

# Ladakh moving towards self-reliance through integrated rural development: LG Kavinder

## STATE TIMES NEWS

**KARGIL:** The Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, on Monday inaugurated Phase I of the Sodh Lift Irrigation Scheme, developed under the Special Development Package at an estimated cost of Rs 9.97 crore. The project will provide assured irrigation to the remote Sodh region, enhancing agricultural productivity and improving the livelihoods of local farmers.



Lieutenant Governor Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta addressing a gathering.

The inaugural ceremony was attended by Chairman/CEC Kargil Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoo, Member of Parliament Ladakh Mohd Haneefa Jan, Executive Councillor Kacho Mohd Feroz, Deputy Commissioner Rakesh Kumar, SSP Nitin Yadav, ADC Inteeaz Kacho, Superintendent Engineer Hydraulics, Councillor Manzoor Hussain, Executive Engineer I&FC, village elders, representatives, and local residents.

the completion of the first phase, describing it as a step toward realizing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat. He said the project reflects the UT Administration's commitment to empowering rural communities through modern infrastructure, technology, and sustainable water management. Gupta commended the efforts of officials and engineers associated with the project and reiterated that true development is achieved when the remotest villages are empowered. He added that initiatives promoting

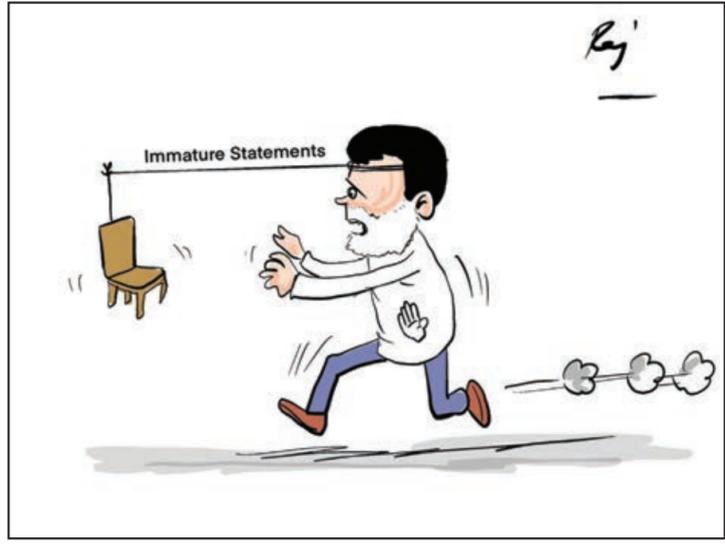
Atmanirbhar Bharat and Vocal for Local are transforming Ladakh's far-flung regions. The Lt Governor informed that approval for Phase II of the Sodh Lift Irrigation Project has already been granted and emphasized the Administration's focus on expanding solar lift, sprinkler, and micro-irrigation systems across the Union Territory.

CEC Dr. Jaffer Akhoo expressed gratitude to the Lt Governor, former leaders, and departmental heads for their contributions. He suggested transitioning the project from conventional to

solar power to reduce operational costs for farmers. MP Mohd Haneefa Jan urged expediting Phase II, citing

the region's horticultural potential, while Councillor Manzoor Hussain termed the inauguration a historic milestone for Sodh's development.

Later, the Lt Governor attended the Karakul Sheep Exhibition at Khumbathang, organized under the National Livestock Mission. Praising Ladakh's herders and scientists, he said the event highlights the Administration's resolve to strengthen the livestock sector and promote self-reliance through sustainable animal husbandry initiatives.



# Sham Lal reviews progress of development works on key ponds in Jammu North

## STATE TIMES NEWS

**JAMMU:** MLA Jammu North, Sham Lal Sharma, on Monday conducted an extensive inspection of the ongoing rejuvenation works of three major water ponds under the jurisdiction of the Jammu Development Authority (JDA), whose tenders have recently been approved.

The inspection covered Karwanda Talab in Panchayat Bhalwal Upper-A with an estimated cost of Rs 28.71 lakh, Badani Talab in Kalakam, Panchayat Kot Upper with an estimated cost of Rs 26.38 lakh, and Kalakam Talab in Panchayat Kot Upper with an estimated cost of Rs 29.95 lakh.

