

Training Programme on 'Value Addition and Minor Fruit Processing' organised



SKUAST-Jammu officials with rural women and youth at raining programme.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A training programme on "Training & Skill Development on Value Addition and Minor Fruit Processing as a Catalyst for Women Agripreneurs" was organised by the Division of Agricultural Extension Education, SKUAST-Jammu, under the JKST&IC sponsored project for rural women and youth of village Badsu, Panchayat Badsu, Block Dansal, District Jammu.

The programme was conducted under the guidance and leadership of the Vice Chancellor, Prof. B. N.

Tripathi. The programme was attended by Prof. Poonam Parihar, Principal Investigator of the JKST&IC project; Dr. Neerja Sharma, Co-PI of the project and Chief Scientist (Horticulture), KVK Samba; S. Sarabjeet Singh, Technical Officer, Division of Agricultural Extension Education; and Shri Sharad Sharma, Assistant, Department of Agriculture, who actively participated in the training.

While welcoming the participants, Prof. Poonam Parihar highlighted that agripreneur-

ship plays a vital role in social and economic development through employment generation, income enhancement, poverty reduction and improved nutrition and food security. She emphasized that minor and underutilized fruits possess immense potential for value addition and entrepreneurship due to their unique nutritional and cultural significance. She stressed that shifting from traditional agriculture to agribusiness is essential to revitalize Indian agriculture and make it a more profitable and attractive livelihood option. She further elaborat-

ed that the rural Kandi area of Jammu is rich in traditional minor fruits such as desi mango, galgal, chakotra, jhamiri, kimb, ber, aonla, jamun, karonda, phalsa and bael. Training interventions focusing on post-harvest operations like grading, packaging, branding and marketing can encourage self-employment and enhance farmers' incomes through value addition.

Dr. Neerja Sharma emphasized that value addition is a key component of agripreneurship, enabling farmers and entrepreneurs to create innovative products,

generate employment and promote sustainable practices. She conducted practical demonstrations on value-added products from aonla and galgal, including aonla pickle, candy, barfi and galgal pickle, highlighting their income-generating potential.

Sharad Sharma apprised participants about forming Farmers Interest Groups for market-led extension to improve socio-economic conditions and strengthen food and nutritional security through women and youth participation.

The programme was also attended by Tarun Sharma, RJ, Community Radio Station Radio Kisan Jammu (90.8 FM), Sangeeta Gourey, Project Assistant, and PG and Ph.D. students of SKUAST-Jammu. Tarun Sharma interviewed Prof. Poonam Parihar on the benefits of such skill development programmes. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by Sarabjeet Singh.

Seminar on Capital Markets organised



Comm/Secretary, I & C J&K, Vikramjit Singh being honoured.

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JAMMU: The Jammu & Kashmir Branch of NIRC of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), in collaboration with the Committee on Financial Markets and Investors' Protection and the Committee on MSME & Start-ups of ICAI, organised a one-day seminar on Capital Markets at ICAI Bhawan, Canal Road, here.

The seminar opened with an address by CA Sourav Pargal, Chairman, J&K Branch of NIRC of ICAI, who set the context for the programme and highlighted the relevance of capital

markets in the region. The inaugural session included the ceremonial lighting of the lamp.

The programme was graced by Vikramjit Singh, Commissioner/Secretary, Industries & Commerce, Jammu & Kashmir, as the Chief Guest, and Rajesh Kumar Dangeti, CGM, SEBI, as the Guest of Honour. Both speakers emphasised the role of regulatory support, capital market access, and professional expertise in strengthening the MSME ecosystem in J&K. The technical sessions featured expert speakers Dr. Arun

Manhas, Director, Industries & Commerce, Jammu, who spoke on job creation through industrialisation in J&K; D.K. Tyagi, Assistant Director, MSME, who explained MSME schemes and their impact in the region; CA Virinchi Nandula, who discussed the role of Chartered Accountants and opportunities in the SME IPO ecosystem; and CA Nidhi Maheshwari, who delivered a detailed session on navigating the SME IPO process.

The programme was managed by CA Jatinder Malhotra, Secretary, and concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by CA Amit Gupta, Vice Chairman, J&K Branch of NIRC of ICAI.

