

National Awardee Apoorv Om call on LG Ladakh in Delhi

LG Kavinder urges people to support initiatives for skill development, empowerment of disabled persons

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

DELHI: Apoorv Om, an internationally acclaimed artist and National Awardee for Persons with Disabilities, today met the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, at New Delhi.

During the meeting, Apoorv Om, who is Deaf, Dumb and has Low Vision (PwD), shared his journey of using art as a powerful medium for social transformation, inclusion, and empowerment of persons with hearing impairment. He expressed his passion for creating meaningful artworks dedicated to national and global leaders, institutions, and causes that inspire unity, inclusion, and human values. Apoorv Om briefed the Lieutenant Governor about his contributions in the field of digital inclusion and disability empowerment over the last 11 years. He highlighted that his artworks and portraits have been widely appreciated and accepted by eminent national and international dignitaries, including the President of



Apoorv Om, National Awardee for Persons with Disabilities, meeting with LG Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta.

India, the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi, Vice President of India, senior UN leaders, and other global institutions. A National Awardee for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (2017) and National Youth Awardee (2016-17), Apoorv Om is also a FIT India Ambassador appointed by the Government of India. His work has consistently focused on bringing persons with hearing impairment

into the mainstream of society through creativity, innovation, and positive representation. The Lieutenant Governor appreciated Apoorv Om's dedication, resilience, and commitment towards social inclusion. He lauded his efforts to use art as a bridge between ability and opportunity and encouraged initiatives that promote empowerment of persons with disabilities. He also urged the people suffering

from disabilities and challenges of any kind to take inspiration from Apoorv Om's determination and creativity and to believe in their own potential to overcome obstacles, achieve excellence, and make meaningful contributions to society.

Kavinder Gupta said that the government at the Centre has launched several schemes and initiatives aimed at empowering persons with disabilities, providing them with skill development, education, and employment opportunities, and ensuring their full participation in social and economic life. He expressed confidence that with continued support, awareness, and active participation from society, persons with disabilities can achieve their aspirations and contribute significantly to nation-building.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasised the importance of collective efforts to create an inclusive environment where every individual's talent and potential are recognised and nurtured.

Teachers can play a pivotal role in shaping society; JKTA outlines agenda for New Year

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JAMMU: The Jammu Kashmir Teachers Association (JKTA) organized a mega convention at Government College for Women, Gandhinagar, Jammu, to deliberate upon the evolving role of teachers and the challenges confronting the teaching fraternity. The convention was held on the theme "Role of teachers in grooming the complete development of students and addressing academic, administrative, and infrastructural challenges in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir."

The Association emphasized that education must extend beyond classroom instruction and examinations, with a conscious focus on character building, environmental awareness, management education, teacher education, and the promotion and preservation of indigenous languages such as Dogri, Bhardwahia, Padri, Rambani, Bhalesi, Pogali, Sarazi, Khashali, and Rudhari, besides strengthening the cross-cultural ethos of the Jammu province.

Mehbooba-Iltija's controversial statements a major reason for attacks on Kashmiris: Shiv Sena

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JAMMU: Shiv Sena (UBT) Jammu and Kashmir unit chief Manish Sahni has stated that the controversial and nationally offensive statements made by Muslim leaders like Mehbooba and Iltija Mufti are a major reason for the attacks on Kashmiri students and (shawl) vendors in other states.

While briefing the media persons at party's central office, Manish Sahni strongly condemned the incidents of assault on Kashmiri students and shawl vendors by some miscreants. He advocated for strict legal action against these miscreants. He believes that the controversial and nationally offensive statements of some leaders like Mehbooba and Iltija Mufti are a major cause of these attacks.

Sahni strongly condemned Iltija Mufti's objection to saying 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' and her support for a cricketer



Shiv Sena (UBT) J&K chief Manish Sahni talking to reporters.

BCCI's decision welcomed, demand for complete boycott

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Shiv Sena (UBT) Jammu and Kashmir unit chief Manish Sahni welcomed the BCCI's decision to exclude Bangladeshi players from the IPL. He also demanded a boycott of Bangladesh in the T20 series to be held in February and the cancellation of the Indian team's tour to Bangladesh in October-September.

displayed the Palestinian flag on his helmet. Sahni said that earlier, the mother-daughter duo (Mehbooba and Iltija Mufti) had also given controversial and nationally offensive statements, calling India a "lynchistan" (land of lynch-

ings). Sahni said that the statements of these leaders are similar to the actions of the miscreants who carry out acts of lynching.

Sahni said that the same country, whose national slogan 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' is

being objected, had released five dangerous terrorists in exchange for the release of Mehbooba Mufti's sister and Iltija's aunt, Rubiya Saeed, who was kidnapped on December 8, 1989.

Iltija. Whom she is opposing today, had formed a government with the same party in 2014.

Sahni said that along with strict legal action against the miscreants, these leaders must also restrain their controversial statements. On this occasion Vikas Bakshi, Sanjeev Kohli, Aditya Mahajan, and Raju Kapoor were present.

