

# BJP emerges as first choice of youth: Yudhvir



Senior BJP leader and MLA Jammu East, Yudhvir Sethi, welcoming newly joined youths.

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: A large number of youths from various parts of Jammu old city on Friday joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) during a joining programme held at Pt. Prem Nath Dogra Bhawan, Kachi Chawni.

The new members were warmly welcomed by MLA Jammu East, Yudhvir Sethi, who said that the growing participation of youth reflects their strong faith in the BJP's vision of development, stability and opportunities.

He said the energy, enthusiasm and ideas of young people are the backbone of the nation and their decision to join the BJP shows their trust in the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his commitment to transparent and progressive governance.

The programme was attended by Brijeshwar Singh Rana, Prabhari and In-charge District Jammu; Arun Sharma, State Secretary and Seh-Prabhari District Jammu; BJP District President Advocate Rajesh Gupta; Sanjay Abrol; Rahul Sharma, and other senior party workers.

He added that the increasing participation of youth further strengthens the party's ideology and vision for a brighter future of Jammu and Jammu & Kashmir.

He expressed confidence that the newly inducted youth will work with dedication and serve the nation with commitment.

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# Satish Sharma to flag off Jammu-Haridwar Pilgrim Bus on Jan 12

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: The Jammu Yatri Bhawan Trust today announced the launch of a special State Road Transport Corporation bus service from Jammu to Haridwar and back, following the approval of the Minister for Transport, J&K, Satish Sharma. This initiative has been taken to facilitate pilgrims wishing to travel to the holy city of Haridwar during the upcoming auspicious occasions. The bus will depart from the Sankat Mochan Panchmukhi Shree Hanuman Mandir Bhawan Complex, B.C. Road, Jammu, on Monday, January 12, 2026, at 4:00 PM, and is scheduled to reach Haridwar on the morning of January 13, 2026. The service has been launched on the eve of Lohri, Makar Sankranti, and Adkashi Parav, which will be observed on January 14, making it a spiritually significant opportunity for devotees of Ganga Maiya.

Special facilities are being provided for yatis travelling to perform the sacred ritual of immersion of ashes of their departed loved ones. These include complimentary one-day accommodation in a peaceful environment and free transportation from Haridwar Yatri Bhawan to Karkhal for conducting the immersion ceremony in a dignified manner.

As a goodwill gesture, every yatri will also receive one packet of Bhog Prasad and one bottle of water on the return journey to Jammu, courtesy of the Jammu Yatri Bhawan Trust, Haridwar. These facilities have been arranged to ensure a comfortable and respectful pilgrimage for all travellers.

The Transport Minister, Satish Sharma, will formally flag off the bus from Jammu on January 12 at 4:00 PM. The Trust expressed deep appreciation for the efforts of Pawan Kumar Shastri, President, Jammu Yatri Bhawan Trust, for his dedication and vision in organizing this spiritual journey on such an auspicious occasion. This was stated by Gurdas Sharma, General Secretary and Treasurer of the Trust, who described the initiative as a valuable service to the devotees.

Devotees of Ganga Maiya who wish to avail of this service and visit Haridwar on the auspicious occasion may book their tickets by contacting 9469748330 or 8899433913.

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# InnovateX 1.0- under Mission Yuva organised at SKUAST-J



SKUAST-Jammu faculty with students.

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: SKUAST-Jammu, under the leadership of Prof. B. N. Tripathi, Vice Chancellor and the able guidance of Dr. S. K. Gupta, Director Research, conducted a one-day awareness programme "InnovateX 1.0" at IDP-NAHEP, SKUAST-Jammu. The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, scholars and aspiring agri-entrepreneurs aiming to sensitize youth about innovation, entrepreneurship and opportunities under Mission YUVA for which Dr. Anil Bhat, Associate Director Research, SKUAST-Jammu, is the Nodal Officer.

Dr. R. K. Salgotra, Director, Institute of Biotechnology, SKUAST-

Jammu, in his address, motivated the youth to become job creators rather than job seekers and highlighted the role of innovation, technology and entrepreneurial mindset in transforming agriculture and society. The programme commenced with the opening remarks by Dr. J. S. Manhas, Professor, Division of Agricultural Extension Education, who emphasized innovation-driven entrepreneurship and the pivotal role of government initiatives, particularly Mission YUVA in nurturing new entrepreneurs.

Dr. Narinder Panotra, Associate Professor, Institute of Biotechnology, SKUAST-Jammu briefed participants about schemes, incentives and institutional support available for startups and neo-innovative enterprises.

