

LG unveils J&K Bank Calendar-2026

■ **STATE TIMES NEWS**
JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday unveiled J&K Bank's Wall and Table Calendars for the year 2026, at Lok Bhavan.

The Wall Calendar for 2026 is themed "Rivers of J&K and Ladakh", while the Table Calendar showcases the region's "Historic Places", reflecting the diversity of human heritage and natural wonders of UT of Jammu & Kashmir and UT of Ladakh.

The Lieutenant Governor appreciated the J&K Bank for selecting unique themes which will raise awareness about preserving ancient monuments, archaeological sites and traditions for future generations. He said society must come together to safeguard these priceless



LG Manoj Sinha unveiling J&K Bank's Wall and Table Calendars for the year 2026 at Lok Bhavan.

treasures. The Lieutenant Governor also emphasised on protecting earth's vital ecosystems. He said rivers in J&K UT are source of fresh water and they are also ensuring food security and supporting biodiversity conservation. The Lieutenant Governor called for community efforts to protect rivers and water bodies to build resilience against climate impacts in the future.

Amitava Chatterjee, Managing Director and CEO, Jammu & Kashmir Bank Limited briefed that the 2026 edition of J&K Bank's calendars honour the rivers that sustain life across the regions and the historic sites that define their shared legacy.

The calendar also features important public welfare initiatives such as Mission YUVA and PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, alongside J&K Bank's key products including Housing Loan, Car Loan, Personal Consumption Loan and Online Account Opening, reinforcing the Bank's role as a development partner and facilitator of people's aspirations.

Santosh D.Vaidya, Principal

Secretary, Finance Department; Dr. Mandeep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor; Sudhir Gupta, Executive Director, Sunit Kumar and Imtiaz Ahmad, Chief General Managers J&K Bank attended the unveiling ceremony.

Full Court Reference held to bid farewell to Justice Vinod Chatterji Koul



Full Court Reference being held to bid farewell to Justice Vinod Chatterji Koul, Judge of HC J&K and Ladakh.

■ **STATE TIMES NEWS**
JAMMU: A Full Court Reference was held on Tuesday in the Court Room of the Chief Justice at the Jammu Wing of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh to bid farewell to Justice Vinod Chatterji Koul, Judge of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, on demitting office upon attaining the age of superannuation.

The Full Court Reference was convened in accordance with the long-standing conventions and institutional traditions of the High Court.

The Reference was attended by Chief Justice Arun Palli and Justice Sanjeev Kumar; Justice Sindhu Sharma, Justice Rajnesh Oswal, Justice Sanjay Dhar, Justice Javed Iqbal Wani, Justice Rahul Bharti, Justice Moksha Khajuria Kazmi, Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal, Justice Rajesh Sekhri, Justice Mohd. Yousef Wani, Justice Sanjay Parihar, and Justice Shahzad Azeem along with the spouses of the Judges of the High Court.

The proceedings were also attended by former Chief Justices and former Judges of the High Court of J&K and Ladakh as well as from Delhi High Court; senior officers of the civil administration and

police, including the Director General of Police, Jammu & Kashmir; Secretary, Department of Science and Technology, Secretary, Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs; Inspector Generals of Police, Jammu, as well as Crime, Senior Additional Advocate General; Deputy Solicitors General of India at Jammu and Srinagar; President, Jammu & Kashmir High Court Bar Association, Jammu; Senior Advocates; Principal District and Sessions Judge, Jammu; Judicial Officers; officers of the Registry and family members of Justice Vinod Chatterji Koul. Officers and Officials and large number of Advocates of the High Court from Srinagar Wing joined the proceedings through virtual mode.

The farewell address was delivered by Monika Kohli, Senior Additional Advocate General, who lauded the dedication, judicial acumen and steadfast commitment of Justice Koul to upholding the rule of law. She observed that the tenure of Justice Koul as a Judge of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh was marked by judicial prudence, fairness and a deep sense of justice, with particular emphasis on ensuring access to

justice for the poor and the marginalized. She described Justice Koul as a gentleman par excellence and highlighted his positive approach, institutional contributions and respectful conduct towards members of the Bar.

Nirmal Kotwal, President, Jammu & Kashmir High Court Bar Association, Jammu, in his farewell address, commended the distinguished judicial service rendered by Justice Vinod Chatterji Koul and highlighted his unwavering commitment to fairness, justice and constitutional values.

