

LG Ladakh flags off delegates for National Youth Festival 2026

Ladakhi youth are talented and confident, says CS Kundra

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
LEH: The Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh Kavinder Gupta on Saturday flagged off and felicitated the Ladakh Team comprising 33 youth participants and officials from the Union Territory who are proceeding to Delhi to take part in the "Viksit Bharat - Young India Dialogue" under the National Youth Festival 2026. The programme aims to provide a national platform for youth to share ideas and contribute to the vision of a developed India.

Addressing the participants, the Lieutenant Governor congratulated them for earning the opportunity to represent Ladakh at a prestigious national forum. He said that they are not only representing their families and institutions, but the aspirations and potential of the entire Union Territory. He added that their participation reflects that the



LG Ladakh Kavinder Gupta with Ladakh Team at flagging off ceremony.

youth of Ladakh are confident, intellectually strong, and ready to play a meaningful role in nation-building.

The Lt Governor noted that the initiative is in line with the vision of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, who has consistently emphasized youth-led development and active participation of young Indians in shaping the future of the country. He said the Viksit Bharat initiative provides a powerful

platform for youth to engage in dialogue, innovation, and policy-oriented thinking.

Urging the participants to actively engage in discussions at the National Youth Festival, the Lieutenant Governor encouraged them to present their ideas with confidence while showcasing Ladakh's unique culture, values, and identity. He expressed confidence that the youth would return with new perspectives

and inspiration to contribute to the development of Ladakh and the nation.

The Lieutenant Governor extended his best wishes to all participants for a successful and enriching experience at the National Youth Festival 2026.

In his address, Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra called Ladakhi youth talent and full of confidence and highlighted the need to organise a UT-level Youth Meet with the

participation of Ladakhi youth from different parts of the region.

Nodal officials accompanying the Ladakh Team informed about the participation of youth from Leh and Kargil in the Cultural and Innovation Track, and the Viskit Bharat Challenge categories of the National Youth Festival, expressing optimism of doing well in the event.

Among those present during the event were Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra, Administrative Secretary YSS Moses Kunzang, and officials from YSS. Participants and officials from Kargil joined the event virtually.



Canal system approved alongside Ujh project to check water flow to Pakistan: Dr Jitendra

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
KATHUA: Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology and Earth Sciences, and Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh on Friday chaired a high-level review meeting with the Kathua district administration to assess developmental projects, flood damage and restoration works. Later, he also held a public durbar as part of his ongoing public outreach programme.



Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh chairing a high-level meeting of administration at Kathua on Saturday.

During the review meeting, Dr Jitendra Singh examined fund allocations, flood damage assessments and the status of ongoing infrastructure projects. He announced that over ₹1,400 crore has been allocated for Jammu and Kashmir, including ₹10 crore for temporary repairs in Kathua and a minimum of over ₹2 crore each for damaged public assets and structures, subject to assessment by the district administration. He said permanent restoration of infrastructure would be funded by the respective departments.

The Minister directed all departments, including Power, PWD and Jal Shakti, to carry

out comprehensive assessments of flood-related damages and submit fresh proposals within a week in a mission mode. He emphasised timely implementation of projects, transparent utilisation of funds and proactive measures to ensure that no affected person or area is left out. He also urged public representatives to conduct awareness campaigns for effective utilisation of relief funds.

Highlighting major infrastructure initiatives, Dr Jitendra Singh said the widening of Dhar Road in Udhampur has been approved by the Ministry of Defence. He instructed NHAI to expedite the remaining work on the Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway, while stressing early completion of the Juthana Bridge and the

Chattergala Tunnel. Importantly, he announced the revival of the Ujh Multipurpose Project and approval of a canal system on the Ujh River to prevent water infiltration and utilise excess water flow towards Pakistan, a proposal cleared by the Ministries of Defence and Home Affairs.

In the healthcare sector, the Union Minister announced that radiation services will soon be operational at the Cancer Centre, Kathua, and an MRI facility has been sanctioned for Government Medical College (GMC) Kathua, enhancing advanced diagnostic services in the district.

Earlier in the day, Dr Jitendra Singh held a public durbar in Kathua, where he interacted directly with citizens and addressed several grievances on the spot.

Addressing the media, he said the government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is committed to inclusive development, last-mile delivery and ease of living for every citizen.

He highlighted that Kathua has witnessed unprecedented development over the past decade, with initiatives such as a medical college, engineering college, Vande Bharat Express train, North India's first homeopathic medical college, and the proposed upgradation of the cancer care centre. He also spoke about establishing an incubation centre at the Industrial Biotech Park to promote startups and entrepreneurship. Referring to recent floods, Dr Jitendra Singh assured that damaged houses would be rebuilt and alternative land would be provided to affected families in consultation with the district administration.

