

## Balbir Singh Usmanpur appointed as Head of BRHF, Washington State

Rajesh, Sant Satnam, Balbir greet newly appointed President

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: A prominent Indian-origin entrepreneur Sardar Balbir Singh Usmanpur, a resident of Seattle, USA, has been appointed as the head of the British Ravidassia Heritage Foundation (BRHF), Washington State. In a meeting of BRHF UK, a UK-based social organization, was held under the chairmanship of its All-India President, Rajesh Bagga.



The foundation's patron, Sant Satnam Singh Narud, was present as a special guest. Other attendees included the foundation's cashier Virender Sharma, along with Sushil Sharma, Ashok Sareen, Rajesh

Kapoor, Rakesh Goyal, Bharat Bhushan, Mahendra Bhagat, Sardar Harmeet Singh, and Balwinder Singh Saggi. During the meeting, Sardar Balbir Singh Usmanpur was officially

announced as the head of the British Ravidassia Heritage Foundation, Washington State.

While presenting the appointment letter, Sant Satnam Singh stated that the primary objective of the foundation is to introduce the new generation worldwide to the teachings and philosophy of Sri Guru Ravidass Maharaj Ji, thereby strengthening global brotherhood. He greeted Balbir Singh for this responsibility.

During the meeting, All-India President Rajesh Bagga, while greeting Balbir Singh Usmanpur, informed about the upcoming 650th birth anniversary of Guru Maharaj in 2026, which will be celebrated on a global scale. He asked the newly appointed president to

begin large-scale preparations in the USA for the event. He further added that Sardar Balbir Singh Usmanpur will establish a foundation unit in the USA and commence preparations on a war footing.

The international conference of the foundation will soon be held in India, followed by a grand event in England.

Meanwhile, Balbir Ram Rattan, All India General Secretary, BRHF, conveyed his greetings to S. Sardar Balbir Singh Usmanpur, urging him to expand the foundation's mission overseas with maximum effort.

Balbir Singh Usmanpur, expressed his commitment to fulfilling his responsibilities showered upon him by BRHF with utmost dedication.

## Vijay Surendra assumes charge of CGM, BSNL, J&K Circle

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: Vijay Kumar Surendra, an officer in HAG of Indian Telecommunications Service (ITS) Group 'A' of 1989 batch, on Monday assumed the charge of Chief General Manager (CGM), BSNL, J&K Circle.

V.K. Surendra brings with him a rich experience of 35 years in the telecom industry, having worked in various capacities across the country in BSNL, BBNL and Department of Telecom.

He has a vast experience of planning and development of Telecom Networks, Mobile communications, NGN Networks, Transmission media, etc.

As CGM, J&K Circle, Surendra will be responsible for overseeing the overall telecom operations, driving



business growth, and ensuring customer satisfaction in the J&K Circle comprising of J&K and Ladakh UTs.

On assuming the charge, Surendra reiterated the mission of BSNL to serve every citizen with cutting-edge technology, superior customer service, and a commitment to innovation that drives the nation forward.

"As we step into the future of digital connectivity, BSNL J&K Circle will expand 4G services, built on indigenous

technology that not only serves our customers but also strengthens the PM's Vision of 'Make in India' initiative," he said.

BSNL is rapidly expanding Fiber to the Home (FTTH) services in rural areas also. This initiative will continue to bridge the digital divide and will ensure the ultra-fast internet and seamless connectivity. Bharatnet will drive digital growth and economic opportunities in even the most remote regions of the country connecting all Gram panchayats with IGBPS digital broadband.

VK Surendra expressed his commitment to provide best quality telecom services to the people of J&K & Ladakh UTs and to further strengthen the BSNL network infrastructure in the region.

## Series of anti-drug IEC campaign events held



ADM Jammu, Ansuja Jamwal flagging off rally.

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: Additional District Magistrate Jammu, Ansuja Jamwal, who is also Executive Secretary of the District Red Cross Society, on Monday inaugurated a drug awareness programme at The Bethel Living Word School Qasim Nagar. The initiative was part of the three-month-long Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) campaign aimed at combating the menace of substance abuse.

As many as 40 awareness events were held today across different Panchayats of the District, educating the public about the perils of drug menace and its ill effects on individuals and society. The IEC activities were started

on February 10, 2025 with the district administration having planned 305 events in the district to be held every Monday, over a period of three months.