During the inspection, Sham Lal directed the concerned authorities to ensure that no compromise is made on quality during the execution of works, emphasizing the use of high-standard materials



MLA Jammu North, Sham Lal Sharma conducting inspection of rejuvenation works of water ponds.

and proper monitoring for effective implementation. He highlighted that once completed, these projects will play a vital role in water conservation, sustainable resource management, and maintaining environmental balance in the region.

He further stated that this initiative will not only accelerate the pace of development but also make rural life more convenient and prosperous.

Sham stated that the rejuvenation of natural water bodies reflects the vision of combining development with ecological responsibility.

"Our ponds and natural reservoirs are the lifeline of rural communities. Their revival will ensure water security, improve groundwater levels, and enhance the beauty and biodiversity of the region. The focus of our development model is to ensure

growth that is both sustainable and inclusive, benefitting every section of society," he said.

He further added that the BJP-led government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is committed to holistic rural development and environmental preservation. "Under various government schemes, we are working to create model villages that balance progress with sustainabili-

ty. Every developmental project in Jammu North is being undertaken with a vision to uplift local infrastructure, strengthen public amenities, and create employment opportunities for youth. Our mission is to ensure that every citizen feels the real impact of development at the grass-roots level," he said.

To ensure effective execution and long-term upkeep of these projects, local committees were formed to supervise the works and take responsibility for regular maintenance and cleanliness of the ponds once the projects are completed.

Prominent persons present during the inspection included Executive Engineer (JDA), AEE JDA, Pawan Sharma Shastri, Ex Sarpanch Bhalwal Upper-A, and Ex Sarpanch Kot Upper, along with several senior party workers.

# Police foil daily wagers' march to Civil Secretariat



Daily wagers raising slogans during a protest at Jammu on Monday.

## STATE TIMES NEWS

**JAMMU:** Police on Monday foiled a protest march by hundreds of daily wage employees of the Jal Shakti Department who had taken out a rally to gherao the Civil Secretariat here, demanding the regularisation of their services and the release of pending wages.

The employees reportedly shut down the water supply to several VIP areas in Jammu city, including the residences of ministers, though the supply was later restored.

The PHE Employees United Front, Jammu, urged the chief minister to table the committee report on the regularisation of daily wagers in the Assembly. This was the third protest by the union in the past fortnight over the government's failure to release the report and formulate a regularisation pol-

icy. Earlier demonstrations were held on October 23 and 27, coinciding with the start of the Assembly session.

Amid slogans of "We want justice", the hundreds of workers began their march from the PHE office on BC Road towards the Civil Secretariat. However, police deployed in large numbers stopped them by placing barricades and barbed wire on the route.

As the police foiled their march, the protesters then sat on a dharna for several hours, seeking the presence of the chief minister and ministers concerned to assure them of action.

"We are demanding a clear policy on regularisation, implementation of the Minimum Wages Act, and release of pending wages. We have been protesting for years, yet our issues remain unresolved," a leader of the PHE

Employees United Front (Jammu Province) said.

He alleged that successive governments had exploited daily wagers. "Essential services, whether in normal times or during crises, run because of daily wagers, but it is these workers who are always denied justice," he told reporters.

He recalled that during the previous Assembly session, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah announced the formation of a committee to examine the regularisation demands. The committee, headed by the chief secretary, was to submit its report within six months, by September 19, but the workers say they have no information regarding its status.

There are an estimated 67,000 daily wage workers across various government departments in Jammu and Kashmir.

# Congress, Left suffer from 'Anti-RSS Phobia': Gaurav

## STATE TIMES NEWS

**JAMMU:** BJP Jammu and Kashmir Spokesperson Gaurav Gupta on Monday came out in strong defence of school students who sang the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) anthem "Gana Geetham" during the flagging-off ceremony of the Ernakulam-Bengaluru Vande Bharat Express, terming the Kerala government's reaction as "politically motivated, anti-national, and a reflection of ideological intolerance."

