

# IIM Jammu students connect with local families under Bandhan Cultural Immersion Initiative

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: The Indian Institute of Management Jammu, under the visionary leadership of Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu, organized its flagship Bandhan Cultural Immersion Program across the Jammu region on 25th-26th Oct 2025.

Designed around the ethos of Bond with Jammu, the initiative brought together people, traditions, and values by connecting IIM Jammu students with 85 Dogra families of Jammu for a single day community immersion.

The program, a unique social outreach initiative of IIM Jammu, aims to provide students with real-life exposure to grassroots culture, local wisdom, and the social fabric of Jammu by transforming society into a living classroom. Four students from IIM Jammu were hosted by each family, where they experienced Dogra traditions, hospitality, cultural pride, and community values firsthand. Prof. Sahay described today's Bandhan cultural immersion program as a soulful bridge that con-



IIM Jammu students posing with dignitaries.

nects people, not just places, and a step toward nation-building through empathy and tradition.

He said IIM Jammu stands as a Mini India with a Global Vision rooted in Dogra heritage and aligned with the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat mission.

He shared that IIM Jammu students are visiting local households across Jammu to experience Dogri culture, values, cuisine, and traditions, with local Jammu families participating in the initiative.

He added that Bandhan is where hearts meet, stories unfold, and the soul of India

is reflected through cultural harmony. He emphasized that education goes beyond the classroom and leadership begins with understanding people.

This unique and first of its kind initiative, he noted, aims to nurture socially responsible leaders through cultural immersion, social sensitivity, grassroots exposure, community engagement, emotional and value-based learning, and nation-building through cultural unity.

He thanked the local families for their warmth and support in strengthening IIM Jammu's community

connect.

The students engaged with a diverse cross-section of society including, Army veterans and gallantry awardees; Local artists and cultural custodians; Entrepreneurs and business owners; Social activists and community leaders; Educationists and sports personalities and Government servants and administrators.

Each interaction served as a live case study in resilience, service, leadership, entrepreneurship, and cultural pride. Families shared local stories, Dogri folk traditions, heritage values, and celebra-

tions that define Dogra identity.

Students participated in household traditions, tasted authentic Dogra cuisine, interacted with family elders, and shared their own academic journeys, resulting in deep emotional and cultural connections.

Each student group was accompanied by an IIM Jammu staff member to ensure cultural sensitivity, coordination, and safety. The program enriched students with Cultural Understanding, Social Integration, Emotional Intelligence, and Leadership Exposure.

The host families expressed that the program enabled them to share the pride of Dogra heritage with the new generation of India's future leaders. Students acknowledged the warmth and deep-rooted values of Jammu society, noting that the experience left a lasting impact on their personal and leadership perspectives. The program was

The event was coordinated by Ankush Varma, Chief Innovation Officer, Srinagar, Campus.

# SMVDSB expedites restoration works of schools under Social Support Mandate

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**

KATRA: As part of its ongoing Social Support Initiative, the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) today conducted a comprehensive review of restoration works at several Government Schools in Reasi and Udhampur district that were severely impacted by recent natural calamities.

These efforts were undertaken in accordance with the directions of the Board's Chairman, Lieutenant Governor, J&K UT, Manoj Sinha, reaffirming the Board's steadfast commitment to repair and renovate government schools in the region and strengthen the educational infrastructure. The schools under restoration include Government High School at Sirla Bhaga; Government Middle Schools at Chack Bhagtha, Parthal, Manoon, and Kun Kanyala; and Government Primary Schools at Hansali, Kalara Chanjute, Upper Sirla, Geeta Nagar, Puraana Daroor, and Banganga in Reasi district. Additionally, restoration works are also under-



SMVDSB team visiting a school.

way at Government Primary School, Dhanno in Udhampur district.

These institutions suffered extensive damage to classrooms, boundary walls and sanitation facilities due to heavy rains and subsequent landslides.

A team, as per the directions of Sachin Kumar Vaishya, Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB, conducted an on-site assessment of the restoration works and instructions were issued to the concerned quarters to ensure prompt deployment of adequate manpower, machinery and requisite materials

at the identified restoration sites to expedite the execution of works. It was further exhorted to furnish progress reports at regular intervals to facilitate close monitoring and ensure accountability so that all restoration works are completed within the stipulated timeframe, in alignment with the Board's commitment to educational welfare.

The visiting team also interacted with school staff and local stakeholders to ensure that the restoration efforts are responsive to the educational and safety needs of the students.

