves as the designated redressal mechanism for establishments where an ICC has not been constituted or where the complaint is against the employer. Participants were sensitised about these institutional mechanisms to ensure timely, fair and confidential redressal of grievances.

Baldev Billawaria reviews development works, hears public grievances in Gangyal

POONCH TODAY NEWS
JAMMU



J&K BJP general secretary & former Deputy Mayor Baldev Singh Billawaria conducted an extensive tour of Ward No. 56 in the Gangyal area today to interact with local residents, understand their concerns, and inspect the progress of ongoing developmental works being undertaken in the locality.

During his visit, Billawaria met with residents from different parts of the ward and patiently listened to their grievances and suggestions regarding civic amenities. The inhabitants highlighted several issues, including the need for improved sanitation, better drainage facilities, repair of internal roads, regular water supply, street lighting, and enhanced cleanliness in public spaces. Residents also requested the early completion of pending development projects to improve the quality of life in the area.

Addressing the gathering, Billawaria assured the people that every genuine issue raised by them would be taken up with the concerned government departments and municipal authorities for prompt resolution. He reiterated that public service remains the foremost priority of the Bharatiya Janata Party and emphasized that continuous interaction with citizens is essential for ensuring accountable and transparent governance.

Billawaria also inspected the ongoing development works in Ward No. 56 and reviewed their progress on the ground. He interacted with officials and local representatives, stressing the importance of maintaining quality standards and ensuring that all projects are completed within the stipulated timeframe. He directed that no compromise should be made in the execution of public works and urged the concerned agencies to accelerate the pace of construction wherever necessary.

Speaking on the occasion, Billawaria said that the BJP is committed to the holistic development of every locality and is working tirelessly to strengthen basic infrastructure and improve public amenities. He added that regular field visits enable public representatives to understand the real concerns of the people and monitor the implementation of development schemes effectively.

The residents appreciated Billawaria's visit and welcomed his initiative to personally assess the situation on the ground. They expressed confidence that their long-pending issues would receive due attention and be resolved at the earliest.

Ranjeet Singh, Rakesh Sangral, Dr. Kuldeep Gupta, Om Nath, Jugal Kishore were also present on this occasion.

VC LCMA inspects Khushalsar-Gilsar Lake System

Reviews conservation and demarcation measures

POONCH TODAY NEWS
SRINAGAR

Vice Chairman, J&K Lake Conservation & Management Authority (LCMA), Khurshid Ahmad Shah, today conducted an extensive inspection tour of the Khushalsar Gilsar lake system, covering Gil Kadal, Sazgaripora, Saidapora, and other adjoining areas in and around the waterbodies to review the progress of conservation and protection measures being undertaken by the Authority.

The Vice Chairman was accompanied by the Superintending Engineer, Collector, all Executive Engineers, Assistant Executive Engineers (AEEs), Junior Engineers (JEs), Revenue officials, and other officers and officials of the Authority.

During the visit, the Vice Chairman undertook a comprehensive on the spot review of the demarcation exercise being carried out by the field teams. He inspected the identified land parcels and assessed the progress achieved in the field.

Stressing the importance of clearly establishing the boundaries of the water bodies and their protected areas, he directed the demarcation teams to expedite the pegging and marking of all identified land to ensure proper identification, protection, and effective monitoring of these ecologically significant assets.



Interacting with the field staff, the Vice Chairman emphasized the need for sustained vigilance and coordinated efforts in carrying out conservation activities. He instructed the concerned officers to ensure that the demarcation work is completed in a time bound manner while maintaining complete accuracy and transparency. He further directed that regular inspections be conducted to prevent any encroachment or unauthorized activity within the demarcated areas.

Reviewing the condition of the water body, the Vice Chairman directed that the Water Master and barge be mobilized and shifted to the Khushalsar Gilsar water body on priority today itself so that cleaning and other restoration activities can be intensified without any delay. He emphasized that all necessary logistical arrangements should be made immediately to ensure that the machinery becomes operational at the earliest.

The Vice Chairman also reviewed the existing protective measures along vulnerable stretches of the Khushalsar Gilsar water bodies. Recognizing the need for strengthening the physical protection of the lake boundaries, he directed the Engineering Wing of LCMA to immediately prepare a detailed proposal for installation of chain link fencing around the identified vulnerable locations. He observed that appropriate fencing would help secure the demarcated land, discourage encroachments, and support the long-term preservation and restoration of the water bodies.

Reiterating the Authority's commitment towards conservation of the Khushal Sar Gilsar lake system, the Vice Chairman stated that LCMA remains dedicated to protecting these important urban wetlands through scientific management, continuous monitoring, infrastructure development, and active field level interventions. He emphasized that the restoration and safeguarding of these water bodies is vital for maintaining ecological balance, improving the urban environment, and preserving the natural heritage of the Kashmir Valley for future generations.

DC Kishtwar finalises arrangements for Annual Shree Hudh Mata Trisandhiya Yatra-2026

POONCH TODAY NEWS
KISHTWAR

Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar Pankaj Kumar Sharma today convened a meeting of district and sectoral officers to finalise elaborate arrangements for the smooth, secure and successful conduct of the Annual Shree Hudh Mata Trisandhiya Yatra-2026, scheduled to commence on July 15, 2026.

As per the notified schedule, the Holy Mace (Charri Mubarak) shall reach Shri Gauri Shankar Mandir Sarkoot Kishtwar on July 16, 2026.

The Deputy Commissioner undertook a comprehensive review of all logistical, infrastructural and safety-related arrangements to ensure a seamless and hassle-free pilgrimage experience for devotees. Stressing inter-departmental coordination and proactive execution, he issued a slew of directions aimed at augmenting public convenience and ensuring strict adherence to safety protocols.

Key directions included desilting of drains, ensuring uninterrupted potable water supply, provision of clean and adequate sanitation facilities at critical locations including Shri Gauri Shankar Mandir and upkeep of roads along the Yatra route. He further directed improvement of infrastructure from Kishtwar to Shri Hudh Mata Bhawan.



The concerned departments were directed to ensure adequate solar lighting, uninterrupted power supply, sanitation management, accommodation facilities, transportation arrangements and robust healthcare services. Special emphasis was laid on the deployment of medical teams, availability of ambulances and provision of free of cost medicines for pilgrims.

The Deputy Commissioner also reviewed security and disaster preparedness measures.

The Senior Superintendent of Police Kishtwar Naresh Singh assured comprehensive security arrangements, including advance deployment of personnel, strategic surveillance and effective crowd management mechanisms. SDRF teams shall also be deployed at vulnerable points along the Yatra route.

To maintain environmental sanctity and cleanliness, directions were issued for installation of dustbins, sanitation drives at all Langer (community kitchen) sites and dissemination of awareness messages encouraging eco-friendly practices among pilgrims. A public advisory shall also be issued in this regard.

The Chief Executive Officer Municipal Council Kishtwar and Block Development Officer, Kishtwar, were specifically directed to ensure meticulous sanitation, cleanliness and desilting of drains in and around Shri Gauri Shankar Mandir, Sarkoot.

The District Traffic Inspector Kishtwar was directed to formulate and implement a foolproof traffic management plan to regulate vehicular movement during the Yatra.

During the meeting, representatives of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha, led by its President, Mahant Ram Saran Dass Ji Maharaj, along with members of the Shri Hudh Mata Yatra Management Committee, raised various issues and suggestions. The Deputy Commissioner responded with on-the-spot directions and reiterated the unwavering commitment of the District Administration towards facilitating a safe and spiritually enriching pilgrimage.

The meeting was attended by ADC Kishtwar Pawan Kotwal, ACR Kishtwar Mohammad Idrees Lone, CEO Municipal Council Kishtwar Mirza Mumtaz Iqbal, Tehsildar Kishtwar Nirbhay Sharma, Tehsildar Dachan Umer Jahanzeb, DFO Marwah Vishal Chaudhary, DNO AYUSH Kishtwar Dr. Vikram Singh Jamwal, BMO Dachan Dr. Sajjad Hussain, DTI Kishtwar Anil Raina besides other district and sectoral officers and stakeholders.

J&K Bank inks maiden strategic partnership with Directorate of Census Operations JKL for Census 2027 Population Enumeration awareness

POONCH TODAY NEWS
SRINAGAR



Reinforcing its commitment to nation-building and public service, J&K Bank today signed a strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), first-of-its-kind in the nation, with the Directorate of Census Operations, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh to collaborate on media, publicity and public awareness activities for the upcoming Population Enumeration phase of Census 2027 in the UTs of J&K and Ladakh.

This historic MoU was inked by Chief General Manager Ashutosh Sareen on behalf of J&K Bank, while Chief Principal Census Officer (CPCO) and Director Census Operations (DCO) Amit Sharma (IAS) put in his signatures on behalf of the Directorate of Census Operations J&K and Ladakh in the presence of Joint Chief Principal Census Officer Arun Kumar, Deputy Chief Principal Census Officer Manmeet Singh Loomba, General Manager (CC&M) Mohammad Muzaffar Wani, DGM Syed Aadil Bashir and other senior officers from both organizations.

The landmark partnership will leverage the Bank's extensive branch network, digital signages and trusted customer outreach channels to disseminate official Census-related information and create widespread public awareness about the country's first Census through digital means. The collaboration will involve widespread media, publicity and awareness initiatives.

