

Dr Jitendra inaugurates Nora bridge, announces 9 additional underpasses, flyover along Express corridor

STATE TIMES NEWS

KATHUA: Union Minister, Dr Jitendra Singh on Wednesday inaugurated the vital Nora bridge along Lakhanpur-Thein Road in Basohli sector of district Kathua. The bridge constructed at a cost of Rs 1646.88 lac was a long pending public demand and provides a vital picturesque link reducing the travel time by around two hours.



Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh addressing a public meeting at the site of Nora bridge along Lakhanpur-Thein road after inaugurating it on Wednesday.

last phase of Shahpur Kandi project, revival in principal of 100 year old Ujh Multipurpose Project etc.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir was ignored by earlier governments for political reasons, but in last years this has been sought to be made up by starting several new national projects and reviving the stalled ones.

Referring to nine underpasses now to be constructed on the Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Express corridor for the convenience of the public, Dr Jitendra underlined that this demand had been met four days ago. He stated that plans are on the anvil to turn Kathua into a major hub of trade and tourism.

Dr Singh was addressing a public rally here during the inauguration of the 191-metre long Nora Bridge costing 1700 lakh rupees. He said the construction of the double-lane bridge meets a long-pending demand. He said the local people will no longer have to face inconvenience while traveling from Bani to Basohli.

The construction of the bridge, said Dr Jitendra said, alternate alignment of Lakhanpur-Thein road, was necessitated by the submergence of some portion of

Nora Nallah falling in Panchayat Thein of district Kathua. Dr Singh underlined that the fulfilment of the public demand manifests the government's commitment to ensuring ease of travel for the locals.

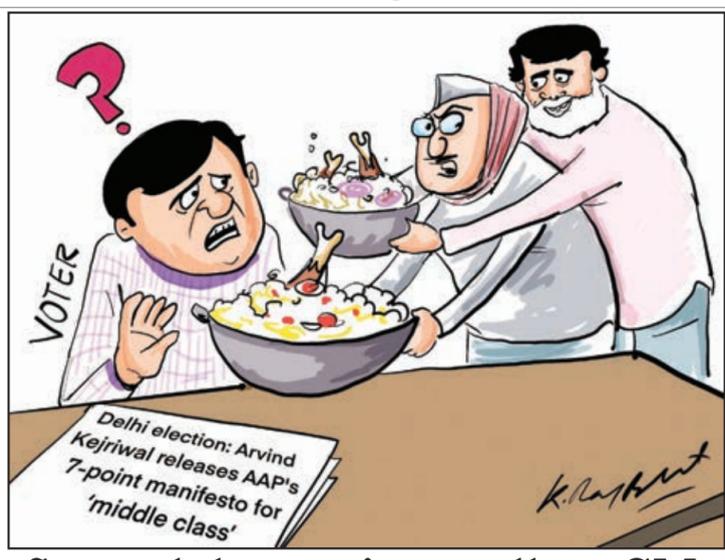
The Minister informed that Juthana Bridge is ready, and it will be inaugurated soon. He said after assuming charge as the Prime Minister Modi resolved to carry out development in the underdeveloped and previously-neglected areas. He said the aim was to bring these areas at par with places already touched by development on many fronts.

Dr Jitendra informed that fulfilling another popular public demand and to assuage the concerns of local populace vis-à-vis livelihoods, the government has decided to build nine under passes on the Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Express Corridor; including two at Dayala Check, as many as at Hatli Morh, and two each at Rajbagh and Chanrorian, and one at Koodah. Also, an elevated flyover at Kalibari is also proposed, Dr Singh further

informed. The Union Minister also informed the gathering that the government approved last week the Chattergala project built at an estimated cost of 30,345 crore rupees. As part of the ambitious project, the strategic tunnel costing 4245 crore rupees which will connect Kathua to Doda via Basohli Bani and Bhaderwah.

The Minister noted that the travel time between Doda and Kathua will be reduced significantly to only three hours. He said a DND is proposed to be built Doda and Dalhousie in Himachal Pradesh.

