

Chief Minister unveils JAKFAS Annual Calendar 2026

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, unveiled the Jammu and Kashmir Finance and Accounts Society (JAKFAS) Annual Calendar 2026, themed "From Potential to Prosperity."

Chief Minister congratulated the JAKFAS for its continued efforts in bringing out professional and innovative initiatives highlighting Jammu and Kashmir's development journey.

The Digital JAKFAS Calendar 2026 was unveiled in the presence of Nasir Aslam Wani, Advisor to the Chief Minister; Dheeraj Gupta, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister; and senior officers of the Finance Department, including Fayaz Ahmad Lone, Director General, Accounts & Treasuries; Mahesh Das, Director General, Codes;



Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah unveiling JAKFAS Annual Calendar 2026.

Yaqoob Itoo, Director General, Funds Organization, Mohammad Sultan Malik, Director General Budget, and President JAKFAS, Rashim Deepika besides other officers. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister appreciated JAKFAS for bringing out its annual digital calendar and observed that the theme reflects the immense natural, human, and institutional

strengths of Jammu and Kashmir, as well as its transformative journey from latent potential to sustainable prosperity. He commended the Society for its efforts and conveyed his best wishes to its members for continued success in their professional pursuits and future endeavours.

Earlier, Rashim Deepika explained that each month of

the calendar has been designed with carefully curated images depicting development initiatives, key sectors, cultural heritage and milestones, together portraying Jammu and Kashmir's journey from potential to prosperity.

The event was also attended by Rahul Mahajan, Vice President (Jammu), JAKFAS; Tariq Malik, Publicity Secretary, JAKFAS; Sonika

Arora, Joint Director, Codes; and other officers, while Rafiq Shah, Vice President (Kashmir), JAKFAS; Mohd Akram Thakkar, General Secretary, JAKFAS; Dr. Anand Thakur Sen, Finance Secretary; Simarjeet Singh, Sports Secretary; Sonam Singh, Cultural-cum-Literary Secretary, JAKFAS; Hitesh Choudhary, Media In-charge, JAKFAS; and other officers participated virtually.

The JAKFAS Digital Calendar 2026 serves as an organisational and visual representation of progress across sectors and reflects the Union Territory's commitment to development, reform, and participatory.



Jugal, Slathia describe PMGSY game changer for rural connectivity; launch Rs 2716.2 lakh road project in Samba

STATE TIMES NEWS

SAMBA: Member of Parliament Jugal Kishore Sharma and MLA Surjeet Singh Slathia on Friday described the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) as a game changer for strengthening road infrastructure, particularly in rural and border areas, stating that the centrally sponsored scheme has immense potential to transform connectivity in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

The leaders jointly kick-started the construction of an 11-kilometre road from Village Sodam to Sanur via Mansoor in Samba constituency. The project, being executed under PMGSY at an estimated cost of Rs 2716.2 lakh, aims to provide all-weather road connectivity to several villages that have remained underserved for decades.

Addressing a gathering of local residents and officials, MP Jugal Kishore Sharma said that PMGSY has brought a paradigm shift in rural development by ensuring reliable and durable road connectivity to remote habitations.

He emphasized that roads are not merely means of transportation but the backbone of economic growth, social integration and access to essential services such as healthcare, education and markets.

"Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, development has been given a new direction. PMGSY has emerged as one of the most impactful schemes, especially in regions like Jammu and Kashmir, where challenging terrain has historically hindered connectivity," Sharma said.

Speaking on the occasion, Slathia said improved road infrastructure has significantly enhanced access to healthcare, education, employment opportunities and markets. He highlighted that the Central Government has made unprecedented investments in infrastructure development in Jammu and Kashmir over the past decade, particularly after 2019, ensuring that development reaches the grassroots level.

Slathia said PMGSY has transformed the rural landscape by connecting villages that were earlier cut off dur-



MP Jugal Kishore Sharma and MLA Surjeet Singh Slathia starting construction of 11-kilometre road.

ing adverse weather conditions. "This road will provide a major boost to socio-economic activity in the area. Farmers, students, traders and daily commuters will be the biggest beneficiaries," he added.