Speaking on the collaboration, Chief Principal Census Officer and Director Census Operations Amit Sharma said, "J&K Bank is one of the most trusted public-facing institutions in both the Union Territories with an unmatched presence across urban, rural, border and remote areas. By integrating Census communication with this trusted institutional network, we are taking authentic Census information directly to the people, strengthening public confidence and ensuring that no resident remains unaware of this important national exercise."

The Chief Principal Census Officer Amit Sharma further highlighted that the landmark partnership would substantially strengthen the Directorate's ongoing publicity campaign by integrating Census messaging into one of the largest institutional networks.

While expressing confidence that the collaboration would significantly improve public awareness and facilitate seamless conduct of the forthcoming Census operations, Amit further said, “Besides reaching lakhs of residents through the Bank's physical and digital touchpoints, the initiative would help counter misinformation, reinforce public trust and encourage greater participation during Population Enumeration, particularly in remote, border and underserved areas.”

Speaking on the occasion, Chief General Manager Ashutosh Sareen said, "The Census is one of the most significant national exercises, providing the foundation for informed policymaking, equitable resource allocation and evidence-based planning for the country's future. Its success depends not only on robust execution but also on widespread public awareness and participation.”

“As a trusted financial institution with a deep presence across Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, J&K Bank is privileged to support this national endeavour by leveraging its extensive physical and digital outreach to disseminate authentic information, build public confidence and encourage greater participation in Census 2027", he added.

Under the MoU, J&K Bank will facilitate the display of Census awareness material, including posters, pamphlets and standees, across its branches, customer service areas, financial literacy centres and other public-facing locations. The Bank will also disseminate Census awareness messages through its digital signages. Both organizations will coordinate the awareness campaign through designated nodal officers. The MoU is non-commercial in nature and entails no financial commitment from either side.

It is worthwhile to mention here that this exclusive MoU of J&K Bank with Census Department, MHA, Government of India, will remain in force up to March 31, 2027, providing a structured framework for coordinated awareness initiatives aimed at promoting informed public participation and facilitating the successful conduct of Census 2027 across the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

Saurabh Bhagat chaired review meeting on J&K SAMADHAN

POONCH TODAY NEWS
SRINAGAR



Commissioner Secretary, Department of Public Grievances, Saurabh Bhagat today chaired a review meeting to assess the functioning and performance of J&K SAMADHAN, the Union Territory's flagship grievance redressal and monitoring platform.

During the meeting, a comprehensive review of J&K SAMADHAN was undertaken covering grievance registration, disposal trends, departmental performance, citizen feedback mechanisms and overall system functionality.

Commissioner Secretary emphasized the importance of strengthening the grievance redressal ecosystem to ensure timely, transparent and effective resolution of public grievances and to further enhance citizen satisfaction.

The meeting was informed that J&K SAMADHAN is proposed to be migrated to the MeghRaj Government Cloud infrastructure. The migration is expected to provide a secure, scalable and reliable hosting environment, improve system availability, strengthen disaster recovery capabilities and align the platform with the Government of India's cloud adoption framework. Shri Saurabh Bhagat directed the concerned officers to take necessary steps for migration of the platform to MeghRaj Cloud in a time-bound manner to ensure enhanced performance, security and operational efficiency.

Commissioner Secretary also directed the concerned officers to initiate the development of J&K SAMADHAN 3.0, envisaged as a next-generation citizen engagement and governance platform for the Union Territory. He emphasized that the proposed platform should build upon the strengths of the existing J&K SAMADHAN system while incorporating advanced technologies and best practices from successful citizen governance platforms implemented across the country.

Saurabh Bhagat observed that J&K SAMADHAN 3.0 should evolve beyond a conventional grievance redressal platform and serve as a comprehensive citizen-government interaction ecosystem. The proposed platform shall integrate citizen engagement, grievance redressal, service delivery monitoring, governance analytics, Artificial Intelligence, GIS-enabled monitoring and decision support systems into a unified digital framework.

Commissioner Secretary further directed that the proposed platform should leverage emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), AI-powered Voicebots and Chatbots, multilingual citizen interfaces, predictive analytics, governance dashboards and intelligent decision-support tools. The platform shall provide seamless access to citizens through multiple channels including web portals, mobile applications, toll-free helplines, WhatsApp, SMS, email and other digital interfaces to ensure inclusive and accessible governance across Jammu & Kashmir.

During the meeting, Saurabh Bhagat emphasized the need to replicate successful grievance redressal models adopted by other States within the JK Samadhan framework. In this regard, it was directed that the feasibility of adopting and suitably customizing proven best practices from other States be examined for implementation in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, with a view to expediting the development of a modern, efficient, and citizen-centric governance ecosystem.

Commissioner Secretary further directed that Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geo-informatics (BISAG-N) may be considered as the Technology Partner for J&K SAMADHAN 3.0 for providing technical expertise in platform integration, customization, localization, GIS integration, dashboard development, interoperability with departmental systems and implementation support. The proposed collaboration is expected to facilitate adoption of a proven governance framework while reducing development timelines, implementation risks and overall project costs.

Saurabh Bhagat directed the Department of Public Grievances, State e-Mission Team (SeMT) Department of Information Technology to work in close coordination for preparation of a detailed roadmap, technical architecture and implementation strategy for the development and rollout of J&K SAMADHAN 3.0.

The meeting was attended by officers of the Department of Public Grievances, Department of Information Technology, State e-Mission Team (SeMT) and other concerned stakeholders.

DC Reasi reviews monsoon preparedness, directs departments to ensure prompt response

POONCH TODAY NEWS
REASI



Deputy Commissioner Reasi Kumar Abhishek, who is also Chairman of the District Disaster Management Authority, today chaired a meeting to review preparedness and response measures for the monsoon season across the district.

The Deputy Commissioner assessed the preparedness of all departments in dealing with potential challenges arising from heavy rainfall, flash floods, landslides, waterlogging and disruption of essential services. Coordinated efforts among departments are required to ensure public safety and minimise inconvenience to residents during the monsoon season.

The DC instructed officers concerned to conduct field visits to all vulnerable locations and inspect drainage channels and watercourses. He directed that blocked channels should be cleared immediately to ensure smooth flow of rainwater and prevent waterlogging, flooding and damage to public infrastructure. All executing agencies were further directed to keep required machinery and equipment deployed in advance so that restoration and relief operations can be undertaken without delay in case of heavy rainfall or landslides.

The DC directed that preventive and mitigation works should be undertaken on priority, with all necessary measures completed before the peak monsoon period. Road connectivity to Katra must remain uninterrupted under all circumstances to ensure the pilgrimage to Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji continues smoothly without inconvenience to devotees.

Executive Engineer JPDCL and Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Department briefed the chair on preparedness measures being undertaken by their departments for the monsoon season, including availability of manpower, emergency response teams, equipment and contingency plans to address disruption in essential services. SDMs and Tehsildars briefed the DC on vulnerable locations within their respective jurisdictions and preparedness measures undertaken to tackle any eventuality during the monsoon season.

The DC directed all departments to submit damage and relief assessment reports within the stipulated time to ensure prompt processing and disbursal of relief assistance to affected beneficiaries and to submit temporary restoration proposals without delay for timely release and utilisation of funds.

SDRF teams were directed to be deployed in Mahore to strengthen emergency response capabilities and provide immediate assistance in the event of any disaster. Officers concerned were further directed to identify houses located in vulnerable and high-risk areas and, wherever necessary, shift residents to safer locations to safeguard lives and property.

The concerned departments were also directed to ensure availability and timely supply of sufficient ration and other essential commodities in remote and vulnerable areas. The BRO was directed to install adequate warning signages at all vulnerable points and landslide-prone stretches to enhance public safety and facilitate smooth movement of traffic during the monsoon season.

Officers concerned were directed to establish control rooms at district as well as sub-divisional levels to ensure round-the-clock monitoring and prompt response to any emergency during the monsoon season.

Among those present were ADDC Krishan Lal, ADC Rakesh Kumar, CPO Narinder Kumar, ACR, ACD and other officers concerned.

India's strength lies in unity amid diversity: HP Governor

POONCH TODAY NEWS
SHIMLA



Governor of Himachal Pradesh, Kavinder Gupta said that Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was not only the architect of India's political integration but also a strong champion of Indian federalism. He observed that India's federal structure is unique in the world, where diverse languages, cultures and traditions are united by the Constitution, which serves as the foundation of national unity.

The Governor was addressing the inaugural session of the international seminar on "Sardar Patel's Vision of Integration, Integrity and Federalism" and the inauguration of the "Vande Mataram: Ek Yatra" exhibition at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study (IIAS), Shimla, today. He attended the programme as the Chief Guest.

Notably, the Vice President of India, Shri C.P. Radhakrishnan, who was scheduled to grace the occasion, could not attend due to inclement weather. A video message from the Vice President was presented during the programme.

Addressing the gathering, Shri Kavinder Gupta said the two events commemorated two enduring pillars of India's national consciousness. While the "Vande Mataram: Ek Yatra" exhibition reflects the cultural and emotional awakening that inspired millions during the freedom movement, the seminar revisits Sardar Patel's visionary leadership in unifying the nation and laying the foundation of a strong and united India.

Describing "Vande Mataram" as the soul of India's freedom struggle, the Governor said that Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's immortal composition inspired generations of freedom fighters with the spirit of sacrifice, patriotism and national service. He remarked that the exhibition is not merely a display of historical documents and photographs but a living chronicle of India's national awakening, especially for the younger generation.