Talking about the achievements of the government in the past six months in other parts of this Lok Sabha constituency, the Minister highlighted many new key projects in the area that include Sudhmahadev Tunnel, in district Doda a new road link connecting villages like Humbal, Burgana and Dr Jitendra Singh's native village of Kalhota with under construction NH-224. He said these projects will be game-changers in the development journey of the entire region.



Several deputations call on CM, highlight public issues



Chief Minister Omar Abdullah meeting with several deputations at Civil Secretariat.

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday met several deputations at Civil Secretariat, and listened to their issues, demands and grievances for immediate redressal.

A deputation led by District Development Council Chairman Kishitwar, Pooja Thakur, brought development and employment issues to the notice of the Chief Minister:

Representing far-flung areas of Paddar, Dachhan, Atholi, Nagseni and other areas of Kishtwar district, the delegation submitted a memorandum of demands to the Chief Minister, highlighting key issues faced by these remote areas of Kishtwar district.

The delegation emphasized the need for employment opportunities for locals in ongoing and upcoming power

projects, along with the upgradation of schools and health institutions to address critical shortages of teachers, doctors and paramedics.

They also brought attention to the need for improved public infrastructure, including better roads, reliable drinking water facilities and the establishment of banking services in remote areas.

The Chief Minister gave a patient hearing to the deputation and assured that all genuine demands would be addressed on priority emphasizing the government's commitment to ensuring equitable development in remote areas for upliftment of marginalized communities.

In a separate meeting, a deputation comprising former legislators of the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir State Assembly met the Chief Minister to discuss

their concerns.

They requested for an enhancement of pension benefits, noting that the last revision occurred over a decade ago.

Besides they requested for an increase in medical allowance.

They also sought intervention of Chief Minister in giving directions for smooth and hassle free entry of ex-legislators to the Legislative Assembly and Secretariat premises and to devise a simple mechanism to facilitate their easy access.

The Chief Minister assured the delegation that their issues would be taken up promptly.

He said that his government gives due recognition to their contributions to public service and assured that a mechanism would be devised to facilitate their entry without any difficulty.

UGC team conducts accessibility audit at JU



UGC team during visit to University of Jammu on Wednesday.

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In a significant step toward fostering inclusivity and accessibility in higher education, a team from the University Grants Commission (UGC) visited the University of Jammu to conduct a comprehensive accessibility audit. This initiative underscores UGC's commitment to creating equitable learning environments for individuals with disabilities across educational institutions.

Manhas, Coordinator, Disability Initiatives; Dr. Ginny Dogra, Director DIQA.

The audit evaluated the university's adherence to accessibility standards and identified areas for improvement, focusing on creating an inclusive campus for students, faculty, and staff with disabilities. The UGC team assessed critical aspects such as the physical accessibility of buildings, availability of assistive devices, access to digital resources, and policy frameworks supporting differently-abled individuals.

The team conducted an on-ground inspection of key infrastructure, including ramps, elevators, tactile pathways, accessible washrooms, and other supportive facilities. Central amenities such as the touch-and-smell garden, the physiotherapy unit of the health center, GZSAC complex, and sports facilities were also visited and highly appreciated for their inclusivity.

Dr. Neeraj Sharma, Registrar, presented a comprehensive overview of the

university's initiatives for persons with disabilities. His presentation highlighted existing facilities, policy interventions, and programs aimed at empowering specially-abled students, along with glimpses of past events promoting inclusivity.

The UGC team also interacted with specially-abled students and alumni to understand their experiences and challenges firsthand.

The audit's findings and recommendations will provide the University of Jammu with a strategic roadmap to implement enhancements and align with UGC and national accessibility guidelines. These measures are expected to further the university's mission of fostering an inclusive and supportive educational environment for all.

Among others present included Dr. Vikram Sahi, I/c Librarian, Dr. Hema Gandotra, Dr. Ankit Mahajan, Dr. Neelam Choudhary, Dr. Ashwin Khushwah and Ameet Targotra AD DIQA.

PM Modi fulfilled dream of millions of Hindus across the globe: Sat

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: J&K BJP President Sat Sharma and MLA Jammu East, Yudhvir Sethi participated in the first anniversary celebrations of the Ram Temple consecration ceremony at the Fruit & Vegetable Market in Narwal, Jammu.