Reacting sharply to Kerala Education Minister V. Sivankutty's decision to order an inquiry into the incident, Gupta said the move was an "insult to the very spirit of nationalism" and "proof that the Left government has completely lost its moral compass."

"Calling a patriotic song a constitutional violation is ridiculous and shameful. These are children singing about Bharat Mata, the Congress and Left must explain what exactly they find offensive about that," Gupta

said. "Bharat Mata Ki Jai is not confined to any religion or political party. It is a chant of pure patriotism," Gaurav said, hitting out at the Kerala Government and Congress for politicising national pride.

"Why turn patriotism into controversy? Chanting Bharat Mata Ki Jai is about love and respect for the motherland not about politics or ideology. Every Indian should feel proud, not hesitant, to say it," he added.

Gupta called it "shameful and unfortunate" that parties like Congress were questioning a patriotic song dedicated to the nation, and accused them of trying to divide society over nationalism.

He accused the Kerala Government and the Congress Party of "suffering from a chronic allergy to anything



that celebrates India's heritage and pride."

"For them, anything not stamped by their ideology becomes communal, this mindset is dangerous and divisive," he added.

Gaurav said the Congress, by backing the Kerala Government's reaction, had "once again exposed its anti-national mindset and anti-Hindu bias."

"Congress is no longer the party of freedom fighters, it has turned into a confused alliance of appeasement and pseudo-secularism. Supporting this controversy only shows how far it has fallen," he said.

Gupta further stated that singing patriotic songs should unite citizens, not divide them along ideological lines. "When children sing for the Motherland, it's a moment of pride.

But Congress and the Left see nationalism as a threat that's their real problem," he remarked.

He added that patriotism is not the monopoly of any organisation, including the RSS. "Those opposing such songs are the ones truly disrespecting the Constitution and the idea of India," Gupta said.

Taking a dig at senior Congress leader K.C. Venugopal, who wrote to the Railway Minister seeking an explanation, Gupta said, "Instead of appreciating children's devotion, Congress leaders are busy writing letters to stop patriotic songs. This shows how hollow their commitment to the nation really is."

Gupta urged political leaders to "rise above petty politics" and allow India's young generation to "sing freely for their nation without fear or ideological policing."

"The BJP stands with every child who sings for Bharat Mata and against every political force that tries to silence that voice," he asserted.

# Engaging faculty even in Professional Colleges on reduced wages & for session per session is surely detrimental to future of students

## DAYA SAGAR

**J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah** has been quoted in media as having said on last 25th October while addressing the valedictory session of the two-day National Education Policy (NEP) Conclave-2025 organised by the J&K Higher Education Department (HED) at Amar Singh College Srinagar that quality and innovation should remain the central pillars of higher education. Before the subject is taken further it is not out of place to mention here that what to talk of private sector even the Governments are found not lagging behind in exploiting the needy unemployed highly qualified youth by laying / adopting recruitment rules / policies where in even the youth with post graduate / professional degrees could be appointed in 'underemployed' status (unfairly reduced wages even against regular vacancies) with even half the wages otherwise due for job vacancy/post. It has also become a common custom for the political leaders and political activists who are when out of power to cry and express concern for the unemployed youth / under employment youth as and when they see some elections to parliament / legislature approaching. Practice of employing even Teachers in senior secondary schools, Lecturers in colleges, Assistant professors in universities / engineering colleges / medical colleges

against some regular substantive post year after year or session after session on academic arrangement basis / contractual basis / a consolidated wage/ re employing retired professors on contract basis has nearly become regular practice in J&K where cases could be quoted of repeated appointments session wise and in some cases not filling the posts even for 2-3 yrs (even more) by regular recruitment. A test check on such cases in Jammu University / Government College of Engineering & Technology Jammu / Government Medical Colleges would surely substantiate the status with cases where same person would have been appointed on academic arrangement basis for session after session even for 3 to 4 sessions without advertising/ filling post through PSC or by timely recruitment through PSC and that too in some cases on reduced wage. One would ask when the same person is appointed for another session (who is suitable for the job experience / qualification wise) why not appoint him/ select him/her as a regular appointee?