Paying rich tributes to Sardar Patel, Shri Gupta said his contribution extended far beyond the integration of over 560 princely states. He recalled Patel's exemplary leadership during the Bardoli Satyagraha, his organisational skills, discipline and unwavering commitment to nation-building, which earned him the title of "Sardar."

The Governor also appreciated Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's initiative in establishing the Statue of Unity at Kevadia, Gujarat, describing it as a lasting tribute to Sardar Patel's unparalleled contribution to national integration and a powerful symbol of the spirit of "Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat."

The Governor appealed to scholars, researchers, students and citizens to look beyond the exhibition and imbibe the ideals and values of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in their lives. He especially urged the youth to visit the Statue of Unity at Kevadia, Gujarat, whenever they have the opportunity, describing it as an inspiring experience that offers a deeper understanding of the Iron Man's extraordinary contribution to national integration. He said it is the collective responsibility of every citizen to preserve and carry forward Sardar Patel's enduring legacy of unity, integrity and patriotism.

On the occasion, the Governor released the Coffee Table Book on Vande Mataram, the seminar proceedings on "Darsana of Radhakrishnan: Eternal and Temporal," and a multilingual poetry volume on Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. He also visited the "Vande Mataram: Ek Yatra" exhibition, curated by noted researcher and author Shri Akhilesh Jha, with significant contributions from co-curator Ms. Rashmita Jha and researcher Ms. Shreyasi Jha.

Earlier, Prof. Shashi Prabha Kumar, Chairperson, IIAS, welcomed the Governor and highlighted the institute's year-long programmes marking its 60th Foundation Year. She underlined Sardar Patel's enduring vision of unity and federalism and reaffirmed the institute's commitment to presenting India's history and civilisational heritage in its true perspective.

Shri Prafulla Ketkar, Editor of Organizer Weekly, spoke on Sardar Patel's historic contribution to the creation of a united India. Prof. Himanshu Kumar Chaturvedi, Director, IIAS, welcomed and honoured the Governor and briefed the gathering on the exhibition and the international seminar. Shri Mehar Chand Negi, Secretary, IIAS, proposed the vote of thanks.

Prof. Mahavir Singh, Vice Chancellor, HP University Shimla, Prof. Preeti Saxena, Vice Chancellor, Himachal Pradesh National Law University, Ghandal, Shri Purushottam Tiwari, Principal Auditor General, Fellows and othr prominent people were also present on the occasion.

Continued delay for restoration of Statehood will cause great harm to the generation to come and the country: Dy. CM Surinder Choudhary

POONCH TODAY NEWS
JAMMU

The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference senior leader and Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary on Thursday said the Restoration of Statehood to Jammu & Kashmir is not merely a political demand but an essential prerequisite for safeguarding democracy, ensuring effective governance, and accelerating the all-round development of the region.

Addressing public meetings at Bari Brahmana, Vijaypur, Samba in District Samba and Hiranagar, Kathua in District Kathua along with Provincial President Jammu Rattan Lal Gupta. Choudhary said that every passing day without the restoration of full statehood is causing irreparable harm to the future of Jammu & Kashmir. "The continued delay will adversely affect not only the present generation but also generations to come by slowing development, weakening democratic institutions, and creating uncertainty in governance," he asserted.



Choudhary said that Jammu & Kashmir is a sensitive border region of immense strategic importance and a world-renowned tourist destination. Such a unique region deserves a fully empowered, democratically elected government capable of taking independent decisions in the best interests of its people. He added that the existing dual power structure, where authority is divided between the elected government and the Lieutenant Governor, has resulted in administrative bottlenecks, delayed decision-making, and avoidable obstacles in implementing development programmes.

He said the people of Jammu & Kashmir have repeatedly demonstrated their faith in democracy by participating in elections despite numerous challenges. Their democratic mandate must be respected by restoring full statehood at the earliest. Continued denial of statehood is inconsistent with the spirit of the Constitution and India's federal democratic framework.

The legislator's party and other alliance partners have decided to hold a strong protest on 20th of July at Jantar Mantar Delhi to remind the Centre leadership to restore the Statehood without any further delay. He also requested the people of Jammu to participate in a Public meeting to be held on 12th of July at Maharaja Hari Singh Park Jammu.

Addressing the gatherings Rattan Lal Gupta Provincial President Jammu said that the reminded the Central Government of its repeated assurances regarding the restoration of statehood and urged it to translate those commitments into action without any further delay. He said that restoring statehood would strengthen democratic institutions, improve administrative accountability, attract investment, boost tourism, create employment opportunities, and ensure balanced and inclusive development across all regions of Jammu & Kashmir.

He emphasized that the demand for statehood transcends party politics and reflects the aspirations and dignity of the people of Jammu & Kashmir. The Centre should act without further delay and restore full statehood in the larger national interest and in keeping with its constitutional and democratic commitments.

Mr Gupta appealed to the people to participate in the mega rally to be held at Maharaja Hari Singh Park Jammu near Fortune Hotel at the Bank of Tawi on 12th of July at 10:30 am.

Among others who were present in the meeting included: Sudagar Gupta District President Samba, Mohinder Singh former JCCB, Sham Narian Mehta District President Kathua Rural, Ajeet Kumar Sharma District President Kathua Urban, Rajesh Pargotra, Rajni Devi Working President Women Wing Jammu, K.K Bakashi District Secretary Kathua, Shoket Choudhary District President Samba ST Cell, Puran Chand, Ajay Sharma, Satpal, Rajeshwar Singh, Balbir Singh, Prem Verma, Anoop Gupta, Sharief Choudhary, Parveen Kousar, Ashu Thakur and other party functionaries were also present.

DC Reasi, MD SBM chair review meeting on SWM Rules 2026

POONCH TODAY NEWS
REASI

Deputy Commissioner Reasi, Kumar Abhishek along with MD SBM, Dr. Devansh Yadav, today chaired a review meeting to assess the implementation of the Solid Waste Management (SWM) Rules, 2026, and the directions issued by the Supreme Court regarding scientific waste management and environmental protection.

The meeting was attended by senior officers of the district administration, Urban Local Bodies, line departments, and stakeholders associated with sanitation and waste management. The Team Leader, Mission Directorate, Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban), Jammu & Kashmir, delivered a detailed presentation highlighting the key provisions of the SWM Rules, 2026, and the responsibilities assigned to Urban Local Bodies, the district administration, and other stakeholders.



During the presentation, emphasis was laid on the transition towards a circular economy approach, mandatory four-stream segregation of waste at source comprising wet, dry, sanitary, and special care waste, strengthening of door-to-door collection systems, decentralized waste processing, scientific landfill management, and remediation of legacy waste dump sites.

The meeting reviewed the timelines prescribed under the new rules, including the preparation of solid waste action plans, establishment of Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs), identification of sanitary landfill sites, creation of grievance redressal mechanisms, and strengthening of digital monitoring systems for waste collection and transportation.

The directions of the Supreme Court regarding the constitution of Special Cells at the district level, regular monitoring of waste management activities, fortnightly and monthly reporting mechanisms, and enforcement measures against violators were also discussed in detail.

Special focus was laid on improving waste management systems in key tourist destinations of the district under the Clean Himalayan Hill Cities Initiative. The proposed action plan for Katra was reviewed, including the development of biomethanation facilities, establishment of Reduce-Reuse-Recycle (RRR) Centres, installation of smart toilets and reverse vending machines, creation of composting infrastructure, and implementation of awareness campaigns and community participation initiatives aimed at achieving zero-waste tourism destinations.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the active involvement of elected representatives in achieving the objectives of the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026. He also stressed the deployment of GPS-based tracking systems for waste collection and transportation vehicles, mapping of Points of Interest (PoIs), and establishment of digital monitoring systems to ensure real-time supervision, route optimization, and accountability in solid waste management operations. He directed all concerned agencies to accelerate waste processing and remediation activities and achieve tangible progress. He further stressed the need for scientific processing of accumulated waste and time-bound remediation of dumping sites in accordance with the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026.

MD SBM laid special emphasis on the registration of Bulk Waste Generators (BWGs) in Katra and directed the Municipal Committee Katra to ensure registration of all eligible establishments, including hotels, guest houses, restaurants, institutions, commercial establishments, and large residential complexes. He stated that the implementation of various waste management initiatives should be linked with Mission YUVA and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to create sustainable employment opportunities for local youth and women.

ADDC Krishan Lal, CPO Narinder Kumar, DFO, CMO, XEN Jal Shakti and other concerned officers were present during the meeting. Executive Officer Municipal Committee Katra/Reasi, joined the meeting virtually.

Jal Shakti Minister, Advisor to CM review I&FC sector of Kashmir Division

POONCH TODAY NEWS
SRINAGAR

Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, along with Advisor to Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani today chaired a high-level review meeting at the Civil Secretariat, Srinagar to assess the functioning and progress of the Irrigation and Flood Control (I & FC) sector across Kashmir Division.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Jal Shakti Department, Shaleen Kabra, senior officers of the department and representatives of various wings associated with the irrigation & flood management and PHE.

While addressing the meeting, Javed Rana stressed the need for further strengthening the flood protection infrastructure across Kashmir Valley, particularly along vulnerable stretches of River Jhelum and its tributaries, to enhance resilience against flood-related risks and safeguard the lives, property and public assets.

The Minister reviewed the physical and financial progress achieved under various flood management and mitigation projects. He directed the concerned officers to expedite the execution of ongoing works while ensuring strict adherence to quality standards and stipulated timelines so that all critical interventions are completed ahead of the monsoon season.

