

# BJP Jammu District holds Sarpanch-Panch Workshop on VB-GRAM-G Act Yudhvir Sethi calls VB-GRAM-G Act a historic step, says rural self-reliance key to Viksit Bharat

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: A Sarpanch-Panch workshop was organised by BJP Jammu district under the public awareness campaign of the "Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Employment and Livelihood Mission (Rural) - VB-GRAM-G" at Pandit Prem Nath Dogra Bhawan, Kachi Chawni, here today. Senior BJP leader and MLA Jammu East, Yudhvir Sethi, was present as the Chief Speaker at the workshop. The programme was attended by elected Sarpanches, Panchs, local officials, civil society members, and key political leaders, including MLA Jammu West Arvind Gupta, BJP District President Advocate Rajesh Gupta District General Secretary Ravikant, District General Secretary Sunet Raina, District Vice President Ramesh Gupta, Mandal President Adarsh Jathiar, Mandal President, Shiv Sharma and Mandal President, Anil Angral.



MLA Jammu East, Yudhvir Sethi speaking at a workshop.

Addressing the workshop, MLA Yudhvir Sethi said that the vision of a Developed India can be realised only when rural society is provided with concrete opportunities for employment, livelihood, and self-reliance. He emphasised that connecting the general public with government schemes through such awareness campaigns is extremely important. He said, "The Viksit Bharat-Gram Panchayat Act is a historic legislative advance, introduced under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to empower Panchayati Raj Institutions like never before. It brings clarity, accountability, and participatory governance to every village through structured planning, performance-based incentives and direct linking of development outcomes with revenue support." Sethi elaborated, "The Act positions Gram Panchayats at the centre of rural development by devolving financial powers, granting authority to prepare local development plans based on people's priorities, and linking central schemes such as the Jal Jeevan Mission, PM Awas Yojana and Swachh Bharat Mission with measurable outcomes at the village level. VB-GRAM-G also mandates annual Gram Sabha performance reviews, transparent budgeting, and citizen audit practices to enhance accountability and trust. The Act's focus on digital integration - through e-Gram portals and real-time monitoring - ensures that planning, execution, and fund utilisation are efficient and corruption-free."

Sethi added, "Under this Act, Panchayats will receive performance-based incentives tied to results in education, health, sanitation, skill development, and livelihood growth. It also promotes inclusion by reserving decision-making roles for women, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and marginalised communities to make rural governance truly representative." BJP District President Advocate Rajesh Gupta emphasised political support for the Act, stating, "The BJP and the Government of India are dedicated to strengthening local governance. The VB-GRAM-G Act is a key milestone in realising Prime Minister Modi's vision of 'Gram Swaraj' - where villages manage their development agenda, rights, resources, and responsibilities. With better planning powers, direct funding linkages, and technology support, Panchayats can usher in an era of holistic rural growth."

# Director Information, DIPR employees, Jammu Information Veterans condole demise of former officer Thakur Singh

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: Director Information, Nitish Rajora has expressed deep grief and sorrow on the tragic demise of Thakur Singh, former officer of the department, who also served as Director Public Relations, Lok Bhawan and Cultural Officer, Jammu. In his message, the Director said that Thakur Singh had served the department in various capacities and his contribution has been widely recognised in the department. He expressed deep grief on his tragic demise and also extended his sympathies to the bereaved family. Meanwhile, the employees of Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), have also expressed deep grief and sorrow on the sad demise of Thakur Singh. The Employees extended their deepest sympathies to the bereaved family and also prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul. **Meanwhile, the Jammu Information Veterans (Pensioners' Association) has expressed profound shock**



Members of the Association fondly recalled his commendable and dedicated services in the Information Department. Known for his talent, integrity, humility, and ever-smiling demeanor, Thakur Singh earned the respect and affection of colleagues across the department. Owing to his professional excellence and dedication, he was selected for key assignments with former Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad and former Governor N. N. Vohra. Even after his retirement, he continued to serve as Media Officer with the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board for over seven years. Veterans noted that despite serving with top-ranking dignitaries, he remained selfless and never sought personal favours for himself or his family. K. B. Jandial, Chairman, Jammu Information Veterans, along with members of the Association from Jammu and Kashmir, expressed heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul.