Prominent BJP leaders present at the event included Adv. Rajesh Gupta, District President Jammu, along with key office bearers of the Fruit & Vegetable Market. The dignitaries included President Sardar Surinder Singh, Vice President Vishal Kohli, General Secretary Ankur Anand, Junior Vice President Ashok Sharma,



J&K BJP President Sat Sharma and MLA Jammu East, Yudhvir Sethi participating in the first anniversary celebrations of the Ram Temple consecration.

Secretary Anil Sharma, Cashier Tarsem Gupta, and Media Secretary Rajinder Sharma. A grand Tiranga Rally was also taken out within the Narwal Mandi, symbolizing national unity and reverence for the Ram Temple. The rally saw enthusiastic participation from traders, shopkeepers, and BJP karyakartas.

Sat lauded the significance of the Ram Temple, calling it a realization of the long-cherished dream of millions of Hindus across the globe. He emphasized that the construction of the grand temple in Ayodhya under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is a testament to the unwavering faith and cultural heritage of Bharat. Yudhvir Sethi, while addressing the gathering, expressed his gratitude to the people for their relentless support in preserving and promoting Sanatan Dharma. "The Ram Temple stands as a symbol of righteousness, justice, and devotion. It is our duty to uphold these values and ensure that our future generations remain connected to their roots," he stated. Yudhvir Sethi further emphasized the role of the BJP in safeguarding the cultural and religious identity of Bharat and reiterated his commitment to serving the people with dedication. The event concluded with prayers and bhajans dedicated to Lord Ram, as attendees expressed their joy and gratitude for witnessing this historic period in India's cultural and religious history.

Sakeena chairs Cabinet Sub-Committee meet on Reservation Rules

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Cabinet Sub-Committee on Reservation Rules convened its meeting under the chairpersonship of Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo here on Wednesday.

Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmad Rana (member of Sub-committee);

Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare Department, Sanjeev Verma; Secretary Law, Achal Sethi and representatives from General Administration Department also participated in the meeting.

The Sub-committee examined the grievances and issues raised by section of aspirants and students on different aspects of existing reservation policy. The Sub-committee also discussed the

existing reservation policy and evaluated several aspects of it.

Pertinently, the cabinet Sub-committee was constituted by the government last month to look into grievances projected by several section of aspirants against the existing reservation rules.

The sub-committee will submit its report to the council of ministers headed by Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah.

Going to be 100 days of Omar Govt: Time to look at NC's Election Manifesto

DAYA SAGAR

Omar Abdullah took oath of office as 1st Chief Minister of UT of J&K in October 2024 (16) and in the Election Manifesto placed before the voter citizen during the 1st Elections to the Legislative Assembly of UT of J&K Omar Abdullah as vice President of NC had said < "This manifesto is not just a list of promises; it is a pledge with the people. It reflects the blood, sweat, and tears of those who came before us, who dreamed of a prosperous and peaceful Jammu and Kashmir. It is your voice, your aspirations, your resilience, and your resolve. I stand before you as your son, your brother, your friend committed to seeing every promise in this manifesto fulfilled". No doubt the Chief Minister has expressed intimate faith in the intentions of Prime Minister particularly as regards grant of the status of a State to UT of J&K without delay (but at appropriate time) and has given the impressions that his government would avoid any unnecessary confrontation with center on the issue of 'statehood' status. Some people may be opining otherwise over the way Omar Abdullah is taking to the Statehood issue but going by the constitutional and administrative realities Omar Abdullah is surely taking on such like issues in a very affirmative way particularly in terms of his being a Chief Minister of a UT and not a state.

at the same time the common of J&K wants Omar Abdullah to take on the affairs related to promises made by his party/his alliance during election campaigns and the delays in any form in executing processes / proposals for delivering commitments made in election manifesto cannot be disposed off under the excuses that as Chief Minister of UT he has limited powers/delegations since before contesting elections he was well aware of the fact that he was going to be the legislature of a UT/ if gains majority then also CM of a UT only where the LG too has a direct / even exclusive jurisdiction on some important matters.

Any financial / administrative requirements for executing the promises should have been well examined by his party before making promises and initiating any new process of examining the implications or appointing committees after forming government is surely no any delivery of promises.