The Chief Justice in his farewell speech observed that retirement marks not an end, but a transition, with a Judge's bond to the Court enduring through values, judgments and institutional contribution. He acknowledged Justice Koul's perceptible contribution, quiet humour and commitment to the Bench during his tenure. Emphasis was laid on the unseen sacrifices of judicial life and the vital support of the Judge's family in enabling such service. Wishing Justice Koul health and fulfillment in the years ahead, the Chief Justice also extended New Year greetings to the entire Bar and Bench.

Justice Vinod Chatterji Koul,

in his response, expressed profound gratitude to the Chief Justice, brother and sister Judges, members of the Bar; Judicial Officers, officers of the Registry and court staff for their cooperation and support throughout his tenure. He stated that he was deeply moved by the warmth and affection extended to him and emphasized that effective dispensation of justice is possible only through harmonious cooperation between the Bench and the Bar. He also appreciated the legal acumen, professional competence and commitment of the advocates of the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh and placed on record his appreciation for the dedication and assistance of his personal staff.

The proceedings of the Full Court Reference were conducted by M. K. Sharma, Registrar General, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, ensuring the smooth, orderly and dignified conduct of the event.

Upon conclusion of the proceedings, Justice Vinod Chatterji Koul was accorded a Guard of Honor by the security personnel of the High Court as a mark of respect and recognition of his distinguished and meritorious judicial service.



Amit Sharma moderates 2nd UTLCCC Meeting chairs by CS Ladakh; Key decisions taken on Census 2027

■ **STATE TIMES NEWS**
LEH/JAMMU: Amit Sharma, IAS, Director Census Operations (DCO) and Director Citizen Registration (DCR), Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs for the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, on Tuesday moderated the 2nd UT Level Census Coordination Committee (UTLCCC) Meeting for UT Ladakh. The meeting was held in hybrid mode and was chaired by Pawan Kotwal, Chief Secretary, UT Ladakh. It was attended by Administrative Secretaries, Deputy Commissioners of Leh and Kargil, and senior officers of the UT Administration and Directorate of Census Operations.

During the meeting, Amit Sharma made a comprehensive presentation on the upcoming Census 2027, which will be India's first fully digital and paperless census. He informed that the administrative jurisdiction for conduct of Census 2027 activities would be frozen by December 31, 2025. In this regard, the Chief Secretary



Amit Sharma, DCO and DCR, GoI, MHA for UTs of J&K and Ladakh, chairing 2nd UT Level Census Coordination Committee Meeting.

directed the Deputy Commissioners of Leh and Kargil to submit the requisite information within the prescribed timelines, following which a Gazette Notification would be issued by the UT Administration.

Amit Sharma also requested the UT Ladakh Administration to appoint the required census staff for smooth conduct of census operations, followed by an early Gazette Notification, in line with other States and Union Territories. The proposal was agreed upon and approved during the meeting.

Highlighting the unique features of Census 2027, Sharma stated that it would include a self-enumeration facility for citizens through a dedicated

mobile application, faster data processing through a robust digital platform, and the introduction of "Census as a Service (CaaS)" for the first time. He also informed that an additional column on caste would be included, making the census more comprehensive and meaningful.

A major decision taken during the meeting was regarding the timeline for census activities in Ladakh. Chief Secretary Pawan Kotwal announced that the House Listing Operation (HLO) would be conducted in June 2026, followed by Population Enumeration (PE) in September 2026, keeping in view Ladakh's categorisation as a snow-bound region, as per Government of India notification.

Amit Sharma further assured that the Ministry of Home Affairs, through the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, would provide due remuneration to all census functionaries, along with necessary IT infrastructure, vehicles, POL, technical experts and support staff throughout the 18-month census period.

Before the conclusion of the meeting, Amit Sharma expressed gratitude to Chief Secretary Pawan Kotwal for chairing the meeting and clearing crucial decisions on the eve of his retirement. Participants also extended best wishes to the Chief Secretary for his post-retirement life.

Crime Branch Jammu (EOW) sets new record in 2025, disposes unprecedented number of economic offence cases

■ **STATE TIMES NEWS**
JAMMU: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Crime Branch Jammu has delivered a landmark performance in 2025 by disposing of a record number of cases and complaints, restoring crores of rupees to victims, and significantly strengthening the fight against economic crimes across the Jammu Zone.

