

Dr Jitendra launches Central Water Schemes in Kathua, calls for achieving saturation



Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh addressing a public rally after inaugurating Multiple Water Supply schemes under Jal Jeevan Mission at Jasrota, Kathua on Saturday.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KATHUA: Union Minister, Dr Jitendra Singh on Saturday called for effective implementation of all the Water Supply Schemes under the Jal Jeevan Mission in Jammu and Kashmir to achieve their saturation.

He was addressing a public gathering in village Jasrota here after inaugurating seven Water Supply Schemes under Jal Jeevan Mission.

The schemes costing 25.31 crore rupees will benefit 15,881 souls, covering 2584 households in 10 villages.

The Minister informed that a total of 303 Water Supply Schemes, with an estimated cost of 1369.57 crore rupees, are being taken up in district

Kathua under Jal Jeevan Mission.

Dr Jitendra pointed out that certain issues are being faced in the proper implementation of the schemes on the which are being sorted out in coordination with J&K government.

Presenting a report card of the works done in his Parliamentary constituency in the first 100 days of the Narendra Modi Government 3.0, he enumerated the key projects like the prestigious Chattergala tunnel and Delhi to Katra Expressway corridor, saying these ambitious projects are nearing their completion.

Crediting Prime Minister Narendra Modi with creating a new work culture, Dr

Jitendra stated that the government is focused on completing the stalled projects to boost connectivity in remote parts of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister said that once completed, the strategic Chattergala tunnel to be game-changer in providing all-weather connectivity between Doda and Lakhanpur will be a game-changer in providing all-weather connectivity between Doda and Lakhanpur. He informed the gathering that it has now been decided to build nine additional underpasses along Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway, fulfilling a public demand.

Underlining the potential of tourism to create employment opportunities and boost livelihoods, Dr

Jitendra said steps are also being taken to promote tourism in places such as Basohli and Mantalia in the region.

The Minister informed that Mansar area of Udhampur district is also being developed as a tourist destination under Swadesh Darshan scheme.

Dr Jitendra stated that in the times to come, district Kathua will become a major hub of economic activity, offering avenues of self-employment to the local youth.

He mentioned that the district has earned a unique distinction for having North India's first Bio-tech Park, Seed Processing Plant and North India's only Homeopathic College.

The Minister urged the

youth to avail the subsidy being provided by the government for the promotion of Khadi to earn their own livelihoods.

Minister for Jal Shakti, J&K Government, Javed Ahmed Rana; MLA, Jasrota, Rajiv Jasroti; MLA, Bani, Dr Rameshwar Singh; MLA, Hiranagar, Vijay Kumar Sharma; Vice Chairman, DDC, Kathua, Raghunadan Singh Bablu, representatives of PRLs and officials from Department of Jal Shakti were among those present on the occasion.

CS reviews development of tourism infrastructure under PRASHAD

Takes stock of facilities offered to pilgrims at Shiv Khori shrine

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Saturday chaired a meeting of Tourism Department to take stock of the completion of projects taken up under Pilgrimage Rejuvenation And Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD) scheme here in J&K and also reviewed the facilities being extended at Shiv Khori Shrine ahead of the Mahashivratri festival.