The programme featured lectures by medical experts, enlightening students and parents about drug addiction and its devastating consequences. A former addict also shared his experiences with substance abuse and the challenges of rehabilitation, underscoring the dangers of addiction.

The event was also attended by former corporators. Speaking on the occasion, ADM Ansuja Jamwal emphasised the collective responsibility of schools and civil society in curbing drug abuse. She further elaborated on the destructive cycle of addiction

and its far-reaching impact on individuals, families and society.

The ADM underscored that disrupting the drug supply chain requires public vigilance and commitment. "Drugs are not cool. Any individual luring children under such pretences should be reported," she asserted.

Highlighting the provisions of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003, ADM Jamwal urged school authorities to report violations, ensuring strict action against non-compliant vendors.

Psychiatrist Dr Manmeet Singh advised parents and teachers to monitor behavioural changes that may indicate substance abuse, while Senior Lecturer Dr Shefali Gupta elaborated on preventive measures. SDPO Jammu East Shazeen Bhat outlined the legal repercussions of drug abuse.

The event also featured recitation of poems by students and a skit on the dangers of drug addiction. It concluded with an awareness rally, flagged off by ADM Jamwal, in which students, teachers, and local residents marched through the neighbourhood, distributing informative pamphlets to spread awareness.

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu under the leadership of Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu inaugurated the sixth batch of the Nurturing Future Leadership Program on Monday at its permanent campus, Vedanta, MDP Centre, Jagti. Organized under the aegis of the Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Programme, Ministry of Education, Government of India, this initiative reflects IIM Jammu's commitment to academic excellence and leadership development.

This unique residential program, scheduled from February 17 to 21, 2025, is designed to cultivate leadership capabilities among educators at various levels, creating a pool of potential leaders ready to drive generational transitions.



IIM Jammu faculty lighting ceremonial lamp.

Delivered by IIM Jammu's faculty, the program aims to help institutions enhance their leadership potential. Participants introduced themselves and shared their reflections on the program, discussing their experiences and expectations. The inaugural ceremony commenced with the lamp lighting ceremony.

Dr. Parvathy B, Program

Director, IIM Jammu welcomed everyone and provided a brief introduction to the program and expressed gratitude to the Director and Dean for their continuous support.

She outlined the objectives of the five-day program, emphasizing its focus on equipping faculty with essential leadership skills to enhance their academic

journeys and foster impactful learning environments.

Dr. Pratik Maheshwari, Co-Chairperson, Executive Education and Consultancy, IIM Jammu, highlighted the program's focus on leadership development, real-life challenges, and team building. He also provided an overview of Executive Education and Consultancy and IIM Jammu's journey.

Dr. Jaganth G, Program Director, IIM Jammu, emphasized the need for strong leadership in a growing nation and highlighted how the program is designed to nurture future leaders. He concluded the event by delivering the vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to all participants and contributors for their support and engagement.

The sixth batch comprises of 26 participants from institutes across India and is fully funded by the

Ministry of Education, Government of India.

The curriculum is structured into four key themes: leadership, communication, skill development, and recent government initiatives.

Over five days, participants will engage in lectures, interactive workshops, group discussions, case studies, role-plays, and practical exercises, ensuring the active application of concepts. Following the inaugural ceremony, participants toured the institute's campus, gaining insights into its state-of-the-art infrastructure.

The Nurturing Future Leadership Program 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 hub for leadership and innovation.

## Sat nominates BJP District Presidents for Kashmir

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: Jammu & Kashmir BJP President, Sat Sharma, in consultations with Tarun Chugh, National General Secretary, BJP & Prabhari J&K-UT, Ashok Kaul, General Secretary Organization and Sunil Sharma, LoP and Kashmir Prabhari, has nominated district presidents for ten districts of Kashmir. Adv. Sheikh Salman has been nominated as District President for Srinagar District, Gulam Hassan Rather for District Ganderbal, Hakeem Rahullah

Ghazli for District Budgam, Er. Syed Showkat Gayoor Andrabi for District Pulwama, Waseem Raja Parray for District Shopian, Farooq Ahmad Rather for District Kulgam, Rakesh Koul for District Anantnag, Gulam Hassan Dar for District Baramulla, Rafeeq Shah for District Kupwara & Mudasir Farooq Jaan for District Bandipora. Sat expressed hope that the new nominees will work wholeheartedly to strengthen the party in their respective districts.