An official spokesperson of Crime Branch Jammu said that the Wing registered 67 new FIRs during 2025, the highest in the last 25 years, and successfully disposed of a record number of cases involving serious and complex financial offences. "The monetary value of cases charge-sheeted in courts during the year is approximately Rs 20 crore. This reflects the scale of financial wrongdoing detected and addressed by EOW Jammu," the official stated.

During the year, 22 accused persons were arrested in different FIRs. Multiple EOW

teams were deployed across Jammu Zone and in other states to trace, search, and arrest offenders. "These investigations involved meticulous scrutiny of documentary and digital evidence and close coordination with government departments, banks, and financial institutions. The timely disposal of these cases demonstrates the professionalism and dedication of our officers," the spokesperson added.

EOW Jammu also emerged as a strong pillar of public grievance redressal, resolving 1,186 complaints during 2025 after careful factual and legal examination. The Wing handled a wide range of cases including land frauds, high-profile cheating, impersonation, visa frauds, misappropriation of government funds, and misuse of official position, with special focus on illegal job consultancies operating in the region. "Organised networks of land brokers, habitual offenders, and pro-

fessional fraudsters were identified and booked under law, sending a strong deterrent message," the official said.

To further strengthen investigations, Photo Sections of EOW Jammu established across districts provided vital photographic evidence. These units covered 3,599 crime scenes in cases registered at various police stations, ensuring accurate documentation of crucial evidence. Working under the guidance of Crime Headquarters J&K, EOW Jammu also conducted awareness on new criminal laws and thanked government departments, banks, and the private sector for timely information sharing. "EOW Jammu remains committed to protecting public trust. We urge citizens to stay vigilant and promptly report economic offences for a transparent and secure economic environment," the spokesperson concluded.

Bangladesh's former PM Khaleda Zia dies

Modi mourns death, Jaishankar to attend funeral X

■ **STATE TIMES NEWS**
DHAKA: Bangladesh's first woman Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, who played a major role in restoring democracy after a period of tumultuous military rule and dominated the country's politics for decades, died on Tuesday after a prolonged illness. She was 80. "My mother is no more," Zia's elder son and Bangladesh Nationalist Party's (BNP) acting Chairman Trique Rahman said.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will represent India at the funeral of former Bangladesh prime minister Khaleda Zia in Dhaka. Prime Minister Narendra Modi mourned Zia's death, saying as the first woman premier of Bangladesh, her important contributions towards the development of the country, as well as India-Bangladesh relations, will always be remembered.

Modi also recalled his "warm meeting"

with her in Dhaka in 2015. "We hope that her vision and legacy will continue to guide our partnership," he said.

Zia was a three-time prime minister and held the position of chairperson of BNP. Her personal physician, Dr AZM Zahid Hossain, said she breathed her last early on Tuesday while receiving treatment at Evercare Hospital in Dhaka.

Zia's family members, including her elder son Tarique Rahman, his wife Zubaida Rahman, and their daughter Zaima, were present at the hospital. BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir was also at the hospital.

Her party said she passed away at 6:00 am local time, "just after Fajr prayer".

Zia's funeral will be held on Wednesday after Zohr prayers at Parliament's South Plaza and the adjoining Manik Mia Avenue, Law Advisor Asif Nazrul said.

She will later be laid to rest with full state honours beside the grave of her husband, former president and BNP founder Ziaur Rahman, at Zia Uddin in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in Dhaka, Nazrul told reporters after a special meeting of the interim government's Advisory Council at the state guest house Jamuna.

In a televised address to the nation, Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus announced a three-day state mourning and a one-day general holiday.

"At the death of former prime minister Begum Khaleda Zia, I declare three days of state mourning and a one-day general holiday tomorrow on the day of her Namaz-e-Janaza (funeral prayers)," he said.

Yunus urged people to maintain discipline and order during the funeral prayers and the observance of mourning across the country.

CS reviews prospects for eco-tourism promotion, MAP cultivation in J&K

■ **STATE TIMES NEWS**
JAMMU: Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo on Tuesday chaired two separate high-level meetings to review initiatives undertaken by the Union Territory administration for the promotion of eco-tourism and the commercial cultivation of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAP) across Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting on eco-tourism was attended by the Commissioner Secretary, Forests; Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF); Chief Wildlife Warden; Managing Director, Forest Development Corporation (FDC); Director, Remote Sensing, along with other senior officers of the Forest Department.