Emphasising the importance of continuous monitoring, inter-departmental coordination and proactive planning, Javed Rana called for a comprehensive and preparedness-driven approach to flood management in the Valley. He instructed the officers to identify and promptly address the bottlenecks hindering the progress of flood protection works. He asked to ensure their timely completion in the larger public interest and for the safety of vulnerable communities.

Rana also emphasised upon prioritising restoration of defunct irrigation canals, repair of canal breaches and maintenance of irrigation infrastructure across the Valley to ensure uninterrupted water supply to agricultural fields.

Advisor Nasir Aslam Wani underscored the need for a proactive and long-term approach towards flood management in Kashmir. He stressed the importance of strengthening embankments, enhancing river carrying capacity and ensuring timely execution of flood protection works. He called for improved preparedness, regular maintenance of flood channels and greater inter-departmental coordination to safeguard vulnerable areas and minimise the impact of future flood events.

He emphasised the need for sustainable water use and the importance of rain water harvesting through installation and use of water storage tanks.

During the review, a detailed presentation was given on the measures undertaken to mitigate the flood risks across vulnerable areas and the progress achieved under various ongoing schemes and projects. The presentation highlighted the status of desilting and dredging operations, strengthening and restoration of embankments, construction of flood protection works. It also covered the physical and financial progress of various flood management projects being executed under different schemes and funding components.

The officers apprised of the status of irrigation infrastructure, water discharge levels and measures being taken to meet the requirements of farmers across the Valley.

The Minister was informed that under the Prime Minister's Development Package (PMDP) launched in the aftermath of the devastating 2014 floods, under PMDP Phase-I, most works for flood management and restoration have been substantially completed. Accordingly, Phase-II (Part-A), involving works worth 1,623.43 crore under the Flood Management and Border Areas Programme (FMBAP), is under implementation from FY 2022-23.

The meeting also reviewed the safety audit of embankments along River Jhelum and assessed the progress achieved under the Prime Minister's Development Package (PMDP) Phase-II. Progress of ongoing projects being executed under the UT Capex Budget, NABARD and SASCI Disaster Component was also reviewed threadbare.

Regarding the initiatives after September 2025, in view of the persistent flood threat posed by River Jhelum and to strengthen preparedness for the forthcoming monsoon season, it was informed that the department had initiated a comprehensive post-monsoon safety audit in October 2025 to assess the vulnerabilities and identify critical intervention points.

Based on the findings of the audit, 62 flood mitigation works were identified at an estimated cost of Rs 71.56 crore. Of these, 16 works involving an expenditure of Rs 27.31 crore were completed under the ongoing FMBAP, Regular UT Capex and DMRRR (UT Capex) programmes. The remaining 46 works were tendered under MH-4711 (Flood Sector-UT Capex) at an estimated cost of Rs 43.25 crore. So far, 28 works have been completed, while eight others are in advanced stages of completion, significantly enhancing the flood protection infrastructure along the river system.

Under the UT CAPEX Budget 2026-27, the Irrigation and Flood Control (I&FC) Kashmir sector recorded substantial progress across major irrigation, minor irrigation and flood control sectors.

For the financial year 2026-27, the department has taken up 129 works for execution, comprising 124 ongoing works and five new works. It was also given out that sector-wise, the department has taken up 20 Major Irrigation works, 46 Minor Irrigation works, and 63 Flood Control works, reflecting the government's continued focus on strengthening irrigation infrastructure and flood management across Kashmir Division.

J&K UTLBC and PFRDA hold APY Outreach Programme in Jammu

POONCH TODAY NEWS
JAMMU, JUL 10



Reinforcing the collective commitment towards expanding social security and financial inclusion, the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA), in collaboration with the J&K Union Territory Level Bankers' Committee (UTLBC) and the Lead District Manager (LDM) Jammu, today organised a Atal Pension Yojana (APY) Outreach Programme at Country Inn, Jammu.

The programme brought together senior officials from PFRDA, UTLBC, banks, government departments, financial institutions, Business Correspondents, and other stakeholders. The outreach programme focused on enhancing awareness about the Atal Pension Yojana, increasing enrolment under the scheme, and strengthening pension coverage among workers in the unorganised sector through coordinated efforts of all participating institutions.

Delivering the keynote address, AGM, PFRDA Ruby Vinayak Bhaosagar elaborated on the strategies required to accelerate APY enrolment across the UT. "Atal Pension Yojana provides a dependable and affordable pension framework for the unorganised workforce. The focus should now be on deeper field-level engagement, customer awareness and consistent enrolment efforts so that every eligible citizen can secure a financially stable retirement," he said

Addressing the gathering, Dy. General Manager, J&K UTLBC Syed Aadil Bashir Andrabi underscored the importance of collaborative efforts in taking social security initiatives to the grassroots. He said, "Atal Pension Yojana is an important instrument for securing the future of workers in the unorganised sector, and banks must continue to proactively spread awareness and facilitate enrolment at the grassroots."

Officiating DGM, SBI Chander Mohan Bhat highlighted the banking sector's role in the successful implementation of the scheme. "The success of APY depends upon sustained outreach and active participation of all banks," he said.

Speaking on the occasion, Assistant Commissioner Sania Haq Khan, JKAS, emphasised the need for coordinated institutional efforts to achieve wider coverage under the scheme.

During the programme, Manager, PFRDA Nishant Anand gave a detailed presentation on the features and benefits of APY, explaining the scheme's guaranteed monthly pension benefits after the age of 60 and the enrolment process for eligible subscribers.

The participating banks also facilitated on-the-spot enrolment of new subscribers under the scheme. Discussions during the programme focused on addressing field-level implementation challenges, sharing best practices adopted by leading branches and recognising top-performing banks for their contribution towards APY enrolment.

On the occasion, few banks were also felicitated for outstanding performance in APY Coverage.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by DGM & Zonal Head, J&K Bank Chandrika Parihar, who appreciated the efforts of PFRDA, UTLBC, SBI, participating banks, Business Correspondents and all stakeholders in making the outreach programme successful.

Committee on Ethics discusses code of conduct; proposes orientation, institutional outreach

POONCH TODAY NEWS
SRINAGAR



A meeting of the Committee on Ethics of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly was convened today under the Chairmanship of MLA Nizam-Ud- Din Bhat.

The meeting was attended by legislators Salman Sagar, Peerzada Feroze, Kuldeep Raj Dubey, Satish Kumar, Surinder Kumar and Arvind Gupta, alongside senior officers from the Assembly Secretariat.

The Committee initiated deliberations on establishing a foundational framework to encourage public confidence in parliamentary institutions and their members. Acknowledging contemporary challenges faced by the legislative bodies, the members unanimously emphasised the necessity of upholding stringent norms, ethical standards and core values to guide the public conduct and responsibilities of representatives. To this end, the Committee resolved to formulate a comprehensive Code of Conduct to serve as an institutional guide for members.

Recognizing the vital role of ethical values in public life, the Committee decided to organize an orientation programme for all members of the Legislative Assembly.

This initiative will include a comparative study of the operational frameworks of ethics committees across various State Legislatures, as well as the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. To adopt best practices, the Committee emphasized the necessity of undertaking study tours to witness the practical functioning of these institutional mechanisms outside the Union Territory.

In a bid to institutionalize the evolving ethical standards, the Committee resolved to broaden its scope of engagement. The members proposed expanding outreach to external academic and civic institutions, including universities. This external consultation aims to gather diverse inputs on public expectations and define contemporary benchmarks for the conduct of public representatives both within and outside the House.

CUJ Organises Expert Lecture on "Understanding Variables in Research" under Shiksha Shastrarth Forum

POONCH TODAY NEWS
JAMMU



The Department of Educational Studies, Central University of Jammu, organized an enriching expert lecture titled "Understanding Variables in Research" under the Shiksha Shastrarth Forum. The program was held under the esteemed patronage of the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Prof. Sanjeev Jain. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from faculty members of the Department of Educational Studies and research scholars, providing an engaging platform for strengthening research methodology and promoting academic inquiry.

The program commenced with the formal welcome of the distinguished resource person, Dr. Seema Rani Thappa, Assistant Professor, Department of Teacher Education, Nagaland University. Welcoming the gathering, Prof. Asit K. Mantry, Head, Department of Educational Studies, underscored the importance of research methodology in producing meaningful and credible scholarly work. He emphasised that a sound understanding of research variables forms the cornerstone of quality research design, enabling researchers to develop logically coherent and methodologically rigorous studies. Prof. Mantry also noted that the lecture marked the first academic programme of the current session under the Shiksha Shastrarth Forum, highlighting the Forum's significance as a vibrant platform dedicated to fostering intellectual discourse and advancing research excellence.

Delivering the expert lecture, Dr. Thappa presented a comprehensive overview of the concept of variables in educational and social science research. She elaborated on the meaning, characteristics, and significance of variables while systematically explaining various types, including independent, dependent, moderator, mediator, control, and extraneous variables. Using practical illustrations and research-based examples, she demonstrated how the appropriate identification and operationalisation of variables enhance the validity, reliability, and overall quality of research investigations. She also guided participants on selecting variables in alignment with research objectives, formulating hypotheses, and avoiding common methodological errors during the research process.

The lecture was followed by an interactive session in which research scholars actively engaged with the resource person through thoughtful questions on identifying variables in qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method research, operational definitions, conceptual frameworks, and research design. Dr. Thappa addressed the queries with clarity, practical insights, and illustrative examples, making the session highly informative and beneficial for both emerging and experienced researchers.

