

Shopkeepers' Association of General Bus Stand Jammu meets LG to address long-pending grievances

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: A meeting was held between the Shopkeepers' Association of General Bus Stand, Jammu, and Manoj Sinha, Lieutenant Governor (LG) of J&K, to discuss the long-pending issues faced by shopkeepers. The association members highlighted concerns regarding the declining footfall in the new bus stand complex, affecting their livelihoods.

The members apprised the LG of the historic significance of the General Bus Stand, which had served as the city's primary boarding and deboarding point since 1971. Previously, passengers arriving at the bus stand would visit prominent tourist and religious sites such as Raghunath Temple, Bawe Wali Mandir, Ranbeshwar Mandir, Peerkho Mandir, Ram Mandir, Mubarak Mandi Fort, and local markets,



Association members calling on LG Manoj Sinha.

contributing to tourism and business growth. However, due to multiple boarding points scattered across the city, passengers now board buses from isolated locations, rarely engaging with Jammu's commercial and cultural hotspots.

The members also raised concerns about the New Bus Stand cum Multi-Tier Parking Complex, inaugurated on February 11, 2021, by the LG himself. Despite the inauguration, the complex faced severe

infrastructure deficiencies, including no electricity for 1.5 years and the absence of ATM and cloakroom facilities for 2.5 years. Additionally, several ticket counters remain non-functional to date.

Due to inactive platforms, many shops located within the corridors and corners of the complex receive minimal footfall, leading to low business revenue. The association suggested that the bus stand's design should be modified to ensure that all

parts of the complex remain lively and operational, thereby maximizing state revenue and benefiting shopkeepers. Additionally, members requested that shop rents be remitted until all platforms become fully operational.

Concerns over rent disparities were also raised. Before the renovation, the shop rent was Rs. 3 per sq. ft., but now some shops are being charged Rs. 12.5 per sq. ft. (on lease) while others pay Rs. 25 per sq. ft. (on rent deed). The association demanded that rents be rolled back to Rs. 3 per sq. ft. until normal business operations resume. Additionally, the members highlighted that in 2008, all shopkeepers had applied for shop leases, but only a few were granted leases, while others were left out due to the transfer of the then Vice Chairman of JDA, causing injustice to many.

Despite multiple meetings with VC JDA, DC Jammu, Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Principal Secretary Urban & Housing, RTO Jammu, and Transport Commissioner Jammu, no significant action had been taken, leaving shopkeepers disheartened. After discussing these grievances in detail, LG Manoj Sinha assured the delegation that all concerns would be addressed at the earliest and that he would personally oversee the resolution of these issues.

The meeting was attended by association members, including President Vishal Mahajan, Chairman Ashwani Sharma, Senior Vice President Sanjay Dutta, General Secretary Sumit, Vice Presidents Gulshan and Sumeer, Advisors Hanif Khan and Janak Raj, Secretaries Sanjay, Vishal, and Nitin, and Cashier Sohail Khan.

Vishwa Bharati celebrates Maha Shivratri



Students performing during the event.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Vishwa Bharati Higher Secondary School celebrated Maha Shivratri with a program filled with devotional songs, captivating dances, and enlightening speeches.

Present on the occasion were Dr. S.K.Koul, President Vishwa Bharati Women's Welfare Institution, J.L. Koul former President Vishwa Bharati Women's Welfare Institution, Yoginder Koul, Treasurer Vishwa Bharati School, Verinder Dembi RAC Member, B.L Saraf Retd. Session Judge and Prof. Bharati Bhat Principal Vishwa Bharati College of Education and Sanjay Raina an expert in ritual discourse

was the chief guest on the occasion.

The celebration commenced with the 'Welcome Address' by the school Principal Annapurna Kaul followed by the 'Ganesh Vandana' and chanting of auspicious mantras.

Students of all age groups participated enthusiastically, showcasing their talent and reverence for the festival. The program featured a series of soul-stirring devotional songs that filled the air with spiritual vibrations.

The audience was mesmerized by the graceful and energetic dance performances, depicting various aspects of Lord Shiva's divine persona.

In addition to cultural performances, students delivered insightful speeches highlighting the significance of Maha Shivratri, the importance of Lord Shiva's teachings, and the deeper meaning behind the rituals associated with the festival.