The session was attended by several industry leaders, eminent Chartered Accountants, and members of the branch managing committee, including CA Sanchit Aggarwal, Treasurer, and CA Ayush Sawhney, Executive Member.

Woven Whispers celebrates India's handloom journey from craft to commerce



FICCI FLO National President, Poonam Sharma with others at programme.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Woven Whispers: Craft to Commerce, a landmark celebration of India's rich handloom heritage and its transformation into a sustainable economic force, was successfully held today at the National Crafts Museum, New Delhi. The event was organised by FICCI FLO under the leadership of its National President, Poonam Sharma, in partnership with the Office of the Development Commissioner (Handlooms), Ministry of Textiles, and the Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI).

The FICCI FLO leadership and organising team included Shuriti Puri, Ambar Paridhi, Dr. Ritu Singh, Ritu Vadehra, Sumitee Abbi, Suguna Ravichandran, Saloni Mehta, Nidhi Goel, Namrata Mishra, Ritika Sarna, Ritu Singhal and Anjali Aggarwal, whose collective efforts ensured the success-

ful execution of the initiative.

The programme was graced by the Chief Guest, Nadda, and witnessed the presence of several ambassadors and senior diplomatic representatives, highlighting growing international interest in India's handloom traditions, sustainability practices and women-led craft enterprises. Woven Whispers showcased the integration of traditional weaving techniques with contemporary design, innovation and market access. The initiative focused on empowering women artisans and weavers, strengthening livelihoods, and fostering collaboration between craft clusters, designers, policymakers, industry leaders and global stakeholders. A key highlight was a panel discussion featuring Jeyasree Ravi, Founder, Palam Silks (Nalli Sarees); Isha Manchanda, Textile Specialist, Good Earth; Gunjan Jain, Founder, Virikshi; Manish

Saksena, Business Lead, Aadyam Handwoven (Aditya Birla Group); and Rta Kapur Chishti, sari historian and textile scholar. The discussion explored women-led innovation, sustainability, market access and the economic future of handloom clusters.

The Fashion Design Council of India, led by Sunil Sethi, curated a fashion showcase that reimaged Indian handlooms through modern silhouettes while preserving cultural authenticity. Distinguished guests from governance, culture, entrepreneurship and media further underscored the event's impact.

Woven Whispers: Craft to Commerce stood as a powerful testament to how strategic partnerships can drive sustainable growth, global visibility and economic empowerment for India's handloom sector while preserving its cultural heritage.

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JAMMU: The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu inaugurated the Fourteenth Batch of the Nurturing Future Leadership Program on 15th December 2025 at Vedanta, MDP Centre, Jagti. Organized under the Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Programme, Ministry of Education, Government of India, the initiative reflects IIM Jammu's commitment to fostering academic excellence and leadership development among educators. The inaugural ceremony commenced with a lamp lighting, and the program welcomed 25 participants from across India.

Prof. Jabir Ali, Dean Faculty and Research, IIM Jammu, graced the occasion, highlighting the diversity of participants and emphasizing the program's aim to go beyond best practices by sharing IIM Jammu's jour-



ney since 2016. He noted the institute's growth to over 1,200 students, the benefits of the new IIM Act in offering undergraduate and post-graduate programs, and the institute's BGA Institutional and EFMD MBA accreditation, with aspirations for Triple Crown recognition. He encouraged participants to engage in interactive discussions to create a multiplier impact while appreciating the unique experience of student life.

Prof. Sanjeev Pathak,

Chairperson, Executive Education and Consultancy (EE&C), IIM Jammu, described the program as a marquee initiative of the Ministry of Education, emphasizing its commitment to leadership enhancement and continuous quality improvement. He highlighted the importance of blended classroom, collaborative, and experiential learning and encouraged participants to share insights on professional platforms like LinkedIn.

Dr. Sakthi Nagaraj T,

Program Director, IIM Jammu, delivered the welcome address, stating that each participant is a leader in their own right, and the program is designed to foster continuous learning throughout and beyond the sessions. Participants introduced themselves, shared reflections, and discussed expectations. Dr. Prakrit Silal, Program Director, IIM Jammu, proposed the vote of thanks, concluding with the national anthem.