The program concluded with a formal Vote of Thanks, expressing gratitude to the resource person, faculty members, research scholars, and all those who contributed to the successful conduct of the event. The lecture marked yet another intellectually enriching academic engagement under the Shiksha Shastrarth Forum and reaffirmed the Department of Educational Studies' continued commitment to nurturing research aptitude, promoting academic excellence, and strengthening scholarly dialogue within the university community.

LG VK Saxena inaugurates Centre of Excellence on Integrated Technologies at Government ITI Leh

POONCH TODAY NEWS
LEH



Taking a major leap towards strengthening technical education and preparing Ladakh's youth for emerging technologies, Lieutenant Governor, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena, today inaugurated the Centre of Excellence on Integrated Technologies - Srujan - at Government Industrial Training Institute (ITI), Leh.

The Centre has been established under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative of Kalyani Strategic Systems Limited (KSSL), a subsidiary of Bharat Forge Ltd., with Scientech Technologies Pvt. Ltd. serving as the technical partner. Developed with an investment of over 1.01 crore, the Centre has been equipped with advanced laboratory infrastructure, industry-grade equipment, simulation software and modern training systems to provide world-class technical education and industry-oriented skill development to the youth of Ladakh.

The newly inaugurated Centre has been equipped with advanced technologies covering Programmable Logic Controllers (PLC), Electric Vehicle Technology, Pneumatics, Hydraulics, Industrial Automation, Engineering Simulation Systems and Industry 4.0 technologies, enabling trainees to acquire practical competencies required by modern manufacturing and engineering industries.

The Lieutenant Governor also interacted with the first batch of 22 trainees, who have commenced a two-month specialised training programme at the Centre. As part of their practical learning in Solar Energy Technology, the trainees will design and install a solar photovoltaic system for the laboratory itself. The initiative will not only provide them with hands-on experience in renewable energy technologies but will also ensure uninterrupted power supply to the laboratory while promoting green and sustainable energy solutions in line with Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision for clean energy development.

Addressing the gathering, L-G Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena said that the inauguration of the Centre represented much more than the opening of a modern laboratory, and described it as the beginning of new aspirations, opportunities and a brighter future for the youth of Ladakh. He emphasised that the greatest wealth of any nation lies in its human resource and that every investment made in education and skill development contributes directly to the long-term prosperity of society.

The Lieutenant Governor noted that the CoE will provide the youth of Ladakh with industry-relevant skills aligned with the rapidly evolving technological landscape.

Highlighting the ongoing global transformation driven by Artificial Intelligence, Industrial Automation, Electric Mobility, Robotics, Smart Manufacturing and Industry 4.0, L-G Shri Saxena said that conventional skills alone were no longer sufficient and that young people must be equipped to lead this technological revolution with confidence and competence.

Appreciating the contribution of the industry partners, the Lieutenant Governor congratulated Kalyani Strategic Systems Limited for establishing the Centre under its CSR initiative and acknowledged the role of Scientech Technologies Pvt. Ltd. in providing advanced engineering systems, technical expertise and long-term training support.

DDC Doda reviews implementation of Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, PM POSHAN Scheme

POONCH TODAY NEWS
DODA



District Development Commissioner (DDC) Doda Krishan Lal today chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the implementation and progress of the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and PM POSHAN Scheme in the district at conference Hall DC Office Complex. The meeting focused on improving educational outcomes, strengthening school infrastructure, ensuring nutritional support to students and enhancing overall service delivery in government schools.

During the meeting, Chief Education Officer Doda presented a detailed overview of the School Education Department through Power Point Presentation.

He apprised the chair about the number of schools functioning in the district, zone-wise details of private schools, enrolment in government and private institutions, gender-wise enrolment in government schools, sanctioned staff strength, status of dropout students during 2025-26, availability of Assured Minimum Facilities (AMFs), drinking water facilities, toilet facilities including separate toilets for girls and other key educational indicators.

The DDC stressed the need to increase enrolment in government schools and emphasized that ensuring every eligible child is enrolled, retained and provided quality education is a collective responsibility of the Education Department, parents, School Management Committees and the community. He directed the officers to make sustained efforts to reduce dropout rates and ensure that every child remains connected with the education system.

A detailed review of the implementation of Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan and PM POSHAN Scheme was conducted, covering student enrolment, learning outcomes, nutritional support, compliance with scheme guidelines and the overall progress of approved activities.

The DDC reviewed the physical and financial progress of works under Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, including major infrastructure projects, digital initiatives, installation of solar power systems on government school buildings, construction and upgradation works, early childhood care and education initiatives, seasonal centres, learning enhancement programmes, sports activities, progress of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs), construction of girls' hostels in different educational zones and Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) to Children with Special Needs (CWSN) students.

The implementation of the PM POSHAN (Mid-Day Meal) Scheme was also reviewed in detail, including the quality and coverage of mid-day meals, kitchen-cum-store facilities, School Nutrition Gardens, nutritional standards and measures to improve attendance and learning through effective implementation of the scheme.

The meeting further reviewed the availability of Assured Minimum Facilities (AMFs) in schools, including drinking water, functional toilets, separate toilets for girls, digital learning resources and other essential infrastructure. The DDC directed the concerned officers to bridge all infrastructural gaps on priority and ensure that every school provides a safe, hygienic and child-friendly learning environment.

Emphasizing effective monitoring and accountability, the DDC directed all Zonal Education Officers (ZEOs) to undertake regular visits to every school under their jurisdiction, inspect the ground-level progress of ongoing works, verify the status of educational and infrastructural facilities and submit detailed school-wise reports to the Chief Education Officer. He instructed the officers to closely monitor the implementation of all approved projects and ensure their timely completion with quality standards.

Satish Sharma secures breakthrough on mutton dealers' issues during meetings in Punjab

POONCH TODAY NEWS
CHANDIGARH



In a significant step towards resolving the long-pending issues faced by the mutton dealers, Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Information Technology, Youth Services & Sports, and Science & Technology, Satish Sharma, today held a series of meetings with the Punjab Government, resulting in immediate directions for addressing the concerns of the trading community.

The Minister held detailed discussions with the Punjab's Animal and Sheep Husbandry Minister, the Chief Secretary of Punjab, the Secretary, Science & Technology and the Secretary, Rural Development & Panchayati Raj.

The primary focus of the meetings was to find an immediate and practical resolution to the issues affecting the mutton dealers, which have been causing hardships to the traders and impacting the smooth movement of livestock.

During the marathon deliberations, Satish Sharma strongly projected the concerns of the mutton dealers. He emphasized the need for coordinated action between the governments of Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab to facilitate hassle-free movement of livestock while ensuring compliance with all regulatory requirements.

Responding positively to the Minister's intervention, the Punjab Government issued on-the-spot instructions to the concerned departments to take immediate steps for resolving the issues. The decisions taken during the meetings are expected to significantly ease the difficulties being faced by the mutton dealers and ensure smoother coordination between Punjab and J&K.

Expressing satisfaction over the outcome of the meetings, Satish Sharma said that safeguarding the interests of traders and ensuring uninterrupted supply of essential commodities remains a priority of the Government. He said the positive response from the Punjab Government reflects the spirit of cooperative federalism and inter-state coordination in resolving issues affecting the livelihoods of thousands of people.

The meetings also featured extensive discussions on strengthening cooperation in the field of animal husbandry. Both sides explored measures to improve livestock management, disease control, scientific breeding practices and veterinary services through greater collaboration and exchange of best practices.

In separate discussions with the senior officials, the Minister also reviewed opportunities for enhanced cooperation in the fields of Science & Technology, innovation, digital governance and research. He stressed the need to leverage technology for improving public service delivery and promoting sustainable development.

The growing menace of drug abuse also figured prominently during the discussions. Satish Sharma held detailed deliberations with the senior Punjab officials on the state's comprehensive anti-drug strategy, particularly its community-based model involving Village Defence Committees and a dedicated 24x7 monitoring mechanism. He said these initiatives have shown encouraging results and would be examined for suitable adoption in Jammu and Kashmir to strengthen the fight against drug abuse and protect the youth from the scourge of narcotics.

The Minister thanked the Punjab Government for its prompt response and assured the mutton dealers that the Jammu and Kashmir Government would continue to work closely with all the stakeholders to ensure that their genuine concerns are addressed in a time-bound manner.

In a first, LG VK Saxena inaugurates five EV Charging Stations across Ladakh

POONCH TODAY NEWS
LEH



In a significant step towards promoting sustainable mobility and advancing the vision of Carbon Neutral Ladakh, Lieutenant Governor, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena, today inaugurated five Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Stations across the Union Territory, reaffirming the Administration's commitment to clean energy, environmentally responsible transportation and preservation of Ladakh's fragile Himalayan ecosystem.

The newly inaugurated EV Charging Stations, the first in Ladakh, have been established at Main Bus Stand, Leh; Tia Rong; Solar Colony; Chuchot Shamma; and Khaltsi, while a sixth charging station near Magnetic Hill in Leh is in the final stages of completion. Together, these charging stations will form the foundation of a comprehensive EV charging network across Ladakh, facilitating the growing adoption of electric vehicles and ensuring convenient charging infrastructure for both residents and tourists.

The new EV charging infrastructure has been designed in a way that owners of electric vehicles do not face any inconvenience while travelling within Ladakh or while charging their vehicles. Each of the charging stations is equipped with two fast-charging guns, enabling vehicles to be charged up to 80 per cent capacity within 30 mins to one hour, thereby making electric mobility more practical and convenient. They are also equipped with advanced fire safety measures and an emergency shutdown system for enhanced safety.