# CEC Tashi meets Lt Governor; presents MoU signed with Mongolia's Arkhangai Province



CEC Adv. Tashi Gyalson meeting with Lt Governor, Kavinder Gupta.

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**  
LEI: Chairman and Chief Executive Councillor, LAHDC Leh, Adv. Tashi Gyalson, on Saturday met with the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, and presented him a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), Leh and Mongolia's Arkhangai Province.

The MoU, signed by CEC Tashi Gyalson and Governor of Arkhangai Province Dashzeveg Baatarzhulun in Western Bayan-Ulaan Sum, Mongolia, in the presence of EC Ghulam Mehdi, EC Stanzin Chosphele, and Councillor Igoon Sonam Thardos, outlines cooperation in diverse sectors.

These include cultural exchange, tourism promotion, trade, education, animal and sheep husbandry, agriculture and horticulture, astro-

physics, and sports.

The Lt Governor lauded the signing of the MoU, stating that it will further strengthen the deep-rooted cultural bonds between Ladakh and Mongolia, while promoting Buddhist heritage through enhanced people-to-people exchanges.

He said the collaboration also reaffirms the enduring legacy of His Eminence Kushok Bakula Rinpoche, who, as India's Ambassador to Mongolia, laid the foundation for this spiritual and cultural connection.

The Lt Governor observed that the agreement reflects a shared commitment to fostering mutual growth and development in both regions. He noted that such initiatives not only strengthen bilateral relations but also carry forward Ladakh's historical and spiritual ties with Mongolia, promoting peace, cooperation, and cultural harmony.

# IEI J&K State Centre holds 60th Annual General Meeting

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**

SRINAGAR: The Institution of Engineers (India), Jammu & Kashmir State Centre, held its 60th Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Saturday at the Institution's Auditorium, Church Lane, Sonwarbagh, Srinagar. The event brought together a distinguished gathering of Corporate Members especially the outgoing and incoming members of the Executive Committees.

The meeting commenced with opening remarks by Dr. Jahangeer Ali, MIE, Honorary Secretary, followed by the welcome address and declaration of election results by Er. Iftekhar Ahmad Hakim, FIE, Chairman, J&K State Centre. The Annual Report for 2024-25, along with the Audited Statements of Accounts, was formally presented, followed by the appointment of auditors and related statutory business, in accordance with the Institution's Charter and By-laws.

A major highlight of the AGM



Chairman Er. Ferdous Ahad Bhat and Honorary Secretary Er. Irfan Ahmad Reshi at AGM.

was the formal handover and takeover ceremony, marking the smooth transition of leadership for the Executive Committee (Session 2025-27). Er. Ferdous Ahad Bhat, FIE, and Er. Irfan Ahmad Reshi, MIE, officially assumed charge as Chairman and Honorary Secretary, respectively, effective 25th October 2025. The outgoing Chairman Er. Iftekhar Ahmad Hakim, FIE, and Honorary Secretary Dr. Jahangeer Ali, MIE, handed over responsibilities in an order-

ly and dignified manner; drawing appreciation from the members for their exemplary service.

The newly constituted Executive Committee (2025-27) includes Er. Ferdous Ahad Bhat as Chairman, Er. Irfan Ahmad Reshi as Honorary Secretary, Er. Iftekhar Ahmad Hakim Immediate Past Chairman, Dr. Jahangeer Ali,

Immediate Past Honorary Secretary, Er. Basharat Jeelani Kawoosa, Er. Irfan Shafi Paray and Er. Shabir Ahmad Tak from the Civil Engineering Branch, Er. Ansar Hamid Sheikh and Er. Shuja Hussain Qureshi from the Mechanical Engineering Branch, Er. Mohammad Amin Kak from the Production Engineering Branch, Er. Mohammad Owais

from the Electronics & Telecommunication Branch Er. Aijaz Ahmad Mir, Er. Arshad Bashir Bhat from the Electrical Engineering Branch and Dr. Jamilul Bashir from the Computer Engineering Branch. In his address, Er. Ferdous Ahad Bhat expressed gratitude for the trust reposed in him and reaffirmed his commitment to advancing the institution's objectives through enhanced professional collabora-

tion, innovation, and public engagement. Er. Irfan Ahmad Reshi emphasized strengthening interdisciplinary participation and expanding the Institution's outreach to young engineers and academia.