Over five days, the fully-

funded program focuses on four key themes: leadership, communication, skill development, and recent government initiatives. Participants engage in lectures, interactive workshops, group discussions, case studies, role-plays, and practical exercises to ensure active application of concepts. They also toured IIM Jammu's campus, including Manthan (Senate Hall), Nalanda Library, Vishrantika Faculty Lounge, and smart classrooms, gaining insights into state-of-the-art infrastructure.

The Nurturing Future Leadership Program, coordinated by the Office of Executive Education and Consultancy, aligns with the Malaviya Mission's vision of empowering educators and leaders to shape India's educational landscape, reinforcing IIM Jammu's position as a premier hub for leadership, innovation, and educational excellence.

Prof Parikshat assumes charge as CEC Director

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Prof Parikshat Singh Manhas has formally taken charge as Director of the Consortium for Educational Communication (CEC), New Delhi, an inter-university centre of the University Grants Commission (UGC). CEC is a key national institution responsible for producing and disseminating curriculum-based educational television programmes, digital lectures and e-content for higher education. Its academic resources are broadcast round-the-clock through SWAYAM Prabha DTH channels and made available on digital platforms, ensuring access to quality learning for students across the country, including remote areas.

CEC also collaborates with universities and subject experts to develop online courses, e-learning modules and blended

learning models aligned with national education reforms.

A distinguished academician and administrator, Professor Manhas earlier served as Chairman of the J&K Board of School Education, where he led major reforms to enhance transparency, academic standards and administrative efficiency. His appointment is expected to strengthen CEC's role in advancing inclusive, technology-driven higher education in India.



Prof Parikshat Manhas taking charge as Director CEC, New Delhi.

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consolidating the party's position in Assam.

Those present on the occasion included DDC Suresh Sharma, party spokesperson Dr. Tahir Choudhary, Media Incharge Dr. Pardeep Mahotra, Pitanbar Sharma, Surinder Singh Gilli, Advocate Rajinder Singh Jamwal, Rajesh Gupta, Satish Shastri, and other senior party leaders and workers.

The BJP leadership expressed full confidence that Sunil Sharma will discharge his new responsibilities with dedication and organizational excellence, contributing meaningfully to the party's electoral success in Assam.

Public service camp organized



Ayushman Cards, Vaya Vandana Cards, Aadhaar card updating and ration card corrections held in a camp.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A one-day public service camp was organized today for the convenience of residents of Ward No. 3, providing essential services such as issuance of new Ayushman Cards, Vaya Vandana Cards, Aadhaar card updates and ration card corrections.

Although the camp was primarily arranged for Ward No.

3, residents from other wards also participated in large numbers, making the initiative highly successful.

People availed themselves of the facilities and expressed their gratitude to the Jammu Urban Development Agency (JUDA), the Social Welfare Department and the BJP team of Ward No. 3 for organizing the camp and ensuring smooth

delivery of services. The wide participation and positive response made the camp a noteworthy public outreach effort. Keeping in view the strong public demand, it has been informed that the camp will also be organized tomorrow, December 16 (Tuesday), 2025, from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM, for the benefit of more residents.

Former Councillor Narottam Sharma was present during the camp along with senior BJP workers of Ward No. 3, including Kuldeep Sharma, Saroj Gupta, Booth President Sanjay Abrol, Sanjay Mengo, Pawan Sharma, Rajinder, Pandit Rajkumar Sharma and Akhil Gupta. Officers from the JUDA Department, including Rajni Chhibber and Ruby Dutta, also graced the occasion.

Sunil Sharma's organizational strength to boost BJP's Assam poll strategy: Billawaria

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The senior leadership of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Jammu and Kashmir, led by Baldev Singh Billawaria, General Secretary, J&K BJP, on Monday felicitated Sunil Sharma, Leader of Opposition in the J&K Legislative Assembly, on his nomination as Election Co-Incharge for the upcoming Assam Assembly Elections by the BJP high command.

Baldev Singh Billawaria congratulated Sunil Sharma and praised his unwavering dedication, discipline and deep commitment to the party's ideology and organizational growth. He said that Sharma has consistently dis-



General Secretary J&K BJP, Baldev Singh Billawaria felicitating Sunil Sharma, Leader of Opposition.

played sharp political acumen, strategic clarity and an exceptional ability to coordinate party workers at the grassroots level. His political journey, Billawaria noted, has been marked by tireless

hard work, organizational loyalty and a strong connect with party cadre across regions.