Vice-Chancellor BGSBU visits University Health Centre

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

RAJOURI: The Vice-Chancellor of Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University (BGSBU), Prof. Jawaaid Iqbal, today visited the University Health Centre to review the healthcare facilities and services being provided to students, faculty, and staff.

During the visit, the Vice-Chancellor inspected the available medical infrastructure, interacted with the medical and paramedical staff, and enquired about patient care, availability of medicines, and emergency preparedness. Prof. Iqbal emphasized the importance of ensuring accessible, efficient, and quality healthcare on campus, particularly for students residing in hostels.

He appreciated the dedication of the Health Centre staff and directed the concerned officials to further strengthen medical services by upgrading facilities wherever required, ensuring adequate staffing, and maintaining essential medical supplies.

Shiv Sena Hindustan protests acute water shortage in Purkhu Camp, burns PHE effigy



Shiv Sena Hindustan workers and leaders burning effigy during protest.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Members of Shiv Sena Hindustan, led by Jammu & Kashmir President Pandit Rajesh Kesri, staged a protest in Purkhu Camp, burning an effigy of the Public Health Engineering (PHE) Department to express their strong displeasure over the persistent water shortage in the area. The protest comes after residents of Purkhu Camp have been grappling with severe water scarcity for over a year, struggling to access clean water even during harsh winter months. Despite repeated appeals to the PHE Department and

assurances of laying new pipelines, no tangible action has been taken, leaving families, particularly the poor, in distress. Addressing the protest, Pandit Rajesh Kesri strongly condemned the department's apathy and inaction, warning that if the issue is not resolved promptly, Shiv Sena Hindustan will escalate the agitation with a protest outside the Chief Engineer's office. He urged the authorities to intervene immediately and ensure a regular and adequate water supply for the affected residents.

The protesters highlighted that the lack of water is

severely impacting daily life, from household needs to hygiene, and demanded urgent relief measures. The protest was attended by senior party members including Raj Kumar, Sanjeev Kumar Sharma, Rajesh Sharma, Sanjeev Kumar, Vinod Kumar, Anu Devi, Mani Devi, Darshan Devi, and dozens of other supporters. The demonstrators stressed that unless the PHE Department acts without further delay, the agitation will intensify, urging authorities to take immediate steps to restore normalcy and provide relief to the struggling community.

Natrang stages "Swachh Gram" to promote cleanliness and environmental responsibility

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Natrang today staged its new socially relevant production "Swachh Gram" at Rani Park, Jammu, under its ongoing weekly theatre initiative Sunday Theatre. Written and directed by noted theatre personality Neeraj Kant, the play was conceived as a lively street performance aimed at sensitising citizens towards cleanliness, environmental responsibility and the harmful effects of irresponsible waste disposal.

Blending humour, symbolism and striking visual imagery, Swachh Gram effectively conveyed the urgent need for civic sense and collective participation in maintaining a clean and healthy environment. The performance struck a strong chord with the audience by highlighting everyday habits that contribute to pollution and public inconvenience.



Natrang artists performing in a play.

The narrative opens on a busy street where people casually litter without concern. A character, Pappu, throws a banana peel on the road, ignoring an elderly man's advice that public spaces belong to everyone. Soon, Meena narrowly escapes slipping on the peel and angrily disposes of it in a dustbin, as the narrator points out the

irony of ignoring dustbins even when they are readily available.

In another sequence, Pappu once again displays negligence by discarding dirty disposable bottles on the street. The elderly man and Meena explain how such unhygienic practices spread filth and disease, reinforced by a coughing child affected by nearby garbage.

Meena stresses that awareness and responsibility can bring behavioural change, prompting Pappu to introspect.

Days later, a visible transformation occurs in Pappu's attitude. Unable to find a dustbin, he carries his waste in his bag instead of littering. His change is appreciated, and he pledges never to litter again while encouraging others to do the same. The characters collectively vow to keep their surroundings clean for a better India.

The play then shifts to another locality plagued by plastic waste. Mohan throws a plastic bottle on the road, leading to the dramatic entry of Mother Earth, distressed by human actions. The Plastic Monster appears, boasting that humans create him and then suffer because plastic does not decompose. Suman enters with a cloth bag and reusable bottle, explaining the importance of

reducing plastic use, reusing materials creatively and recycling waste through scrap dealers. As awareness spreads, the Plastic Monster gradually loses strength.

The play concludes with a collective pledge to follow the principles of Reduce, Reuse and Recycle, segregate waste into blue and green bins, prepare compost from kitchen waste and actively contribute to keeping homes, streets and the nation clean. The performance ends on a powerful message that a truly clean India can only be achieved through committed citizen participation.

Actors who delivered impactful performances included Neeraj Kant, Pawan Verma, Kanapreet Kaur, Priyral Ashok Gupta, Kartik Kumar, Aadesh Dhar and Kushal Bhat. The music for the play was composed by Mohd. Yaseen.

