

LG Kavinder reviews progress of major infrastructure projects in Ladakh

Asks DCs to finalise recruitment rules, notify advertisement forthwith

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LEH: The Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the progress of major infrastructure projects under key Central Government schemes, including the Central Road and Infrastructure Fund (CRIF), Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS), and the Prime Minister's Development Package (PMDP).

Recruitment drives for non-gazetted posts through the District Subordinate Services Recruitment Boards (DSSRBs) and the Ladakh Subordinate Services Staff Selection Board (LSSSSB), as well as gazetted posts being filled through the Union Public Service Commission, were also reviewed.



LG Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta chairing meeting at Leh on Friday.

Secretary, PWD, Michael D'Souza informed that 14 new CRIF projects worth approximately Rs 931 crores have been sanctioned by the Government of India, while highlighting land acquisition challenges affecting timelines. Chief Engineer, PDD, Tsewang Paljor detailed the implementation of RDSS under six packages costing Rs 1216.86 crores, targeted for

completion by March 2028. He flagged power purchase liabilities of Rs 396.81 crores payable to Jammu and Kashmir Power Corporation Limited and stressed the need for adequate funding in FY 2026-27 to initiate a proposed 5 MW solar power project. Manpower shortages for operations and maintenance were also discussed. Administrative Secretary,

Planning and Finance, Dr L Franklin reviewed nine PMDP projects, including the Srinagar-Leh 220 kV Transmission Line, Nimoo-Padum-Darcha Road, Zoji La Tunnel, solar drier subsidies, and the Pashmina promotion programme. An outlay of Rs 21,441 crores has been earmarked for Ladakh under PMDP. Director, Defence Institute

of High Altitude Research, Dr OP Chaurasia briefed the meeting on upcoming research-related infrastructure initiatives.

The meeting was informed that 1,385 non-gazetted posts were advertised in 2025, with over 900 matriculation and 10+2 level posts filled. Examinations for 473 graduation-level posts are scheduled for March 2026, alongside special recruitment drives for teachers and other vacancies. The Lieutenant Governor expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for substantial budgetary support and emphasized timely execution, transparency, equitable regional development, and focused attention on border areas to accelerate Ladakh's growth.



Dr Jitendra hosts luncheon interaction for Ladakh students, appreciates their aspirational urge

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NEW DELHI: Union Minister, Jitendra Singh, on Friday hosted a delegation of students from Ladakh at his residence for a special luncheon interaction. The programme provided a platform for open dialogue on youth empowerment, national integration, and emerging opportunities, with the Minister appreciating the students' aspirational spirit and encouraging them to aim high.



Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh interacting with students from Ladakh at his New Delhi residence on Friday.

Interacting warmly with the delegation, Dr. Singh underlined the transformative power of exposure and cultural exchange in shaping young minds. Recalling earlier student exchange initiatives, particularly involving youth from the North-East, he noted that such programmes helped remove hesitation and build confidence among students from remote regions. He shared how festivals like Lohri, Bihu, Makar Sankranti, and Pongal were celebrated together during past exchanges, allowing participants to appreciate India's cultural diversity while recognising the shared spirit of celebration that strengthens emotional unity.

Highlighting the impact of technology, Dr. Singh said

that geographical barriers have diminished in today's digital era, effectively eliminating the notion of "small places." With improved connectivity and infrastructure, students can now prepare for Civil Services and pursue competitive careers from any corner of the country. He advised students to first understand their inner strengths and capacities before choosing a career path, emphasising that self-awareness is key to success.

Referring to the past decade under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he said numerous initiatives have opened new avenues for youth across sectors. He assured the students that government support remains accessible to those committed to hard work and persever-

ance. Speaking about Ladakh's rapid transformation, he highlighted the establishment of new colleges, expansion of higher education institutions, and growing opportunities in engineering, medicine, and civil services. He also mentioned the Prime Minister's visits to Ladakh, including during extreme winter conditions, as a sign of strong commitment to the region.

The students were part of the Student Experience in Regional Understanding (SERU) programme, which promotes cultural understanding and academic exposure. Participants described the initiative as enriching and confidence-building, broadening their aspirations and reinforcing their sense of belonging to the national community.

J&K Bank accords warm farewell to two General Managers

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: J&K Bank on Friday accorded a warm send-off to its two senior management functionaries, Anand Pal Singh and Shabir Ahmad, who superannuated as General Managers after serving the institution for over three-and-a-half decades in different capacities and geographies.

MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee chaired the farewell function, held at the Bank's Corporate Headquarters, which was attended by Executive Director Sudhir Gupta, Chief General Manager Intiyaz Ahmad Bhat, General Managers, Deputy General Managers and other senior officers.

In his remarks on the occasion, MD & CEO Amitava thanked both the officers for their steadfast commitment to the organisation and wished them a healthy and happy post-retirement life. He further said, "The superannuation of senior leaders is always a moment of mixed emotions for any institution. While we celebrate their remarkable journey and immense contribution, we also recognise that we are bidding farewell to a



wealth of experience and institutional memory. Both of you have contributed significantly to the Bank's growth and culture over the years."

Highlighting the Bank's forward-looking approach, the MD & CEO added, "As we bid farewell to our senior colleagues today, I am pleased to share that the Bank has already initiated a structured career progression process. Our succession planning is well underway and we remain committed to nurture the next line of leadership to take the organisation forward with renewed energy and vision."

Further, he urged the middle management to gear up for

greater responsibilities in the rapidly transforming banking landscape.

He said, "The landscape of banking and finance is evolving at an unprecedented pace, driven by technology, regulatory shifts and changing customer expectations. I call upon our upcoming leaders to be ready - both in mindset and capability - to assume larger roles. Agility, innovation, risk awareness and a deep sense of customer commitment must define the next phase of leadership at the Bank."

Executive Director Sudhir Gupta and CGM Intiyaz Ahmad Bhat also conveyed their best

wishes to the retiring officers, appreciating their team spirit and contribution towards the institution.

Besides expressing gratitude to the Bank's leadership both the retiring officers thanked their colleagues for the support and cooperation extended to them throughout their careers. GM Anand Pal Singh said, "I feel honoured to have been part of the J&K Bank family. The journey has been truly rewarding, and I am grateful to the Bank's leadership and all my colleagues for their constant support and for the cherished memories we created together."

"While expressing my gratitude to the Bank's leadership, I sincerely thank all my friends and colleagues for this wonderful journey of over thirty-seven years. I will always cherish these years with a deep sense of affection and satisfaction", remarked GM Shabir Ahmad.

The ceremony concluded with the presentation of mementos as a token of appreciation, amidst warm wishes from colleagues for a fulfilling and prosperous post-retirement life of both the retiring officers.

ICAI J&K Branch organises seminar on Budget 2026 & GST Amendments



Dignitaries during the seminar in Jammu on Friday.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Jammu & Kashmir Branch (NIRC) of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), in association with the Committee for Members in Industry & Business (CMIB), ICAI, organised a 6 CPE hour Seminar on "Budget 2026 and GST Amendments & Litigations" at ICAI Bhawan, Jammu.

The seminar witnessed active participation from members of the profession and representatives from trade and industry.

CA (Dr.) Girish Ahuja, eminent tax expert and author, delivered a focused analysis of Budget 2026, highlighting key amend-

ments in direct tax provisions and their practical implications for professionals and businesses. He provided clear and actionable insights on compliance and tax planning.

CA Aanchal Kapoor deliberated on recent GST amendments and litigation trends, offering practical guidance on handling GST proceedings and emerging compliance challenges.

CA Jatin Malhotra, Secretary of the Branch, moderated the technical sessions and facilitated the interactive discussions.

CA Sourav Pargal, Chairman of the Branch, in his address emphasized the importance of continuous

professional education and the need for members to remain updated with evolving fiscal laws. He reiterated the Branch's commitment towards organizing knowledge-driven programmes for professional development.

CA Amit Gupta, Vice-Chairman, concluded the seminar with a formal vote of thanks.

CA Saneet Aggarwal, Treasurer, along with Executive Members CA Ayush Sawhney and CA Ayush Mahajan were also present on the occasion.

The seminar concluded with an engaging interactive session between the speakers and participants.

Free PoJK from illegal occupation: India's clear message, says Gaurav

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: BJP Spokesperson and Convenor, International Affairs, Gaurav Gupta on Thursday lauded India's strong rebuttal to Pakistan and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), terming it a "decisive diplomatic slap" to what he described as "habitual propaganda on Jammu and Kashmir."

Referring to India's right of reply during the 55th session of the UNHRC in Geneva, Gupta said India once again dismantled what he called Pakistan's "manufactured narrative" on Kashmir. "Pakistan has reduced itself to an exporter of lies at international forums. Every time it raises Kashmir, it only exposes its own record of terror sponsorship and human rights abuses," Gupta asserted.

He further accused the OIC of acting as a "mouthpiece" for Islamabad. "It is unfortunate that the OIC continues to parrot Pakistan's script. Instead of focusing on genuine global human rights issues, it allows itself to be misused for narrow political agendas," he said.