The AGM concluded with a felicitation ceremony honoring the outgoing office bearers for their dedicated service and a vote of thanks by Dr. Jahangeer Ali, followed by an informal interaction over tea.

Er. Ferdous Ahad Bhat has the distinction of being the youngest Chairman in the history of The Institution of Engineers (India), J&K State Centre. He is presently serving as an Assistant Executive Engineer (Mechanical). Er. Irfan Ahmad Reshi, who took over as Honorary Secretary, is currently serving as an Assistant Executive Engineer (Civil).

# Modi is in heart of Opposition too: Gaurav Gupta on BJP's Rajya Sabha victory

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: Following the Bharatiya Janata Party's resounding victory in the Rajya Sabha elections from Jammu & Kashmir, BJP spokesperson Gaurav Gupta said the results underscore Prime Minister Narendra Modi's growing acceptance across political lines while highlighting the decline of the National Conference (NC) under Omar Abdullah's leadership.

Gupta observed, "With just 28 MLAs, BJP secured 32 votes - meaning four opposition members consciously rose above party lines to support our candidate and J&K BJP President Sat Sharma. Additionally, three votes were deliberately rendered invalid by opposition MLAs, which further benefited BJP in this closely contested election. In essence, seven crucial votes shifted in our favour, reflecting Modi's vision of development, nationalism, and integrity resonating even beyond our party."

Taking aim at NC, Gupta



said, "People and opposition leaders alike are disillusioned by NC's politics of confusion and double standards. Omar Abdullah speaks of democracy but cannot manage his own party. These votes of conscience, along with the invalid votes, send a clear message - the people and even some opposition members are rejecting NC's opportunism and backdoor manipulations."

He further added, "NC has lost credibility, alienated its ally Congress, and indulged in manipulative tactics, shattering any illusion of opposition unity in Jammu & Kashmir."

Crediting the victory,

Gupta stated, "BJP's strategic leadership ensured this outcome. Tarun Chugh Ji's guidance maintained organisational discipline and inspired confidence across the legislative team. Leader of Opposition Sunil Sharma Ji, the 'Chanakya' of this win, executed flawless coordination, alliance management, and strategic foresight, turning planning into performance on voting day."

Gupta also appreciated the tireless efforts of BJP legislators, General Secretary (Organisation) Ashok Koul Ji, and Chief Spokesperson Sh. Sunil Sethi Ji, saying, "Their meticulous planning, dedication, and strategic media coordination significantly amplified our message and strengthened the party's image."

Concluding, Gupta said, "This victory is not just numerical - it is a powerful political statement from Jammu & Kashmir that people trust Modi Ji's leadership and the BJP's roadmap for peace, progress, and prosperity."

# Div Level-Northern India Science Drama Contest 2025-26 held

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: Director School Education Jammu Dr. Naseem Javed Choudhary on Saturday inaugurated the Divisional Level-Northern India Science Drama Contest 2025-26 hosted by SCERT Divisional Office, Jammu at Baba Jitto Auditorium, Kissan Kendra, Talab Tillo.

Students from ten districts of Jammu Division presented original science-based plays judged on presentation, scientific content and communication.

Government High School Suchani-Samba secured the first position while GGHSS Nowabad Jammu and GHS Panyalag Kathua bagged second and third position.

Sheetal from GHS Suchani won Best Director and Best Script awards, Jeevan Lal from HS Panyalag was adjudged Best Actor and Ms. Lakshita Bhagat from



DSE Jammu Dr. Naseem Javed Choudhary lighting a lamp.

GGHSS Nowabad received Best Actress award.

The jury included Ravinder Sharma Smooh, Director Reflection Theatre Group Jammu; Suraj Singh Jamwal, HOD Vocal (Retd.), Music and Fine Arts College Jammu; and Dr. Amarjeet Singh, Assistant Professor, Music and Fine Arts College Jammu. The winning team will now represent the Jammu Division at the Northern India Science

Drama Contest to be held at the National Science Centre, Delhi on December 1-2, 2025.

The event was held under the aegis of the National Science Centre, Delhi, a unit of the National Council of Science Museums (NCSM), Ministry of Culture, Government of India, with the theme "Science & Technology for the Benefit of Mankind" and sub-themes including Women in

Science, Smart Agriculture, Digital India, Hygiene for All and Green Technologies.

Earlier, the event commenced with the lighting of traditional lamp followed by the formal inauguration by the Chief Guest.

In his address, Dr. Choudhary urged students to explore and communicate scientific ideas through creativity and performance, highlighting that such contests nurture confidence, teamwork and scientific temper among learners.

