

Integrated infra approach brings dynamism to J&K's development in past 5 yrs: LG

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha on Saturday laid the foundation stone to build 320 houses completely damaged during flash-floods and land-slides in Reasi District.

Funded entirely by High-range Rural Development Society (HRDS India) at an estimated cost of Rs 32 crore, the initiative will provide 320 affected families in Reasi with modern, prefabricated "Smart Houses" without any burden on the government exchequer.

Earlier, the Lieutenant Governor had laid the foundation stones for 1,869 houses for families affected due to Pakistani Shelling during Operation Sindoor and recent natural calamities in eight districts including Kishtwar, Rajouri, Poonch, Udhampur, Ramban, Jammu, Kathua, and Samba.

The Lieutenant Governor praised Swami Atma Nambi, President HRDS-India and all the members of the NGO for their selfless contribution.

The Lieutenant Governor stated that, with the help of HRDS India, our vision is to ensure that no family affected due to natural calamity remains weak and disadvantaged.

"Houses for affected families are not just walls and roofs but they are embodiment of dreams and aspirations and foundation for quality living and personal growth for family members

I see this movement as a new revolution and a new model for the country where needy families are being taken care of without involving government money. It gives us a powerful Mantra that all should work together for the common good of the UT of J&K and its people," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The noble initiative features state-of-the-art, efficient, modern, resilient, and technologically advanced three-bedroom 'Smart Houses'. These houses are slated for completion within just six months of foundation work and include dedicated facilities such as cowsheds to support rural livelihoods.

HRDS India will also provide extensive social security package for beneficiary families. This holistic support includes 15 years of free life insurance



LG Manoj Sinha laying foundation stone for construction of 320 houses for families affected due to flash-floods and land-slides in Reasi District.

and annual health check-ups for all family members. To ensure long-term sustainability, HRDS India will also provide maintenance of the houses for the next five years.

The Lieutenant Governor reiterated that it has been his sincere effort that entire J&K UT achieves speedy and all-round development.

"In the past five years, we had integrated physical, social, and digital components to create best infrastructure while prioritizing a people-first approach to provide dynamism to the development of UT of Jammu Kashmir," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor also highlighted numerous infrastructure projects initiated over the last few years aimed at enhancing connectivity and improving the ease of living of the people of Reasi District.

Addressing the long pending demands, the Lieutenant Governor assured that work on underground Sewerage System for Katra town will commence within the next six months. Master Plan for Katra is currently in its final stages and is slated for approval. Efforts are also being intensified for establishment of the Inter-modal Station, he said.

The Lieutenant Governor lauded the CEO of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board and the entire team for their dedicated service and effective response during rescue and relief operations.

He shared the series of key initiatives undertaken by the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board.

"The construction of the

Shankaracharya Temple in Katra, a Rs 30 crore project is designed to enhance the spiritual landscape while boosting local economic opportunities. This follows the Board's successful completion of five temples in Reasi last year, with another five temples.

The Board has made the promotion of Sanskrit and Vedic education a top priority. This is highlighted by a Rs 1.5 crore funding grant to Kathua's Chudamani Sanskrit Santhan Nyas and ongoing support for various Sanskrit and Ved Pathshallas and Gurukuls.

The Board's Gurukul has achieved national distinction. The sustained efforts have also earned the Shrine Board numerous national level awards for environmental excellence.

The Board has procured Rs 22 crore worth of products from local Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in Reasi and surrounding areas, with plans to scale this partnership to Rs 50 crore.

The Shrine Board remains dedicated to community service, undertaking the reconstruction of 15 schools damaged by recent floods and spending Rs 12 crore over the past seven years into the development of villages neighboring the Holy Shrine.

The construction of helipads at Katra and Shiv Khori, at Rs 27 crore, is in its final stages. These facilities, alongside the recently completed redevelopment of Shiv Khori, will soon be dedicated to the pilgrims to ensure a seamless pilgrimage experience. International Museum of the

Goddess is also coming up in Katra," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor highlighted several pilgrim-centric measures taken by the Shrine Board. The insurance cover for pilgrims has been increased from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 10 lakh. Furthermore, the Shrine Board continues to prioritize the health of devotees, spending approximately Rs 4 crore annually toward medical treatment of pilgrims, he said.

The Lieutenant Governor also underscored the Shrine Board's commitment to the welfare of Baridar families.

Around 777 families received assistance for the marriage of their daughters. Under Kanjak Samridhi Yojana, 565 young girls were provided with long-term financial security totaling Rs 9.49 crore.

Under Girl Child Adoption Scheme, 154 girls from Baridar families benefited from an outlay of Rs 3.2 crore, he further said. Shri Saraf Singh Nag, Chairman, District Development Council Reasi; Baldev Raj Sharma, Member of

Legislative Assembly; Shri Mata Vaishno Devi; Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Bhim Sen Tuti, IGP Jammu; Sachin Kumar Vaishya, CEO Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board; Sarah Rizvi, DIG Udhampur-Reasi Range; Nidhi Malik, Deputy Commissioner Reasi; Vandana Pal, Associate Administrator; HRDS India, senior officers of civil and police administration and representatives of various social and political organisations attended the foundation stone laying ceremony.



