

Central Govt prioritising rapid development of Ladakh's border regions: LG Kavinder

STATE TIMES NEWS
KARGIL: The Government of India, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is prioritizing the development of border areas, the preservation of Ladakh's cultural heritage, and the strengthening of India's strategic frontiers. This was emphasized by Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, while addressing the public after inaugurating the Darchik Cultural Centre, a landmark facility established under the Indian Army's Operation Sadbhavana.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by senior Army officials including Maj Gen Dinesh Kumar Singh, Chief of Staff 14 Corps; Maj Gen K. Mahesh, GOC 8 Mountain Division; Brig Satyakam Dabas; Brig Dev Panwar; Brig Virendra Singh Salaria; and several other officers, along with Deputy Commissioner Kargil Rakesh Kumar and SSP Kargil Nitin Yadav.

In his address, the Lt Governor highlighted that



LG Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta inaugurating the Darchik Cultural Centre.

the Darchik Cultural Centre is "not just an infrastructure project, but a symbol of India's commitment to preserving the unique heritage of the Dard Aryan community." He said the initiative reflects the Central Government's broader vision of empowering border populations, strengthening grassroots cultural identity, and creating sustainable opportunities for local youth.

He noted that under the guidance of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, the morale and readiness of the armed forces have significantly improved, contribut-

ing to the peaceful environment essential for development projects in border regions. The Lt Governor praised the Army's continuous support for community welfare, citing projects such as the Indus View Point in Batalik, Captain Manoj Pandey (PVC) Stadium in Garkone, and the Kalubar War Memorial.

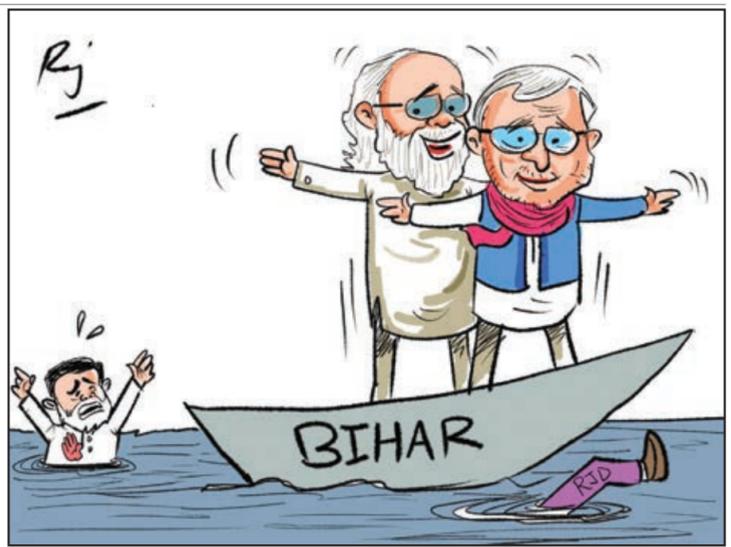
Outlining the UT Administration's developmental vision, he stressed the government's commitment to improving infrastructure, developing skilled manpower, and boosting tourism and business oppor-

tunities. He emphasized Ladakh's immense cultural and tourism potential, especially in historically rich areas like Kargil.

The Lt Governor said the Aryan Valley holds global importance for its ancient ethnic lineage and rare cultural expressions. The new Cultural Centre aims to preserve traditional music, dance, attire, language, and folklore while promoting cultural tourism and local livelihoods. He encouraged the community to use the centre as a "living cultural space" by organizing workshops, festivals, youth training pro-

grams, and research collaborations.

Kavinder Gupta also launched Community Radio Stations at Partapur and Tyakshi, enhancing communication in remote regions of Nubra Valley, and unveiled the Param Vir Chakra Comic Series in the Dardiarya/Brokskat language. He felicitated local contributors for their cultural efforts and concluded by praising all stakeholders for safeguarding the cultural identity of the Aryan Valley while fostering peace and sustainable development.



CS reviews progress of major highways, tunnels across J&K

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo on Thursday chaired a high-level meeting to review the status of major highway and road development projects being executed across Jammu & Kashmir by Project Beacon, Project Sampark, NHAI, NHIDCL, and the Public Works (R&B) Department.



Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo chairing meeting on Thursday.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Public Works Department; Divisional Commissioner, Jammu/Kashmir; Secretary Transport; Engineer-in-Chief (Works); Regional Officer, NHAI; Chief Engineers of Project Beacon and Project Sampark and other senior officers. All Deputy Commissioners participated through video conferencing.