The occasion was graced by Gurdev Kumar, Joint Director and Manisha, Personnel Officer, Directorate of School Education Jammu as Guests of Honour, along with Principals of DIETs. Prof. (Dr.) Sindhu Kapoor welcomed the dignitaries and participants. In his address, Dr. Choudhary urged students to explore

and communicate scientific ideas through creativity and performance, highlighting that such contests nurture confidence, teamwork and scientific temper among learners.

The valedictory session was graced by Dr. Karuna Nidhi, Deputy Director (Trainings), Department of Agriculture Jammu and DIET Principals from Kathua, Samba, Reasi, Rajouri and Poonch.

In her valedictory address, Prof. (Dr.) Sindhu Kapoor appreciated the efforts of students, teachers, and the SCERT team for promoting scientific thinking through creative expression.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Sandarve. The programme was coordinated by Ms. Neeraj Jamwal, Dr. Sandarve, and Dr. Jyoti Sudan, and moderated by Ms. Manu Vasudeva and Ms. Shamim Nazki.

# Western Railway ensures enhanced passenger facilities during Diwali, Chhath Puja rush

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**

MUMBAI: Indian Railways has made extensive arrangements to ensure the convenience and comfort of passengers during the ongoing festive season of Diwali and Chhath Puja.

More than 12,000 trips of holiday special trains are being operated across the country to cater to the surge in travel demand. To manage the increased passenger movement, additional facilities such as holding areas, extra ticket counters, drinking water and sanitation arrangements have been made at major stations.

Around 12 lakh railway employees are working tirelessly round the clock to ensure smooth operations and safe travel during this busy period.

According to a press release issued by the Chief Public Relations Officer of Western Railway, Vineet Abhishek, Western Railway too has taken several proactive steps to handle the festive rush effectively.

Nearly 2,500 trips, comprising over 80 pairs of special trains, are being operated to meet the heavy demand during the festive season.

A majority of these

trains are north-bound, catering mainly to passengers travelling towards Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and neighbouring states. Out of these, around 1,630 trips are from Gujarat, 752 trips from Maharashtra and 90 trips from Madhya Pradesh.

The Special trains operating from Udhna/Surat to various parts of the country, including UP and Bihar, have witnessed a significant surge in passenger traffic.

Compared to the festive period last year, when 93 trips were notified and approximately 1.49 lakh passengers were trans-

ported (from 09.10.2024 to 08.11.2024), this year's festive season (from 28.09.2025 to 28.10.2025) has seen 128 trips being notified, catering to over 2 lakh passengers. These special trains have provided a convenient and hassle-free travel experience to passengers traveling to their destinations.

It is noteworthy to observe that on 19th October, 2025, seeing the surge in passenger traffic, 10 special trains were run for the convenience of passengers.

To handle this rush efficiently, several infrastruc-

tural improvements and passenger-friendly facilities have been developed at Udhna station. The newly upgraded high-level Platform No. 6 at Udhna (East) has improved boarding convenience for passengers.

A 700-metre-long concrete road has been constructed to connect the station approach road with the circulating and holding areas.

Two spacious holding areas have been created - one on the west side accommodating around 1,000 passengers and another on the east side catering to 1,500 passen-

gers.

These holding areas are well-equipped with adequate seating, drinking water taps, lights, fans, toilets, CCTV surveillance and a public announcement system. To make ticketing faster and easier, extra booking counters, ATMs and hand-held ticketing terminals have been introduced.

The mobile UTS facility has also been launched, enabling booking staff to issue tickets to passengers waiting in queues.

For smooth inter-platform movement, a new escalator and additional staircase have been pro-

vided in the East station building. Free drinking water and adequate toilet facilities have also been arranged for the convenience of passengers.

In terms of crowd management and safety, additional RPF and GRP personnel have been deployed to assist passengers and maintain proper queue formation at the platforms. Trains are being escorted by RPF personnel to ensure safety.

CCTV surveillance is being monitored round the clock and a dedicated war room has been set up at sensitive stations for crowd management.

Western Railway officers and staff have been deployed 24x7 to monitor operations and assist passengers.

Western Railway is also ensuring wide publicity of all special trains and passenger facilities through print and electronic media, social media platforms and press releases so that passengers remain well informed about train services.

Western Railway appeals to all passengers to cooperate with railway staff and follow safety instructions to ensure a safe and comfortable journey during this festive season.