The promises that attracted attention of the voter citizen expecting immediate delivery after the government got installed in reference to Election Manifestos -2024 that of National Conference / Alliance could be briefed like (i) The J&K assembly, in its first list of business after elections, will pass a resolution against the centre's decision to strip the region of its statehood and special status. (ii) Formulate a policy to provide land to the landless and those who have been in uninterrupted possession of state lands for an extended period, granting ownership rights under a considered policy (III) To fill

up all vacancies in government departments within 180 days (IV) The Job

Application will be made free for all the examinations (V) Provide 200 units of electricity free (VI) Provide Rs. 5000 per month to female heads of households to EWS (VII) Provide 12 cylinders free of cost per year to EWS (VIII) Will enhance the old age and widow pension to 3000 (IX) Women shall be entitled to travel free in all public transport (X) Increase FREE rice allocation to 10 kg per person per month (XI) Entitle the general public also to 10 kg rice/Atta per head/month.(XII)Free education for all upto University level(XIII)will formulate a policy for regularisation in a time bound manner for Casual labourers, Daily wagers, Contractual Employees, Home Guard, Rehbar-e-Khel, Paramedical staff in Associated Hospitals, GMC and other category of temporary employees (XIV) one-time settlement for pending electricity bill arrears in both rural and urban areas (XV)will resolve land lease policy and ensure all genuine leases are renewed (XVI) In view of the experiences of states who have opted for old pension scheme. We will find ways to reinstate the old pension scheme (XVII) (The JKNC is strongly committed to the dignified return and rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits (XVII) Ensure that passport verification procedures are simplified, removing hurdles and making it easier for people to obtain passports(XVIII) shall make all efforts

for all engineering and medical examinations to be conducted locally including NEET and other exams. (XIX) will work towards the establishing of Miniorty Commission (XX) will explore new tourist destination in J&K, including regions in Pir Panjal, Chenab, and other areas.



A Look through the Mist

fill these expectations. The aspiration for a return to the Statehood remains strong! Hon'ble Prime Minister, on several occasions, has already expressed his commitment to restoring statehood, which has been a source of rekindled hope and reassurance for the people.

The Council of Ministers of Jammu and Kashmir has recently passed a unanimous resolution calling for the immediate restoration of statehood. This resolution reflects the collective will of the elected representatives, echoing the aspirations of the people for the reinstatement of full democratic governance. My Government will make all efforts for restoration of full Statehood and Constitutional Guarantees available to the State (iv) 6. My government is fully committed to implementing the promises made to the people for further political empowerment and for creating an enabling environment for employment, sustainable development, social inclusiveness and expansion of the economy for enhancing the overall quality of life (v) 13. My Government is committed to provide 200 units of free electricity to deserving households for which modalities are being worked out.(vi) 16. My Government is committed to providing Free, Clean and Safe Drinking Water to All. For quality assurance of drinking water, and Kashmir. Healthcare facilities and services in rural areas.... > " As regards the restoration of statehood the Assembly had taken to the reference in election manifesto. As regards other points mentioned in the forging paras no doubt the large participation of voter citizens in a very peaceful con-

duct of elections and the expectations of the common man did find particular note in the address but though references were also made to the items related to election promises the same were not that elaborate and even as regards providing 200 units of electricity free the reference said for deserving cases only . Any how it was expected that soon other reference out of the 20 mentioned above would soon be in public domain in the form of orders with in the powers of cabinet and proposals that require sanctions of the LG/ Central government. But not very encouraging actions of the Omar Government have yet taken the shape of orders , particularly as regards promises listed at Sr:2 to 15 above for which it was expected that there would be immediate deliveries regarding those.

It was hoped that some of the promises may be specifically addressed in the 20th Jan 2025 cabinet meeting but not much has been reported as for taking care of manifesto promises.

As regards Sr:16 to 20 the subjects no doubt need participation of other authorities but still some initiations were expected and in case that has not been placed adequately in public domain yet, that may be placed in case not have been taken note of here. No doubt programmes that involve finances would require matching inputs but people expect that any such limitations must have been addressed by the vote seekers before making electoral promises.

(The writer is a Sr Journalist & a known analyst of J&K affairs)