The Chief Secretary directed that permissions for extraction of construction material must be strictly ensured and used only for the designated projects. Deputy Commissioners were instructed to expedite compensation cases and ensure timely disbursement to facilitate immediate handover of land to executing agencies for simultaneous work on all project packages. He also called for prompt grant of forest clearances wherever required. Both Divisional Commissioners were asked to regularly engage with the implementing agencies to resolve issues without delay and maintain the momentum of work. The Chief Secretary emphasised that while the administration would facilitate all necessary support, the agencies must adhere strictly to the prescribed timelines.

The Public Works Department was asked to

finalise and follow the new DPRs under formulation so that these crucial projects can move swiftly to the tendering and execution stages.

A comprehensive review was held on several flagship road corridors, including Srinagar-Baramulla-Uri Road, Khanabal-Baltal Road, Alignment fixing for Peer ki Gali and Sadhna Tunnels, Akhnoor-Poonch Road (completion status), Dredging permissions for NH-144A, Mangam-Doodhpatti-Shopian-Poonch Road, Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway, Kaluchak-Purmandal-Domel Road, Fourth Tawi Bridge, Jammu.

The Chief Secretary laid special emphasis on expediting works along NH-44, including Tunnel projects. He reviewed the progress of Nashri-Chenani road via Patnitop, Marog-Digdol Tunnel, Digdol to Khuni Nallah Tunnel, Malkarkot to Sherbibi Tunnel, Black topping of Banihal to Ramban stretch before December end was specially being emphasis upon. The Divisional Commissioner Jammu was directed to monitor these works closely and furnish regular progress reports.

The meeting noted the progress on both metropolitan ring roads including that of

Jammu and Srinagar Ring Road projects. Review covered land issues, construction progress, and connectivity requirements. Detailed discussions were held on the completion of tunnel in Jammu and connectivity of Srinagar Ring Road to the Airport and from Sumbal to Wayil, with directions for accelerating the pace of execution.

The Chief Secretary assessed multiple NHIDCL projects including Highway works on Jammu-Akhnoor Road, Improvement of riding surface from Bhagwati Chowk to Canal Head (Jammu), Chenani-Sudhmahadev Road, Goha-Khellani Road, Khellani-Khanabal stretch, Zojila Tunnel and revised DPRs under consideration.

The meeting also reviewed new DPRs under consideration in NHAI, including New Fourth Tawi Bridge, Phase-II of Jammu Ring Road, Six-laning of Chenani-Nashri Tunnel, Srinagar Ring Road Phase

III, Sumbal-Bandipora-Gurez Road, Service road on Srinagar-Qazigund Highway, Kathua-Basholi-Bani-Bafliaz-Doda Road and many others in the length and breadth of J&K.

Progress of key R&B projects was also assessed, including Bypasses for Pulwama, Gulgam and Shopian towns, Sanat Nagar Flyover, Service road at Tenggpora, Bridges at Chanapora and Tenggpora. New projects discussed included Parimpora-Shalteng Flyover, Old Padshahbagh Bridge, Lal Chowk-Parimpora Flyover and dozens of other connectivity projects.

The Chief Secretary reiterated that all these projects are vital for improving mobility, economic growth, and regional connectivity across Jammu & Kashmir. He directed all departments and agencies to work in close coordination to ensure timely completion of every package and removal of all impediments at the earliest.

Dr Jitendra lauds Indian Army's mega health camp; Performs Bhoomi Pujan of Udhampur Chamber of Commerce Building

STATE TIMES NEWS
UDHAMPUR: Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh undertook a series of significant public engagements in Udhampur on Thursday, beginning with a visit to the Army Command Hospital where he reviewed the ongoing first-ever Mega Health Camp, and later performing the Bhoomi Pujan and laying the foundation stone of the new Udhampur Chamber of Commerce building at Battal Balia.

During his visit to the Command Hospital, Dr. Jitendra interacted with patients at the three-day Mega Cataract Camp, being held from 19-21 November under Operation Driшти. He praised the Indian Army for organising this state-of-the-art health initiative, calling it a remarkable example of the Army's humanitarian commitment during peacetime.

He highlighted that while the Army's role in safeguarding the nation is unparalleled, its contribution to community welfare through healthcare and humanitarian assistance is equally commendable. Dr.



Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh interacting with patients during visit to Medical Camp at AC Hospital Udhampur.

Singh toured the Department of Ophthalmology, reviewed advanced facilities, and interacted with senior citizens and other patients, acknowledging the efforts of the medical staff.

The Minister also reviewed cutting-edge medical technology including the 3-D microscope used for precision eye surgeries. He said that world-class equipment and specialised care not only improve treatment outcomes but also instill confidence among patients. Dr. Singh emphasised that such outreach programmes strengthen the bond between the Armed Forces and citizens, showcasing the

Army's multifaceted nation-building role.

Later in the day, Dr. Jitendra Singh performed the Bhoomi Pujan and laid the foundation stone for the Udhampur Chamber of Commerce building, marking an important milestone in the district's economic development. The ceremony was organised by Chamber President Sham Kalsotra and attended by MLAs Pawan Gupta, RS Pathania, Balwant Mankotia, Sunil Bhardwaj, DDC Chairman Lal Chand, BJP President Arun Gupta, BCP Saloni Rai, SSP Amod Nagpure, and prominent business leaders.

Dr. Singh described the initiative as a historic step toward strengthening the business ecosystem of Udhampur. He said the Chamber would provide a structured platform for local enterprises, support investment, and promote entrepreneurship across the region. The facility will offer business incubation, advisory services, skill development programmes, and financial guidance for SMEs.

He added that the new Chamber would complement major infrastructural developments in the area, ensuring improved connectivity translates into economic opportunities and employment generation. With strong participation from trade associations and civil administration, the event reflected a collective commitment to boosting Udhampur's economic landscape. Both engagements reinforced Dr. Jitendra Singh's vision of holistic development-strengthening healthcare access through Army-led initiatives and fostering economic growth through institutional support for local businesses.

350th Martyrdom anniversary of Guru Tegh Bahadur ji

Nagar Kirtan received grand welcome in Jammu before moving towards next halt at Pathankot

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: The Nagar Kirtan commemorating the 350th Martyrdom Anniversary of Ninth Sikh Guru, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji received a spirited Khalsai welcome from the sangat in Jammu before the procession advanced towards next destination at Pathankot. Devotees accompanied the Nagar Kirtan barefoot for long stretches both during last night's reception and at the time of its onward journey today, infusing the city with a deeply spiritual atmosphere. A dedicated stopover was arranged for the Nagar Kirtan at Gurdwara Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Chand Nagar, Jammu.

Sikh youth showcased the martial art Gatka skills as the procession departed from Jammu while the local sangat



showered flowers upon the palanquin of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. A large group of devotees also joined the procession heading towards Sri Anandpur Sahib to pay homage during the main events.

As the procession passed through Jammu city, various gurdwaras extended a warm

welcome. Singh Sabha Gurdwara Akali Kaur Singh Nagar in Digiana greeted the Nagar Kirtan with full devotion. Rajinder Singh Wazir, Rajinder Singh Raina, Narinder Singh Wazir, Sandeep Singh along with a sizeable gathering were present. At Sri Sant Mela Singh Ji

Dastkari Ashram, devotees welcomed the Nagar Kirtan alongside Mahant Manjit Singh. The sangat of Singh Sabha Gurdwara Digiana Camp along with President Charanjeet Singh, Manjeet Singh, Suraj Singh also extended a hearty welcome.

At Dogval and Amar, Kashmiri Sikh Sangat including Sarpanch Vikram Singh, Swarn Singh, Simranjeet Singh, Surjit Singh, Jagdeep Singh, Darbari Singh and others arranged a special kahwa langar. At Mata Vaishno Devi Bypass, the sangat of Kunjuwani welcomed the religious procession, while the sangat of Sarore area also offered greetings and organised langar.