L-G Shri Saxena described the inauguration of the charging stations as a historic day for Ladakh's transition towards clean energy and sustainable transportation. He stated that the initiative was fully aligned with the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of making Ladakh a Carbon Neutral region and promoting clean energy while protecting its pristine environment and reducing dependence on fossil fuels.

"The inauguration of these EV Charging Stations reflects our unwavering commitment to clean energy, sustainable mobility and environmentally responsible development. Ladakh's fragile ecology demands that we adopt technologies that minimise pollution and reduce carbon emissions. I am confident that the people of Ladakh, who have always embraced progressive initiatives, will wholeheartedly adopt this transition towards clean mobility," said L-G Shri Saxena.

Appealing to the people of Ladakh, L-G Shri Saxena urged the citizens to gradually shift from conventional petrol and diesel vehicles to electric vehicles, noting that such a transition would play a crucial role in reducing pollution, conserving the environment and protecting Ladakh's unique ecological heritage.

NC's Jantar Mantar protest exposes its separatist mindset, diverts attention from governance failures: BJP

POONCH TODAY NEWS
JAMMU



J&K BJP addressed a press conference at party headquarters, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu, on the National Conference's proposed dharna at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi.

Former MLC and BJP spokesperson Girdhari Lal Raina, and BJP spokesperson Ankit Gupta, in the presence of BJP Media In-charge Dr. Pardeep Mahotra addressed the press conference.

Dr. Pardeep Mahotra, while introducing the subject and the speakers, described the issue as one of immense public importance and explained the circumstances that compelled the BJP to place the facts before the people.

Girdhari Lal Raina, while addressing the media, said that the National Conference has once again exposed its true political character. Instead of governing Jammu and Kashmir and fulfilling the promises made to the people, it has chosen to stage a political spectacle at Jantar Mantar. The reported invitation extended to Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, former Chairman of the separatist Hurriyat Conference, to participate in the so-called statehood protest has unmasked the ideological mindset of the National Conference.

He said the people of Jammu and Kashmir have every right to ask: What kind of statehood is the National Conference demanding? Is it a statehood meant to accelerate development, create employment, strengthen democratic institutions and deepen national integration, or is it intended to revive the politics of separatism, appeasement and instability that plunged Jammu and Kashmir into decades of terrorism, bloodshed and suffering?

Raina said that from attempting to legitimise voices associated with separatism to repeatedly creating controversies over material perceived as glorifying terrorists and anti-national elements, the National Conference has consistently sent disturbing signals regarding its political priorities. Rather than standing unequivocally with the nationalist aspirations of the people, it has continued to flirt with narratives that have historically weakened India's sovereignty in Jammu and Kashmir.

Highlighting what he termed the National Conference's hypocrisy, Raina pointed out its complete silence on the systematic denial of democratic rights and brutal repression of the people living in Pakistan-occupied Jammu & Kashmir. While its leaders repeatedly advocate engagement with Pakistan, they refuse to utter a single word against Pakistan's illegal occupation, human rights violations and suppression of democratic freedoms in PoJK. Their selective outrage exposes the bankruptcy of their politics, he said.

Questioning the timing of the protest at New Delhi, Raina expressed fear that this may help narrative of Pakistani establishment and Pakistani Army at international level.

Ankit Gupta stated that the BJP's position on statehood is absolutely clear. The restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir is a solemn commitment made by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Hon'ble Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah. That commitment will be honoured at an appropriate time, keeping in view the larger national interest, security considerations and the developmental requirements of the Union Territory. Unlike the National Conference, the BJP does not use the issue of statehood for political blackmail or emotional exploitation.

Gupta asserted that instead of staging political dramas in New Delhi, the National Conference should return to Srinagar and answer the people of Jammu and Kashmir. It should explain why unemployment continues to rise, why governance has become ineffective, why several electoral promises remain unfulfilled and why the common citizen continues to suffer despite the party being in government. He alleged that the Jantar Mantar protest is merely an attempt to divert public attention from the failures of the Omar Abdullah government and the growing internal factionalism within the National Conference.

The BJP leaders said that the era of exploiting public emotions, encouraging ambiguity on separatism and surviving on the politics of fear is over. The people of Jammu and Kashmir have decisively chosen the path of peace, democracy, development and national integration. No amount of political theatrics or symbolic protests can reverse this irreversible journey.

CS sets monthly targets for PM Surya Ghar Yojana, Solarization Mission in J&K

POONCH TODAY NEWS
SRINAGAR



Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the progress achieved under the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana and the ongoing Solarization of Government Buildings Programme across the Union Territory.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Power Development Department; Additional Chief Secretary, Finance; Divisional Commissioner, Jammu/Kashmir; Managing Director, JPDCL/KPDCL; CEO, JAKEDA besides representatives of several other concerned departments.

While taking this review the Chief Secretary emphasized the need to achieve the targets assigned to both the Power Distribution Companies (DISCOMs) within the stipulated timelines. He directed the concerned agencies to ensure installation of all the rooftop solar (RTS) systems pertaining to nearly 57,000 beneficiaries where vendor agreements have already been executed, so that these consumers receive the benefits of the scheme without any delay.

Stressing the importance of timely implementation, the Chief Secretary instructed the concerned departments to prepare a well-defined timeline for achieving the targets considerably before the sunset date of the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana, thereby ensuring that Jammu & Kashmir fully utilizes the opportunity provided under the flagship programme of the Government of India.

Reviewing the progress of the Solarization of Government Buildings, the Chief Secretary called upon the Science & Technology Department and JAKEDA to expedite execution and ensure that all identified government buildings are brought under rooftop solar coverage in a mission mode.

He directed that over 1,400 more government buildings under the CAPEX mode and around 1,300 buildings under the RESCO mode be targeted for completion by the end of July 2026. He also stressed the simultaneous completion of smart metering in all commissioned buildings to ensure effective net metering, accurate energy accounting and optimum utilization of the installed solar assets.

Speaking during the meeting, Additional Chief Secretary, Power Development Department, Ashwani Kumar, outlined the roadmap for bridging the existing implementation gaps and highlighted the measures being taken to further streamline execution.

He elaborated upon the strategy to strengthen inter-agency coordination, simplify operational processes and accelerate the pace of implementation so that the targets under both the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana and the Solarization of Government Buildings Programme are achieved within the prescribed timelines.

Additional Chief Secretary, Finance, Shailendra Kumar, while appreciating the progress made under the scheme, suggested that districts demonstrating outstanding performance should be suitably recognized to encourage healthy competition among the implementing agencies.

He particularly commended the exemplary work carried out in the Kupwara and Shopian districts in the implementation of this Yojana, and recommended that the officers and field functionaries responsible for these achievements be appropriately appreciated to motivate similar performance across the Union Territory.

The meeting was informed by the MD, KPDCL, Mehmood Ahmad Shah that under PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana, the Government of India has fixed a national target of one crore residential rooftop solar installations by 31st March 2027. In line with this, Jammu & Kashmir has set a target of 83,500 residential consumers for itself, comprising 39,500 consumers under JPDCL and 44,000 consumers under KPDCL.

BJP OBC Morcha holds organisational meeting under Chairmanship of Sat Sharma

POONCH TODAY NEWS
JAMMU



The BJP OBC Morcha, Jammu & Kashmir, on Thursday held an organisational meeting under the chairmanship of Sat Sharma, President, BJP Jammu & Kashmir and Member of Rajya Sabha, to review the organisational activities of the Morcha and discuss the programmes received from the party's Central leadership.

The meeting was attended by Baldev Singh Billawaria, State General Secretary BJP; Rashpaul Verma, State Vice President BJP; Braham Jyot Satti, President, BJP OBC Morcha Jammu & Kashmir; Murari Lal, Former President, BJP OBC Morcha; Captain Romesh Lal, State Working Committee Member, BJP J&K; Sham Mehra, State General Secretary, BJP OBC Morcha; Sunny Sangotra, State General Secretary, BJP OBC Morcha; Reeta Verma, State Vice President, BJP OBC Morcha; Krishan Lal Verma, Former District President, OBC Morcha Nowshera; Suresh Salgotra, State Vice President, BJP OBC Morcha; Captain Hans Raj Verma, State Spokesperson, BJP OBC Morcha; Madan Verma, State Executive Member; Ashok Salgotra, State Secretary, BJP OBC Morcha; Vijay Saini, State Vice President, BJP OBC Morcha, along with other senior office bearers and district representatives.

During the meeting, a detailed discussion was held on the organisational programmes and campaigns assigned by the BJP Central leadership. The leaders deliberated on strategies to ensure their effective implementation across Jammu & Kashmir and stressed the need for better coordination among district and mandal units. The meeting also reviewed the progress of the Morcha's ongoing activities and chalked out a roadmap for the forthcoming organisational programmes.

Special emphasis was laid on strengthening the organisation at the grassroots level, increasing public outreach, and ensuring active participation of party workers in all upcoming programmes. Office bearers were asked to work in close coordination and make every campaign people-centric and result-oriented.

Addressing the meeting, Sat Sharma said that the BJP's organisational strength has always been its biggest asset and every karyakarta has an important role in taking the party's ideology and the Central Government's welfare initiatives to the people. He said the programmes received from the party's Central leadership should be implemented with full dedication and sincerity so that their message reaches every booth and every household. Sharma urged all Morcha office bearers to remain in constant touch with the public, work in a spirit of teamwork, and ensure that every forthcoming organisational programme is conducted successfully. He expressed confidence that the BJP OBC Morcha would continue to play a significant role in further strengthening the organisation across Jammu & Kashmir.