Kashmiri Pandit legacy central to Kashmir's composite culture: Dr Jitendra

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Expressing concern over the continuing dilution of the community's cultural and linguistic ethos, Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh has stressed the need for sustained efforts to preserve the Kashmiri Pandit legacy and emphasised that preserving the community's cultural, linguistic and civilisational ethos is essential for sustaining Kashmir's composite culture, which remains incomplete without the Kashmiri Pandits.

The Minister said that the Modi government has taken decisive and sustained action against terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir over the past eleven years, resulting in a significant decline in terror incidents, stone-pelting and targeted killings. He said this reflects strong political will, and marks a clear departure from earlier approaches that lacked firmness in dealing with terrorism.

Dr Singh was speaking at a programme organised here to mark the death anniversary of Pandit Prem Nath Bhat, a noted lawyer and journalist who was killed by terrorists on 27 December, 1989. Paying tributes to Pandit Bhat, the Minister said his sacrifice symbolises the suffering endured by the Kashmiri Pandit community due to terrorism and targeted violence.

Dr Jitendra said terrorism inflicted grave human suffering and severely disrupted the social harmony of Kashmir. He noted that for several years, the human rights of victims of



Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh addressing 'Chetna Divas' to mark death anniversary of journalist Pandit Prem Nath Bhat, at Jammu on Saturday.

terrorism, particularly Kashmiri Pandits, were overlooked due to a selective and inconsistent definition of terrorism. This, he said, aggravated the injustice faced by those who were forced to leave their homes and abandon their ancestral roots. He said the Kashmiri Pandit community has demonstrated extraordinary resilience and an inherent capacity to survive and thrive despite decades of displacement and adversity.

Highlighting Kashmir's centuries-old composite and pluralistic culture, Dr Jitendra said Kashmiri Pandits have been an inseparable part of the Valley's civilisational fabric. Their contributions to education, literature, administration and social values provided a stabilising and rational influence that benefitted the entire society. He expressed concern over the continuing dilution of cultural and linguistic ethos and stressed the need for sustained efforts to preserve the Kashmiri Pandit legacy. The Minister emphasised that preserving the community's cultural,

linguistic and civilisational ethos is essential for sustaining Kashmir's composite culture, which remains incomplete without the Kashmiri Pandits.

Dr Jitendra assured that the government is sincere, trustworthy and fully committed to addressing the long-pending demands of the Kashmiri Pandit community. He said he would ensure that these demands are taken up and addressed to the maximum extent possible. He also suggested that the community undertake a structured exercise to compile demands already met by the government, and clearly identify the remaining issues. This consolidated representation, he said, could then be submitted to the Ministry of Home Affairs for consideration.

Dr Singh further noted that the government's approach aims not only at rehabilitation but also at preserving the cultural and social fabric of the Valley, ensuring that the Kashmiri Pandit community's contributions are recognised and sustained for future generations.

IGP Jammu reviews ICCC functioning at Katra; Emphasizes technology-driven policing

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

REASI: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Jammu Zone, Bhim Sen Tuti, on Saturday visited Police Station Katra and conducted a comprehensive review of the functioning of the Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC). During the visit, the IGP inspected the overall implementation, operational efficiency and real-time monitoring mechanisms of the ICCC, with a focus on its role in strengthening surveillance, coordination and response



IGP Jammu Zone, Bhim Sen Tuti chairing a meeting.

systems.

The IGP Jammu underscored the importance of continuous capacity build-

ing and directed the Officers to organise regular and structured training programmes for ICCC

staff. He emphasized that optimal utilisation of technology and skilled manpower is essential to enhance operational effectiveness, improve response time and ensure seamless monitoring and coordination.

During the visit, the IGP also interacted with Probationer SIs, guiding them on contemporary and technology-enabled policing practices. He laid strong emphasis on the effective use of modern technological

tools in investigation to ensure timely, transparent and professional handling of cases, in line with evolving policing requirements.

The meeting was attended by DIG Udhampur-Reasi Range Sarah Rizvi, SSP Reasi Paramvir Singh, SSP Traffic Aadil Ahmed, JKPS; Addl. SP Katra Vipran Chandran, JKPS; Addl. SP Reasi Sh Iftikhar Ahmed, JKPS; SDPO Katra Dr. Bishm Dubey, JKPS; and SHO P/S Katra Insp. Ranjeet Singh Rao.

Protests outside Lok Bhavan in Jammu over medical college admission row

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Dozens of protesters on Saturday gathered outside Lok Bhavan, demanding revocation of the MBBS admission list of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Institute of Medical Excellence in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi.

The protest was organised by Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Sangharsh Samiti, a recently-formed conglomeration of various right-wing organizations.

JK BJP's women activists and several trade leaders also joined the protest.