Reiterating the BJP government's commitment to balanced and inclusive development in Jammu and Kashmir over the past decade, Slathia said border districts like Samba are receiving focused attention to strengthen last-mile connectivity and improve the quality of life in rural areas.

Both leaders stressed that youth employment, local econ-

omy and public convenience remain central to the development agenda. Improved road connectivity, they said, would facilitate faster movement of goods and services, reduce travel time and enhance safety, particularly for school-children and patients.

Local residents welcomed the launch of the project and expressed optimism that the long-pending demand for a proper road would finally be fulfilled. Officials from the executing agency assured timely completion of the work while maintaining prescribed quality standards.

JU, ASCOMS sign MoU to strengthen access to specialized healthcare



Dr. Neeraj Sharma, Registrar, JU and Dr. Pavan Malhotra, Director Principal, ASCOMS after signing MoU.

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Marking an important step towards improving on-campus healthcare facilities, the University of Jammu (JU) on Friday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Acharya Shri Chandher College of Medical Sciences and Hospital (ASCOMS) to provide specialized medical services to its stakeholders.

The partnership aims to provide specialized medical services on an Outpatient

Department (OPD) basis to all employees, their families, and students of the University. Under the arrangement, expert medical consultations will be made available directly at the University Health Centre, ensuring convenient and timely access to quality healthcare. The OPD will function three days a week, from Monday to Wednesday, between 10:00 AM and 02:00 PM. The services will be delivered as per a roster of specialists submitted by

ASCOMS to the University of Jammu.

The MoU was signed in the presence of Prof. Umesh Rai, Vice Chancellor JU, and Dr. Gautam Mengi, Joint Secretary of ASCOMS. The documents were formally signed by Dr. Neeraj Sharma, Registrar, JU and Dr. Pavan Malhotra, Director Principal, ASCOMS.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Umesh Rai, said that the collaboration reflects the University's sustained

focus on creating a supportive and healthy campus ecosystem, where professional medical guidance and care remain easily accessible to students, faculty, and staff.

Senior functionaries appreciated the initiative of the two institutions in coming together to provide the best possible healthcare facilities to all stakeholders, including University employees, their families, and students. The ASCOMS management was also lauded for extending healthcare support under its community outreach programme.

Among others present on the occasion included Prof. Neelu Rohmetra, Dean Research Studies, Prof. Sangeeta Gupta, Dean Planning and Development, Dr. Gautam Sharma, Dental Surgeon, and Dr. Saloni Mahajan, Medical Officer of the University Health Centre.

CS reviews progress of major health infrastructure projects across J&K

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, on Friday chaired a high-level review meeting to assess the progress of ongoing and proposed health infrastructure projects across the Union Territory of J&K, reiterating that strengthening healthcare facilities remains a top priority of the government.

A comprehensive review was conducted of projects being executed by the Health & Medical Education Department, covering Government Medical Colleges, SKIMS, Dental Colleges, Health Services, SASCI projects, and flagship centrally sponsored schemes such as PM-ABHIM and ECRP-II. The Chief Secretary examined physical and financial progress, fund utilization, and issues delaying project execution, issuing clear directions to expedite approvals, resolve inter-departmental bottle-

necks-particularly related to land and utilities-and ensure strict adherence to timelines and quality standards.

Chief Secretary Dulloo emphasized that delays in healthcare projects directly impact public welfare, cautioning that lapses would be reviewed at the highest level. He stressed the need to avoid cost overruns through efficient use of resources. Additional Chief Secretary, PWD, Anil Kumar Singh, issued on-the-spot instructions to Chief Engineers to remove site-specific bottlenecks to ensure uninterrupted work. Secretary Health & Medical Education, Dr. Syed Abid Rashid Shah, presented an overview of progress since the last review and outlined the department's mechanism for regular monitoring of projects.

