

Addresses 27th Annual Day Function of ALSWA Jammu

AI, Technology open new doors of opportunities for students, says LG

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU : The Lt Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, addressed the 27th Annual Day Function of the All Ladakh Students Welfare Association Jammu, here today. He congratulated the Association for its sustained contribution towards the welfare, unity and holistic development of Ladakhi students.



LG Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta addressing 27th Annual Day Function of the All Ladakh Students Welfare Association Jammu.

While addressing the gathering of youth from Leh and Kargil districts in Jammu, the Lt Governor termed the Ladakh Students Welfare Association is not merely an organisation, but a reflection of the determination, discipline and dreams of Ladakhi youth striving for a brighter future. He appreciated the Association's role since 2015 in providing academic guidance, nurturing cultural unity and effectively representing students' concerns before the administration.

Kavinder Gupta emphasised that student life is the foundation of nation-building. It is a phase that shapes character, instils discipline and nurtures a sense of responsibility towards society and the nation. He shared that life's challenges strengthen resolve and teach invaluable lessons, enabling youth to emerge stronger and more committed to national service.

Highlighting the transformative power of organised youth, the Lt Governor remarked that when young minds unite with purpose, they can change the direction of society. He asserted that student life is the first laboratory where the future of the nation is prepared.

The Lt Governor stated that today's India is an India of opportunities. In the age of Technology and Artificial Intelligence, he reassured students that technology does not eliminate opportunities, but expands them. He urged the youth to continuously learn, innovate and adapt, noting that human creativity, leadership and sensitivity can never be replaced by machines.

Referring to the inspiring vision of Narendra Modi for Viksit Bharat @2047, the Lt Governor said that India's youth are its greatest strength.

He stressed that self-reliant youth are the foundation of a strong nation, and affirmed that the youth are not just the future of India, but also its present driving force.

Speaking on Ladakh's unique identity and importance, Shri Kavinder Gupta said that educated and aware youth are the region's biggest strength. He urged students to stay connected with their language, culture and roots, while upholding the spirit of unity and the ethos of "Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat".

The Lt Governor assured that the Ladakh Administration remains fully committed to listening to students' concerns and resolving them with sensitivity and priority, reiterating that student welfare remains central to governance.

Concluding his address, the Lt Governor congratulated the Association for the successful conduct

of the event and expressed hope that the association would continue its commendable work for the benefit of students in the years to come. He called upon the youth to uphold honesty, hard work and discipline, and to contribute meaningfully towards building a strong, self-reliant and developed India.

The programme was graced by Special Guests Kacho Ahmad Ali Khan and Raj Kumar, whose presence added value and encouragement to the students on the occasion of ALSWAJ Annual Day 2024-25.

Later, the Lt Governor felicitated the executive members of the Association in recognition of their dedicated service and contribution towards student welfare and organisational strengthening.

Earlier, Muzaffar Ali, President of the Association, highlighted the key initiatives and sustained efforts of the Association in supporting Ladakhi students.

The welcome address was delivered by Mansura Paldan. Cultural performances by Balti, Shina and Yaseen groups, along with a Ladakhi song, beautifully reflected the theme "Unity in Diversity - Spirit of Ladakh", showcasing the region's rich cultural heritage and harmony.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks presented by Sabrina Aamir, expressing gratitude to all dignitaries, participants and organisers for making the event a meaningful and inspiring success.



Nagrota Gaushala Jammu hosts 'Zero-Plastic' Maha Shivratri celebration, blending devotion with sustainability



Comm Secy HUDD, Mandep Kaur and former Minister Priya Sethi performing Gau Poojan on Mahashivratri.

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU : In a unique blend of spirituality and environmental responsibility, the Nagrota Gaushala, Jammu, managed by the Jammu Municipal Corporation, organised a "Zero-Plastic, Zero-Landfill" celebration on the occasion of Mahashivratri. The initiative showcased how traditional religious gatherings can be conducted with a strong focus on sustainability and ecological awareness.

The event was graced by Mandep Kaur (IAS), Commissioner Secretary to the Government, Housing and Urban Development Department, who participated in Gau Poojan and hawan rituals centred on the sacred

bond between Lord Shiva and Nandi. Joint Commissioners, officers, and officials of the Jammu Municipal Corporation were also present, along with prominent citizens led by Priya Sethi, former minister, and a large number of former Lambardars, Sarpanches and Panches from the area.

During her visit, Mandep Kaur inspected the Gaushala facilities and reviewed arrangements for cattle welfare. Addressing the gathering, she urged the public to actively contribute towards the Gaushala's mission and support animal care through donations. She highlighted the creation of a dedicated "Gau Shalaya

Punya Karaya Account" by the JMC to ensure continued development and maintenance of the facility. The appeal received an enthusiastic response, with many devotees contributing generously on the spot.