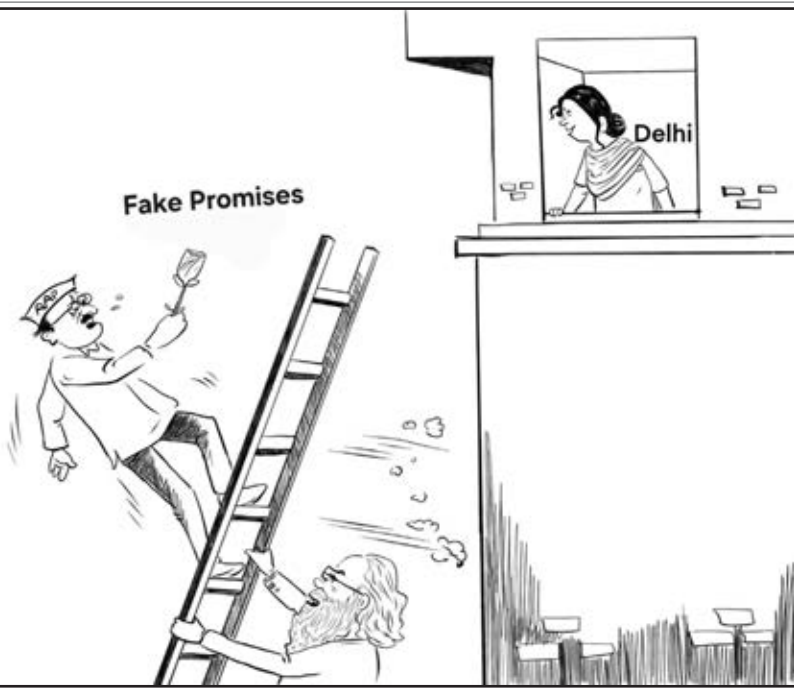
Those who attended includes Principal Secretary, Finance; Commissioner Secretary, Tourism; Commissioner Secretary, Culture; Divisional Commissioner, Jammu; Secretary, PWD; Secretary, H&ME; Secretary, Transport, MD, JPDCL; DC, Reasi; Director Tourism, Kashmir/Jammu; MD, Cable Car Corporation and other concerned officers.

While speaking in this meeting, the Chief Secretary took note of the progress made on projects taken up at the religious sites under PRASHAD scheme. He also enquired about the projects that had been submitted to Ministry of Tourism, GoI for augmenting infrastructure at other religiously and culturally significant places found across the districts of the UT.

Dulloo took this occasion to stress upon the concerned to execute the projects on ground and their early completion keeping in view their importance for bringing ease to the visitors. He also directed for early submission of plans for other eligible sites for their comprehensive development.

He enjoined upon the Tourism, Culture and Public Works Departments to identify works and execute them keeping in consideration their religious and cultural significance. He called for their completion preserving their aesthetic appeal, local art and architecture.

The Chief Secretary further asked for identification of additional sites in both Jammu and Kashmir divisions on the basis of tourist foothall there. He stressed on framing comprehensive plans as per the set format so that these too are developed on modern lines.



Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo chairing a meeting of Tourism Department.

In her presentation, the Commissioner Secretary Tourism, Yasha Mudgal informed the meeting that the projects for development of Utterbehni, Purnandal and Katra are in pipeline. She revealed that the plan for Katra includes Rs 44.52 Cr with main components of multilevel car parking, facade improvement of fawara chowk, walkway development to Darshan Deodi, construction of public toilets and other Illumination and beautification works.

The scope of works for development of Utterbehni and Purnandal were given as construction of steel suspension foot bridge, 3D mural paintings, landscaping/vertical garden, multi-facility complex at Purnandal, development of river-front, facade lighting, sewerage treatment besides protection and other beautification works.

Other projects submitted to GoI for approval includes development of Ganga Ghat at River Choti Ganga near Choti Ganga near Thanda Pani Bridge, Development of pilgrim circuit at district Udhampur at the cost of Rs 13.47 Cr.

It also includes development of Hari Parbat Fort, Kheer Bhawani Temple, Baba Shukr-ud-din Shrine at Watlab (Sopore), Baba Lal Sahib Shrine Kupwara, Religious circuit in district Poonch, Development of Kailash Kund and other shrines at Baderwah township.

Regarding the development of Shiv Khori Cave Shrine, the Chief Secretary directed for extending all the facilities for smooth conduct of upcoming

Mahashivratri Festival to be celebrated from February 25-27 here.

The Deputy Commissioner, Reasi, Nidhi Malik gave account of the activities traditionally conducted here on this holy festival. She also gave insights about the development of Helipad at Katra and Shiv Khori Shrine.

The details of other development activities taken up under CSR are refurbishment of toilets, food kiosks, drinking water points, resting/rain shelters, Development of river ghats, beautification of the Ram Mandir, installation of sound system, beautification around the cave besides others.

