

India's youth will play decisive role in shaping destiny of Nation: LG Ladakh

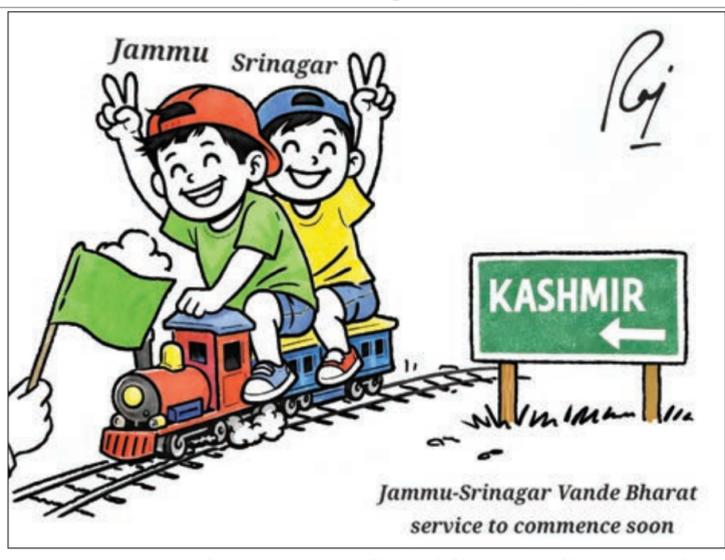
STATE TIMES NEWS
GURDASPUR: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh Kavinder Gupta said India's youth will play a decisive role in shaping the nation's destiny and realising the vision of a developed India by 2047. He was addressing the Annual Convocation Ceremony of Government College, Gurdaspur, where he awarded degrees to 247 students and conferred the Roll of Honour upon five meritorious students. Emphasising the importance of education in nation-building, Kavinder Gupta urged students to cultivate innovation, integrity and a spirit of service. He said the vision of "Viksit Bharat 2047" can only be achieved through active youth participation in governance, entrepreneurship, research and community development. He encouraged graduates to face challenges confidently and contribute meaningfully to society.



LG Ladakh Kavinder Gupta lighting a lamp at Annual Convocation Ceremony of Government College, Gurdaspur.

emotional and personally significant, the Lieutenant Governor recalled his journey as a former student of the same institution. He said returning to the college stage felt like coming home and credited his teachers, parents and the institution's discipline for shaping his life. He remarked that transformation is not about position but about responsibility and service. Sharing his experiences in Ladakh, he said serving in the high-altitude Union Territory is a sacred commitment to nation-building. He highlighted his tours to remote border villages, interactions with soldiers' families and youth, and stressed that governance must be rooted in service and direct public engagement. He noted rapid development in higher education infrastructure at the University of Ladakh and appreciated the innovation-driven spirit of students at premier institutions such as Indian Institute of Technology Jammu. Referring to his participation in the India AI Impact Summit, Kavinder Gupta underlined the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence in healthcare, education, agriculture and governance, while emphasising ethical and inclusive use of technology. He encouraged graduates to equip themselves with emerging digital skills and leverage AI responsibly for societal benefit. Later, he was conferred the

Shri Laxmi Chander Vishist Sewa Rattan Award in recognition of his distinguished public service. Raman Bahl, Halqa Incharge Gurdaspur, and Dr. Sandeep Sharma, Vice Chancellor of Maharaja Ranjit Singh Punjab Technical University, were present. Former Principals and senior faculty including Professor Raj Kumar Sharma, Professor G.S. Kalsi, Om Prakash, V.K. Maudgil, Kamal Kishore Atri, V.K. Singh and Professor J.S. Grover attended the ceremony. Registrar Professor Seema Mahajan and Principal Ashwani Kumar Bhalla conducted the proceedings. The event began with the Academic Procession and concluded with the National Anthem.



AIIMS Jammu conducts four-day Certificate Course in Forensic Medicine & Sciences for J&K Police officers



Participating J&K Police officers with AIIMS Jammu faculty posing for a photograph.