## Maha Shivratri Shobha Yatra on Feb 26

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: Shri Ranbireswar Mandir Welfare Committee (SRMWC) and Jammu and Kashmir Dharamarth Trust are organizing Shiv Barat (Shobha Yatra) on February 26, 2025 Mahant of the Temple Rishi Ban informed on Monday. He said that this Shobha Yatra will start from Shri Ranbireswar Temple sharply at 3.30 PM on Feb 2 and this Shobha Yatra (Shiv Barat) will pass through all main

bazars of the old city via Indira Chowk, Hari Market, Raghunath Bazar, Old Hospital road, Purani Mandi, Link road, Jain Bazar, Chowk Chabutra, Pacea Danga and will finally culminate at Shri Ranbireswar Temple.

Rishi further informed that on March 2, a free Medical Camp with the active co-operation of Indian System of Medicines (Govt. Ayurvedic Hospital Indira Chowk) will be organized at temple premises in

which renowned doctors will examine the patients and will provide them free medicines.

He further appealed all religious minded people to take part of these programmes and get blessings of Lord Shiva.

He also pleaded all trade organizations to be part of this Shobha Yatra and to decorate their markets with gates, bunting, lights to welcome Shiv Barat. He said Bhandra of MahaShivratri at temple premises is on March 02.

## Bal Krishan assumes charge of MD/CEO JCCB



JAMMU: Bal Krishan, a Senior Officer from 2001

Batch of Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Services, presently Additional Registrar Cooperative Jammu, on Monday assumed the charge of Managing Director/CEO Jammu Central Cooperative Bank (JCCB).

Before the above assignments, Bal Krishan has also worked as Deputy Commissioner in State Taxes Department in different capacities and CEO in Tourism Department Authority Baderwah.

## Pendency of criminal case cannot be construed as impediment in appointment: DB

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: A Division Bench of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court comprising Chief Justice Tashi Rabstan and Justice MA Chowdhary, while dismissing the appeal filed by UT, observed that the pendency of a criminal case cannot be construed as an impediment in appointment and performance of duties by such person.

This judgment has been passed in an appeal filed by the UT of Jammu & Kashmir against the judgment of Central Administrative Tribunal whereby the Tribunal has allowed OA and set aside the order impugned therein dated January 3, 2024 whereby the petitioner No. 2 had withdrawn the appointment order issued in favour of the respondent under SRO 43, pursuant to his appointment order dated December 5, 2023

and joining order dated December 6, 2023 in PWD (R&B) Division Baderwah.

The petitioners, however, have been authorized to proceed further on conclusion of the trial against the respondent.

The facts, as summarized before the learned Tribunal, are that the respondent came to be appointed under SRO 43 on account of death of his father, by the petitioners herein by virtue of Order No. CEJ/ADM/232 of 2023 dated November 22, 2023, in compliance to the approval conveyed by the Administrative Department; that pursuant to his appointment, the respondent came to be posted in PWD(R&B), Division Baderwah for further duties and the respondent joined at his place of posting on December 6, 2023; that the

respondent swore an affidavit that he has not been convicted of any offence by any court of law and that he is facing trial in one case; that on December 23, 2023, the respondent No. 4-Executive Engineer, PWD(R&B), Division Baderwah vide his communication stated that the respondent had been allowed to join in the Division after proper verification of the documents and on receipt of character/antecedent certificate from CID vide Form No. 55821 dated May 17, 2023; that the respondent had revealed that he was under trial in one case and said case has not been disposed of till date as such, instructions were sought for the withdrawal of the salary of the respondent by the petitioner No. 4-Executive Engineer, PWD (R&B), Division, Baderwah from the peti-

tioner No. 3-Chief Engineer, PWD(R&B) Chenab Zone, Batote. The petitioner No. 2-Chief Engineer, PWD (R&B), Jammu vide his No. CEJ/ADM/01 of 2024 dated January 3, 2024, however, issued an order withdrawing the appointment with immediate effect vide communication No. 1123-27 dated January 4, 2024, on the sole consideration that the respondent was involved in a case registered under FIR No. 0087/2023 under section 8/21 of NDPS Act of Police Station, Baderwah.