Highlighting his experience, Billawaria said that Sunil Sharma has successful-

ly handled challenging political situations with maturity and foresight, making him a natural choice for this important responsibility. He expressed confidence that Sharma's disciplined and result-oriented approach, coupled with his hands-on, organizational style, would significantly strengthen the BJP's election preparedness in Assam.

Billawaria further stated that Sharma's leadership qualities and organizational skills will energize party workers and help effectively translate the BJP's vision and policies into strong on-ground action. He added that Sharma's contribution would play a vital role in further

Two-week online refresher course in commerce and management inaugurated at JU

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Postgraduate Department of Commerce, University of Jammu (JU), in collaboration with the Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Centre (MMTC), JU, inaugurated a two-week online refresher course in Commerce and Management on Monday.

The programme aims to enhance the professional skills, pedagogical competencies and subject knowledge of educators and professionals in the field of commerce and management.

The refresher course is being conducted from December 15 to 29, 2025, over a period of 15 days, with four sessions daily, each of 1.5 hours duration. A total of 124 participants from various institutions and universities across different states of India have enrolled in the programme.

Eminent academicians and experts from across the country have been invited to deliver sessions, ensuring a rich and transformative learning experience. The course covers a wide range of contemporary and emerging topics, including the Indian model of sustainable development, business intelligence, the transformational impact of artificial intelligence, Bloom's taxonomy, innovative business models, research ethics and other relevant themes aligned with current academic and indus-

try needs.

Prof. Neelu Rhometa, Chief Guest of the inaugural session, in her presidential address applauded the Department of Commerce and MMTC for organizing such an academically enriching programme. She emphasized the significance of experiential learning, the need for diverse perspectives in research and learning, and highlighted the growing importance of modern research practices.

Prof. Sandeep Pandita, Director, MMTC, University of Jammu, underscored the critical role of teacher training in achieving educational excellence and professional growth, while also highlighting the relevance of the Indian Knowledge System in contemporary education.

Prof. Alka Sharma delivered a presentation on the "Evolving Role of Faculty in the Higher Education System," focusing on NEP 2020 and the importance of bridging theory and practice. Prof. Jeevan Jyoti, Head, Department of Commerce, welcomed the participants. Prof. Hardeep Chahal spoke on research ethics, while Prof. Tarsem Lal, Course Coordinator, presented the vote of thanks. Dr. Harleen Kaur, Deputy Coordinator, briefed participants on course guidelines and concluded the session.

From Nehru to Sonia, Congress built on 'Vote Chori': Gaurav

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: BJP Spokesperson and Convener, International Affairs, Gaurav Gupta, on Sunday launched a sharp attack on the Congress, dismissing its allegations of "vote chori" as a ploy to mislead the nation and cover its own history of electoral manipulation. Gupta stated that Congress' recent Delhi rally was not aimed at electoral reforms or protecting democracy, but at creating confusion, shielding illegal infiltrators, and diverting attention from facts highlighted by Union Home Minister Amit Shah in Parliament.

Gupta recalled historical instances of alleged electoral malpractices by Congress, including Jawaharlal Nehru becoming Prime Minister despite losing the internal vote to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and Indira Gandhi's 1975 Rae



Bareilly election being set aside by the Allahabad High Court, leading to the Emergency. He also cited pending legal scrutiny regarding Sonia Gandhi's voter registration before acquiring Indian citizenship, asserting that such instances exemplify the "most blatant form of vote chori." Accusing Congress of attacking constitutional institutions after electoral defeats, Gupta criticized their repeated excuses targeting EVMs, the SIR process, and others, instead of introspection. Defending the Special

Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise, he highlighted its success in Bihar, where over one crore voters participated and record voter turnout was observed.

Gupta challenged Rahul Gandhi to approach the courts if he believed there were irregularities in Bihar elections, asserting that genuine faith in democracy requires legal remedies, not street protests. He dismissed Congress claims of large rally attendance at Ramlila Maidan, noting the venue's limited capacity and symbolic importance rather than reflecting public support.

Concluding, Gupta emphasized India's resilient democracy and warned that Congress' theatrics would not succeed in misleading people or defaming institutions. "The truth is clear," he said, "If there is any real 'vote chori' in this country, it is the Congress."