Organisers also drew attention to the dangers posed by plastic waste to stray and sheltered cattle. Under the theme "Gau Seva, Maha Seva," they emphasised that protecting cows goes hand in hand with protecting the environment. Single-use plastics were strictly banned at the venue, and the community kitchen served hundreds of devotees using biodegradable plates and eco-friendly alternatives. Volunteers from the Peace Initiative Trust distributed free cloth bags to encourage sustainable habits among visitors.

The successful conduct of the event demonstrated that large-scale religious gatherings can be organised without leaving an ecological footprint. Organisers thanked the public for their cooperation and support, noting that such initiatives could set a new benchmark for environmentally conscious cultural and spiritual celebrations across Jammu and Kashmir.

NSD's 25th Bharat Rang Mahotsav kicks off in Jammu with performance on Dinkar's Poetry Rashmirathi

BRM Jammu chapter scheduled to happen in two phases

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU : The National School of Drama (NSD)'s 25th Bharat Rang Mahotsav 2026, which is world's largest international theatre festival, made a powerful impact in Jammu as the festival opened with the electrifying staging of 'Rashmirathi'.

The dramatic interpretation of Rashtrakavi Ramdhari Singh Dinkar's timeless epic poem left audiences spellbound, marking a thrilling start to the world's largest international theatre festival.

Directed by Sumeet Sharma and presented by Design Your Degree, SIIEDC, University of Jammu, the performance witnessed an overwhelming response as theatre enthusiasts applauded the stirring storytelling and evocative performances.

The day was graced by at the programme, former Chief Secretary of Jammu & Kashmir B. R. Sharma graced the occasion as the Chief Guest, while Padma Shri Prof. Lalit Magotra, President of Dogri Samstha, and Harvinder Kaur, Secretary of the J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, attended as



Participants with dignitaries at NSD's 25th Bharat Rang Mahotsav 2026.

Guests of Honour.

The event also saw the presence of Prof. Umesh Rai, Vice Chancellor of the University of Jammu, along with Prof. Alka Sharma, Director SIIEDC, who delivered the welcome address. Prof. Prakash C. Antahal, Dean Students Welfare, and Prof. K. S. Charak were also present, contributing to the felicitation of dignitaries.

With the successful curtain-raiser now behind, the momentum is set to soar even higher as Jammu prepares for two high-octane theatre showcases. On 17th February, the festival will present the

Dogri adaptation of 'Jasma', written by Shanta Gandhi, translated by Kavi Rattan ji, and helmed by directors Abhishek Bharti and Aparna Kapoor. This culturally rooted production, staged by the Department of Performing Arts, Cluster University of Jammu, is expected to draw massive attention for its regional resonance and powerful narrative.

The theatrical excitement will continue on 20th February, when 'Jasma' returns for yet another performance, giving audiences another opportunity to experience the much-anticipated

Dogri rendition in Matrika Auditorium SMVDU Katra. NSD's Bharat Rang Mahotsav continues to uphold its legacy of celebrating diverse cultural voices and amplifying India's theatrical heritage on a global stage.

The 25th edition, BRM 2026, spans 25 days from 27 January to 20 February 2026, showcasing over 277 productions across 228 Indian and international languages, including several underrepresented tongues. The festival brings together national, international and regional productions, with participation from 9 countries

and theatre groups from every state and union territory.

Celebrating India's theatrical diversity, BRM 2026 includes performances by children's groups, tribal communities, and artists from marginalised sections, reaffirming NSD's commitment to inclusivity and the universalisation of theatre.

NSD has been continuously working towards the spread and democratisation of theatre. Recently, it launched Rang Akash, internet radio to promote theatre along with launching its OTT platform Natyam to avail some of its prized productions to theatre lovers across the nation.

Satish participates in Maha Shivratri celebrations, prays for peace and prosperity

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU : Minister for FCS&CA, Transport, Youth Services and Sports, IT, Science and Technology, Satish Sharma on Sunday participated in Maha Shivratri celebrations at various places across Jammu district, with the main function held at Batal village in the Chhambh constituency.

The Minister joined devotees in offering prayers on the auspicious occasion and interacted warmly with members of the local community. He extended his

heartfelt greetings to all those celebrating the festival and prayed for peace, harmony and prosperity across Jammu and Kashmir.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister highlighted the spiritual and cultural significance of Maha Shivratri, describing it as a festival that strengthens faith, promotes unity and reinforces the values of devotion and compassion. He said such sacred occasions serve as a reminder of the region's rich cultural heritage and

shared traditions.

Satish Sharma also appreciated the enthusiasm and devotion of the people participating in the celebrations. He expressed hope that the festival would bring happiness, well-being and renewed spiritual strength to every household.

