

10th Armed Forces Veterans Day

Courage, sacrifice of army backbone of nation's security: LG

STATE TIMES NEWS
RAJOURI: On 10th Armed Forces Veterans Day, the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha paid tribute to ex-servicemen, Veer Naris and their family members and attended a commemorative event at ALG Rajouri.



Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha speaking at 10th Armed Forces Veterans Day programme in Rajouri.

Our Armed Forces' veterans are embodiment of living history and their sacrifices have not only safeguarded our freedom but also shaped the destiny of our great nation," the Lieutenant Governor said. The Lieutenant Governor stated that the selfless service of armed forces is not a job but a lifelong commitment which continues even after their military careers conclude and uniform is folded away. He said the courage of veterans is not limited to the battlefield but also in establishing peace and ensuring the nation's progress. Saluting the resilience of

army bravehearts and their love for the motherland, the Lieutenant Governor said the courage and sacrifice of army is the backbone of our nation's security. "The sacrifices of our soldiers remain invisible. While the nation sleeps in peace, they stand alert. While nation celebrates festivals together, our soldiers safeguard the border far away from home. They do not speak about Sacrifice. They live it every moment," the Lieutenant Governor said. On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor inaugu-

rated the "Wall of Fame" and launched a dedicated police helpline service for veterans. He reiterated the government's resolve, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, towards the welfare of veterans and their families. "Veterans are living role models for youth and guiding the nation with character, timeless values and selfless service. They are leading by example in everyday life. From safeguarding the nation to serving the society; our armed forces veterans continue to shape India's future. It is my commitment to honor veterans' service through care. We are not only dedicated to the well-being of Veterans' families but also building a life of dignity for those brave soldiers who served and sacrificed," he said. The Lieutenant Governor paid homage to the first Commander-in-Chief of Indian Army, Field Marshal K.M. Cariappa. He also paid tribute to Second Lieutenant Ram Raghoba Rane, Brigadier Mohammad Usman, Naik Jadunath Singh and bravehearts of Rajouri.

A mega Ex-Servicemen Rally was organised to mark the occasion. Motorised wheelchairs, retrofitted scooters and other mobility aids were also distributed to the veterans and veer naris.

Lieutenant General Pratik Sharma, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C), Northern Command; Lt Gen P K Mishra, GOC White Knight Corps (16 Corps); Maj Gen Kaushik Mukherjee, GOC 25 Inf Division; Brig. Pankaj Chib (Retd), Director Sainik Welfare Department, veterans, veer naris, prominent citizens and people from all walks of life attended the Armed Forces Veterans Day event. Ifthkar Ahmed, Thakur Randhir Singh and Deyyani Rana-Members of Legislative Assembly; Tejinder Singh, DIG Rajouri Poonch Range; Abhishek Sharma, Deputy Commissioner Rajouri; Gaurav Sikarwar, SSP Rajouri, and other senior officials of security forces, civil and police administration were also present on the occasion and paid tribute to the veterans and veer naris.



Old Akhnoor Hospital building set for revival after official inspection

Dr Zargar orders DPR for renovation, six departments to be shifted

STATE TIMES NEWS
AKHNOOR: A decisive move to revive the long-neglected old building of the Sub-District Hospital (SDH) Akhnoor has been initiated following an on-spot inspection by Director Health Services Jammu, Dr Abdul Hamid Zargar.



Director Health Services Jammu, Dr Abdul Hamid Zargar inspecting old building of SDH Akhnoor.

The initiative aims at strengthening healthcare delivery while ensuring optimum utilisation of valuable Government property located at a prime site in the heart of Akhnoor town.

Dr Zargar, accompanied by Executive Engineer PWD Sanjeev Sharma, Assistant Executive Engineer Sunil Bogia, Block Medical Officer Mohammad Saleem, and other senior officials from the Health and Public Works Departments, inspected the structural condition of the old hospital complex and deliberated on a roadmap for its revival.

The inspection comes in the wake of the issue raised by Akhnoor MLA Mohan Lal Bhagat during the recent District Development Board (DDB) meeting. The MLA had drawn the attention of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and Health Minister Sakina Itoo to the deteriorating condition of the old hospital building, valued at several crores, which has remained largely unused since

the hospital shifted to a new facility. He had also expressed concern over the rise of antisocial activities due to prolonged neglect of the premises.

Taking prompt cognizance of the matter, the Chief Minister directed the Director Health Services Jammu to personally inspect the site and take necessary remedial steps.

During the inspection, Dr Abdul Hamid Zargar directed that six departments—Eye, ENT, Dental, Immunisation, Physiotherapy and Family Welfare—be planned to operate from the old hospital building after required renovation. He instructed the Public Works Department to prepare and submit a Detailed Project Report (DPR) at the earliest to facilitate timely restoration.

After technical assessment, it was decided that the severely dilapidated central structure, which is beyond repair, will be

dismantled, while the rear blocks will be renovated. A large open lawn will be developed in the central area to improve access, safety and aesthetics of the hospital complex.