It was also revealed that the administration also envisages construction of alternate track to cater to the rush of pilgrims, stabilization of hillock, construction of new staircase and bathing Ghats, Improvement of road to Ransoo, augmentation of Ransoo Bus Stand, Strengthening of steel bridges, lighting of tracks and other beautification works.

Moreover it was added that in order to enhance the security of pilgrims, CCTV cameras had been installed around the temple shrine with deployment of more security personnel. It was further disclosed that the pilgrim count has taken a major leap with just around 50,000 pilgrims in 2008 to more than 20 lakh in 2023. The cave shrine attracts lots of devotees on the occasion of Mahashivratri festival as a number of religious activities are held here in true spiritual devotion of the devotees.

Div Com inaugurates Winter Festival at Lal Draman

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

DODA: The much-awaited Winter Festival was organised on Saturday here at Lal Draman (Doda) filling the sprawling meadows with fun and festivity.

The festival witnessed enthusiastic participation from a large gathering of around 2500 people including tourists, locals, officials and media personnel.

Organized by the District Administration & Department of Tourism J&K, in collaboration with Tejas Ek Pahal Foundation (NGO) and the Indian Army, the mega fair was inaugurated by Divisional Commissioner Ramesh Kumar in presence of District Development Council (DDC) Chairman Dhananter Singh; DDC Vice Chairperson, Sangeeta Bhagat; DIG Police Doda/ Kishtwar/



Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Ramesh Kumar visiting a stall in Winter Festival at Lal Draman, Doda.

Ramban Range, Shridhar Patil and Deputy Commissioner, with the plantation of saplings, symbolizing a commitment to environmental conservation.

Speaking on the occasion, Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Ramesh Kumar, emphasized the government's

vision of transforming the region into a major tourist destination by exploring new locations. He highlighted that the Chenab Valley, with its blend of winter and summer attractions, religious sites, and adventure tourism spots, holds immense potential to boost the local economy.

"The Winter Festival at Lal Draman is a key initiative in unlocking Doda's tourism prospects. Such events not only attract visitors but also contribute significantly to the socio-economic development of the region," he stated.

On the occasion a flag rally was also taken out, followed by an inspection of departmental and food stalls by the Divisional Commissioner and other guests, showcasing local products and traditional cuisine.

Adding a patriotic fervor to the event, the National Anthem was played, instilling a sense of unity and pride among attendees. The festival was marked by vibrant cultural performances, adventure sports, trekking, and other scenic activities, offering a glimpse of the region's rich heritage and tourism potential.

ACS Education holds meeting with College Principals

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Shantmanu, on Saturday chaired the maiden meeting of Principals of colleges of Jammu division at GCW Parade Ground, Jammu.

Director Colleges, Sheikh Ajaz Bashir, provided a comprehensive overview of the colleges functioning in Jammu division, highlighting their strengths, achievements and accreditation status. He further detailed the current state of the colleges and outlined the necessary steps being taken up for successful implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) in its fourth year in J&K.

During the meeting, Shantmanu emphasised the importance of promoting



ACS, Shantmanu after the meeting of Principals of colleges of Jammu division at GCW Parade Ground, Jammu.

moral education among the students while taking due care of their mental health. He stressed the need to closely monitor the health and emotional well-being of students, recognizing that a holistic approach is essential for their overall develop-

ment. He also encouraged the Principals to work on strategies for supporting students' mental health, particularly in challenging times.

ACS further discussed the roadmap for NEP implementation in its fourth year

and desired that the Universities have to take immediate steps in terms of identification of courses to be adopted by the students in online format as envisaged by the NEP 2020. This will immensely address the issues of implementation by colleges as three batches have been enrolled in all colleges of J&K, he added.

Shantmanu asked the Director Colleges to take up the matter with the universities in right earnest to address the challenges of NEP 2020.

Listening patiently to the issues raised by the Principals, ACS asked the Director Colleges for a comprehensive account of their issues, particularly with regard to infrastructure,

staffing and resources, for further consideration and resolution at the departmental level.

Recognizing the need for analysing enrolment challenges, he sought the views of Principals who highlighted the difficulties faced by the students with respect to conduct of CUET and prolonged admission process through SMARTH portal.