The Minister reiterated his commitment to the welfare and development of all sections of society and prayed for lasting peace, progress and prosperity in Jammu and Kashmir.

Need has arisen for clearing some misunderstandings on Geo Administrative order of J&K



A Look through the Mist Part-II

DAYA SAGAR

To many the Indian 'State' of Jammu and Kashmir is even this day 'known' as Kashmir. In pre 1947 British times too the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir was also referred as Kashmir even in official quotes and such like references have made many to feel/believe that Jammu and Kashmir State prominently comprises of Kashmir Valley only where as the Kashmir Valley is a small part of Jammu and Kashmir State. A brief review of the Geo-Administrative order of Maharaja Hari Singh's Princely State of British Indian Empire would give some meaningful understanding about Jammu and Kashmir State & affairs related this most discussed { even internationally } Indian state. In the nineteenth century Maharaja Gulab Singh of Jammu & Kashmir ventured into marking the Geographical boundaries of Bharat to the other side of Himalayas. Gulab Singh's forces even routed the 'Tibetan' army. Raja Gulab Singh's General Zorabar Singh had followed the route through Kishtwar in 1830's since at that time Kashmir valley was not governed by Gulab Singh. Jammu Region and Ladakh region were already part of Jammu Raj before the control of the Kashmir Valley was also transferred to Jammu Raj { Maharaja Gulab Singh } by the British India Crown when the Kashmir valley was surrendered to the British India by the Punjab Sikh Empire as compensation for the battle the Sikhs lost to the British in 1846. Hence the Jammu Raj was named as the State of Jammu and Kashmir. A fair and honest trial could be done by looking at

the structure of Civil Administration given to J&K by the times of Maharaja Hari Singh before when the then Princely state of J&K acceded to India Dominion on 26th Oct 1947 to become part of India i.e Bharat Democratic Republic. Civil Divisions / Administration For the purposes of civil administration, the state was divided into three parts ; 1. Province of Jammu [app 14010 sq Miles(12401+1600+9) /36315 Sq Km] 2. Province of Kashmir { 8569 sq miles / 22133sq Km} 3. District of Ladakh. The head of revenue administration in each province was a Governor. Ladakh district was under a Wazir Wazarat. Kashmir Province: { 8569 sq miles / 22000sq Km } : The Geographical Division of J&K comprising of the Jhelum valley (consisting of the valleys that drained into the Jhelum and Krishan Ganga rivers) and the lateral valleys of the Sind as well as that of Liddar together form the famous Kashmir valley. Kashmir Valley along with the hilly track of Muzaffarabad included in Kashmir Province. It is the Kashmir Region of today.

Jammu Province: { app 14010 sq Miles /36315 Sq Km } . It extended over the Semi- mountainous and Sub-mountainous tract consisting of the plains contiguous to the Punjab and broken Kandi country skirting the Himalayan ranges. The rivers Ravi, Chenab, and Jhelum and several perennial streams flowing through. The hills in Bhaderwah, Doda, and Kishtwar formed part of this Division. Jagirs of Poonch & Chenani too were with this Province. This Division comprised the whole area covered by the ranges of low hills to the south of Pir Panjal Mountains which divide the two provinces of Jammu and Kashmir. District of Ladakh {63554 sq miles / 164748 sq km } :- The Tibetan and Semi Tibetan tract, that consisted on

middle reaches of the Indus formed this Division i.e Ladakh DISTRICT OF Maharajas Administration comprised of district of Gilgit and the frontier ilaqaqs of Skardu, Ladakh and Kargil. The river Indus having it's source in Mansarovar lake in Tibet traversed the whole of this Division (district) running from south east up to the bend around the Nanga Parbat, where it assumes a south westerly course. Except in Gilgit, the ranges in

Province	District	Tehsil	Niabat
1. Kashmir	1. Anantnag	1. Anantnag. 2. Kulgam	-
		3. Awantipura. 4. Srinagar	-
	2. Baramulla	1. Baramulla	-
		2. Srinapatasinghpura	-
		3. Uttarmachhipura	1. Gurez. 2. Sopore
3. Muzaffarabad	1. Muzaffarabad. 2. Uri 3. Karnah		

this Division Vary from 17000 feet to 22000 feet. . Crop area in Ladakh was very small. Mountains in the North stretch up to Pamirs. Mount Godwin Astin, 28265 feet above MSL was the then second highest known peak in world. Bhotia and Shina spoken in Ladakh and Gilgit remained confined to Ladakh. # Astore was under a Revenue Assistant and ## Ladakh had nearly Direct Administration under a Wazir Wazarat. In 1935 when Soviet Russia nearly over ran Eastern Turkistan , the

