

LG Kavinder chairs preparatory meeting for 1st Sindhu Mahakumbh 2026

Directs comprehensive arrangements to ensure successful conduct of Mahakumbh

STATE TIMES NEWS

LEH: The upcoming 1st Sindhu Mahakumbh 2026 in Leh, Ladakh is being positioned as far more than just another annual festival - it symbolizes the region's organisational strength, deep cultural roots and hospitality, while offering a grand platform to showcase Ladakh's rich heritage to the nation and the world. The event is set to take place on June 23-24 at the sacred Sindhu Ghat and is expected to draw thousands of pilgrims, cultural troupes, dignitaries and visitors from across India and abroad.

Presiding over a high-level preparatory meeting at Lok Niwas, the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, emphasised the significance of Sindhu Mahakumbh as a reflection of Ladakh's discipline and collective spirit. He urged all



LG Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta chairing a meeting.

departments to collaborate meticulously on logistics, security, medical facilities, crowd control, transport, sanitation and visitor management to ensure a safe, comfortable and memorable experience for all participants.

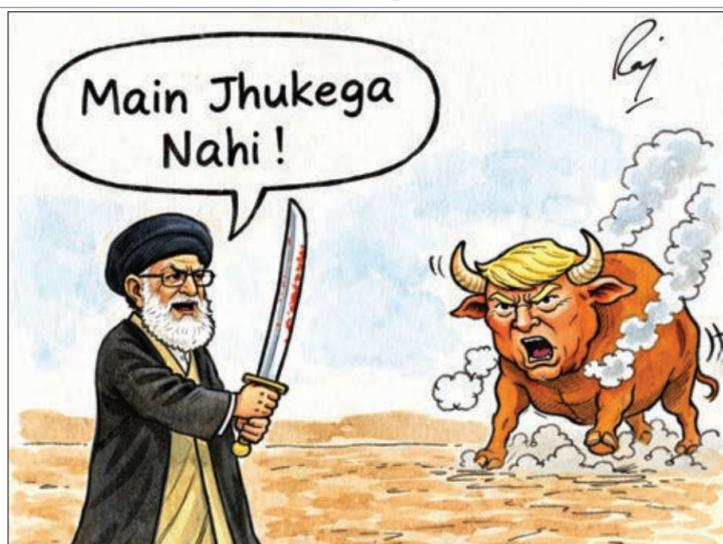
The meeting was attended by senior officials, including Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra, Secretary of Housing & Urban Development Sanjit Rodrigues, Wildlife Warden

Mandeep Mittal, Director Tourism Tsering Paldan, ADC Leh Ghulam Mohd, officials from the Public Works Department, and members of the Sindhu Darshan Yatra Samiti. Representatives from the Samiti highlighted the evolution of the Sindhu Darshan Festival, which has been organised annually since 1987 and will be marked as the first ever "Mahakumbh" edition in 2026.

The Samiti noted that the event is expected to attract pilgrims from over 25 states and union territories, along with foreign ambassadors and special guests, making it one of Ladakh's most significant cultural gatherings to date. They also sought administrative support for logistical coordination, including hosting cultural troupes such as those from the North Zone Cultural Centre, Patiala.

Kavinder Gupta invoked the ancient ethos of "Atithi Devo Bhava" - treating guests as gods - urging authorities to uphold the highest standards of hospitality, service excellence and visitor care. He directed that crowd management, traffic flow, emergency services, medical camps, potable water, sanitation, lighting and sustainable waste disposal be

meticulously planned and monitored across the venue. A Joint Control Room will ensure real-time coordination between departments, and strict accountability mechanisms will be enforced to address any operational lapses. Emphasising the dual goals of spiritual enrichment and national showcase, the LG reaffirmed the administration's full support for making Sindhu Mahakumbh 2026 a safe, exemplary and unforgettable event that reflects Ladakh's cultural pride, tourism potential and organisational capability.



AIIMS Jammu commemorates 2nd Institute Day Celebrations of Unity and Excellence

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: All India Institute of Medical Sciences Jammu commemorated its 2nd Institute Day with dignity and pride, marking a significant milestone in its journey as an emerging centre of excellence in healthcare, medical education and research.

The ceremony witnessed the gracious presence of Chief Guest Padma Shri Prof. (Dr.) Neerja Bhatla, President, AIIMS Bathinda; Guest of Honour Lt. Gen. (Dr.) C. S. Narayanan, President, AIIMS Jammu; Prof. (Dr.) D. N. Sharma, Executive Director & CEO, AIIMS Jammu; Prof. (Dr.) Meeta Gupta, Dean (Academics); along with faculty members, officers, nursing officers, residents, students and staff, reflecting the collective strength and unity of the AIIMS Jammu fraternity.

