

CM reviews Mission YUVA; calls for stronger synergy to boost youth entrepreneurship

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JAMMU: Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah on Wednesday chaired a review meeting to assess the progress of Mission YUVA, a flagship initiative aimed at fostering entrepreneurship and employment opportunities for the youth across Jammu and Kashmir.

Speaking at the meeting, the Chief Minister said that the real strength of Mission YUVA lies in the success stories emerging from the ground. "Wherever we find a speed breaker or friction, we will remove it swiftly," he said, emphasizing that seamless coordination between departments and banks is essential to ensure that young entrepreneurs succeed.

He underlined that although the Mission is still in its early operational phase, the results are encouraging. "We have been discussing this for some time. The actual operational duration of these schemes is barely a few months, and in any scheme, that is a very short life



Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah chairing a review meeting of Mission YUVA.

cycle. The first year or so is spent in learning and fine-tuning. To that extent, with more than 10,000 sanctions and around 600-670 disbursements, I believe the success of Mission YUVA will feed on itself," he said.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Secretary Labour & Employment Kumar Rajeev Ranjan, MD & CEO J&K Bank Amitava Chatterjee, vice

chancellors of several universities, Deputy Commissioners, Mission Director Mission YUVA, Director JKEDI, MD JKRLM, Directors of IIT and IIM Jammu, and representatives of BISAG, NABARD and other concerned institutions.

Outstation officers participated via video conferencing.

Earlier, Secretary Labour & Employment made a detailed presentation on the implementation status of Mission YUVA from its conception to its evolution till date. He briefed the meeting about UDYAM Jagriti, a compre-

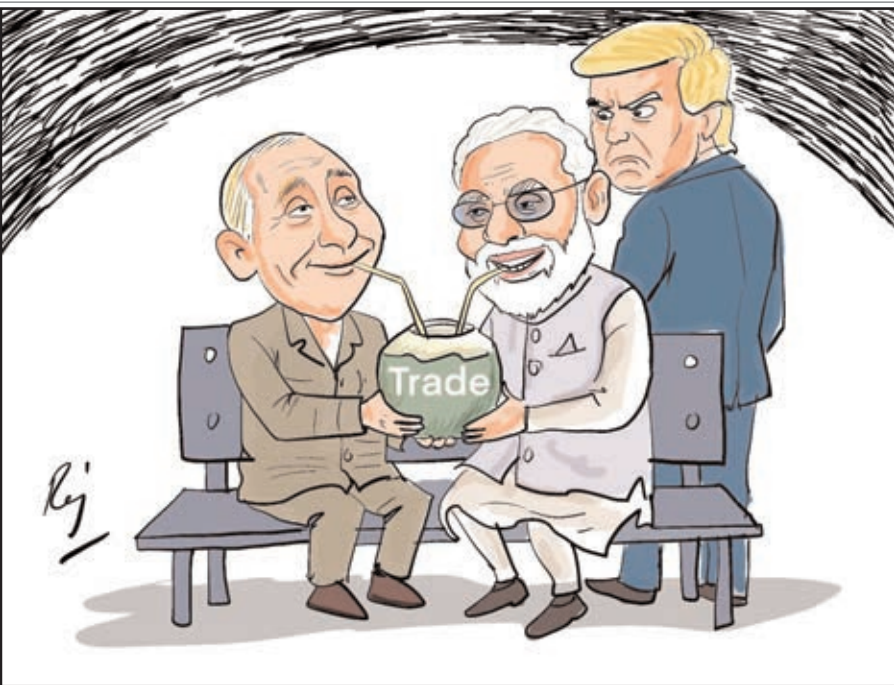
hensive awareness campaign, outlining its key features, phases and its role in amplifying success stories, objectives of district-level conferences and workshops, social media outreach and the dedicated mobile application.

The meeting discussed, threadbare, the next steps required to ensure the Mission's successful implementation. It was informed that over 60,000 applications were received within just six months of the scheme's launch.

The Chief Minister reviewed

district-wise data of applications received over the last two years, the status of applications at various processing levels, average timelines for verification, week-on-week sanctioning trends by banks, progress at registration cells, training coverage and trainee monitoring.