Chief Guest threw light on the significance of Maha Shivratri in Hindu cultural heritage and advised that all human beings should follow a righteous path of life to achieve Shiv Tatv for salvation from repeated birth and death.

The program concluded with the 'Vote of Thanks' by Kawaljeet Kour from Department of English.

Balbir emphasizes Vajpayee's vision on peace with neighbours



BJP Spokesperson, Balbir Ram Rattan interacting with party leaders in Jammu on Monday.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir BJP Spokesperson, Balbir Ram Rattan, underscored the significance of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's vision of peace and diplomacy with neighbouring countries. He was discussing the birth centenary programmes with party's senior activists.

Balbir Ram Rattan emphasized that Vajpayee's legacy of fostering amicable relations with neighbouring nations remains relevant in today's geopolitical landscape.

Balbir highlighted how Vajpayee, during his tenure

as PM, believed in constructive engagement and dialogue as a means to resolve conflicts and promote stability in the region. He recalled the historic initiatives undertaken by the former Prime Minister, including the Lahore Bus Service and efforts to de-escalate tensions through diplomatic channels.

"Atal ji firmly believed that peace with neighbours is not just a diplomatic necessity but also a moral and strategic imperative," Balbir said.

Balbir further said that it is crucial to remember Atal ji's wisdom-that strong nations seek peace, not war.

His leadership showed that dialogue and cooperation yield far greater results than hostility," he added.

He encouraged party activists to engage with the public and spread awareness about Vajpayee's contributions to India's diplomatic achievements. He mentioned that Vajpayee's leadership demonstrated a fine balance between national security and peaceful coexistence, setting an example for future generations of leaders.

Vajpayee's diplomatic philosophy was not just about maintaining peace but also about ensuring India's progress through cooperation and mutual respect, he said, adding that we must carry forward his legacy and work towards a peaceful, prosperous, and strong India.

DDC Member Pt. Suresh Sharma, senior leaders Sanjay Baru, Praduman Singh, and Parmod Kapahi, Hans Raj Loria, Sanjay Kumar, took part in this discussion.

IIM Jammu, Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti host National Workshop on Academic Writing for Higher Education in Indian Languages (Dogri)

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu, in collaboration with the Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti under the aegis of the University Grants Commission (UGC), Ministry of Education, Government of India, inaugurated the Authors Workshop on Academic Writing to develop textbooks for higher education in Bharatiya Language (Dogri) on 24th Feb 2025. This initiative aligns with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, aiming to strengthen academic content in Bharatiya languages and enhance accessibility to quality education.

The inaugural ceremony was graced by Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu; Chief Guest Prof. S.P. Bansal, Vice-Chancellor, Central University of Himachal Pradesh & Himachal Pradesh University; Padma Lalit Magotra, President, Dogri Sanstha, Jammu; and Guests of Honor Dr. Archana Thakur, Joint Secretary,



Dignitary being honoured during the programme.

UGC, and Prof. Pragati Kumar, Vice-Chancellor, SMVDU. Dr. Garima Saini, Assistant Professor, IIM Jammu, was also present during the ceremony.

Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu emphasized the importance of genuinely embracing regional languages rather than treating their promotion as a mere formality. He stressed the need to make Dogri a compulsory subject in schools from an early stage, in line

with NEP 2020's emphasis on mother-tongue-based education. Acknowledging the contributions of Padma Shri Lalit Magotra to Dogri, he called for institutional efforts to integrate the language into academics. He highlighted the significance of preserving and promoting one's mother tongue alongside English and reaffirmed IIM Jammu's commitment to linguistic inclusivity.

Chief Guest Prof. S.P. Bansal, Vice-Chancellor,

Central University of Himachal Pradesh & Himachal Pradesh University, expressed gratitude to Director, IIM Jammu and commended him for organizing the two-day workshop and underscored NEP 2020's role in strengthening regional languages.

Keynote Speaker Padma Shri Lalit Magotra, President, Dogri Sanstha, Jammu highlighted the role of mother tongue in knowledge dissemination, referencing global examples where native languages are prioritized in education. He emphasized that linguistic diversity strengthens cognitive abilities and cultural identity, making it imperative to preserve and promote regional languages.