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: The Department of Forensic Medicine at All India Institute of Medical Sciences Jammu has successfully conducted a four-day "Certificate Course in Forensic Medicine & Sciences" exclusively for officers of the Jammu and Kashmir Police. This training programme is the first of its kind in the country, and AIIMS Jammu becomes the first among all institutions nationwide to initiate such a specialized course for police officers. The course was conceptualized and designed by the Course Director, Professor and Head of the Department of Forensic Medicine, Prof

(Dr) Dinesh Rao. The programme was attended by 25 Probationary Deputy Superintendents of Police (DySPs) and 36 Probationary Police Sub-Inspectors (PSIs). The curriculum covered a wide spectrum of forensic disciplines, including forensic identification, forensic thanatology, forensic ballistics, crime scene investigation, forensic evidence, narcotics, questioned documents, traumatic pathology and asphyxial deaths. The final day of the course was dedicated to assessment, and certificates were awarded only to those officers who successfully qualified. The valedictory func-

tion was graced by Prof. (Dr.) D. N. Sharma, Executive Director & CEO, AIIMS Jammu, Shri Garib Das, Director of the Sher-e-Kashmir Police Academy and Shri Rajendra Kumar Gupta, Deputy Director of SEKPA. On the occasion, the Course Director and Head of Forensic Medicine, Prof (Dr) Dinesh Rao, highlighted the crucial role of forensic science in modern criminal investigations and stressed the need to integrate forensic principles into routine police training. Garib Das also underscored the significance of forensic education for law enforcement personnel and assured that efforts would be made, in coordination with the Ministries concerned, to further strengthen and expand such training programmes. Prof. (Dr.) D. N. Sharma, Executive Director & CEO, AIIMS Jammu, commended the initiative and described the programme as a significant step toward institutional collaboration and interdisciplinary training of national relevance. He reaffirmed AIIMS Jammu's commitment to contributing beyond healthcare delivery by supporting professional capacity building in critical domains. The Programme reflects AIIMS Jammu's expanding role in academic excellence, interdisciplinary engagement and Nation-oriented institutional initiatives.

J&K Judicial Academy organises training on "Power and Duties of Drawing and Disbursing Officer including GeM Training"

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Under the patronage of Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh (Patron-in-Chief, J&K Judicial Academy), Arun Palli and guidance of Chairperson and members of Governing Committee for J&K Judicial Academy, the Jammu & Kashmir Judicial Academy on Saturday organised a one day Refresher Training Programme (A-061/25) on "Power and Duties of Drawing and Disbursing Officer including GeM Training" at its Janipur Campus, Jammu. The programme was conducted for the Judicial Officers and Nazirs/Buyers dealing with Government e-Marketplace (GeM) of Jammu Province. The programme commenced with registration of the participants followed by introduction by Naseer Ahmad Dar, Director, J&K Judicial Academy. In his address, the Director underscored the importance of financial disci-



Sarthak Khoda, GeM Trainer speaking at a programme.

pline, accountability and digital procurement systems in strengthening the institutional efficiency and transparency within the judicial system. The first and second sessions conducted by Sarthak Khoda, GeM Trainer, who provided an in-depth overview of the Government e-Marketplace platform. The sessions covered registration and onboarding processes, procurement workflow, order placement, contract management, billing, invoicing and payment reconciliation. The resource person also apprised the participants of recent features and policy updates on GeM and addressed practical challenges faced by stakeholders. The technical sessions were also graced by Amir Ali, Senior Assistant Director, Government e-Marketplace, whose presence added value to the deliberations. The third and fourth sessions were delivered by Er. Jagteshwar Singh, Accounts Officer, Civil Aviation Department, J&K. He elaborated on the legal and administrative framework governing the role of Drawing and Disbursing Officers, including powers and duties under General Financial Rules (GFRs), Treasury Rules and Financial Codes. The sessions further focused on budgetary control, expenditure management, maintenance of financial records, preparation and submission of bills, advances and recoveries, pension matters, GPF/NPS issues, audit procedures, and common objections. The technical sessions were also attended by Sandeep Singh Manhas, FA/CAO, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, whose august presence enriched the deliberations. The programme concluded with an interactive session, wherein the participants actively engaged with the resource persons, raised queries and shared field-level experiences. The interactive deliberations enriched the learning experience and clarified practical aspects of financial compliance and procurement procedures.