Besides this, at Vijaypur in Samba district, former Jammu and Kashmir Cabinet Minister

S. Manjeet Singh, Giani Harpal Singh, Jasvir Singh, Harnam Singh, Gurmeet Singh, Gurdeep Singh along with the local Sikh sangat welcomed the Nagar Kirtan and arranged langar. Likewise, the sangat at Bari Brahmana Adda in Samba also extended a warm reception to the Nagar Kirtan. Notably, upon its late-night arrival in Jammu, special religious congregation was organised at Mandla for the reception of the Nagar Kirtan. The District Gurdwara Management Committee Jammu led the collective arrangements. The preparations were jointly supported by Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha Guru Nanak Nagar Jammu, Gurdwara Yadgar Sri Bala Pritam Ji Trikuta Nagar Jammu, Gurdwara Yadgar

Chhevin Patshahi Talab Tillo Jammu, Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha Bakshi Nagar Jammu, Gurdwara Yadgar Sri Guru Angad Patshah Ji Preet Nagar Jammu, Gurdwara Kalghidhar Sahib Rehari Jammu, Gurdwara Yadgar Sant Sundar Singh Ji Tapo Sthan Akhnoor and Surinder Singh Kala, President of Vegetable and Fruit Association Narwal Mandi.

RTO Jammu Jasveer Singh, Gurdwara Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji President Ranjit Singh Tohra, Sant Tejwant Singh Damnewale, General Secretary Master Ranbir Singh, Jagpal Singh (Treasurer), Taranjeet Singh (Dharam Prachar Committee Incharge), Balwinder Singh, Surjit Singh (General Secretary) and others were present on this occasion.

CSIR-IIIM starts Tulip Plantation at its Field Station Pulwama

STATE TIMES NEWS
PULWAMA: CSIR - Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (IIIM) Jammu under the aegis of Union Ministry of Science and Technology, under the flagship Mission on Floriculture on Thursday kick started its annual Tulip plantation at its Field Station Bonera Pulwama.

Under the Mission CSIR-IIIM has initiated tulip cultivation at Field Station Bonera since year 2022 with the primary objectives of indigenizing tulip bulb production, developing agro-technological protocols and expanding crop cultivation.

Dr Zabeer Ahmed Director CSIR-IIIM, who inaugurated the plantation while interacting with media, said that pursuant to the Prime Ministers clarion call for self-reliant India and with the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, CSIR Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine, Jammu is implementing the pan India CSIR Floriculture Mission envisioned by Dr Jitendra Singh

Union Minister for Science and Technology and Vice President CSIR.

He further added, that the initiative marks a significant step toward positioning Jammu and Kashmir as a hub for tulip bulb production in future, aiming to shift India from an import dependent consumer to a self-sufficient producer.

Under the flagship Mission the Institute has achieved remarkable achievements since 2021 in strengthening the commercial Floriculture sector in the region and empowering the farmers through production of high value cut, bulbous and other region specific ornamental crops, he added.

Concurrent to the event, the Institute at its Field Station Bonera Pulwama organized a workshop on advanced approaches for integrated apiculture, commercial floriculture and ornamental crop production systems. The programme designed to disseminate advance scientific knowledge, improve agri-entrepreneurial competencies



Dr Zabeer Ahmed Director CSIR-IIIM lighting ceremonial lamp.

is expected to enhance the technological readiness of students, farmers and aspiring agri-entrepreneurs in apiculture and floriculture value chains.

The participants of the workshop that

included 120 students from multiple academic institutions and 40 apiculture farmers of South Kashmir, were given intensive training in evidence driven apiculture, including honey bee colony dynamics, nutri-

tional supplementation strategies and the application of integrated pest, pathogen and winter management strategies within apiary systems.

Dr Shahid Rasool, Principal Scientist and Scientist Incharge of the Field Station informed that the training modules encompassed the full continuum of modern ornamental floriculture ranging from propagation physiology; phenological modelling and controlled environment cultivation to postharvest physiology; supply chain optimization and market driven varietal selection. Participants were exposed to advanced cultivation methodologies for cut flowers, bulbous ornamentals and protected floriculture systems, alongside emerging domains such as urban floriculture, vertical greening technologies and landscape architectural design using sustainable ornamental plant palettes. The programme integrated hands-on demonstrations, including precision fertigation,

microclimate modulation techniques and the use of sensor based monitoring tools for improving crop performance and environmental resilience. Subject matter experts delivered scientific lectures on advanced approaches for ornamental crop improvement, conservation of wild MAPs and ornamental germplasm, adaptive cultivation under climate variability and biotechnological interventions for quality enhancement and stress tolerance, Dr Rasool added.

The workshop reaffirms CSIR-IIIM's commitment to translational research, rural livelihood enhancement and the strengthening of India's scientific and commercial footprint in the global floriculture and apiculture sectors. By advancing indigenous technologies and fostering an innovation oriented ecosystem, the Institute aims to catalyse sustainable, knowledge driven growth in high value floriculture.