Guest of Honor Prof. Pragati Kumar, Vice-Chancellor, SMVDU emphasized the importance of collaboration among institutions to promote indigenous language content. He underscored the role of technology and digital platforms in enhancing the reach and

accessibility of Dogri literature and educational resources.

Guests of Honor Dr. Archana Thakur, Joint Secretary, UGC, appreciated the world-class infrastructure and collaborative efforts of institutions like the IIM Jammu, Central University of Himachal Pradesh, SMVDU, and University of Jammu, in promoting regional languages. She highlighted the establishment of a Bharatiya Bhasha Forum of languages and announced a dedicated dashboard for authors to ensure plagiarism-free content, emphasizing originality and quality in academic writing.

Dr. Garima Saini, Assistant Professor, and Faculty Coordinator, IIM Jammu provided an overview of the two-day workshop, outlining its objectives and key focus areas. She emphasized its role in equipping educators, scholars, and authors with essential skills for developing textbooks in Bharatiya languages, aligning with NEP 2020's vision.

JU's global academic partnership will unlock avenues for students, faculty: VC

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Vice Chancellor, University of Jammu, Prof. Umesh Rai, on Monday exuded optimism about promoting and strengthening academic collaboration and research partnerships with leading British universities, saying the ongoing initiatives will create new opportunities for both students and faculty, enriching their learning experiences on a global scale.

"We are committed to further strengthening these ties to enhance the university's academic ecosystem," the Vice Chancellor said while commending the efforts of a high-level delegation led by Prof. Dinesh Singh, Vice Chairman of the J&K Higher Education Council and former Vice Chancellor of Delhi University, during its recent visit to the United Kingdom.

Interacting with delegation members-Prof. Anju Bhasin, Prof. Alka Sharma, and Prof. Sadaf Shah-upon their return, Prof. Rai reiterated that these initiatives align with the University's mission to achieve



Vice Chancellor, University of Jammu, Prof. Umesh Rai and others during the programme.

academic excellence. The delegation apprised the Vice Chancellor about their visit to the United Kingdom, provided insights into the discussions held and the prospective collaborations that could benefit JU's faculty and students. They said the delegation explored opportunities for academic collaboration, research partnerships, and faculty and student exchange programs with leading British universities. Prof Dinesh Singh led delegation visited top institutions, Imperial College London, University College London (UCL), Middlesex University, and the UCL Institute of Education (IOE). They also

participated in significant academic forums, including the India-UK Education Conference and the India-UK Reception at the UK Parliament, which facilitated high-level discussions on higher education collaborations between the two nations. One of the key highlights of the visit was the enthusiastic response received for the Design Your Degree (DYD) program, a unique initiative launched by the University of Jammu under the visionary leadership of Prof. Umesh Rai. British academicians acknowledged the program's interdisciplinary approach and expressed keen interest in forging partner-

ships to implement similar models in their institutions.

During their interactions, the JU delegation explored potential research collaborations in Artificial Intelligence (AI), technology-driven education, and interdisciplinary learning models. Discussions with Prof. Nick Jones at Imperial College London, Prof. Carl Gombriach at London Interdisciplinary School (LIS), and senior academic leaders at Middlesex University and UCL's Institute of Education paved the way for future academic exchanges and joint initiatives.

The visit also provided a platform to discuss initiatives such as the College on Wheels and the upcoming Riveraine Project, aimed at enhancing global research collaborations. Furthermore, the lecture delivered by Prof. Dinesh Singh's at University College London (UCL) on the DYD program received an overwhelming response, reinforcing JU's role in shaping innovative education models.

Alongside the JU delegation, representatives from Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), Awantipora, also participated in the UK visit. The IUST delegation engaged in meaningful discussions with British universities, focusing on expanding academic collaborations and research opportunities. Their participation further strengthened the collective vision of J&K's higher education institutions in establishing strong international linkages and fostering global learning experiences.

Better traffic management during Maha Shivratri is priority: DIG Traffic Jammu

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Dr. Mohd Haseeb Mughal, DIG Traffic Range Jammu, conducted an inspection of traffic arrangements at Aap Shambhu Temple, Roop Nagar, Jammu, on 24th February 2025. The visit aimed to assess and enhance traffic management plans in anticipation of the significant footfall of devotees expected on the auspicious occasion of Shivratri on 26th February 2025. Ensuring smooth traffic regulation and organized parking arrangements remains a top priority for the Traffic Police Jammu.