Dr. Monica Reshi, Associate Professor, Division of Post-Harvest Management, SKUAST-Jammu, highlighted entrepreneurial opportunities under Mission YUVA in post-harvest management, value addition and agri-processing, emphasizing income enhancement through reduction of post-harvest losses.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Monica Reshi. The event was coordinated by Dr. Maninder Singh, Rohit Kumar and Sahil Naik ensuring smooth conduct of the programme and leaving participants motivated and well informed about entrepreneurship opportunities under Mission YUVA.

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# IIM Jammu concludes Nurturing Future Leadership Program (Batch-15)

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu organized the valedictory ceremony of the Nurturing Future Leadership Program (Batch-15) under the aegis of the Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Program at the Vedanta MDP Centre, Jagti Campus, on January 9, 2026. The five-day program was conducted from January 05 to 09, 2026, with Prof. Nitin Upadhyay and Dr. Ramswarup Bhaskar serving as Program Directors. The ceremony was presided over by Prof. Jabir Ali, Dean Faculty and Research, IIM Jammu.

Addressing the participants, Prof. Jabir Ali emphasized that the key takeaways of the programme should be multiplied through adoption of best practices and their integration across disciplines. He stated that the programme marks the beginning of sustained engagement, collaboration and joint initiatives.



IIM Jammu faculty with participants at concluding ceremony.

Highlighting IIM Jammu as a living case study of leadership and institutional transformation, he encouraged participants to carry forward best practices for long-term impact in their respective institutions.

Prof. Nitin Upadhyay, Dean Academics, IIM Jammu, stated that the programme was designed in alignment with the vision of the Ministry of Education, reflecting evolving perspectives towards Viksit Bharat and the changing dynamics of higher education. He added that the programme strengthened understanding of educational trans-

formation by addressing both diversity and commonality within the academic ecosystem and noted that leadership learnings would translate into meaningful action at participants' institutions.

Prof. Sanjeev Pathak, Chairperson, Executive Education and Consultancy, IIM Jammu, highlighted the importance of participant feedback in enhancing programme quality and shaping future batches. He appreciated the active engagement and collaborative spirit of the participants and informed that additional batches are planned in March and April.

Participants shared that their time at IIM Jammu provided deep insights into its academic systems, collaborative culture and strong connectivity between faculty and leadership. They described the experience as enriching and transformative, appreciating impactful sessions by Prof. Brigadier Neeraj Soni, Prof. Nitin Upadhyay, Prof. Jabir Ali and Dr. Muqbil Burhan, along with the motivational energy of Prof. Sanjeev Pathak.

Certificates were distributed to all participants, followed by a vote of thanks by Dr. Ramswarup Bhaskar.

# Discrimination in education policy against Jammu unacceptable: Kesri

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: Shiv Sena Hind Hindustan, Jammu & Kashmir President Pandit Rajesh Kesri, on Friday expressed strong resentment over what he termed as a discriminatory approach of the government towards the Jammu region, particularly in matters related to education.

Addressing a press conference, Pandit Rajesh Kesri strongly criticized the government's recent decision to reduce the academic syllabus by 15 percent in Kashmir Valley due to severe winter conditions, while allegedly ignoring similar and equally harsh conditions in Jammu. He stated that such selective decisions clearly reflect regional bias and undermine the principle of equal treatment.

Kesri pointed out that border and hilly areas of Jammu face intense cold waves, while the plains are currently grappling with dense fog, severely



affecting daily life and making it unsafe for students to commute. Despite these challenges, he said, the Jammu region has been denied relief measures that have been extended to Kashmir.

Demanding parity and fairness, the Shiv Sena Hind Hindustan President urged the government to implement a uniform education policy for both Jammu and Kashmir. He specifically called for a 15 percent reduction in the syllabus for students of the Jammu region as well, so that they are not placed at a disadvantage due to circumstances beyond their control.

In addition, the party demanded an extension of winter vacations in Jammu, citing prevailing weather conditions that pose serious risks to the safety and health of school-going children.

Pandit Kesri further emphasized that Jammu and Kashmir contribute equally to the Union Territory's revenue and electoral process, and therefore deserve equal consideration in policy decisions. Any form of discrimination, he warned, would only deepen regional resentment and erode public trust.

Those present on the occasion included Secretary Raj Kumar, Sanjeev Sharma, Shishpal Salathia, and other party workers.