Shantmanu asked the Director Colleges to take a comprehensive view from all stakeholders and come up with corrective measures needed in this regard.

The Principals shared their insights, discussing the achievements of their colleges in academics, sports, NSS, NCC and research. They assured the chairperson that the vision

of the department to deliver quality education shall be fulfilled.

The meeting provided a valuable platform for open dialogue, where challenges were discussed, efforts were acknowledged, and solutions were explored.

The Principals appreciated the opportunity given to them to bring forward their concerns, with the hope that these discussions would lead to effective resolutions.

ACS exhorted upon all the attendees to maintain a positive mindset, emphasising the importance of continuous self-improvement and a service-oriented approach in tackling challenges. He expressed confidence that by working together, higher education in JK can reach new heights.

ADDCC inspects psychiatric clinic for drug regulation compliance



ADDCC Jammu, Sher Singh inspecting documents.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Additional District Development Commissioner Sher Singh on Saturday conducted inspection of a psychiatric clinic to ensure compliance with drug regulations. The inspection was carried out in pursuance of an order issued by District Magistrate Sachin Kumar Vaishya, which mandated a committee to oversee the regulation of drugs and medicines in psychiatric clinics.

The inspection team included the committee members, Superintendent of Police (Hq) Irshad Hussain, Chief Medical Officer Dr. Harbaksh Singh, Medical Officer Dr. Arti Sharma, Assistant Drugs Controller Arvind Sharma, Tehsildar Nazool Athira Janwal and Accounts Officer Kamal Bhagat.

During the visit, the team reviewed patient records from past years, scrutinising documentation and treatment histories. They also examined invoices, purchase orders and stock registers to verify medication procurement and inventory management.

ADDCC Sher Singh emphasised that regular inspections are crucial to enforcing strict regulations on controlled substances. He highlighted that systematic oversight ensures compliance with legal standards and helps prevent irregularities in the handling of psychotropic and Schedule H drugs.

During the inspection, the team closely examined records related to psychotropic substances and Schedule H drugs under the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945. The Chief Medical Officer and other officials assessed these records to verify adherence to regulatory guidelines.

Additionally, the team inspected the staffing structure of the clinics, verifying the presence and qualifications of doctors and paramedical staff to ensure that medical services were being provided by certified professionals.

DC calls for balanced irrigation approach to preserve groundwater

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Deputy Commissioner Sachin Kumar Vaishya on Saturday chaired a meeting of the District Level Implementation Committee to review the progress of the Community Bore Wells initiative under the Per Drop More Crop component of the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana.

The scheme aims to provide irrigation facilities to rainfed and kandi areas, as well as regions at the tail end of major irrigation canals. Designed to ensure equitable water distribution across the Union Territory,



Deputy Commissioner Sachin Kumar Vaishya chairing a meeting on Saturday.

each bore well is expected to irrigate approximately 10 hectares of farmland.

Joint surveys conducted by the Agriculture,

Horticulture, and Command Area Development departments have led to the short-listing of feasible sites for bore well installation. The

committee assessed the proposed locations, considering factors such as groundwater availability and accessibility for farmers.

Chairing the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Vaishya underscored the importance of sustainable water management and the need for a balanced approach. "Water availability is crucial for sustaining agriculture in these challenging terrains. Scientific assessment and sustainable water management must go hand in hand to make this project a success," he said. He also stressed that irrigation expansion should not come at the cost of depleting groundwater reserves.

The discussion further centred on water distribution mechanisms post-

installation. Members highlighted that awareness initiatives have been conducted to educate farmers on the scheme's benefits and optimal irrigation practices.

The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer Uttam Singh, SE Hydraulics M. Taj Choudhary, Chief Agriculture Officer Vinod Kundal, Chief Horticulture Officer R.K. Kotwal, PO S&WM Bhupinder Gupta, Assistant Soil Conservation Officer CAD Sarore Shashi Kant Sharma, and Executive Engineer Tubewell Irrigation Jammu Amit Abrol.