During the deliberations, the CS emphasised the need for a comprehensive, well-planned and integrated approach to eco-tourism development. He advised the department to identify destinations capable of offering multiple eco-tourism activities so that visitors can choose experiences based on their interests and length of stay, thereby improving both visitor satisfaction and economic returns.

The role of the Forest Development Corporation in strengthening eco-tourism infrastructure and services was



Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo chairing a meeting.

discussed in detail. PCCF Suresh Kumar Gupta highlighted successful eco-tourism models adopted in other states, including the Ranjit Sagar Lake initiative in Punjab and similar projects in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. These models, he said, were examined for possible replication in Jammu and Kashmir after suitable local adaptation.

Commissioner Secretary, Forests, Sheetal Nanda observed that the eco-tourism initiative is still at a formative stage and offers significant scope for improvement in planning, institutionalisation and execution. She underlined that the initiative seeks sustainable utilisation of the region's rich natural resources while ensuring conservation of forests and wildlife. She also stressed the importance of community participation, livelihood generation and preservation of local cul-

ture as key pillars of eco-tourism development.

It was informed that the eco-tourism initiative is expected to generate substantial employment and livelihood opportunities, particularly for rural and forest-dependent communities. The initiative also aims to promote high-quality, high-value eco-tourism and establish a trusted eco-tourism brand, positioning Jammu and Kashmir as a leading sustainable tourism destination.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary also rolled out the mobile application 'e-Bahak', developed by BISAG-N, for online grant of grazing permissions to nomadic pastoral communities of Jammu and Kashmir. The trilingual application, available in Hindi, English and Urdu, is fully digital with an integrated payment gateway, eliminating manual intervention

Later in the day, the Chief Secretary chaired another meeting to discuss strategies for promoting the commercial cultivation of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants across the Union Territory. He called for a clear vision plan with well-defined objectives, prepared in consultation with market stakeholders, including pharmaceutical companies. He directed that commercial cultivation should begin with a few popular and locally suitable MAP varieties, followed by gradual diversification after the development of scientific packages of practices.

Emphasising collaboration with research institutions such as SKUAST and CSIR-IIIM, Jammu, he stressed the need for time-bound milestones, development of processing facilities and dissemination of advanced knowledge and infrastructure support.

Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture Production Department, Shailendra Kumar, highlighted that farmers' profitability must remain the core objective of the strategy, while Vice Chancellors of SKUAST Jammu and Kashmir and the Director of CSIR-IIIM outlined their respective roles in scaling up MAP cultivation across Jammu and Kashmir.

Chief Secretary Designate Ashish Kundra calls on LG Kavinder Gupta



Ashish Kundra, Chief Secretary designate calling on Lieutenant Governor Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta.

■ **STATE TIMES NEWS**
LEH: Ashish Kundra, IAS, Chief Secretary designate, today paid a courtesy call on the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, at the LG Secretariat, Leh.

During the meeting, the Lt Governor and the Chief Secretary exchanged views on key administrative priori-

ties and discussed matters related to governance and development in the Union Territory.

The Lt Governor extended his best wishes to Ashish Kundra on his new responsibility and expressed confidence in his role in further strengthening efficient administration in Ladakh.

Ladakh Administration facilitates safe evacuation of stranded passengers

LEH: Acting on the directions of Lieutenant Governor Kavinder Gupta, the UT Ladakh Administration successfully facilitated the safe evacuation and passage of all passengers stranded at Sonamarg and Minamarg through the Zoji-La Pass. The operation was carried out despite challenging weather and terrain conditions.

The rescue and evacuation process was efficiently coordinated by the Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Drass, Vishal Atri, in close cooperation with officials of the Ladakh Police and the District Administration, Kargil. Their timely intervention ensured the safe movement of all affected passengers without any untoward incident.

Meanwhile, Zoji-La Pass has been closed due to an adverse weather forecast. The general public has been strongly advised to strictly follow the travel advisories issued by Traffic Police Ladakh while planning their journeys.

Lieutenant Governor Kavinder Gupta appreciated the coordinated efforts of the SDM Drass, district administration, and police personnel for their prompt response, dedication, and commitment to public safety under difficult conditions.