Such practices have not kept only the employed under mental/ social / emotional stresses worth adversely affecting their dedication / capacity towards performance of assigned job but also the quality of teaching. Those employed in teaching institutions/ extension services if remain under economic/ unfair social stresses surely

work with reduced initiative for imparting training / education and professional motivation to the students in their institution thereby indirectly effecting the quality of the students / the targeted beneficiaries. Just for reference the Govt College of Engineering Jammu which is much older than Jammu IIT otherwise should have been academically & infrastructure wise better than even IIT Jammu but a test review of the status of this college faculty wise & market placement would be worth taking a note. Some may even observe that the system there has benefited the students less and more to those employed there over the years to progress in their academic status (BE to M. Tech to Ph D) as well as cadre status. The status of faculty reflects the quality of the product. The administration and the policy makers must take immediate note of such like prevailing unhealthy culture of framing the faculty in higher education institutions in case they seriously take the advice given by J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on 25th October 2025 while addressing the valedictory session of the two-day National Education Policy (NEP) Conclave-2025 organised by the J&K Higher Education Department (HED) at Amar Singh College Srinagar that quality and innovation should remain



A Look through the Mist

the central pillars of higher education.

Had the leaders who have been often found talking of quality in education & related infrastructure been not simply in run for finding some space in the media but had been truthfully concerned, they would have worked in a regular way atleast for the 'underemployed university educated youth' retained as faculty even in the professional colleges and got undone the unfair practices of continued contractual / repeated academic session related employments & that too at reduced wage in government institutions like as per Government Order No: 137 -JK(HE) of 2024 Dated: -03-2024 (Guidelines for engagement of faculty on Academic Arrangement/ Guest Faculty in Government Degree Colleges / GCET etc. of UT of Jammu & Kashmir) where salary of Lecturer in GCET on session basis is mentioned as Rs.28000/pm (consolidated), all selections / engagements to be for a maximum of one academic session only and a fresh advertisement and engagement process to be initiated for every academic session, only 30 days maternity leave (without wages) and employment excluding the period of summer vacations / winter vacations. Imagine the instability in which such teaching staff may be working and affect .of that on the beneficiary students in a engineer-

ing college? Attempt was made to find out some data on the regular appointments made through advertisements following some existing session wise appointment but instances could not be found worth dismissing the observations that appointments session wise are made session after session not occasionally.

What the chief Minister has opined on 25th October has been very appealing and worth raising hopes worth expecting that Omar Government is for setting priorities on academically structuring the higher education institutions / colleges (atleast the professional colleges) also with adequately stable faculties like atleast undoing the system of appointment of lecturers / assistant professors in Engineering Colleges like Government College of Engineering & Technology on academic arrangement basis for only one session which has almost become a regular practice since such practice / recruitment culture is surely not going to give us a dynamic and learner centric systemic environment on ground to compete / fit in the modern competitive technological environment. The way such appointments are made session after session it could be inferred that the posts are not in regular course advertised/ filled through J&K PSC / or in some other manner since in case a detailed in-depth study is conducted it would be found that in some cases some senior faculty mem-

bers had joined the college after just B.E/ B.Tech degree and have risen to level of regular senior faculty by attaining M.E / Meech/ Ph D qualification while serving in the college itself which very well shows how badly the education of the students might have been affected in such environment.

Some cases may also come in light where a person has been appointed more than one time on session to session academic arrangement basis and has been there after adjusted on regular basis (even risen to level of HOD). One would ask in case the post was advertised through PSC and no selection was made through PSC, how could the one who had earlier worked for a session be reappointed for a session? Such cases may be found in the other higher education colleges too and hence there is fair need for getting a study conducted since the prevailing system adversely affects the education quality since an unstable faculty cannot academically do justice to the job being under rated, under paid and under pressures of being there with unstable career.

Will the J&K Chief Minister order for test check as discussed here atleast in the 'premier' institutions like Government Engineering Colleges in J&K is the question?

(The writer is Sr Journalist, social activist and analyst J&K affairs dayasagar45@yahoo.com 09419796096)