J&K Bank also made a detailed presentation on the status of loan sanctions under Mission YUVA. It was informed that from the inception of the scheme, J&K Bank has sanctioned 10,172 cases, of which 9,393 have been collateral-free, reflecting strong institutional support for young entrepreneurs. The Chief Minister directed all departments, financial institutions and implementation agencies to work in synergy and maintain momentum to ensure timely sanctions, smooth disbursement and robust monitoring mechanisms, enabling Mission YUVA to deliver transformative outcomes for the youth of Jammu and Kashmir.



LMD concludes 2-day training programme at Excise & Taxation Institute Nagrota



LMD J&K officials at training programme.

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JAMMU: The Legal Metrology Department, J&K, under the supervision of Controller Shiv Kumar Gupta, concluded a two-day training programme held at the Excise and Taxation Institute Nagrota. Officers from both Jammu and Kashmir divisions participated in the programme, which focused on strengthening enforcement capacity, enhancing administrative efficiency and updating field staff on key legal and technical frameworks.

The technical sessions covered amendments in PCR

and GFR, the role of DDOs, GeM procedures, e-Commerce regulations and emerging areas such as Artificial Intelligence and Cyber Security. The sessions were conducted by experts from the Legal Metrology Department, IIT Jammu and the J&K Police. The programme featured expert-led deliberations, interactive discussions and knowledge-sharing sessions aimed at improving practical understanding and field-level implementation.

The Institute emphasised practical learning, teamwork and the adoption of modern

systems to strengthen service delivery and promote transparency. A dedicated session on stress management was also organised to help officers improve workplace well-being and professional conduct. At the conclusion of the programme, Controller LMD distributed certificates among the participating officers, acknowledging their active participation and performance. The department reiterated its commitment to continuous capacity building, improved coordination, and stronger consumer protection across Jammu and Kashmir.

Complicated Cancer Surgery performed successfully in GMC Jammu

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In an era where compassion, skill and dedication define true medical excellence, the doctors of Government Medical College (GMC), Jammu continue to earn admiration for their unwavering commitment to saving lives. Their relentless service, professional brilliance and humanitarian spirit have strengthened public trust and transformed countless families, particularly through exemplary teamwork in complex and high-risk cases.

A shining example of this commitment was recently demonstrated by Dr. Sandeep Bhat, Assistant Professor and renowned Laparoscopic Gastrointestinal Oncology Surgeon, Surgical Unit-5, GMC Jammu.

Trained at Medanta Hospital,

Gurgaon, Dr. Bhat accomplished a remarkable feat by successfully performing a major cancer surgery-gastrectomy-on an 85-year-old patient diagnosed with gastric carcinoma that had also spread to the gallbladder. A massive tumour weighing nearly three-quarters of a kilogram was removed en bloc along with the stomach, gallbladder and part of the liver to achieve a complete R0 resection, a procedure demanding exceptional precision, teamwork and advanced laparoscopic skills. The surgery was carried out under the overall supervision of Dr. Mohd. Riaz, Professor and Senior Laparoscopic Surgeon, HOU Surgical Unit-5.

The patient had been bedridden for years due to multiple comorbidities, including chronic kidney disease,

diabetes requiring high insulin doses, hypertension, hypothyroidism, left bundle branch block and COPD. He had undergone repeated hospital admissions for upper gastrointestinal bleeding leading to severe anaemia. After thorough evaluation by a multidisciplinary team-cardiologist, nephrologist, pulmonologist, endocrinologist and anesthesiologist and detailed discussion in the tumour board, Dr. Bhat decided to proceed with surgery despite significant risks, especially as other hospitals had earlier expressed reluctance.

Following the successful operation by the surgical team-Dr. Bhat, Dr. Vikrant, Dr. Nair, Abhileve and the anaesthesia team led by Dr. Atri and Dr. Shagufta-the patient received meticulous critical care in the

Surgical ICU. When he suffered a massive heart attack five days later, timely interventions by Dr. Sanjeev Bhat, Senior Cardiologist; Dr. Raju Bhandari, Senior Nephrologist; and the ICU team led by Dr. Shruti proved lifesaving. Continuous monitoring, multiple infusions and coordinated management stabilized his condition.

Post-operative care by Dr. Kikali, Dr. Vanshaji and residents of Surgical Unit-5, along with anaesthesia residents, ensured steady recovery. The patient has since been discharged and is recuperating well at home. His family expressed deep gratitude and highlighted the exceptional services rendered at GMC Jammu, reaffirming the institution's reputation for compassionate and high-quality healthcare.