# LG releases J&K Shri Kashi Vidwat Parishad's Dairy, Panchang Calendar 2026



LG Manoj Sinha releasing J&K Shri Kashi Vidwat Parishad's Dairy and Panchang Calendar 2026, at Lok Bhavan.

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha released J&K Shri Kashi Vidwat Parishad's Dairy and Panchang Calendar 2026, at Lok Bhavan, here on Saturday. The Lieutenant Governor extended his felicitations to Padma Shri Prof. Vishwa Murti Shastri, President, J&K Shri Kashi Vidwat Parishad Jammu, editorial

team, and all the members of the parishad for their dedicated efforts in promoting and preserving cultural heritage. The 2026 Calendar is designed as a comprehensive spiritual and cultural guide featuring information about auspicious occasions, festivals and religious rituals. Prof Murti informed about the functioning of the Parishad for upliftment of Sanskrit language in UT of Jammu and Kashmir and recently held and coming programmes for the current year. He also put forth some issues and demands for redressal so that Parishad can function smoothly, enhance their activities for Sanskrit language. On this occasion Prof Nalini Kohli, Prof Anita Sudan, Prof Sunita Sudan, Prof Ram Bahadur Shukla all vice presidents, Dr Vijender Kumar General Secretary, Dr Parveen Kumar Treasurer, Dr Sandhya Rani, Dr Mamta Sharma, Dr Shubh Kumar, Dr Vishal Sharma, Dr Bhushan Kumar, Vachasparti Shastri, Shakti Dutt Sharma, Sudhanshu Sharma, Uday Bhaskar and Harish Kumar were present.

# Swami Ram Shaiv Trik Ashram observes 11th Nirwan Diwas of Param Pujya Swami Ram Ji Maharaj

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: Swami Ram Shaiv Trik Ashram, Naseeb Nagar, Janipur, on Saturday commemorated the 11th Nirwan Diwas of Param Pujya Mahamaheshwaracharya Swami Ram Ji Maharaj with deep reverence, solemnity, and spiritual fervour. Devotees, spiritual leaders, scholars, and community members gathered in large numbers to pay homage to the revered saint and to reflect upon his profound spiritual legacy. The observance was marked by a series of sacred rituals and spiritual activities, including recitation of Guru Geeta, Panchastavi, Bhairav Stotra, Bahuroop Garb, and Sangreh Stutree, followed by a grand Savaen Hawan conducted to honour the life and teachings of Swami Ram Ji Maharaj. The Ashram re-



Swami Ram Shaiv Trik Ashram members performing Hawan.

onated with the chanting of Tantric and Agamic mantras, creating an atmosphere of divine devotion and contemplation. Mahamaheshwaracharya Swami Ram Ji Maharaj, regarded as the reincarnation of Bhairavadi Pati Anandishwar Bhairav - Shiva Himself - was a towering spiritual master of Kashmir Shaivism. He attained Mahasamadhi in 1915 on the auspicious occasion of Magh Krishna Paksha Chaturdashi. His teachings, rooted in the Shaiva Trika philosophy propounded by luminaries such as Mahamaheshwaracharya Abhinav Gupta, continue to inspire seekers towards spiritual discipline, inner awakening, and selfless service. The day-long programme commenced with Kalash Pooja at 5:00 AM, followed by Dainik Magh Maas Jaap from 6:30 AM to 8:00 AM. The Hawan rituals began at 8:30 AM with Kund Pooja, Ganesh Sahakar, Chamanwakh Sahakar, and

Rudra Sahakar, culminating in Savaen Pind Kriya, Aarti, and Poorn Ahuti at 3:00 PM. Naveed Vitran was held at 3:30 PM. The religious proceedings were conducted under the aegis of noted Shaivite scholar and KP Culture and Traditions expert Sanjay Raina. The Yajmans for the occasion were Sanjeev Raina, B.L. Koul, Veer Ji, and Dr. Vijay Koul, guided by revered K.K. Dhar. Speaking on the occasion, Surinder Kachroo, President of the Trust, stated that Swami Ram Shaiv Trik Ashram is the only dedicated learning and training centre for Kashmir Shaivism (Shaiv Darshan), offering both online and offline teaching, mentoring, and spiritual practice, thereby preserving and propagating the rich Shaivite heritage. General Secretary of the Trust, Jai Krishen Khar also paid homage to the revered saint.