Local MLAs Dr Bharat Bhushan and Rajiv Jasrotia, Chairman DDC Kathua Col (Retd) Mahan Singh, Vice Chairman Raghunandan Singh, senior officers and public representatives were present on the occasion.

JKAACL operationalizes Guru-Shishya Parampara Scheme

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL) has operationalised the prestigious Guru-Shishya Parampara Scheme from January 1, 2026, marking the commencement of structured training classes by three selected Gurus at their respective locations across the Union Territory.

The initiative aims to preserve, revitalize and pass on rare and endangered traditional art forms of Jammu and Kashmir through the time-honoured Guru-Shishya tradition.

The scheme seeks to identify eminent masters of traditional art forms and engage them in the systematic training of young disciples, ensuring the continuity and sustainability of the region's rich and diverse cultural heritage.



Guru commencing imparting training to groups of Shishyas.

Under the programme, each selected Guru imparts training to a group of five to eight Shishyas in a specific art form. To ensure sustained engagement, a monthly honorarium of Rs 10,000 is provided to the Guru, Rs 7,500 to the accompanist or assistant and Rs 5,000 to each Shishya. The duration of training has been fixed at one year and is extendable by another year subject to the performance review.

The scheme received an overwhelming response from across the Union Territory with nearly 200 applications, including 63 from Kashmir and 137 from Jammu. After detailed scrutiny and evaluation by a panel of experts, three traditional art forms on the verge of extinction were identified and eminent practitioners were appointed as Gurus to revive and safeguard these cultural expressions.

Salohna Devi has been selected as Guru for the Ghuria folk dance of Paddar, Dev Raj for the Massadey folk tradition of Bani and Abdul Rashid Mir for the Dastan folk tradition of

Kashmir. All three Gurus have commenced imparting structured training to their respective groups of Shishyas, ensuring authenticity, discipline and continuity of these traditions.

Massadey is a vibrant Dogri folk performance deeply rooted in storytelling, music and movement, reflecting local legends, myths and social values. Dastan-e-Goi is a classical oral storytelling tradition renowned for its elaborate narratives and dramatic expression, representing a rich legacy of oral literature. Ghuria, a women-led folk dance of Paddar in Kishtwar district, blends flute, dhouns and call-and-response singing and is deeply embedded in community life, though presently facing the threat of extinction.

Through the Guru-Shishya Parampara Scheme, JKAACL is continuing its efforts to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage of Jammu and Kashmir by ensuring its transmission to future generations in its most authentic and traditional form.

866 Armed Police Constables promoted; 36 granted In-situ up gradation

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Armed Police Headquarters on Saturday issued promotion orders for 866 Constables of the Jammu and Kashmir Armed Police to the rank of Selection Grade Constable (SGCT). Additionally, 36 Constables were granted in-situ up gradation, in accordance with the prescribed rules.

The promotions were approved after a comprehensive evaluation of the service records of eligible Constables and were finalized strictly in compliance with the norms and guidelines of the Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC).

Congratulating the newly promoted Selection Grade Constables and their families,



lies, Anand Jain, ADG Armed extended his best wishes for their future endeavours. He expressed confidence that the promoted personnel would continue to perform their duties with greater dedication, professionalism, and integrity, and would uphold the responsibilities and expectations associated with their enhanced status.

311 drug peddlers held in Jammu, heroin worth Rs 60 crore seized in 2025

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: District Police Jammu achieved significant milestones in its sustained campaign against drug trafficking and substance abuse during the year 2025, reinforcing its zero-tolerance policy towards narcotics through focused enforcement, intelligence-led operations, financial investigations, and community participation.

An official police spokesperson said that during 2025, 204 FIRs were registered under the NDPS Act, leading to the arrest of 311 accused, including 35 women drug peddlers. As part of the crackdown, 71 vehicles used for narcotics trafficking were seized. Of the total arrests, 207 accused were apprehended in heroin (Chitta) cases, while 51 arrests were made in non-chitta NDPS cases. "Substantial recoveries were made during the year, dealing a severe blow to drug syndicates operating in the region," the spokesperson said, adding that police recovered over 15 kilograms of heroin, estimated to be worth Rs 60

crore in the international market, along with 78 kilograms of ganja, 114 kilograms of poppy straw, capsules, and opium.