In his address, Prof. (Dr.) D. N. Sharma, Executive Director & CEO, AIIMS Jammu reaffirmed the Institute's steadfast commitment to excellence in patient

care, academics and research. He emphasized that AIIMS Jammu has emerged as a vibrant, research-oriented institution where innovation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and academic rigour form the foundation of growth. He highlighted continuous efforts to build a strong research ecosystem that encourages faculty and young scholars to pursue meaningful, outcome-driven research aligned with National health priorities. He further stated that the Institute's progress reflects collective dedication, discipline and a shared vision to establish AIIMS Jammu as a Centre of Excellence of National Importance.

On the occasion, Prof. (Dr.) Shakti Kumar Gupta, Former Executive Director & CEO, AIIMS Jammu reflected on the Institute's foundational journey and expressed his deep faith in its future. He stated, "I firmly believe that AIIMS Jammu will reach the next level of excellence and emerge as one of the leading medical institutions in the country." He appreciated the collective efforts of the faculty, officers,

and staff and conveyed confidence that with continued dedication and unity, the Institute will scale greater heights in patient care, academics, and research.

Lt. Gen. (Dr.) C. S. Narayanan, President, AIIMS Jammu described AIIMS Jammu as an institution "young in years, yet bold in vision and immense in potential." He emphasized that the Institute is not merely a hospital but a centre meant to shape knowledge and transform society. Highlighting Clinical Excellence, Academic Rigour, and Meaningful Research as key pillars for the future, he urged faculty and students to pursue measurable excellence with integrity and discipline, reminding young doctors that while technology strengthens medicine, empathy and ethical conduct remain its true foundation.

Chief Guest Padma Shri Prof. (Dr.) Neerja Bhatla, President, AIIMS Bathinda lauded the remarkable progress of AIIMS Jammu and described it as an institution with immense potential and purpose. She emphasized the responsibility of such

institutions toward compassionate and equitable healthcare and encouraged young professionals to focus on impactful research, strong teamwork, and patient care rooted in dignity and empathy.

During the celebration, the Institute highlighted its historic achievement of receiving Final NABH Accreditation for a period of four years, effective from 15 January 2026 to 14 January 2030. The release of the AIIMS Jammu Kulgeet (Theme Song) and the presentation of Research Paper Awards further marked the occasion, celebrating institutional pride, academic excellence, and a strong culture of meaningful research.

The 2nd Institute Day concluded with Vote of Thanks by Dean (Academics) Prof. (Dr.) Meeta Gupta, reaffirming AIIMS Jammu's unwavering commitment to strengthening patient care, advancing academic excellence, and promoting impactful research as it continues its journey toward becoming a Centre of National Importance and a symbol of public trust.

17th PRAKRITI International Documentary Film Festival concludes at JU



Participating students posing with Chief Guest, Padma Shri Prof. Lalit Magotra, JU faculty and CEC officials.

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The valedictory function of the 17th PRAKRITI: International Documentary Film Festival concluded on a high note at the University of Jammu (JU), marking the successful culmination of two days of compelling screenings and meaningful dialogue. The festival, themed around Environment, Development, Human Rights, and Swachh Bharat, showcased films that highlighted social issues, indigenous knowledge, and human resilience.

Padma Shri awardee Prof. Lalit Magotra, a distinguished alumnus of the University, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest, while the function was presided over by Vice-Chancellor Prof. Umesh Rai. Also present were Prof. Parikshit Singh Manhas, Director, CEC; Prof. Neelu Rohmetra, Dean Research Studies; and Sunil Mehru, Joint Director, CEC.

Addressing the gathering, Prof. Magotra described the festival as a landmark initiative, emphasizing that documentaries serve not only as sources of information but also as instruments of social responsibility, creativity, and awareness. He

urged students to appreciate storytelling techniques, visual language, and the nuanced power of silence in cinema.

Prof. Rai highlighted the festival's academic value, noting that experiential learning through documentary cinema bridges the gap between theory and real-world knowledge. He stressed that education must go beyond textbooks, integrating indigenous wisdom and practical experiences from daily life, while inspiring students to engage responsibly with society.

Prof. Manhas expressed gratitude to the University for hosting the festival and reflected on the transformative power of documentaries as mirrors of society. He emphasized that in the age of digital transformation and AI, education must extend into technology-driven, experiential environments, nurturing socially conscious and responsible citizens.

Sunil Mehru noted that the two-day festival explored diverse landscapes-from sinking islands and lavender fields to urban centers-documenting stories of climate change, grassroots innovation, migration, and dignity of labour. He called on participants to carry forward the festival's spirit,

where cinema informs, inspires, and drives meaningful change.