Addressing diagnostic issues flagged earlier, Dr Zargar also sought a one-month daily report of ultrasound services at SDH Akhnoor. Regarding demands for X-ray and ultrasound machines and other medical equipment for Akhnoor and Chowki Choura hospitals, he assured that these proposals are already in the pipeline and will be met in a phased manner.

The visit of the Health Services Director has generated a sense of relief and satisfaction among the residents of Akhnoor, who expressed hope that revival of the old hospital building will curb antisocial activities, strengthen law and order and significantly improve healthcare services in the town.

VB-G RAM G Act a landmark step towards rural empowerment and Viksit Bharat 2047: Sham Lal

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU : The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Jammu North, today held a press conference highlighting the objectives, implementation framework, and long-term impact of the VB-G RAM G Act, 2025, and its alignment with the national vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The party underlined the Act's role in strengthening grassroots development, rural empowerment, and Panchayati Raj Institutions in Jammu and Kashmir. The press conference was attended by senior BJP leaders including Sham Lal Sharma, MLA Jammu North; Surinder Bhagat, MLA Marh; Nand Kishore Sharma, President BJP Jammu North District; General Secretary Bhruvnech Mehta; Raveesh Mengi; Convener Yash Pal Sharma; Rakesh Singh;



Sham Lal Sharma, MLA Jammu North briefing media persons on Wednesday.

Shamsher Prajapati; Robin Karwal; and several Mandal Presidents.

Addressing the media, Sham Lal described the VB-G RAM G Act, 2025 as a landmark and transformative rural employment legislation, providing a guaranteed 125 days of employment per rural household annually. He said the Act ensures income stability and livelihood security, marking a shift from symbolic welfare measures to a legally enforce-

able, transparent, and outcome-driven development model. He explained that the scheme goes beyond short-term wage support and focuses on sustainable rural development through the creation of durable assets such as rural roads, irrigation and drainage systems, water conservation structures, flood protection works, and essential community infrastructure, strengthening agriculture and village-level economic activity. Sham Lal fur-

ther stated that the Act integrates employment with skill development and self-reliance, expanding opportunities for semi-skilled and skilled work. It promotes agri-based enterprises, traditional occupations, women-led Self-Help Groups, rural entrepreneurship, and youth initiatives, supported by modern technology and planning tools. Emphasising transparency, he said the Act mandates time-bound wage payments with automatic compen-

sation for delays, along with social audits, geo-tagging, digital monitoring, and strict verification to prevent corruption and leakages. Highlighting the central role of Panchayati Raj Institutions, he said Panchayats and Gram Sabhas will lead planning, execution, and monitoring, ensuring decentralisation and community participation. Placing the Act within the Viksit Bharat 2047 framework, Sham Lal Sharma said rural India is the foundation of national progress. He dismissed opposition criticism over the scheme's name, asserting that BJP remains focused on results, development, and public welfare. Special emphasis was laid on Jammu and Kashmir's unique needs, with priority for border, hilly, and remote areas, ensuring inclusive and balanced development across the Union Territory.

SMVDSB reopens natural cave for devotees on Makar Sankranti

STATE TIMES NEWS
KATRA: On the auspicious occasion of Makar Sankranti, the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) reopened the revered historic natural cave at the Holy Shrine of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji. The reopening was marked by special rituals and prayers, accompanied by Vedic chanting. The timing of this sacred event on Makar Sankranti holds added significance, as the festival symbolizes new beginnings and spiritual elevation. The Natural Cave, which remains closed for most of the year due to heavy pilgrim inflow, is made accessible during the months of January and February, when footfall is comparatively lower. This arrangement offers devotees a rare opportunity to experience darshan in its pristine form, allow-



ing a deeper connection with the shrine's timeless sanctity. During the remaining months, pilgrims access the sanctum sanctorum through the newly constructed caves. The reopening of the old cave reflects the shrine's unwavering commitment, under the chairmanship of Manoj Sinha, Lt.

Governor of JK-UT, to preserving its spiritual heritage while safeguarding the traditions that make it one of India's most revered spiritual destinations. The Shrine Board will actively encourage more devotees to undertake the pilgrimage through the Old Cave, while ensuring strict adherence to

permissible crowd capacity limits and maintaining orderly pilgrim movement. The Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB highlighted that careful measures have been implemented to manage crowd flow and prevent congestion along the route, while special provisions have been introduced to assist elderly and differently-abled pilgrims. It is noteworthy that the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine is witnessing a significant increase in pilgrim footfall compared to the corresponding period last year. During the first 13 days of 2026, around 3,05,217 pilgrims paid obeisance at the Holy Shrine, as against 2,68,761 pilgrims during the same period last year. On an average, around 20000 to 25000 pilgrims are visiting the Holy Shrine daily. Present on the occasion of the reopening were senior officers, including the Addl. Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB; the Sub-Divisional Magistrate; and the Tehsildar Bhawan, along with Pujaris and a large gathering of pilgrims.