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NISD, MoSJE-Sponsored Training Programme on beggary elimination inaugurated at JU

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: The Department of Home Science (Human Development), University of Jammu (JU), is organizing the Second Two-Day Capacity-Building Training Programme on "Convergence of Programmes for the Elimination of Beggary," sponsored by the National Institute of Social Defence (NISD), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE), Government of India, on 21st and 22nd February 2026. The programme was inaugurated by Dr. Mohd. Haseeb Mughal, DIG Traffic, Jammu, who emphasized that beggary is a serious and multidimensional social issue often underestimated in policy and public discourse. He highlighted that reliance solely on legal enforcement has not yielded sustainable results and called for a humane, rehabilitation-oriented, and coordinated approach involving law enforcement agencies, social welfare departments, NGOs, and community institutions. Dr. Mughal stressed the need for reliable data, targeted interventions for vulnerable groups, strict action against trafficking networks, and the establishment of a dedicated helpline to assist individuals willing to disengage from beggary. He also underlined the importance of medical support,



counselling, skill development, shelter homes, and livelihood opportunities to ensure dignified reintegration into society. In her welcome address, Prof. Sarika Manhas, Head of the Department, emphasized the critical importance of institutional convergence in addressing beggary as a complex developmental and social concern. Highlighting that this is the second such initiative organized by the Department, she stated that the deliberations aim to strengthen inter-departmental coordination, clarify institutional roles, and develop actionable, region-specific strategies. She further informed that the recommendations emerging from both workshops are being consolidated and will be formally shared with the Ministry for policy-level consideration and follow-up. The inaugural session was followed by technical deliberations featuring Dr. Hema Gandotra, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Jammu, who spoke on "Beggary and Social Stigma: The Problem of Identity and Labelling"; Pardeep Dutta, Consulting Editor, NDTV, who addressed "Role of Media in Addressing Beggary: Representation, Ethics and Social Responsibility"; and Dr. Sapna Bansal, Associate Professor, School of Law, Forensic Justice & Policy Studies, National Forensic Sciences University, New Delhi, who delivered a session on "Legal Frameworks Governing Beggary - Constitutional Mandates, Judicial Trends and Policy Reform."

The concluding remarks on Day One were presented by Dr. Nitam Sharma, Assistant Professor, The Law School, JU. Prominent among those who attended the training programme were SSP M.R. Giri, Dy. SP Sumniya Wani, Dy. SP Ramesh Kataria, Shivani Sawhney, Dr. Arpana Rajput (PSPS Government PG College for Women, Gandhi Nagar), Dr. Sanya Khan (Mission Shakti, Doda), and Dr. Kanika Gupta (GDC Samba).

JKBOSE concludes workshop on Strengthening Assessment Systems

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE), in collaboration with PARAKH, NCERT, on Saturday concluded its five-day intensive workshop held from February 17 to 21, 2026. The workshop marks a significant step towards modernizing evaluation practices in alignment with the vision of the National Education Policy (NEP 2020). It focused on two major objectives: the implementation of the Holistic Progress Card (HPC) at the secondary stage and the standardization of question paper templates to ensure competency-based, student-centric assessments. Earlier, the inaugural session was chaired by Chairman JKBOSE, Ghulam Hassan Sheikh, who highlighted the transformative intent of NEP 2020 in ensuring equitable and comprehensive assessment of students' cognitive, emotional and skill-based competencies. The valedictory was graced by Dr. Parveen Singh, Director Academics, JKBOSE, who addressed the participants and emphasized the importance of creativity, analytical thinking and problem-solving skills in question paper design. He underscored the need to align classroom teaching methodologies with reformed assessment frameworks to nurture holistic learning outcomes among students. Resource persons from PARAKH, NCERT delivered detailed technical sessions on the concept and design of standardized Question Paper Templates and the session on implementation of Holistic Progress Card was delivered by Dr. Romesh Kumar Sharma, HOD DIET Jammu. More than 130 educators from the School Education Department, SCERT, DIETs and from private schools actively participated in the workshop. Officers of the Academic Division, JKBOSE, were also present and contributed to the proceedings. The deliberations over the five days included hands-on training, collaborative discussions and practical exercises aimed at building a cadre of professionally trained paper setters and assessment experts. The enthusiastic and overwhelmingly



Director Academics JKBOSE, Dr. Parveen Singh with others at closing ceremony.

positive feedback received from participants has further motivated JKBOSE to continue organizing such impactful capacity-building programmes in the future. Dr. Yasir Hamid Sirwal, along with Dr. Arif Jan, Dy. Director Academics-JD and KD, reaffirmed their commitment to institutionalizing similar workshops on a regular basis to strengthen assessment practices and enhance professional competencies among educators across the Union Territory. Sugandh, Academic Officer, anchored the valedictory, ensuring smooth proceedings. The officers of the Academic Division, JKBOSE Iftikhar Imran, Academic Officer-KD, Syed Kashif Hashmi and Chander Kumar Academic Officers-JD were also present, demonstrating their commitment to the workshop's objectives.