Constant efforts being made to create inclusive environment for SAPs across J&K: Sakeena

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JAMMU: Minister for Education, Social Welfare, Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo, reiterated the Government's firm commitment to safeguarding the rights and needs of Specially Abled Persons (SAPs), emphasising that the administration led by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is focused on building an inclusive, accessible and empowering environment across Jammu and Kashmir. She made these remarks while addressing a grand event at the Convention Centre to commemorate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, observed under the theme "Fostering disability-inclusive societies for advancing social progress." In her address, the Minister stressed that empowerment, dignity and equal opportunity form the core of all government initiatives aimed at improving the lives of persons with disabilities. She noted that continuous efforts are being made to provide better facilities, especially



Minister for Education, Sakeena Itoo addressing an event at Convention Centre, Jammu.

for Children with Special Needs (CWSNs), ensuring they receive a supportive educational atmosphere. Sakeena Itoo highlighted the importance of community involvement and inter-departmental coordination, calling for a collective and compassionate approach aligned with global standards of universal inclusion. She instructed the Education and Social Welfare departments to conduct surveys to document achievements of persons with disabilities, adding that such success stories must be showcased in public events to inspire others. The Minister lauded students from

various schools for their colourful cultural performances, urging them to remain strong, confident and undeterred by challenges. She reaffirmed that the present Government is "of the people and for the people" and remains committed to the upliftment and welfare of SAPs. Addressing the gathering, Minister for Youth Services & Sports, IT and Transport, Satish Sharma, said that equality must be upheld in every sector and assured that the Government is committed to providing equal opportunities for all specially abled individuals. He added that under NEP-

2020, education has been made compulsory for CWSNs. Earlier, Secretary School Education, Ram Niwas Sharma, highlighted the significance of the day, dedicated to promoting the rights and needs of persons with disabilities. Specially abled children presented captivating cultural performances in multiple languages, earning heartfelt appreciation from the audience. Sakeena Itoo also inspected stalls showcasing innovative creations by CWSNs, commending their creativity and assuring full government support.

Devyani Rana launches Youth Orientation Camp for Hotel Industry Careers in Nagrota Constituency

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: MLA Nagrota Devyani Rana on Wednesday inaugurated an Orientation and Training Camp aimed at empowering local youth and preparing them for employment opportunities in the hotel and hospitality industry across Jammu & Kashmir and other parts of the country. The programme has been organised in collaboration with ARC Hospitality, Jammu, as part of its ongoing efforts to enhance skill development and open corporate avenues for the younger generation.

Over 200 enthusiastic youth, aged 18 to 27, participated in the inaugural session. The selected candidates will undergo an intensive 45-day free training programme, covering essential hospitality skills, professional grooming, communication, and workplace readiness. After completion, eligible trainees will be facilitated for placement in reputed hotels



MLA Nagrota Devyani Rana with others at a programme.

within and outside the Union Territory.

Speaking on the occasion, Devyani Rana emphasized the need for youth to take proactive steps in upgrading their skills in line with the evolving demands of the global job market. She highlighted that the hospitality sector offers immense opportunities for growth, stability, and exposure.

"Today's world belongs to those who are willing to learn, adapt, and excel," Rana said. "Our youth must come forward, enhance their skill sets,

and confidently join the corporate world. With the right training and attitude, they can build rewarding careers not just in the UT but anywhere in the country. My vision is to see the youth of Nagrota and Jammu & Kashmir emerge as leaders, innovators, and professionals who contribute meaningfully to society."

She reiterated her commitment to supporting initiatives that bridge the gap between education and employability, ensuring that young people have access to training pro-

grammes that align with industry requirements.

Rana praised ARC Hospitality for creating a training and placement platform that nurtures talent and expands employment opportunities for local youth.

Also speaking on the occasion, Chitwan Khorana, CEO, ARC Hospitality, expressed confidence in the potential of the participants and outlined the organisation's mission.

Khorana said, "The hospitality sector is growing rapidly, and with structured training, we can help young individuals secure stable and prestigious careers. We are proud to partner with community leaders like Ms. Devyani Rana who share our vision for youth empowerment."