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JAMMU: The 460th Free Artificial Limbs Camp was organised by Shri Atam Vallabh Jain Clinic, Jammu at Kali Janni for three days, from January 4 to January 6, 2026, with the objective of providing free assistive devices to specially abled and needy persons.

On the first day of the camp, a total of 58 patients were examined, and artificial limbs and assistive aids were distributed to eligible beneficiaries. As part of the camp, 26 artificial limbs, 6 callipers, and 7 AFO & KFO (Ankle Foot Orthosis and Knee Foot Orthosis) were provided. In addition, two wheelchairs and eight hearing aids were also distributed free of cost. Chairman of the clinic, Pradeep Jain, explained in detail the procedure for providing hearing aids and highlighted the services being rendered by Shri Atam Vallabh Jain



Doctors examining patients at a camp.

Clinic. He appealed to the general public to inform and motivate specially abled persons to avail themselves of the free facilities available at the clinic for their rehabilitation and mobility support. He further stated that the clinic has been consistently providing artificial limbs, callipers, hearing aids and other rehabilitation services free of cost to the needy sections of society. Several prominent members of the Jain community and volunteers were

present during the camp, including Varinder Jain, Parveen Jain, Ashu Jain, Kinti Lal Jain and Deepak Jain. Dr Anita Gupta, physiotherapist, examined the patients and advised suitable limbs and aids to address their physical challenges. The organisers expressed satisfaction over the smooth conduct of the camp and reiterated their commitment to continue such humanitarian initiatives for the welfare of specially abled persons.

NC committed to fulfilling poll promises; Cadres asked to gear up for Municipal, Panchayat Polls: Babu Ram Paul

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Former minister and Zonal President Central Zone of the National Conference (NC), Babu Ram Paul, on Saturday reiterated that the party is fully committed to fulfilling the promises made to the people before the Assembly elections. He was addressing a meeting of office bearers of the NC Central Zone held at Sher-e-Kashmir Bhawan, Jammu, under his chairmanship.

Addressing the gathering, Babu Ram Paul said that the National Conference has always stood for the rights and dignity of the weaker sections of society and asserted that the

government led by young and dynamic Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is delivering on the ground. He stated that the government is working tirelessly to implement its poll promises within the shortest possible time. Highlighting some of the key initiatives, Babu Ram Paul said that women across Jammu and Kashmir are benefiting from the facility of free travel in government-run buses. He added that school-going, college-going, and office-going women can now commute without spending a single penny, which has significantly eased their daily financial burden. He further said that other sections of society, especially the down-



Former minister, Babu Ram Paul speaking at a meeting.

trodden, are also reaping the benefits of the government's welfare-oriented policies.

He also pointed out that the government has honored its commitment of not increasing electricity charges, among several other promises made during the election campaign. "The Omar Abdullah-led govern-

ment is steadfast in translating its commitments into reality," he said. Urging party cadres to strengthen their connection with the grassroots, Babu Ram Paul emphasized the need to reach out to the common masses and effectively highlight the achievements of the NC government. He asked the workers

to start preparing for the upcoming Municipal and Panchayat elections, which he said could be announced at any time during the year.

He also cautioned the cadres against divisive forces, stating that some elements are trying to create an atmosphere of hatred, which has no place in a civilized and democratic society. He urged party workers to make people aware of such agendas and work towards maintaining harmony and unity. Several office bearers also spoke on the occasion and raised issues related to problems being faced by the people at present.

Those present at the meeting

included Ashok Attri (Retd DIG), Rahul Mahajan, Deepender Kour (Ex-MLC), Sagar Chand (Ex-MLA), Amrith Sharma, Dilshada Malik, S. Nirmal Singh, Dr. Y.P. Singh, Naveed Raja (Vice Presidents, Central Zone), Adv. Rajinder Chanyal, Bharat Bhushan, Dr. Vikas Sharma, B.D. Dalotra, Sham Mehra, S. Surjit Singh Sasan, Arvind Singh Janwal, T.R. Mandi, Mohinder Kumar Rana, Narinder Bhagat, Rajinder Kumar, Shakeel Ahmed, Yash Pal, Balbir Chand, Prem Kumar Verma, B.D. Sharma, Brahmanand Sharma, Tarsem Khullar, Manohar Lal, Amar Bhagat, and several others.

Best Crime Journalist Award presented to Abhishek Kapoor



■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Best Crime Journalist Award was presented to Abhishek Kapoor, Jammu-Metro Daily National Newspaper Bureau Chief (Crime), by DIG -Shiv Kumar Sharma, Jammu-Samba-Kathua Range. In a brief Ceremony, DIG Sharma lauded Kapoor's relentless pursuit of truth, incisive reporting on crime and corruption, and his contribution to strengthening the nation's security fabric. Kapoor expressed gratitude to the police fraternity and reaffirmed his commitment to unbiased journalism. The award underscores the vital role of responsible media in supporting law enforcement agencies and upholding the values of transparency and accountability.