Why constitutional provisions for Reservation have not uniformly benefitted castes/tribes who were kept in Focus in 1950?

DAYA SAGAR
 The judgement passed on 1st August 2024 by a seven-judge constitution bench of Supreme Court of India had been very much in discussions, though it is a law now. On the subject "Are state legislatures competent to introduce sub-classification within the SC and ST categories" a seven-judge constitution bench of supreme court of India led by then Hon'ble Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud on 1 August 2024 had upheld in a 6:1 majority judgement the validity of sub-classification within the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Categories keeping in view the related status on date as regards the benefits of reservations obtained so far by individual castes / group but surely well supported with reasoned data/statistics (Quantifiable and measurable data/Data on inadequacy of opportunity). No doubt one may differ in opinion but the law made with the judgement by the

Supreme Court has to be accepted by one and all as a law. Of course opinions regarding matters of greater common interest must also be made by all, when made, in an un-biased manner, particularly on the subject like the one under reference here i.e. reservations with in reservations for the Schedule Caste Category and the like keeping in view all the articles of the COI (1950) that directly or indirectly relate to reservations for socially and educationally backward citizens concerning entry in Legislature/Parliament as also the recommendations made for support in services / education etc. India republic is nearing eight decades old now and what have 'our' elected representatives achieved for the 'Indian' who was standing in last row in August 1947 through such 'props' worth writing off caste/sect ravines is surely the question that must be asked even in 2026. Even after the Special Session of Parliament (18th to 22nd



A Look through the Mist

September 2023) the subject of reservations in 'legislature', reservation in government services and reservations in professional education institutions was pushed in debates that no where tested with the guiding principles that might have been before the Constituent Assembly as could well be sensed from Articles like Art-334 (where in it was laid down that Reservation of seats / special representation in legislature to cease after ten years) since demands for also including OBC along with SC & ST for reservations in Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies were made by almost all the political parties outside NDA. Not only that indirectly demands have also been made even for all India caste census and making reservations

in proportion to the population and that too 'almost' a permanent feature. On the other side some people have already started asking (i) why at all the provision for reservation of seats in the Union legislature (Art-330) and State Legislatures (Art-332) was made in Constitution of India for "socially and educationally" backward classes and not on economic basis { so far classified and commonly understood as Schedule Caste (SC) Art-341 & Scheduled Tribe (ST) Art-342} and (ii) why was also the 'indirect provision' made for reservations in government services under Art-335 that provided that the claims of the members of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes shall be taken into consideration, consistently with the maintenance of efficiency in administration, in the making of appointments to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State. The reasons and pious intentions of the 'elders' worth defending such like provi-

sions do reflect to great extent from the directions given in directive principles (Art-46) where it has been said that the State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. But the question why the reservations in legislature are still continuing even after 7 decades when it was also laid down in constitution (Art-334) that Reservation of seats and special representation to cease after ten years cannot be replied truthfully unless the 'elected representatives' unconditionally accept that they have miserably failed to reasonably empower the socially & educationally backward members of Indian society. Not only those in the race for power centres (political) will have to truthfully introspect & work in the direction of ultimate goal scoring but at social level also those from within too

will have work for clearing the routes for the under privileged to higher education as well health security so as to ensure that the reservation provisions come within the reach of real needy & are no more allowed to just remain means for exploitation of the innocence of the masses of the target groups. To be brief, unless we provide adequate education cover at least up to secondary school level and adequate health cover to those for whom we have been keeping reservations majority of them will not be able to take the benefit for higher education as well as superior service positions in government because like as in the past those economically & administratively superior from 'within' would be over riding the general masses through special coaching/ training and better access to opportunities. Continued (The writer Daya Sagar is a Sr Journalist, analyst J&K affairs and Social Activist)