The event concluded with an interactive session where experts briefed the participants about career paths, industry expectations, and the importance of professional discipline.

CS discusses proposal with stakeholders for establishing CoE in AI



Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo chairing a meeting on Wednesday.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Wednesday chaired an extensive meeting with Nassecom to deliberate on the establishment of a Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Jammu & Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Secretary IT, CEO JaKeGA; Chief Innovations Officer, IIT Jammu; senior leadership from Nassecom including its Head and Director for AI; and other officers of the IT Department.

During the deliberations, the Chief Secretary stressed the need for close coordination among all stakeholders to ensure timely and effective operational-

ization of the CoE in the UT. He called for developing a clear and well-defined governance framework outlining roles, responsibilities, and collaborative mechanisms among participating institutions.

Emphasizing that the CoE should begin with a focused but ambitious roadmap, the Chief Secretary remarked that J&K possesses unique strengths, particularly in terms of rich datasets and diverse inputs, which can significantly contribute to the success of the initiative.

He highlighted the transformative potential of AI in sectors such as education, startup ecosystem development, governance, and planning. He also underscored the importance of leveraging

AI to enhance technological self-reliance and reduce dependence on major global players.

Secretary IT, Dr. Piyush Singla, informed the meeting that a preliminary Detailed Project Report (DPR) has been prepared in consultation with IIT Jammu, aligned with MeitY's guidelines for the CoE scheme. He stated that this DPR forms the foundational blueprint for establishing a Centre of Excellence tailored to the UT's needs, in partnership with premier higher educational institutions and industry leaders.

Prof. N.T. Arvind, Chief Innovations Officer, IIT Jammu, emphasized that the upcoming CoE must be designed to serve real industrial requirements to ensure its long-term sustainability and to enable seamless translation of research from lab environments to market applications.

Representatives from Nassecom expressed their commitment to extending full technical support for the initiative. They offered assistance in setting up the required digital infrastructure, ensuring data readiness, providing skill development and capacity-building programmes, enabling private sector participation, scaling-up associated projects, and supporting monitoring and evaluation frameworks essential for the success of the CoE in J&K.

Northern Railways to resume operation of narrow gauge trains in Kangra Valley

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Northern Railways will resume the operation of narrow gauge trains in the Kangra Valley of Himachal Pradesh from December 5, officials said.

Train services in Himachal Pradesh were suspended following heavy rains and landslides in September this year.

"It has been decided to operate narrow gauge trains in the Kangra Valley in the Jammu division of Northern Railway," Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Jammu Division, Uchit Singhal, said here on Wednesday.

Singhal said that these narrow-gauge trains will initially operate from Baijnath Paprola railway station to Kangra (two pairs) and from Baijnath Paprola railway station to Joginder Nagar (one pair) from December 5.

"These trains were halted during heavy monsoon rains and landslides," he said.

With the completion of the rail route, Divisional Railway Manager Vivek Kumar has approved the resumption of operations of narrow-gauge trains in the Kangra Valley.

The Senior Divisional Commercial Manager said this will not only boost tourism in the region but will also become an important transportation option for local residents. Passengers are requested to check train schedules before undertaking their journey.

DLSA Jammu hosts awareness programme on Int'l Day of Persons with Disabilities 2025



DLSA Jammu members with inmates of Muskan Home.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Jammu, under the guidance of the Chairman, R. N. Watal, (Pr. Distt. & Sessions Judge) and the overall supervision of Secretary Maleeka Sharma, on Wednesday organized an awareness programme on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities here at Muskan Home for Mentally Challenged Children Channi Rama. The programme aimed to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities across political, social, economic and cultural spheres and to sensitize participants about prevention, early identification, intervention, rehabilitation and mainstreaming of persons with disabilities.

Ld. Secretary District Legal Services Authority Maleeka Sharma contributed notably by distributing drawing pads and colors among the children at Muskan Home, adding a personal touch to the programme and encouraging creative engagement among the children.

Panel Lawyer DLSA Advocate Kavita Raina served as the resource person, supported by PLV Sahil Khosla who helped in ensuring smooth conduct of the programme.

Awareness was also raised about enhancing skills in communication, personal care and health management to foster inclusion. The theme for the year 2025 "Fostering Disability-Inclusive Societies for Advancing Social Progress" was highlighted.