The meeting reviewed major infrastructure projects at GMC Jammu, GMC Srinagar

and associated hospitals, including the Bone and Joint Hospital, Jammu, expansion of tertiary care facilities, and works at Indira Gandhi Government Dental College & Hospital, Jammu. Progress of new medical colleges at Anantnag, Doda, Kathua, Udhampur, and Handwara was also examined, with instructions to strictly follow approved timelines. At GMC Anantnag, the construction of a 249-bedded Mother and Child Care Hospital was discussed, now funded under UT Capex with revised DPR including furniture and furnishing. At GMC Udhampur, space constraints for a 50-bedded Critical Care Block under ECRP-II were reviewed, and directions issued for early NOC completion for ITI land transfer to facilitate expansion.

Infrastructure works at GMC Rajouri, including parking, retaining walls, electrical systems, and hostels for resident doctors, were also examined. High-value tertiary care projects at SKIMS Soura and SKIMS Medical College Bemina were discussed, with instructions for seamless execution to strengthen advanced healthcare delivery.

Under Health Services, major projects such as 100-bedded Mother and Child Care Hospital, Lambari (Rajouri); upgradation of SDH Billawar; 50-bedded Hospital at Sunderbani; 100-bedded Hospital at Nowshera; 125-bedded District Hospital at Reshipora, Budgam were reviewed, expected to strengthen secondary and district-level healthcare services across J&K.

For SASCI projects, 23 works have received approval, 13 are under execution, with Rs 34.98 crore released in FY 2025-26, and works worth

over Rs 20 crore already completed. The Chief Secretary directed rationalization of slow-moving projects and re-proposal of unviable works under appropriate funding windows.

A presentation by HSCC highlighted progress under PM-ABHIM and ECRP-II, with most critical care projects expected to be substantially completed by March 2026. Works under ECRP-II worth Rs 178.32 crore were reviewed, with directions to accelerate physical progress to match financial outlays.

Concluding the meeting, Chief Secretary Dulloo stressed that timely completion of health infrastructure projects is essential to improve service delivery and directed all stakeholders to maintain close coordination to ensure tangible outcomes on the ground, meeting deadlines without delay.

Remove bottlenecks delaying appointments, posting of specialist doctors: Sakeena



Health Minister, Sakeena Itoo chairing a meeting.

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo on Friday emphasized on the need for timely referral of vacant posts to address shortages of doctors, paramedics and other support staff in healthcare institutions across Jammu and Kashmir.

The Health Minister made these remarks while chairing a meeting at Civil Secretariat here to review the status of vacancies of different categories of posts at various levels and progress on referral of posts in Government Medical

Colleges (GMCs) and Health and Medical department across Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Secretary Health and Medical Education, Dr. Syed Abid Rashid Shah; Principals of all GMCs (Srinagar, Jammu, Anantnag, Baramulla, Rajouri, Kathua, Doda, Udhampur and Handwara), Principal SKIMS Medical College, Director Health Services Jammu/Kashmir and other senior officers of the department, either in person or through video conferencing.

The meeting was held with an objective of review assessing the existing manpower gaps and expediting recruitment process to strengthen healthcare delivery at all levels.

During the meeting, the Minister emphasized on the need for timely referral of vacant posts to address shortages of doctors, paramedics and support staff in hospitals and medical institutions. She sought detailed updates on sanctioned posts, vacancies and the status of selections being processed through recruiting agencies.

Stressing that efficient human resource forms the backbone of the healthcare system, Sakeena Itoo directed officials to streamline procedures and remove bottlenecks delaying appointments as well as posting of specialists in deserving areas. "Cancel attachments of all doctors and paramedics and post them in areas facing acute shortage of staff", Minister Sakeena directed the officers.

She further asked all Principals of GMCs and Directors to ascertain the requirement of doctors and specialists in their respective

medical institutions and make a proper plan for posting of required staff at these places. She also stressed on both Directors for rationalisation of staff in order to fill necessary manpower gaps of specialists in far flung areas.