The spokesperson further informed that 11 cases involving commercial quantities of narcotics were detected during the year, resulting in the arrest of 38 accused, reflecting intensified action against organised drug trafficking networks. In addition, 11 hardcore and habitual drug peddlers were detained under the stringent PIT NDPS Act, underscoring firm action against repeat offenders. To dismantle the financial backbone of drug networks, Jammu Police attached three immovable properties worth Rs 85,70,285 and one movable property (vehicle) worth Rs 11,40,000, identified as proceeds of narcotics trafficking. Moreover, three identified drug hotspots within the district were demolished, and 23 illegal drug-linked structures were razed during the year 2025.

Highlighting judicial outcomes, the spokesperson

said that 48 convictions were secured in NDPS cases during 2025, reflecting effective investigation and prosecution. Supply-chain investigations were also aggressively pursued. "As many as 12 FIRs and 36 arrests were made across Jammu, Punjab, Kathua, Udhampur and Rajouri, adopting a strong administrative and financial investigation approach to break inter-district and inter-state drug supply chains," the spokesperson added. In a major enforcement exercise, large-scale destruction of seized narcotics was carried out under Section 52-A of the NDPS Act during the year. Contraband seized in 82 cases was destroyed, including 5,293 kg 204 grams of poppy straw, 49 kg 175 grams of cannabis, 44 kg 387 grams of charas, 4 kg 90 grams of ganja, 1 kg 406 grams of heroin, 1 kg of brown sugar, 38,480 capsules, 660 bottles of Corex, and 6,020 tablets. The total value of the destroyed contraband was stated to be worth several crores of rupees. Alongside enforcement,

Jammu Police placed strong emphasis on awareness, prevention, and rehabilitation. During 2025, police organised 27 drug awareness programmes, 325 PCGP meetings, 179 Thana Divyas, and 469 IEC campaigns across the district. Additionally, nine awareness programmes were conducted by the Police Drug De-addiction and Rehabilitation Centre, Channi, Jammu.

The spokesperson said that the Police Drug De-addiction, Rehabilitation and Mental Health Care Centre, Channi, catered to 1,667 OPD patients and admitted 311 patients during the year, highlighting the department's commitment to rehabilitation alongside enforcement.

Appealing to the public, Jammu Police urged citizens to actively support the War on Drugs by sharing any information related to drug peddling or substance abuse on helpline number 100. "The identity of informers will be kept strictly confidential. Together, we can safeguard our youth and build a drug-free society," the spokesperson said.

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PM Modi has been first to give idea of promoting a 'one state, one global standard tourist destination'

Omar Abdullah must take on the call given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Opportunity for J&K to focus on areas outside Valley for such a 'one state, one global standard tourist destination'

■ DAYA SAGAR
The Government of Jammu & Kashmir has enough scope & also requirements for working in the direction of "one state, one global tourist destination" and that too worth showing to the world that once intentions are there unimaginable high potential tourist destinations could be placed on the world map even along Chenab Valley/Pir Panchal/other sub-regions of UT of J&K outside Kashmir Valley. In J&K there are many areas which have enough scope for development as tourist destinations of world class expectations. J&K's Kashmir Valley has been attracting large tourist volume from all over even during pre 1947 times and has been observed as one of the unsurpassable Tourism potential 'heaven' and still there is enough scope even Kashmir valley worth placing on the world map the "tourist" heaven extending over many unexplored areas of J&K which have so far remained unattended not only before 1947 but even after 1947. No doubt all politicians when out of power and the new governments that come have been talking of there being high summer/winter/pilgrim/adventure/health resort/sports tourism potential in the Chenab Valley/Pir Panchal/other sub regions

outside Kashmir Valley but there have been paid no needed attention by "past" governments and 'new' government to professionally work for that (so far no major yielding projects have seen the light worth commercial tourism in such areas that could meaningfully contribute to local economy).

The 10th Governing Council Meeting of NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India) was attended by 24 Chief Ministers & seven Lt. Governors with the theme "Viksit Rajya for Viksit Bharat@2047" and in reference Prime Minister emphasised that India needs to increase the speed of transformation. Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged Indian states to develop at least one global standard tourist destination each to attract international visitors and boost the local economy. Prime Minister opined so on 24th May 2025 as Chairman of the 10th Governing Council meeting of NITI Aayog in Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi and also said that with G20 Summit India got recognised as a global tourist destination. Hence in a way PM suggested that the states 'must' hold the opportunity to develop at least one tourist destination of global expectation in the respective State/UT.