# JKGEJAC (R) asks Govt to redress issues of employees, pensioners

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir Government Employees Joint Action Committee (R) (JKGEJAC-R) on Saturday outlined a comprehensive set of demands for government employees, pensioners, and senior citizens during a press conference chaired by State President Babu Hussain Malik. Key demands included the immediate regularization of daily wagers, ad-hoc, contractual and consolidated employees, Seasonal Tribal Teachers, Rehbar-e-Khel, Rehbar-e-Janglat, Anganwadi workers and helpers, ASHA workers, National Health Mission staff, Home Guard employees, cooks, HDF workers, and re-employment of ousted casual labour in the Tourism Department. The forum also demanded



(JKGEJAC-R) State President Babu Hussain Malik addressing a press conference.

immediate release of pending GPF, leave salary, commutation, gratuity, and other pensionary benefits, enhancement of medical allowance at par with other Union Territories, implementation of the Old Pension Scheme (OPS), disposal of pending SRO-43 cases, removal of pay anomalies, and release of 18 months pending Dearness Allowance (DA). Full implementation of the 8th Pay Commission recommendations, including benefits for retired employees, release of two withheld annual increments for SRO-202 Gazetted and Non-Gazetted staff, and restoration of two additional increments for those who cleared the Secretariat Assistant Course

under SRO-333, was also demanded. Malik highlighted the increasing workload on government employees due to a large number of vacant posts, emphasizing that excessive responsibilities are adversely affecting their health and well-being. Senior trade union leader Girdhari Lal Chanda and other committee members, including Yashpaul Sharma, Muzaffar Nabi, Munish Sharma, Pawan Kumar, Madan Sangral, Arun Sharma, Seva Ram Rathore, Naresh Kumar, Ramesh Sharma, Kamla Sharma, Sham Singh, Vijay Kumar, Neeraj Sharma, Vikas Chander, Mohd. Sadiq, Gurmeet Singh, Israr Ahmed Khan, Tanveer Ahmad, Rajinder Singh, Sadeeq Mohd., Veerji Koul, and Sikandar Singh, expressed concern over the administration's negative approach towards employees' genuine grievances. The committee also raised serious concerns regarding stagnation in promotions and urged the government to create better career advancement opportunities for JKAS officers and frame Service Recruitment Rules to ensure timely promotions for non-gazetted employees. JKGEJAC-R called for immediate re-engagement of Home Guard employees and stressed the need to address staff shortages to maintain efficiency in public service delivery. The forum urged employees to remain united and reaffirmed their commitment to safeguard the rights, dignity, and welfare of all government employees and pensioners in Jammu and Kashmir.

# BJP condemns systematic, repeated assaults on media freedom by AAP govt in Punjab

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) strongly condemned the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in Punjab for its continued, systematic, and politically motivated assault on democracy and media freedom. Addressing a press conference at the BJP Headquarters, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu, J&K BJP State Media In-charge Dr. Pardeep Mahotra and State Spokesperson Dr. Tahir Choudhary denounced the recent police action against the reputed Punjab Kesari newspaper group, calling it an open misuse of government machinery under the directions of AAP supreme Arvind Kejriwal. State Spokesperson Altaf Thakur was also present. Dr. Pardeep Mahotra, strongly criticizing the attack on the freedom of media, said that the raid on Punjab Kesari without any notice, the brutal assault on journalists and staff, the breaking of office locks, and the illegal detentions carried out by Punjab Police clearly expose the dictatorial and intolerant mindset of Arvind Kejriwal and the Bhagwant Mann government. He stated that this was not a routine administrative action, but a calculated political conspiracy to crush an independent media house for publishing critical reports. Dr. Pardeep said that such



BJP State Spokesperson Dr. Tahir Choudhary briefing media at Jammu on Saturday.

actions mirror the darkest days of the Emergency imposed by the Congress, when newspapers were silenced, blacked out, and terrorized, and even resemble the colonial British era when dissent was crushed through brute force. He asserted that when a government starts fearing questions, it chooses repression over accountability. Calling media the fourth pillar of democracy, he warned that attacking journalists is equivalent to attacking the Constitution itself. He added that BJP strongly condemns this barbaric act and will not allow AAP's authoritarian experiment to succeed. The misuse of police, administrative agencies, and intimidation tactics, he added, will only hasten the political collapse of AAP in Punjab, just as it has already faced rejection elsewhere. Dr. Tahir Choudhary said that the attack on Punjab Kesari is part of a long and disturbing pattern of media suppression by the AAP government.