Gupta strongly echoed India's position that the only outstanding issue remains Pakistan's



"illegal occupation of Indian territory." He said, "If Pakistan is genuinely concerned about human rights, it must vacate the territories it has illegally occupied and stop aiding cross-border terrorism. Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India legally, historically, and constitutionally."

Highlighting democratic progress in the Union Territory, Gupta pointed to the high voter turnout in recent Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, stating that the people of Jammu and Kashmir have "rejected separatism and terrorism decisively." "The record participation in elections is the strongest rebuttal to Pakistan's falsehoods. Ballots have defeated bullets," he remarked.

Taking a sharp dig at

Islamabad's criticism of India's development narrative, Gupta referred to the iconic Chenab Rail Bridge, described as the world's highest railway bridge. "If Pakistan calls such historic infrastructure 'fake', then perhaps its leadership truly lives in a fantasy world. The Chenab Bridge stands tall as a symbol of New India's resolve and Jammu and Kashmir's transformation," he said.

Gupta also contrasted the massive developmental push in

Jammu and Kashmir with Pakistan's economic crisis, referring to its repeated bailout packages from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). "While India is investing record funds in infrastructure, connectivity, tourism and youth empowerment in J&K, Pakistan is running from pillar to post seeking financial rescue. The developmental budget of J&K reflects India's commitment to prosperity and peace," he added.

Calling India's response at the

UNHRC "clear, confident and uncompromising," Gupta said the global community is increasingly aware of Pakistan's "double standards." He asserted that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, India will continue to firmly counter misinformation at every international platform.

"Jammu and Kashmir's future is defined by democracy, development and dignity not by Pakistan's outdated rhetoric," Gupta stated.

Ashwani Kumar reviews infrastructure status, operational performance of PDD

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Power Development Department (PDD), Ashwani Kumar, who recently took charge of the department, kicked off his tenure with a thorough review of all sectors, holding a series of meetings.

He held detailed interactions with the officers and staff and took stock of the infrastructure status and operational performance of the power sector.

The meetings were attended by the Managing Directors of all the Corporations, Director Finance, Director Planning, Chief Engineers, Chief Electrical Inspector and other senior officers of the department.

With regard to power supply, it was informed that the department has successfully met a peak demand of 3350 MW during the current winter season, which is 7 per cent higher than the peak demand met last year. An average demand of 2600 MW is also being consistently met.

The ACS was briefed about the sources from

which J&K receives power. He stressed the need to ensure regular and uninterrupted power supply during the Iftar and Sehri periods. He directed for avoiding the unscheduled power cuts, if any. He also emphasized for establishment of a robust load monitoring mechanism, reduction of energy losses and strengthening of consumer grievance redressal systems.

The ACS emphasized for early roll out of Smart Metering Programme, prioritizing installation in commercial and industrial sector and on distribution transformers. He directed the engineers to adopt an inclusive approach to integrate all connected components, noting that this reform would not only improve power supply but also enhance the financial sustainability of the sector.

Ashwani Kumar also reviewed major transmission projects across J&K and their timelines, which are expected to address the peak demand requirements of both the regions, summer in Jammu and winter in Kashmir. He

stated that proposal for funding under central sector schemes or UT budget shall be pursued expeditiously. He directed that technical and infrastructure centric interventions are required to be fast tracked to address the low voltage issues in certain areas.

Regarding the power generation sector, the ACS was briefed about the progress of four major hydroelectric projects, Pakal Dul, Kiru, Kwar and Ratle. He stressed that pumped storage hydro projects should also be explored in coordination with the central agencies, considering their role in peak demand management. He further discussed policy interventions required to fast-track exploitation of the region's hydropower potential.

The ACS also reviewed the summer preparedness of both the regions by all the Corporations. He emphasised the need for an integrated and coordinated approach to ensure optimal utilisation of available resources. He directed for conducting a detailed review of summer preparedness shortly.

NATF National Chairman urges youth prioritize to nation-building

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Baldeep Kour (Former Mrs. India), Dr. Avleen Kour, Arti Khajuria, Sahima, and Simarjot Singh have officially joined the National Anti-Terrorism Front India (NATF) in the joining function held here on Friday. The National Chairman of NATF, Vishal Chopra, welcomed them and stated, "We will contribute towards the growth of the nation. Anyone residing in the



NATF members and dignitaries during the programme.

country but acting be spared. cant moment for NATF against it will no longer " This marks a significant as prominent personali-