Accompanying the DIG Traffic Jammu were Arvinder Singh Kotwal, Additional Superintendent of Police, Traffic City Jammu, Anubhuti, JKPS, DySP Traffic City North Jammu, along with SHO



Dr. Mohd Haseeb Mughal, DIG Traffic Range Jammu, inspecting traffic arrangements at Aap Shambhu Temple.

P/S Janipur and DTI Janipur.

During the visit, DIG Traffic Jammu met with members of the organizing committee to discuss event logistics and coordination efforts. He emphasized the importance of close liaison with all relevant departments, including fire services, local police, and the local administration, to ensure the seamless execution of the festival proceedings.

He further instructed the traffic police officers in the area to maintain continuous coordination with the organizing committee and provide timely updates to senior officers. Additionally, the Addl. SP Traffic City Jammu and DySP Traffic City Jammu were directed to issue a comprehensive deployment order from the Traffic Police Office, City Jammu, ensuring systematic vehicle parking and hassle-free dispersal.

In his directive to SSP Traffic City Jammu, DIG Traffic Jammu stressed the need for proper deployment of traffic personnel at all religious sites where heavy gatherings are anticipated.

This includes managing traffic for any Shobha Yatra or other religious processions planned during the festival. He also instructed that all traffic officers and officials be thoroughly briefed and sensitized about their responsibilities to maintain order and facilitate the movement of devotees.

Traffic Police Jammu remains committed to ensuring a smooth and safe experience for all worshippers and commuters during the Maha Shivratri celebrations.

AIIMS Vijaypur Sub Post Office opened



T. M. Sreelatha, Chief Postmaster General, J&K Circle and Dr. Shakti Kumar Gupta, Executive Director & CEO AIIMS Jammu after inaugurating the post office.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

VIJAYPUR: A new milestone in the region's Healthcare and Postal Services was achieved today with the opening of the AIIMS Vijaypur Sub Post Office, inaugurated by T. M. Sreelatha, Chief Postmaster General, J&K Circle and Dr. Shakti Kumar Gupta,

Executive Director & CEO AIIMS Jammu.

The ceremony also witnessed the presence of Prateek, Director Postal Service (Headquarters) J&K Circle, Dr Ankush Bhagat Sr. Superintendent of Post Offices Jammu Division and other dignitaries from AIIMS authori-

ties. "The AIIMS Vijaypur Sub Post Office will serve the growing needs of patients, staff, and residents, offering a variety of postal and financial services, including mail services, money transfer, and bill payments. This step aligns with the vision of improving essential services in line with modern infrastructure developments," Sreelatha said.

"The opening of this post office is expected to enhance the convenience and efficiency of services for people living in the region, particularly with its strategic location within the AIIMS Vijaypur campus, which will also benefit the medical staff and patients," he added.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and Former District President Jammu South Rekha Mahajan on Monday extended heartfelt congratulations to Rekha Gupta on being elected as new Delhi chief minister at her residence on the first day of Delhi assembly session in New Delhi.

Rekha Mahajan expressing confidence that she will work to fulfil the resolve made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to make the city one of the top capitals in the world.

This milestone marks a significant triumph for women's empowerment in India, and Rekha Mahajan's message resonates with the sentiment.

Rekha Gupta, first-time MLA from Shalimar Bagh, was chosen as the Leader of the House in the Delhi



BJP leader Rekha Mahajan congratulating Rekha Gupta on being elected as new Delhi Chief Minister.

Assembly at the BJP legislature

party meeting here, setting stage for her to become the fourth woman chief minister of Delhi. She said PM Modi has made this time a golden period for women empowerment.

Rekha emphasized that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has assured Delhiites that the new government will prioritize development, transparency, and effective governance.

The BJP's commitment to women's empowerment and leadership is evident in Rekha Gupta's election, As Rekha Gupta begins her tenure as Delhi's Chief Minister, the nation looks forward to witnessing her vision and leadership in action.

Her appointment is a beacon of hope for women's empowerment and inclusive governance in India Rekha Mahajan, added.