Shiv Sena Hind Hindustan reiterated its firm commitment to raising its voice against injustice, safeguarding the interests of the people of Jammu, and ensuring that the region receives its rightful share of development, opportunities, and policy support.

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# Rekha inaugurates 'Kesar Bloom' by Ayushi Abrol at Sanjh-e-Jammu

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: The BJP J&K UT Vice President, Rekha Mahajan, on Friday inaugurated the 'Kesar Bloom', an artisanal herbal tea brand, at the vibrant Sanjhe-e-Jammu being held at Satyam Resort, Trikuta Nagar Jammu with the initiative of Nidhi Abrol from January 9 to 11.

The three-day event offers a lively blend of festive lights, local flavours, exciting shopping deals, creative displays, and cultural experiences, making it a major attraction for residents and visitors alike.

Speaking at the inauguration, Rekha Mahajan said that such platforms play a vital role in promoting local entrepreneurship and traditional products.

Sanjh-e-Jammu is a celebra-



BJP J&K UT Vice President, Rekha Mahajan inaugurating 'Kesar Bloom' stall.

tion of our roots, our creativity, and our self-reliant spirit. When we support local brands like Kesar Bloom, we strengthen our economy and empower our youth, especially women entrepreneurs," she remarked.

The brand is conceptualised by Ayushi Abrol, granddaughter of K K Abrol, and reflects a

mindful approach to wellness through herbal infusions.

The inauguration marked Kesar Bloom's official debut, blending tradition with contemporary tea culture, offering a unique fusion of wellness, aroma, and taste.

The brand has been created with the vision of bringing

Kashmir's rich heritage into everyday wellness through slow, mindful sipping and natural ingredients.

Ayushi Abrol shared that Kesar Bloom is designed to offer more than just tea. "We want people to experience our blends up close, to enjoy slow sips, warm conversations, and

moments that feel personal and comforting. Every cup carries the essence of Kashmir and the care with which it is handcrafted," she said. Rekha Mahajan further added that events like Apna Swadeshi Bazaar give emerging brands a platform to grow and connect with the community.

"When innovation meets tradition, it creates something truly special. Kesar Bloom is a fine example of how local ideas can turn into quality products with national appeal," she stated.

The three-day bazaar continues to welcome people with music, food, shopping, and a strong spirit of community, making it a must-visit destination in Jammu this festive season.

# Director Colleges chairs Principals' Meet to reinforce academic, student support, governance initiatives across Jammu Division

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: In a move to strengthen the quality architecture of Higher Education in the Union Territory, the Director Colleges J&K, Dr. Sheikh Ajaz Bashir, chaired a marathon meeting of Principals of all Government Degree Colleges of Jammu Division to reinforce academic discipline, student support systems and governance in alignment with the Mission and Vision of the Department. Dr. Ravinder Tiekoo, Nodal Principal, Jammu Division Colleges, initiated the proceedings and apprised the gathering regarding the core objectives and agenda of the meeting. Dr. Romesh Kumar Gupta, Principal of the host institution, GGM Science College Jammu, extended a warm welcome and introduced the newly appointed



Director Colleges J&K, Dr. Sheikh Ajaz Bashir chairing a meeting at GGM Science College.

Principals. The Director Colleges emphasized unified institutional alignment, operational excellence and the need to prioritize the welfare of students. A detailed review of the Department's digital governance initiatives was undertaken. The Planning & Development Portal was reiterated as the single verified repository of institutional data, enabling real-time reporting, principal-level accountability and streamlined online staff services including Passport NOCs, Foreign Visit permissions, PhD approvals and CAS scrutiny. It was also highlighted that digital interventions, particularly the engagement of need-based Academic Arrangements for the current session, have significantly enhanced efficiency, ease of operations and transparency.

Principals were sensitised on maintaining clean, verified and updated data for evidence-based planning and development. The Connect with Policy Planning & Development initiative was also reviewed, and college-wise performance indicators based on timely form submissions and data updation were shared. Institutional development initiatives were reviewed, including the func-

tioning of Institutional Innovation Councils in 79 colleges, expansion of eYantra Labs in 30 colleges in collaboration with IIT Bombay, and the rollout of SWAYAM Local Chapters to promote blended and credit-based digital learning. On student welfare, Principals were briefed on strengthening the Mentor-Mentee Programme and the Pyramidal Sports and Co-cur-

ricular Model to ensure inclusive participation and structured talent development. The Department's framework for countering substance abuse was also elaborated, focusing on preventive awareness, vigilant student monitoring and timely institutional support.