The protest led to the blocking of the main road outside Lok Bhavan, resulting in traffic snarls on adjoining roads and causing hardship to commuters for more than one-and-a-half hours.

Police personnel were deployed in strength outside the Lok Bhavan to maintain law and order and regulate traffic, and a tough time to push back protesters who tried to move inside the complex.

"We will continue our protest till the resolution of our genuine



Protesters under Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Sangharsh Samiti protesting at Jammu.

demands which are related to our faith. We are not against students of any particular religion, we just want the seats in the medical college to be reserved for Hindu students alone," Samiti convener Colonel Sukhvir Singh Mankotia told reporters.

Mankotia said the government should close the medical college if there is any problem in reserving

the seats for the Hindu students.

The controversy began after admissions for the inaugural MBBS batch of 50 students were completed through the NEET merit list last month. This batch includes 42 Muslim candidates, mostly from Kashmir, seven Hindu students from Jammu and one Sikh candidate.

NATF Chairman Vishal Chopra meets BDA CEO, pushes for new tourist destinations in Bhadarwah

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

BHADARWAH: Chairman of the National Anti Terrorism Front (NATF), Vishal Chopra, on Saturday held a meeting with Sanjeev Sharma, CEO, Bhadarwah Development Authority (BDA), to discuss measures for strengthening tourism infrastructure in the region.

Several local Sarpanchs, who are also members of NATF, were present during the meeting.

During the interaction, the sarpanchs proposed



Chairman NATF, Vishal Chopra meeting with Sanjeev Sharma, CEO BDA.

the development of four to five new tourist destinations in and around Bhadarwah town. They emphasized that the initiative would help attract

tourists from outside the region, generate employment opportunities, boost local trade, and significantly strengthen the rural economy.

Responding positively, CEO BDA Sanjeev Sharma assured the delegation that the proposals would be examined and taken up on priority. He reiterated the Authority's commitment towards the planned development and overall progress of Bhadarwah.

The assurance was warmly received by the local representatives and residents, who expressed satisfaction over the proactive and development-oriented approach of the BDA leadership.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

LEH: The creation of five new districts in the Union Territory of Ladakh has been described as a historic step towards decentralised governance, equitable development and administrative justice, particularly for people living in far-flung and border areas. The move is expected to bring governance closer to the people, improve access to essential services and address long-standing developmental imbalances arising from Ladakh's unique geography and harsh climatic conditions.

This was stated by the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, during an interaction with a delegation led by Councillor Chairperson Stanzin Lakpa, which called on him at the Lieutenant Governor's Secretariat in Leh.

The delegation expressed gratitude to the UT Administration for announcing the creation of five new districts-Changthang, Zaskar, Nubra, Sham and Drass.

At the same time, they urged the administration to formally notify and operationalise the new districts in a time-bound manner so that people can begin to receive tangible administrative and developmental benefits.

Highlighting the challenges faced by residents of these regions, the delegation pointed to vast distances, limited administrative outreach and extreme weather conditions. They emphasized that the establishment of full-fledged districts would strengthen grassroots governance, improve delivery of public services,



LG Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta interacting with delegation.

enhance disaster response mechanisms and promote inclusive development, while also safeguarding Ladakh's rich cultural and ecological heritage. Giving a patient hearing, the Lieutenant Governor assured the delegation that the UT Administration is fully committed to fulfilling the aspirations of the people of Ladakh. He stated that necessary administrative, infrastructural and human resource frameworks are being put in place to ensure smooth implementation of the new districts.

Kavinder Gupta added that the Central Government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, remains deeply sensitive to the needs of people living in remote and border areas and is committed to Ladakh's holistic development.

The Lieutenant Governor reiterated that the creation of new districts aims to empower local communities, ensure balanced regional development and strengthen border area administration. He further stressed that stakeholder consultations would continue to ensure a smooth, people-centric transition. The Ladakh Ice Skating Association sought the

Hockey Championship. A delegation from Aryan Valley requested renaming their language from "Brokskat" to "Dadri-Arya" and its inclusion among Ladakh's state languages. Other delegations raised issues related to road infrastructure, education, recruitment in the Archaeology and Archives Department, and tourism development in Zaskar. The Lieutenant Governor assured all delegations that their concerns would be examined seriously, with continued efforts to strengthen infrastructure, protect culture and language, and expand opportunities for Ladakh's youth and sportspersons.

CONGRATULATIONS

Heartiest Congratulations to

Mr. Dhruv Singh Slathia
(S/o Shri Dinesh Singh Slathia and Smt. Neeraj Jamwal)
on being awarded the Gold Medal and Certificate of Distinction by Shri Manoj Sinha, Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of J&K and Chancellor of SMVD University, for his Outstanding performance in Academics (B. Tech. Civil Engineering) and Co-curricular/ Extra-curricular activities, at the 11th Convocation of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University, held on 27th December 2025.

With Best Wishes From:
Slathia Family, Gurha Slathia, Mandi Rajgarh & Presently residing at Roop Nagar, Jammu (Mob. No. 9419188583)