Sat Sharma further said that the BJP has always believed in empowering every section of society through good governance, transparency, and inclusive development. He asked the Morcha leadership to maintain regular contact with workers at the booth and mandal levels and ensure that organisational activities are carried out with enthusiasm and discipline. Stressing the importance of teamwork, he said that every office bearer should work with a sense of responsibility and commitment to strengthen the party at the grassroots while highlighting the achievements and welfare initiatives of the Narendra Modi-led Government among the people.

Committee on Government Assurances examines ATR in respect of assurances pertaining to PWD

POONCH TODAY NEWS
SRINAGAR



A meeting of the Committee on Government Assurances of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly was held today at the Assembly Secretariat under the Chairmanship of MLA Ali Mohammad Sagar.

MLAs Ghulam Mohi Ud Din Mir, Chander Prakash, Iftkar Ahmad, Mehraj Malik, Shabir Ahmad Kullay besides Financial Commission (ACS) PWD (R&B) Anil Kumar Singh, Secretary JKLA Manoj Kumar Pandit, Assistant Director JKLA Syed Ahmad Wani and senior officers from PWD attended the meeting.

The Secretary JKLA briefed the representatives of Public Works Department about the mandate, powers and functioning of the Committee and what constitutes a Government Assurances as per legislative practices and precedents. He highlighted the significance and importance of the Committee. He also informed the Committee that directions issued by the Speaker, Deputy Speaker or the Chairman involving action on the part of the Government or Ministers are also treated as assurances and are monitored by the Committee till their compliance.

During the meeting, the Members participated in deliberations and raised several issues. They highlighted the public demands pertaining to the Public Works (R&B) Department, particularly concerning development and infrastructure development.

ACS Public Works (R&B), assured the Committee that all the issues and concerns projected by the Members would be examined carefully and addressed in a phased manner, subject to the availability of resources and other administrative requirements.

Emphasizing the significance of the Committee, the Chairman observed that the Committee on Government Assurances plays a vital role in strengthening the legislative oversight by ensuring executive accountability. He said that assurances, promises and undertakings made by Ministers on the Floor of the House carry the solemn responsibility of the government and must be fulfilled within the stipulated timeframe. He stressed that timely implementation of such assurances not only upholds the dignity and sanctity of the Legislature but also reinforces public confidence in democratic institutions.

The Chairman directed the ACS to furnish constituency-wise and scheme-wise details of funds allocated and released under various schemes in the next meeting to facilitate a comprehensive review by the Committee.

Chief Secy reviews implementation of flagship Centrally Sponsored Schemes in J&K

POONCH TODAY NEWS
SRINAGAR



In a marathon meeting of the concerned Administrative Secretaries, Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, took first hand appraisal of the implementation and progress of key Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) and flagship infrastructure projects being executed across Jammu and Kashmir.

During the comprehensive review, Administrative Secretaries of the concerned departments made detailed presentations on the physical and financial progress achieved under their respective schemes, besides outlining the targets, implementation challenges and future action plans.

The Chief Secretary undertook a scheme-wise assessment covering sectors including education, health, power, digital connectivity, rural and urban development, housing, social welfare, finance, tourism, skill development, water supply, transport, fisheries and infrastructure development. He stressed that effective implementation of flagship schemes remains central to improving public service delivery and ensuring inclusive socio-economic development across the Union Territory.

Emphasizing outcome-oriented governance, the Chief Secretary directed all departments to maintain close monitoring of targets, remove implementation bottlenecks proactively and ensure optimum utilization of available funds.

He impressed upon the Administrative Secretaries to focus on timely completion of projects, saturation of eligible beneficiaries under welfare schemes and sustained field-level supervision so that the intended benefits reach every deserving citizen.

While expressing satisfaction over the progress achieved in several flagship programmes, the Chief Secretary emphasized that every department should work with greater urgency to achieve the prescribed milestones within stipulated timelines. He called for robust monitoring mechanisms, enhanced coordination among implementing agencies and regular field inspections to ensure quality execution of projects and effective delivery of public services.

Atal Dulloo further directed all the Administrative Secretaries to closely monitor both physical and financial progress of their respective schemes, ensure prompt resolution of implementation issues and maintain continuous engagement with the Government of India for timely approvals and release of funds wherever required.

Reviewing the education sector, the meeting was informed that significant progress has been achieved under Samagra Shiksha and PM SHRI Schools, with major emphasis on digital transformation, smart classrooms, ICT laboratories, Atal Tinkering Labs, vocational education, inclusive education, early childhood care, hostel infrastructure and technology-enabled governance.

The Skill Development Department informed that over one lakh youth have already been imparted industry-oriented skill training under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), while implementation of the newly launched PM-SETU programme has been initiated for transforming Industrial Training Institutes into modern Centres of Excellence through industry partnerships and upgraded infrastructure.

Reviewing the power sector, the Chief Secretary was apprised that steady progress has been achieved under the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, with thousands of rooftop solar installations already commissioned across the Union Territory, enabling beneficiaries to substantially reduce their electricity bills. Simultaneously, solarisation of Government buildings is progressing at a rapid pace under the Science & Technology Department to promote clean energy and energy self-reliance.

The meeting also reviewed implementation of Smart Metering and the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS), under which large-scale installation of smart consumer meters and strengthening of power distribution infrastructure are underway to improve operational efficiency, reduce transmission losses and ensure reliable electricity supply across Jammu and Kashmir.

On digital connectivity, the Information Technology Department informed that substantial progress has been achieved under the BharatNet Project, with survey and execution work progressing across Gram Panchayats to provide high-speed broadband connectivity in rural areas. The meeting also reviewed the progress of the 4G saturation project and associated infrastructure works aimed at expanding seamless digital connectivity to remote regions.

Bhalla, Ravinder lead massive congress protest at Dansal

POONCH TODAY NEWS
NAGROTA



A massive rally was held at Dansal by the Congress party which was led by Working President Shri Raman Bhalla alongwith Chief Spokesperson Ravinder Sharma, Th Romal Singh, Madan Dubey and other senior functionaries of Nagrota Assemblky constituency.

A large gathering of Congress workers took out a protest rally in the Dansal market seeking resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over repeated paper leaks ,fair probe in Ram temple chori and setting up of trust of saints, Shankracharyas, early restoration of statehood and water, power crises in several areas of Nagrota Assembly constituency.

The protesters raised slogans against Modi government and BJP over these issues of public concern and failure on multiple fronts.

Addressing the gathering Shri Raman Bhalla hit out at Modi government for the commercialisation of Education and repeated scams in NEET paper leak and other prestigious examinations causing frustration amongst the students and youth, who are committing suicides.

There are 90 incidents of paper leaks in the past ten years but due to lack of accountability the system has rotten and time and it is happening. Prime Minister should sack the Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan immediately and bring reforms in the system.

Referring to "Chanda Chori " in Ram temple, Shri Bhalla termed it a serious issue which has hurt the sentiments of entire hindu population but the trust has not been dissolved yet and a fair probe under Supreme Court Judge should be held tomorrow punish culprits and create a fool proof mechanism.

He said that BJP government has betrayed the people of J&K over the issue of statehood and people are sandwiched between dual control system and facing corruptions and arrogance of administration.

Congress is fighting for statehood for over one & half years and held strong protest at Jantar Mantir Delhi too but BJP is silent.

BJP President @Nitin Nabin didn't utter a word on statehood and other serious issues faced by people and youth but talked of preparations for elections only.

Winning elections by hook or crook is the only motive of BJP and it is always in the elections mode not bothered about issues faced by Jammu people.

He also highlighted the power and water crisis besides monkey menace in the area. He also raised the issue of large scale unemployment, lack of people welfare measures in the absence of PRIs.

He demanded early elections to the basic institutions of democracy and asked party cadres to prepare for the same.

JKPCC Chief Spokesperson Ravinder Sharma Ex MLC lashed out at the BJP for the mess in the management of Ram Temple, stating that the loot of donations has taken place under the nose of double engine government of BJP- RSS and are answerable. A fair probe and transparent system can restore faith of people in the system.

He referred to the fight of LOP Shri Rahul Gandhi ji to save the career of youth and students if the country under Chhatron ki Goonj and said that BJP has commercialised the Education and examinations. People should stand with the youth to bring reforms in the Education and examinations system. Sharma referred to double control system in the absence of statehood and asked people to intensify the struggle for restoration of statehood and expose BJP on all issues.

Th Romal Singh highlighted the numerous issues faced by the people regarding power, water crisis, monkey menace and lack of development through people in the absence of Panchayats.

Several prominent persons joined Congress including Ajay Singh Anil Kumar accompanied by the supporters.

Several senior leaders including Madan Dubey, Zorawar Singh BCC Nagrota, Janak Singh Sub Devi DassVP, Sub Sohan Singh, Vijay Bharat, Smt Vijay Laxmi, Sher Singh, Prakash Singh,Chaman Singh, Devi dass,vinod kumar, Rakha Singh, Noor Alam , Bashir Bagh & others spoke on the occasion.

DC Reasi reviews preparations for Shravan Mahotsav-2026 at Shiv Khori Shrine

POONCH TODAY NEWS
REASI



Deputy Commissioner Reasi, Kumar Abhishek, who is also the Vice Chairman of Shiv Khori Shrine Board today chaired a meeting with officers of various departments to review and finalize arrangements for the proposed celebration of Shravan Mahotsav-2026 at Shiv Khori Shrine, Ransoo.