The SIGMA - Student Integrated Grievance and Messaging Application Portal was reviewed in detail. Principals were encouraged to enhance student registration and effective utilisation.

A major announcement was the upcoming launch of SCALE - Student Connect for Academic Leverage and Excellence initiative, to be implemented in every Government Degree College. SCALE will provide structured outreach and guidance on NEP-2020, academic progres-

sion pathways and career planning. Developmental works across colleges were also reviewed, and Principals were advised to ensure regular monitoring and close coordination with executing agencies.

He also advised to prioritise genuine service-related and workplace concerns, recognising that a motivated workforce is central to sustaining quality education. The Director emphasised the need to prioritize the overall welfare of students, underscoring the point that an Informed Student is an Empowered student. The Director Colleges urged all Principals to collectively own the Department's mission by reinforcing student-centric governance, transparency and accountability, so that GDCs of J&K emerge as vibrant centers of academic excellence.

The Sabha strongly condemned the incident, terming it an attack on communal harmony and the sense of security of minority communities in the valley. The Sabha appreciated the prompt and commendable action taken by the Kashmir Police in apprehending the culprits, providing protection to the victims and restoring their confidence.

The organisation has appealed to the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha to review and strengthen security arrangements for minority communities to prevent such incidents in the future.

The Sabha emphasized that minority community members who continue to live in the valley are living symbols of Kashmiriyat and communal harmony and deserve special attention and protection from the administration and elected government.

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# Rahul Sahai calls on LG

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: Rahul Sahai, Chairman, Indian Chamber of Commerce, Jammu Chapter called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and put forth several key issues pertaining to trade, commerce and industry sector. During the meeting, Sahai extended New Year greetings to the Lieutenant Governor and wished him continued strength and success in his dedicated efforts towards the welfare and development of the people of Jammu & Kashmir.

Sahai discussed several key issues concerning trade, commerce, and industrial growth in the region, with special emphasis on safeguarding the interests of local and existing industries.

He urged for the inclusion of pending applications taken by department under New Central Sector Scheme (NCSS) package and also advocated for the announcement of a new industrial package for existing and local industries on lines similar to NCSS benefits.

He raised the long-pending issue of Gair Mumkin Khad land and sought its early resolution, besides requesting further easing of labour laws through administrative simplification.



Chairman ICC Jammu Chapter, Rahul Sahai calling on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha.

Sahai also highlighted public concern over delays in ongoing infrastructure projects, stating that untimely execution has led to traffic congestion and chaos across Jammu city, making it a major issue of public discussion. He further requested extensions of JDA leases for Fruit Mandi, Transport Nagar, and Bahu Plaza etc, and stressed the need for a people-friendly Master Plan with broader stakeholder participation. Emphasizing social harmony and trust, he also suggested strengthening police-public interaction initiatives for better community engagement. The Lieutenant

Governor patiently heard the concerns and assured that the administration remains committed to addressing genuine issues of trade, industry, and the public in a structured and time-bound manner; keeping overall development and public interest at the forefront. Members of Civil Society Group, headed by Mohd Iqbal Ahanger, Chairman, OBC Welfare Association J&K UT and a delegation of Jewellers Association Jammu also called on the Lieutenant Governor.

Later, Anayat Ullah Rather, Member, District Development Council, Frisal Kulgam also called on Lieutenant Governor.

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# KPS condemns assault on minority family in Srinagar

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: The Kashmiri Pandit Sabha (KPS) Jammu has expressed deep concern and anguish over the reported incident of manhandling, intimidation and vandalism against a Kashmiri Pandit family residing in Raj Bagh, Srinagar.

The family of Ashok Toshkhani has been living peacefully in the Valley and had chosen not to migrate during the turbulent period following the outbreak of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir in 1989-90. As reported in print and social media, Toshkhani narrated the traumatic experience faced by him and his wife when they were allegedly assaulted by Vivek Batra and his associates. The accused reportedly harboured malicious intentions to forcibly occupy the Toshkhani family property.

The Sabha strongly condemned the incident, terming it an attack on communal harmony and the sense of security of minority communities in the valley. The Sabha appreciated the prompt and commendable action taken by the Kashmir Police in apprehending the culprits, providing protection to the victims and restoring their confidence.

The organisation has appealed to the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha to review and strengthen security arrangements for minority communities to prevent such incidents in the future.

The Sabha emphasized that minority community members who continue to live in the valley are living symbols of Kashmiriyat and communal harmony and deserve special attention and protection from the administration and elected government.

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