DB after hearing both the sides observed that Since the respondent, who had been appointed as an MTS (Class IV), the question is whether his service can be terminated on the ground of a pendency of a criminal case. Unless a person is held guilty by

conviction in a trial held by a court, the presumption of his innocence has to be construed as a basic principle of criminal jurisprudence. Merely involvement in a criminal case when the trial is still underway is not a mirror to reflect the character and antecedents of a person.

Needless to mention that if a deserving person is denied appointment then even if later on he is acquitted by the trial court, there is very little scope for him to get the Government employment. The pendency of a criminal case cannot be construed as an impediment in appointment and performance of duties by such person.

DB observed that the Tribunal has rightly discussed the J&K Civil Services (Verification of Character and Antecedents) Instructions,

1997 notified vide Government Order No. 1918-GAD of 1997 dated December 9, 1997 which are to be kept in mind with regard to periodic verification of character and antecedents of Government employee.

Herein in this case, the respondent had not concealed the fact of being accused in a criminal case and facing trial and the CID had also not reported any adverse remarks against him in verification report as such, the appointment of the respondent could not have been withdrawn on the basis of mere registration of a case and pending trial and that too without affording him an opportunity of being heard, therefore, the Tribunal has rightly decided the case.

With these observations, the Division Bench dismissed the appeal.

## Notorious child abuser, Imam Aijaz Sheikh convicted

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: After nearly a decade-long legal battle marred by delays, Aijaz Sheikh, a former Imam, school teacher, and faith healer who sexually abused thousands of young boys in north Kashmir, has finally been convicted under Section 377 of the Ranbir Penal Code. Delivering the verdict, the Chief Judicial Magistrate noted, "The survivors, who have been registered as witnesses in this case, have the liberty to file separate FIRs against the accused." Section 377 prescribes life imprisonment or a term up to 10 years for acts of "unnatural sex," along with a fine. The case began with an FIR on March 2, 2016, and charges were filed in October 2017. However, the trial saw frequent disruptions with multiple judges and public prosecutors being replaced. The

defence, lead by Advocate Zahid Khalil Mirza, presented their arguments only on January 3, 2025, leading to the final judgment on February 17, 2025. Sheikh exploited his positions of trust to target vulnerable children, leaving behind a trail of shattered lives. Survivors described horrific abuse, including being raped hundreds of times, forced into sexual acts with each other, and subjected to violent assaults.

"One of the hardest parts was enduring the legal battle, which often felt more painful than the abuse itself. But today's conviction proves that perseverance matters," said one survivor.

This landmark conviction is seen as a long-overdue step towards justice, bringing hope that such crimes will not go unpunished in the future.

## VCAJK XI lifts second edition of Legend Masters 2.0 inter-state Veteran T20 Cricket C'ship trophy

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: Host Veteran Cricket Association J&K XI lifted the second edition of Legend Masters 2.0 inter-state Veteran T20 Cricket Championship and Hyderabad beat Delhi in a nail biting finish to bag the runners up trophy.

Shiv Kumar Sharma, DIG JSK range was the Chief Guest and Dr. Tahir Chowdhury, BJP

Spokesperson was Guest of Honour at the final presentation.

The tournament was organized by Veteran Cricket Association J&K in collaboration with Excise Department J&K, Batra Group and Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Narayana Superspecialty Hospital at MA Stadium Jammu.

Shiv Kumar Sharma,



VCAJK XI team receiving winner trophy from the chief guest.

DIG Jammu, Samba, Kathua range speaking at the function appreciated that Veterans players from UK, UAE, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Bangalore, Delhi are playing in this tournament shows that "age is just a number". He congratulated Team of Veteran Cricket Association J&K and Hyderabad Veterans for lifting the Winner and

Runners Up. Dr. Tahir Chowdhury added that Legend Masters 2.0 has provided a vibrant platform to the veteran players to hone their abilities and overcome their limitations. He congratulated Veteran Cricket Association J&K on its endeavour to promote Veteran Cricket in J&K.

Nazar Hussain of

Veteran Cricket Association J&K XI was declared as Player of the tournament & Best Bowler, Vishwajit Naik of Hyderabad veterans was declared as Best Batsman, Satish Saraf Captain of Delhi Veteran awarded as Best Wicketkeeper & Adi Narayana of Southern Maverick was adjudged as Best Fielder of the tournament.