In brief it could be said that what the

and encourage people to visit Kashmir. It was also reported at the same in media that Gaurav Gupta, Spokesperson of J&K Bharatiya Janata Party unit had strongly criticized the Omar Abdullah-led government alleging that it had a selective approach in reviving the Union Territory's (J&K) tourism sector following the tragic terror attack in Pahalagam. No doubt Gaurav Gupta had also said that while the Chief Minister's decision to convene Special Cabinet meetings in Pahalagam and Gulmarg for restoring confidence among tourists was welcome, the complete disregard for the Jammu region (equally impacted in terms of tourism and business) reflected a narrow and one-sided policy adding "<"Jammu is not merely a transit point; it is a vital pillar of the UT's cultural and spiritual tourism. From Katra to Patnitop, from historical temples to bustling markets- Jammu offers immense value to the tourism map of the region. The government must recognize this and act">". In another press statement the NC Jammu Provincial President Rattan Lal Gupta had said that the people of Jammu and Kashmir, especially those living in districts Poonch- Rajouri and border areas of Jammu and Kashmir, have borne the brunt of the recent escalation in cross-

A Look through the Mist Part-II



Prime Minister of India has said becomes a very very yielding opportunity for the local governments of States/UTs, particularly like a UT of J&K and Narendra Modi had Chaired the meeting of Niti Ayog as Chairman by virtue of his being Prime Minister of India and he well knew that no state would be able to take to the burden of the costs of all Inputs that may be needed for such a venture independently & the States / UTs, would also come to centre for assistance. It cannot be denied, rather it has to be accepted that the Government of India has always been coming to support any well designed project with financial assistance where ever the proposals are well supported with healthy profile and well said projections.

It was on 28th May that while chairing a high-level meeting in Gulmarg to assess the functioning of various departments J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah was reported as having said that holding back-to-back meetings at tourist resorts of Gulmarg & Pahalagam was an effort to instil public confidence

and encourage people to visit Kashmir. It was also reported at the same in media that Gaurav Gupta, Spokesperson of J&K Bharatiya Janata Party unit had strongly criticized the Omar Abdullah-led government alleging that it had a selective approach in reviving the Union Territory's (J&K) tourism sector following the tragic terror attack in Pahalagam. No doubt Gaurav Gupta had also said that while the Chief Minister's decision to convene Special Cabinet meetings in Pahalagam and Gulmarg for restoring confidence among tourists was welcome, the complete disregard for the Jammu region (equally impacted in terms of tourism and business) reflected a narrow and one-sided policy adding "<"Jammu is not merely a transit point; it is a vital pillar of the UT's cultural and spiritual tourism. From Katra to Patnitop, from historical temples to bustling markets- Jammu offers immense value to the tourism map of the region. The government must recognize this and act">". In another press statement the NC Jammu Provincial President Rattan Lal Gupta had said that the people of Jammu and Kashmir, especially those living in districts Poonch- Rajouri and border areas of Jammu and Kashmir, have borne the brunt of the recent escalation in cross-

border firing tragically losing nearly 23 innocent civilian lives and demanded a well-structured comprehensive financial package from the Centre which would not only provide much-needed support to the affected families but also aid in rebuilding livelihoods, strengthening infrastructure, and revitalizing the local economy. So, surely, for multidimensional reasons there is utmost need for rehabilitation of the people & the areas that have suffered from lack of development & frequent cross border / LOC firings from Pakistan side most of which have always remained under adverse socio-economic environments thereby lacking in even routine development (for which also these sub regions are to be compensated). These areas also have lot of tourism potential worth exploitation and could be made global standard destinations. So, the J&K Govt must catch on the call given by Prime Minister Narendar Modi on 24 May 2025 to develop at least one tourist destination of global expectation. "one state, one global tourist destination".

The sub regions lying outside Kashmir Valley have enough area that could be as a Unit developed into a Global expectation Tourist Destination which would ofcourse need thousands of crores of INR as input from the

government side for which world standard consultants could be retained to draw out the plans & drafts for the areas that have huge fair environment with also some difficult terrain in way likes of much different of which have been turned into super class destinations even by emirates like Dubai. PM Modi has also talked of rise in local economy through such ventures and that is very much relevant in the case of the such areas of Jammu Region, imagine in case one lakh crore INR is invested in the areas that we have how much will go to locals for their service / material inputs even from the capital invested in infrastructure & what fortunes will emerge for locals in terms of returns from tourism?

Mr Omar Abdullah must take on the call given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi who is also chairman of Niti Aayog for "one state, one global tourist destination" and set for drawing out a project profile for approval of assistance from Government of India which will be surely supported by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

To be continued
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