Prof. Neelu Rohmetra delivered the vote of thanks, acknowledging the Chief Guest, Vice-Chancellor, filmmakers, jury members, faculty, students, and organizing teams. Awards were presented to winning filmmakers, each receiving Rs 50,000, a trophy, and a certificate. Students

who staged a dramatic rendition of Rashmirathi were also felicitated.

The festival witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, scholars, civil society members, and media professionals, reinforcing the University of Jammu's commitment to promoting cinema as a medium of knowledge, creativity, and social transformation.

IGP Jammu calls for intelligence-driven operations, strong counter-terrorism measures in Doda

STATE TIMES NEWS

DODA: Bhim Sen Tuti, Inspector General of Police (IGP), Jammu Zone, led a comprehensive Crime Review and Security Assessment Meeting at the District Police Office (DPO) Doda to evaluate the prevailing law and order situation, overall crime trends, and the security grid in the district.

The review was attended by key officers including DIG DKR Range Shridhar Patil, SSP Doda Sandeep Mehta, along with SDPOs, SHOs and supervisory officers from various police units. SSP Doda presented a detailed PowerPoint briefing on the district's crime profile, highlighting trends in pending cases, disposal rates, NDPS and UAPA cases, and other serious offences. During the meeting, officers were



IGP Jammu Zone, Bhim Sen Tuti chairing a meeting.

instructed to expedite investigations, improve conviction rates, and keep vigilant surveillance on anti-social and anti-national elements to strengthen public safety and justice delivery across the district.

IGP Tuti assessed the existing security framework and underscored the need for enhanced inter-agency coordination, intensified night patrolling, and effective area domination in vulnerable and

sensitive locations. He also stressed that intelligence-driven operations and a robust counter-terror posture are crucial for preventing disruptions to peace and public order in Doda.

In his address, the IGP reiterated a zero-tolerance approach against drug trafficking, bovine smuggling and organised crime, directing strict enforcement measures to curb these threats and improve overall law enforce-

ment effectiveness. Officers were also encouraged to engage in public outreach and community policing efforts to build stronger trust and cooperation between police and citizens.

Commending the efforts of the District Police Doda, IGP Tuti urged all officers to continue their duties with professionalism, integrity and commitment to ensure safety across the district. As part of recognising good performance, certificates of merit were distributed to police stations based on their crime performance for the year 2025.

The meeting highlighted the police's strategic focus on combining rigorous crime control, enhanced security measures and active community engagement to maintain law and order in Doda and its adjoining regions.

Poonch: DLIC approves 153 cases under Mission YUVA

STATE TIMES NEWS

POONCH: The District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC) for Mission YUVA met today under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner, Ashok Kumar Sharma.

During the meeting, the committee approved 153 new cases, marking another major milestone in promoting entrepreneurship, self-employment and youth empowerment under the Mission YUVA initiative.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Tahir Mustafa Malik; GM DIC, Naheem Un Nissa Bhatti; Chief Agriculture officer; Jograj Salathia; Medical Superintendent, LDM, District Sheep Husbandry Officer; AD Handicraft/Handloom besides members of the Small Business Development Unit

(SBDU) of Mission YUVA.

The meeting held detailed deliberations, while the participating committee members shared valuable inputs to enhance transparency and efficiency in the implementation process.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasized the importance of coordinated efforts among all stakeholders for the timely processing and disbursement of approved cases. He reiterated that Mission YUVA is not merely a financial support program but a transformative initiative aimed at empowering youth and fostering an entrepreneurial ecosystem in the district.

The Deputy Commissioner directed Lead District Manager (LDM) to ensure speedy disbursement of approved cases to facilitate the early start of beneficiary ventures.

Union Govt need to have a relook at composition of the National Commission for Minorities

NDA Government should get implemented Clause - 7 of UPA-II PM's New 15 Point Prog for Welfare of Minorities