British executed an agreement with Maharaja Hari Singh and took Gilgit on lease under which the administration and defence of Gilgit became the subject of the British. An irregular corps , the Gilgit Scouts was raised for the purpose. In 1947 Gilgit was administratively/ technically transferred back to Maharaja. Frontier ilaqaqs of Skardu , Ladakh and Kargil was 63554 square miles (approximately 1,65000 square

Province	District	Tehsil	Niabat
2. Jammu	1. Jammu	1. Jammu . 2. Samba	-
		3. Akhnoor. 4. Ranbisinigh Pura	-
		1. Mirpur. 2. Bhimber. 3. Kotli	1. Noushera
		1. Udhampur. 2. Ramban	-
		3. Ramnagar. 4. Bhardarwah	-
		5. Kishtwar	-
4. Reasi	1. Reasi. 2. Rajouri		1. Gulabgarh
		1. Kathua. 2. Jasmargah. 3. Basoli	-
3. Jagers*	*Jurisdictional	1. Poonch Jagir app1600 sq km	2. Chenani Jagir app 9 -10 sq km

kilometers). The population was very sparse. In Jammu Province of erstwhile Princely State of Maharaja Hari Singh the Muslim formed a large portion of population but the Jammu Province still extended over larger part of the domain as compared to Kashmir Province without any communal overtones and considerations. Where as a just and rational segmentation of the civil administration was there looking at the ethnic/ cultural /geographical physicals for the welfare of the masses which had been the prime consideration with Maharaja. On the

whole the Muslim population was nearly 77 % of total population of the State as per 1941 census

In 1947 /48 Pakistan by way of illegal infiltration/ attack in the disguise of tribal attack involving regular defence forces encroached upon some parts of Mirpur district, some part of Poonch Jagir, some parts of Ladakh Wazarat/ Gilgit Baltistan and the areas are still under Pakistan occupation since India in Jan 1948 in the interest of peace in the two Dominions of India & Pakistan that had just attained independence requested UNO to impress upon Pakistan refrain from illegal intrusions & clear the invaded areas of Indian state of J&K. but UNO have not been able perform the duty till date. So in to be brief Jammu Province / Jammu Region/ Jammu Division had 5 Districts (Mirpur, Jammu, Kathua, Udhampur & Reasi) and two Jagirs (Poonch & Chenani) out of which Mirpur District & some parts of Poonch Jagir remained under Pakistan occupation leaving nearly four Districts & two Jagirs in Jammu region where in the Kashmir Region there were three districts (Anantnag, Baramulla & Muzaffarabad) out of which almost all District of Muzaffarabad had been occupied by Pakistan leaving behind only about Districts. As regards the Ladakh Division/ Wazarat Gilgit/ Baltistan area was illegally encroached by Pakistan. Accordingly the areas excluding the areas were reorganised in terms of district administrative units as Jammu Region (Nearly 4 districts & 2 Jagirs) in 6 districts (Poonch, Rajouri, Jammu, Kathua, Udhampur ,Doda) extending over an areas of around 26293 Sq Km with more rough/ bad terrain; as Kashmir Region (2 Districts) in 3 Districts (Anantnag, Srinagar, Baramulla) extending over an area of around 15948 sq Km mostly plain & easy terrain and Ladakh region

as 1 district. That means Administration of J&K in independent India started with 6 Districts in Jammu Region (26293 sq km), 3 Districts in Kashmir region (15948 sq km) and 1 Region in Ladakh region. It was in 1979 that Districts in Kashmir region were increased from 3 (Srinagar, Anantnag, Baramulla) to 6 (Srinagar, Badgam, Anantnag, Pulwama, Baramulla, Kupwara) by then Government vide by SRO 306 of 6/6/1979, districts in Ladakh region were increased from 1 (Leh) to 2 (Leh, Kargil) where as the districts in Jammu region were kept 6 only (no increase) as it was there. It was in 2006/07 that Congress lead Congress-PDP government during UPA-I times once again so irrationally carved out (in 2006-07 vide SRO 185 of 22 May 2007) 4 new districts in Kashmir valley as against only 1 recommended by Wazir Commission (MC) in 1984 i.e 300 % more than recommended by WC and also only 4 new districts in Jammu region as against 3 already recommended by WC in 1984 i.e only 33 % more than what was recommended by WC in 1984. So both Jammu Region as well as Kashmir Region in 2026 have 10 District Administrative units when in 1978 Kashmir region had only 3 districts and Jammu region had 6 regions. So any analysis as regards investments & development that will have to be made must be done keeping in view the number of districts as were there in 1978.. Since the common man has very less information and is innocent, some have succeeded in even terming the demand for separate State of Jammu { extending over the territories of Jammu Province of the State of Jammu and Kashmir as a Hindu dominated area demand , which is surely a wrong propaganda. (The writer is Sr Journalist and social activist)