multiple documented incidents. He recalled that on the intervening night of 1st and 2nd November 2025, Punjab Police illegally seized press vans of newspapers published in Punjab, forcibly took away drivers' mobile phones, disrupted newspaper distribution, and even burnt copies of newspapers carrying reports critical of Arvind Kejriwal. He further stated that earlier, under Kejriwal's instructions, the Bhagwant Mann government targeted the renowned Punjab daily Ajit Group by slapping FIRs to exert pressure. Dr. Choudhary added that raids and FIRs were also conducted against independent YouTubers and journalists who questioned government policies, while media houses were routinely pressured not to cover opposition press conferences, with incidents of power cuts and signal jamming during live events.

# SP Ops honoured with COAS Commendation

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: Superintendent of Police (Operations) Jammu, Kameshwar Puri, has been awarded the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Commendation by Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi. The honor recognizes his exemplary leadership and courage during a successful anti-terror operation in the Suffain area of Kathua district.



The commendation highlights the seamless coordination between police and armed forces in neutralizing threats and ensuring the safety of civilians. SP Puri's dedication and swift action in the face of adversity have set a benchmark for operational excellence in counter-terrorism efforts. This recognition underscores the commitment of security forces in Jammu & Kashmir to safeguard peace and stability in the region.

# JKAACL releases Punjabi short story collection "Kadma De Nishan"

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL), Jammu, on Saturday organised a book release function at K. L. Saigal Hall, Jammu, for the release of "Kadma De Nishan", a Punjabi short story collection authored by Sharanjeet Kaur Sandhu, an emerging Punjabi writer. The function was graced by Harbans Kaur Bali as the Chief Guest, while eminent Punjabi writer and novelist Surinder Kaur Neer presided over the event. Welcoming the guests, Additional Secretary, JKAACL, Lal Chand highlighted the Academy's sustained efforts to promote literature, art and culture by providing meaningful platforms to emerging writers and artists under the able guidance of JKAACL Secretary. He informed that JKAACL is organising a series of programmes aimed at promoting and preserving the rich and diverse cultural heritage of Jammu and Kashmir; with



Dignitaries releasing Punjabi short story collection "Kadma De Nishan" at Jammu on Saturday.

special focus on literature, art, painting and languages, thereby enabling artists, scholar and cultural practitioners to showcase their talent and contribute to the preservation of timeless traditions. Harbans Kaur Bali emphasized the urgent need to write, read and preserve Punjabi language and literature. She appreciated JKAACL for organising meaningful literary events that encourage writers and strengthen the cultural and literary fabric of society. In her presidential address, Surinder Kaur Neer lauded the Academy for its significant initiatives to support budding writers and young

scholars. She observed that such literary gatherings play a vital role in enriching and sustaining Punjabi literature in the contemporary era. Speaking about the book "Kadma De Nishan", the speakers noted that the collection presents rich contemporary Punjabi short stories reflecting social realities, human emotions and creative sensibilities. They reiterated that encouraging new writers and bringing fresh Punjabi literature to the forefront remains one of the core objectives of the Academy. Assistant Professor (Punjabi), Parwinder Kaur presented a detailed scholarly paper on the book, offering critical insights which were well appreciated by the audience. Senior Editor, Sheeraza Punjabi, Popinder Singh Paras discussed the book and the author's literary journey in detail, observing that despite being a new entrant, the author's short stories reflect maturity, freshness, and deep social sensitivity. He also underlined the importance of reading and promoting contemporary Punjabi short stories in today's changing social landscape. On the occasion, the author Sharanjeet Kaur Sandhu read out one of her short stories, which left a deep impact on the audience. She expressed her heartfelt grati-

tude to the Academy and the dignitaries for their constant encouragement and support. A large gathering of writers, scholars, critics, Punjabi literature lovers and family members of the author were present, including Dr. Baljit Singh Raina, Jang S. Vederman, Rattan Singh Kanwal, Kanwal Nain Singh, Balvinder Singh, Trilok Singh, Ajit Singh Mastana, Gurmej Singh Sandhu, Sangeet Kaur, Amardeep Singh and Sandeep Kaur, among others. The programme was conducted by Senior Editor Popinder Singh Paras, who also presented the vote of thanks.