DAYA SAGAR

Not only Minorities / Minority affairs have always remained in focus for debates in India where as even the definition/ basis for naming a minority has not been so far laid in clear and plain terms. Even after more than 7 decades of Independence the vote bank politics focussing on religion / caste/ sect/ region / minority 'welfare' has not gone out of focus in India. Like the caste/class based reservations in legislature / services / education institutions/ socio- economic support the 'minority' welfare slogans too have been stretched much beyond the original targets 1950. It was in 1978 that Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) India under a Resolution envisaged the idea of setting a Commission for Minorities and in 1984 Minorities Commission (a non-statutory body) was appointed under the Ministry of Welfare. Parliament of India enacted the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992 ACT NO. 19 of 1992 that came into force on 17 May 1992 (extending to the whole of India except the State of Jammu and Kashmir) and replaced the Commission for Minorities by a statutory National Commission for Minorities. The Act did not specifically

define the term "Minority" and left it for the Central Government to define (Section-2-ii : "Minority", for the purposes of this Act, means a community notified as such by the Central Government;) and so was also left the job of constitution of the Commission (Section-3.- i. The Central Government shall constitute a body to be known as the National Commission for Minorities to exercise the powers conferred on, and to perform the functions assigned to it under this Act. ii. The Act provided that the Commission shall consist of a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson and five Members to be nominated by the Central Government from amongst persons of eminence, ability and integrity; Provided that five Members including the Chairperson shall be from amongst the Minority communities). The function of the NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR MINORITIES under Section-9 among other obligations included :- (a) evaluating the progress of the development of minorities under the Union and States; (b) monitoring working of safeguards provided in Constitution & in laws enacted by Parliament and State Legislatures.

It was Ministry of Welfare GOI that



A Look through the Mist Part-I

had notified five communities (1. Muslims. 2. Christians. 3. Sikhs. 4. Buddhists. 5. Zoroastrians/Parsis) as minorities communities (of course surely community was recognised on religion basis) at the national level on 22th October, 1993 Vide Notification No. S.O. 816(E). The first Statutory National Commission for Minorities was set up on 17.5.1993 vide a Gazette notification No. 993 dated 23-10- 1993 by the then Ministry of Welfare Government of India. Ministry of Minority Affairs was established by Government of India in 2006 as an apex regulatory body for the development and affairs concerning minority communities in India and the operations shifted from the Welfare Ministry to Ministry of Minority Affairs. And later on vide notification S.O 267 (E) dated 27th January 2014 of Ministry of Minority Affairs Jains were also notified as another minority community at national level making the total as six i.e 1. Muslims. 2. Christians. 3.

Sikhs. 4. Buddhists. 5. Zoroastrians /Parsis and 6. Jain.The population of the notified religious communities as minorities as per 2011 Census stood at 1.Muslims 14% , 2. Christians - 2.3 percent population (2.78 crores people),3.Sikhs - 1.7 percent population (2.08 crores people),4.Buddhists - 0.7 percent of the population (8.4 million people) 5.Jains - 0.4 percent of the population (4.5 million people),6.Parsis - Around 57000 people (estimate).

Setting up of Minority Commissions by the State Governments is a State subject. So far as per the information that is available only 18 states (subject to correction) have appointed State HR Commissions but almost all states have nominated same communities as minorities as have been by GoI at national level.

It is worth taking notice that GUIDELINES for implementation of Prime Minister's New 15 Point Programme for the Welfare of Minorities at para/ point- 7 say 7. (a) The target group of the programme consists of the eligible sections among the minorities notified under Section 2 (c) of the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992, viz, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and

Zoroastrians (Parsis) + Jain added in 2014. (b) In States, where one of the minority communities notified under Section 2 (c) of the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992 is, in fact, in majority, the earmarking of physical/financial targets under different schemes will be only for the other notified minorities. Accordingly In reference to Prime Minister's New 15 Point Programme for the Welfare of Minorities at para/ point- 7 the States Punjab, Meghalaya, Mizoram & Nagaland and UTs of J&K & Lakshadweep have one of national level minority as a majority at state level but so the said guideline has not been implemented while implementing the central government welfare programmes for minorities.

The inferences that could be taken by a common mind from the contents of THE National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992 ACT NO. 19 OF 1992 and orders / guidelines regarding minorities issued by government of India may be like (i) for the Government of India and State Governments the Linguistic minorities do not come under the purview of the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992 ACT NO. 19 OF 1992 and it

is in relation to religious communities only' (ii) any religious community that is more than 50% at national level will be taken as minority community by the National Commission for Minorities and Central Government (iii) State governments also believe in the Minorities identified at national level and have not hence (so far) notified the minorities at state levels (iii) so unfortunately it appears that even the senior Indian leaders believe that the backwardness of the minority communities is due to the reason that the majority community in India (ofcourse Hindu) does not fairly treat other communities in minority since had it not been the Section-3 (ii) of the NC for M Act 'would' not have drafted the way it had been drafted like < ii. The Commission shall consist of a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson and five Members to be nominated by the Central Government from amongst persons of eminence, ability and integrity; Provided that five Members including the Chairperson shall be from amongst the Minority communities > . 'Seniors' must have a relook.

To be continued (The writer is Sr Journalist and social activist)