The meeting discussed the detailed agenda of activities scheduled from July 30 to August 24, 2026, aimed at promoting spiritual, cultural and devotional engagement during the holy month of Shravan. The programme includes weekly Kavad Yatras, Shiv Katha, Bhajan Sandhya and concluding religious ceremonies at Shiv Khori Shrine.

The Deputy Commissioner reviewed the arrangements to be made by the concerned departments and stressed the need for coordinated efforts to ensure smooth conduct of the Mahotsav and convenience of pilgrims. He directed all departments to complete their preparations well in advance and maintain close coordination throughout the event.

As per the proposed schedule, Kavad Yatras will be organized on August 3, 10, 17 and 24 from Ransoo Base Camp to Shiv Khori Bhawan, followed by Rudrabhishek and Hawan. A nine-day Shiv Katha programme is proposed from August 16 to 24, while the concluding Bhajan Sandhya and devotional programme will be held on August 24.

The DC reviewed arrangements related to security, traffic management, medical facilities, sanitation, drinking water supply, uninterrupted power supply, road maintenance, fire safety and public awareness. The Police Department was asked to ensure foolproof security arrangements and deployment of adequate personnel during the Mahotsav.

The Chief Medical Officer was directed to provide adequate medical facilities, including deployment of doctors, medical staff, ambulances and oxygen support at Shiv Khori Bhawan and Ransoo. The Jal Shakti Department was asked to ensure adequate drinking water supply along the pilgrimage track and at key locations, while the Power Development Department was instructed to ensure uninterrupted power supply and arrange backup power support wherever required.

The Fire and Emergency Services Department was directed to deploy fire tenders at Ransoo and conduct inspections of fire safety equipment at langar sites. He further directed the Motor Vehicle Department to regulate transportation facilities, prevent overcharging and display approved fare rates at conspicuous places. Departments concerned with Food Safety and Legal Metrology were instructed to conduct regular inspections of eateries, shops and langars to ensure quality standards, verify rates and prevent overpricing.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasized that all departments should work in close coordination to provide a safe, comfortable and spiritually enriching experience to devotees visiting Shiv Khori during the Shravan Mahotsav.

SSP Mukund Tibrewal, ADC Rakesh Kumar, Addl. SP Iftkhar Ahmed, XEN JPDCL and Jal Shakti, Tehsildar Pouni and other concerned officers were present during the meeting.

District Admin Bandipora sets up Plastic Checkpoint at Tragbal to protect Gurez Valley's Fragile Ecology

POONCH TODAY NEWS
BANDIPORA



In a significant step towards preserving the pristine environment of Gurez Valley, the District Administration Bandipora today established a Plastic Checkpoint at Tragbal on the Road to Gurez with the active support of the Indian Army and launched the 'Polythene-Free Gurez' Campaign to curb the use of single-use polythene and plastic and promote sustainable tourism in the valley.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, said that the initiative, envisioned in line with the vision of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India for environmental conservation and cleanliness, has been launched under Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) and would be implemented in letter and spirit.

The Deputy Commissioner inaugurated the newly established Plastic Checkpoint at Tragbal on the Road to Gurez, where she interacted with visitors and tourists proceeding towards Gurez Valley. She appealed to them to cooperate with the District Administration in making Gurez a polythene-free tourist destination by avoiding the use of single-use plastic and adopting eco-friendly alternatives.

The Deputy Commissioner said that with the opening of Gurez Valley for the tourist season, a considerable increase in polythene and plastic waste had been noticed. She stressed that protecting the valley's fragile ecosystem was a collective responsibility and called upon all visitors to actively support the campaign by carrying reusable and environment-friendly materials.

To facilitate the campaign, the District Administration, with the active support of the Indian Army, established the Plastic Checkpoint at Tragbal on the Road to Gurez, where sustainable and environment-friendly alternatives, including steel water bottles and cloth bags, had been made available for travellers. In addition, a washroom facility and a food point were also established for the convenience of visitors.

The Deputy Commissioner urged tourists and other visitors to extend their wholehearted support to the initiative and contribute towards keeping Gurez clean, green and free from plastic pollution.

The campaign is being implemented under Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) under the leadership of the Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Bandipora, with the active support of the Director General, Rural Sanitation, J&K; Secretary, Rural Development Department, Jammu & Kashmir, and the District Administration Bandipora.

The District Administration reaffirmed its commitment to promoting responsible tourism and protecting the natural beauty and ecological wealth of Gurez Valley through sustained public participation and coordinated efforts of all stakeholders.

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Gill, Axar guide India to 6-wicket win over England in first ODI

Shubman Gill continued his love affair with the Edgbaston cricket ground as the Indian captain's graceful 80 lay the foundation for a walk-in-the-park six-wicket victory over England in the first ODI here on Tuesday.

India now have taken a 1-0 lead in the three-match series. Axar Patel, much panned for his recent low returns in T20Is, played the perfect support cast with a superb all-round show of 4/62 and an unbeaten 57 off 52 balls in what could have otherwise been a tricky chase. Chasing a perfectly gettable target of 259, the Indian skipper mixed poise and style in equal measure before suffering from cramps, but Washington Sundar (52 no off 63 balls) and Axar successfully completed the chase in 45.2 overs with a 102-run unbroken stand after being reduced to 160 for 4.

Gill was in fine nick despite being bothered by a dodgy hamstring and calf muscle cramps, which forced him to retire when the 10th ODI century seemed to be there for the taking.

This was India's first win in the ongoing tour of the United Kingdom.



Gill, who hit 11 fours and a six in his 75-ball knock got a lot of support from his in-form deputy Shreyas Iyer (35) during their 101-run stand for the third wicket. Just like Adelaide Oval had been a happy hunting ground for Virat Kohli across formats, the same could be said about Gill and Edgbaston. During the Test series last year, Gill scored 269 and 161 in Indian victory here.

And now in the 50-over format, he once again showed his real class even as he was done in first by calf muscle cramps and then hamstring became an issue.

After veterans Rohit Sharma (11) and Virat Kohli (5) were dismissed cheaply with team score reading 48, Gill took charge of the proceedings. The right-hander was never overly cautious, nor did he take undue risks, hitting those regal on-drives and picturesque cover drives. The pulled six off Josh Tongue was a treat for the eyes.

Once he retired hurt, suddenly the momentum shifted in England's favour.

The set Iyer was responsible for his cross-pitch running that made him traverse an increased distance, only to be run-out. KL Rahul was then beaten for pace by Tongue as he chopped one on to his stumps.

But Axar and Washington shrugged off their poor show in T20Is to maintain calm during their century stand in which they soaked in the pressure of a hostile spell from Jofra Archer, and scored against the spinners, which Harry Brook played one too many. Both the batters were below par with the willow during the T20Is but the longer format gave them time to settle down and since Gill had nullified the scoreboard pressure, they could score runs with consummate ease. Earlier, the seasoned Joe Root and plucky Liam Dawson scored half-centuries in a gutsy seventh-wicket stand for 121 runs as England posted a respectable 258 after opting to bat.

From a solid 61 for no loss till the start of 13th over, England slumped to 107 for 6 before the end of the 22nd over and there seemed no chance of a recovery from that position.

However, Root with a run-a-ball 76, fought well alongside Dawson, whose career-best 68 off 83 balls took them to a position where bowlers had a decent total to defend.

Root played the field, waited patiently for Bumrah to complete his first two spells and attacked Axar (4/62) and Prasidh Krishna once the pitch showed signs of easing out.

The best shot was a ramp off a Jasprit Bumrah bouncer. He hit six fours and a six in all.

While the peerless Bumrah (1/31 in 9 overs) was the best Indian bowler in terms of skills and quality on display, young Gurnoor Brar (2/61 in 9 overs) and the usually profligate Prasidh (2/50 in 10 overs) also chipped in with wickets despite going for runs.

But Axar ran through the tail after the Dawson-Root century stand.

ANTI DENGUE MONTH

1st – 31st July, 2025

DENGUE

- Dengue is a viral disease.
- It is transmitted by the bite of Aedes mosquito.
- Dengue Fever is a severe, flu-like illness.
- Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever (DHF) & Dengue Shock Syndrome (DSS) are more severe forms of disease, which may even cause death if left untreated.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- High fever.
- Frontal headache.
- Pain behind the eyes which worsens with eye movement.
- Muscle and joint pains.
- Rashes on the body.
- Pain abdomen.
- Nausea and vomiting.
- Bleeding & low B.P in severe cases.

PREVENTION

- Avoid water stagnation in & around the house.
- Empty water reservoirs regularly like storage utensils, air coolers, plant pots, drums, flower pots and bird baths etc.
- Keep water tanks and other water containers tightly covered with lids.
- Use mosquito repellents/ Anti mosquito creams.
- Do not wear clothes that expose arms and legs.
- Use mosquito nets while sleeping.
- Use netted screens for doors & windows to prevent entry of mosquitoes

- Person suspected of having Dengue should visit nearby Health Facility.
- The tests and treatment are available free of cost at Govt. Health Institutions.

Directorate Of Health Services JAMMU
राष्ट्रीय वेक्टर जनित रोग नियंत्रण कार्यक्रम NVBDCP
NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य मिशन

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STATE MALARIOLOGIST/SPO, NVBDCP, J&K,
DIRECTORATE OF HEALTH SERVICES, JAMMU
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