"AIIMS is a badge of honour": Prof. (Dr.) Daya Nand Sharma addresses faculty to lead with excellence, integrity and compassion

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Prof. (Dr.) Daya Nand Sharma, ED & CEO, AIIMS Jammu and AIIMS Rewari, addressed the faculty to recognise that working at AIIMS is not merely a professional role but a matter of immense pride and responsibility, carrying with it the mandate to create excellence in medical research, medical education and patient care.



Prof. (Dr.) Daya Nand Sharma, ED & CEO, AIIMS Jammu speaking at a programme.

He stated that the name "AIIMS" itself instills confidence and hope in millions of patients across the country, and that this trust must be upheld by every faculty member with unwavering commitment and accountability. He observed that the faith reposed by the masses in AIIMS is the result of decades of relentless efforts by stalwarts of the medical fraternity, who elevated standards of care and established AIIMS as a globally respected authority in medical science and research. Acknowledging the strong institutional foundation,

Prof. (Dr.) Daya Nand Sharma congratulated the outgoing Director, Prof Dr Shakti Gupta, for creating a beautiful and well-equipped campus, and remarked that the stage has now been firmly set for the faculty to deliver on the core pillars of medical research, medical education and patient care, and to take AIIMS Jammu to greater heights. Stressing that medical research forms the bedrock of the AIIMS ecosystem, Prof. (Dr.) Daya Nand Sharma urged the faculty to intensify collaborative research efforts and clinical trials to find solutions to complex and unresolved

medical problems. He emphasized that the institute must function in mission mode to develop centres of excellence backed by world-class research, ensuring that patients tangibly benefit and that AIIMS Jammu becomes a true repository of public faith and hope. He further called upon faculty members to define clear goals and objectives, stating that single-minded dedication builds the character of an institution and inspires every staff member to contribute with energy and purpose. Prof. (Dr.) Daya Nand Sharma reminded the faculty that

their exalted position at a premier institute carries a heightened responsibility to uphold the confidence of patients and their families, stressing the need for upright character, humility and compassionate conduct at all times.

Highlighting the importance of personal well-being, Prof. (Dr.) Daya Nand Sharma encouraged faculty members to maintain a healthy work-life balance by nurturing social connections and engaging in sports and physical activities within and beyond the campus, noting that de-stressing enhances productivity and professional commitment. Concluding his address, Prof. (Dr.) Daya Nand Sharma reminded the faculty that they always wear a badge of honour, and that their conduct—both in public and private—must reflect humility, discipline, dedication and unwavering focus, befitting the stature and legacy of AIIMS Jammu.

DG Rural Sanitation reviews implementation of AIP 2026-27, sets Jan 25 deadline

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Director General Rural Sanitation J&K, Anoo Malhotra on Wednesday held a comprehensive review meeting to assess the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) 2026-27, progress of ongoing SBM-G assets and the status of functionality, geo-tagging and IMIS reporting across the 20 districts of J&K.



Speaking at the meeting, the Director General directed all districts to submit the reviewed AIP 2026-27 by January 25, 2026, after due discussion with the respective Deputy Commissioners. Emphasis was laid on preparing feasible land-backed and implementation-ready plans, with clear locational details and inclusion of all existing assets. The Director General expressed concern over delays in func-

tionality reporting and poor IMIS updates in several districts and instructed immediate corrective action. She directed the Assistant Commissioners of Panchayat (ACPs) of all the districts to ensure accurate planning and approvals to expedite completion and functionality verification of assets already created and ensure time-bound geo-tagging of IHHLs, compost pits, soak pits and CSCs, resolve pend-

ing cases beyond 90 days on priority. Taking a serious note of data entries on IMIS, particularly under Grey Water Management, the Director General said that strict action will be taken against the officials involved in incorrect reporting. Regarding the new AIP 2026-27, districts were instructed that planning must strictly align with land availability. In cases where proposals are Nil/Zero, a certificate from the respective Deputy Commissioner will be mandatory, clearly justifying the same. Concluding the meeting, the Director reiterated that timely execution, accurate reporting and sustained functionality of assets are non-negotiable priorities under SBM-G and district performance will be closely monitored in the coming months.

LG Kavinder pays obeisance at Bawa Ambo Devasthan Says India's strength lies in unity in diversity

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: On the auspicious occasion of Makar Sankranti, the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, today paid obeisance at the annual congregation of Khajuria Biradari held at Bawa Ambo Devasthan, Bage Bahu, Jammu.



LG Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta paying obeisance at Bawa Ambo Devasthan, Bage Bahu.

The Lieutenant Governor offered prayers and sought the blessings of Kuldev Bawa Ambo Ji for peace, prosperity and the overall well-being of the people of the Union Territory of Ladakh as well as the people of Jammu & Kashmir. Kavinder Gupta said that such religious and cultural

congregations reflect the rich spiritual heritage of the region and play an important role in strengthening social harmony, unity and shared values among the people. The Lieutenant Governor

interacted with the devotees and members of the Khajuria Biradari during the congregation and conveyed his best wishes to them. He extended his greetings on the auspicious occasion of Makar

Sankranti, wishing happiness, good health and prosperity to all. Appealing to the people, the Lieutenant Governor urged all sections of society to uphold the values of commu-