The Minister also directed the Principals for timely finalisation of Recruitment rules for all categories of posts so that the process of recruitment is expedited and the vacant posts are filled timely.

While reviewing different aspects of health sector, Minister Sakeena also laid special emphasis on adopting a proactive and compassionate approach towards victims of drug abuse. She highlighted the need to strengthen de-addiction and rehabilitation services, ensure early identification of substance abuse cases and provide comprehensive medical, psychological and social support to affected individuals.

The Minister stressed that drug abuse need to be addressed as a serious public health as well as societal issue. She directed the officers to enhance awareness programmes, expand counselling services and improve infrastructure at de-addiction centres to facilitate effective treatment and rehabilitation of victims.

Reiterating the government's commitment to a people-centric healthcare system, the Minister said that timely recruitment, robust institutional support and a humane approach towards vulnerable sections, including drug abuse victims, remain top priorities of the Government.

The Minister reaffirmed the Government's commitment to improving patient care and ensuring equitable health services, particularly in peripheral and underserved areas. She underscored that strengthening GMCs and health institutions with adequate staff would enhance health care service delivery across Jammu and Kashmir.

Advisor to CM listens to people's issues at Raabita Jammu



STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Advisor to the Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani, on Friday visited the Raabita Public Outreach Office, where he met several deputations and individuals from across Jammu and Kashmir and listened to their grievances for timely redressal.

The Advisor met people from Reasi, Doda, Baramulla, Jammu, RS Pura, Katra, Rajouri, Kathua, Srinagar and other areas, who presented a wide range of personal and area-specific issues. A delegation of Seasonal and Casual Labourers of the Estates Department also brought forth their issues. Similarly, a deputation of All J&K SICOP Employees called on the Advisor and flagged their grievances for early resolution. The Tractor Union J&K raised issues concerning livelihood, while Revenue Drivers highlighted their service-related matters. The All Kashmir Hot Mix Plant Owners Association also apprised him of their concerns. Wani assured them that their genuine grievances would be examined on priority. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to responsive and people-centric governance and assured that all genuine issues would be taken up for prompt and effective redressal.

CEO reviews preparedness for NVD-2026; emphasizes timely execution of assigned tasks

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Chief Electoral Officer, J&K, Sanjeev Verma on Friday chaired a meeting to review arrangements for celebration of National Voters Day to be observed on January 25.

Director Information J&K Nitish Rajora, Special Secretary Dr. Narupa Rai, Special Secretary Sandesh Kumar Gupta, ADC Jammu Vidhu Shekhar besides senior officers from JKAACL, Higher Education, School Education, Jammu University, All India Radio, district administration and representatives from Muskan Foundation and Jigar Foundation were present in the meeting.

Various points were discussed during the meeting which included NVD Run, participation of students, transportation, National Anthem, fixing of banners at identified places aware-



Chief Electoral Officer, J&K, Sanjeev Verma chairing a meeting on Friday.

ness through SVEEP Van, NVD pledge and allied activities. It was also informed in the meeting that the rehearsal of the event shall be held on 16th of January at KL Sehgal Hall.

Officials from Jammu University were instructed to organise NVD Run on 24th January besides holding sports events and radio talks, discussions to aware general public especially students on election/voting process.

Director Colleges was

asked to prepare live National Anthem to be performed at the beginning and culmination of the program. Similarly, Officials from JKAACL were asked to organize theme based street play, group song and painting competition.

Representatives from Muskan and Jigar Foundation were urged to perform one song each on the theme of National Voters' Day 2026.

While reviewing the arrangements, the CEO emphasized timely execution

of assigned tasks and ensuring coordinated efforts for successful celebration of National Voters' Day 2026.

He impressed upon all the officers to make necessary arrangements for celebration of the national event to achieve the objective of the National Voter's Day.

The CEO stressed upon the officers to put in their synchronized efforts so that all the necessary arrangements are made well in time for a smooth celebration of National Voters' Day.