

SCERT J&K, Jammu Division felicitates selected student for Pariksha Pe Charcha 2026



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■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Bringing laurels to the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, Chahat, a student of Army Public School, Janglote, Kathua, was selected to participate in the 9th Edition of Pariksha Pe Charcha (PPC) 2026, a flagship initiative of the Prime Minister of India aimed at promoting a stress-free, confident, and joyful approach towards examinations.

Chahat was selected through a rigorous multi-stage process involving nearly 2.5 lakh registrations, with around 1.98 lakh students participating at the initial level across the country. Her selection is a testament to her merit, confidence, and perseverance, and also reflects the dedicated efforts of teachers,

institutions, and the academic ecosystem of the Union Territory, particularly the School Education Department, J&K.

To commemorate this achievement, the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Jammu & Kashmir, Jammu Division, today felicitated Chahat on the occasion of the live viewing of Pariksha Pe Charcha 2026, telecast at 10:00 AM. She was accompanied by her class teacher and escort teacher Monica Khosla, along with her mother.

The felicitation ceremony was organized under the guidance of the Director, SCERT J&K, Dr. Naseem Choudhary, with the constant support, mentorship, and hand-holding of the Joint Director, SCERT

J&K, Jammu Division, (Dr.) Prof. Sindhu Kapoor. During the programme, faculty members and students witnessed the live telecast of Pariksha Pe Charcha 2026 and drew inspiration from the Prime Minister's interaction, which emphasized balanced preparation, resilience, joyful learning, and the importance of life skills in achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047.

The successful coordination and facilitation of the PPC initiative at the UT level was carried out by the dedicated PPC Team of SCERT Jammu, comprising Dr. Neeraj Jandial, Associate Professor; Dr. Meenakshi Chandan, Academic Officer; Farhat Jan, Academic Officer; and Dr. Seema Zakir, Teacher, whose concerted efforts ensured smooth implementation and meaningful participation.

The felicitation was conducted as a token of appreciation and encouragement, celebrating this achievement as a source of motivation for the entire student community. On the occasion, the Joint Director appreciated the PPC team for their exceptional performance, commitment, and dedication.

Rekha launches Venura's "Soothe Me" - A wellness initiative for women

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Venura unveiled its much-awaited initiative "Soothe Me", a wellness-focused offering designed especially for women across different life stages. The launch marks a significant step toward bringing comfort, care, and luxury together in women's personal wellness. The brand was founded by Sarika Chopra, whose vision is to create personalised, caring, and premium products that truly understand women's evolving needs. With Soothe Me, Venura aims to support women with products that promote ease, confidence, and well-being. The grand launch was inaugurated by BJP Jammu and Kashmir Vice President Rekha Mahajan along with Dr. Vikesh Kaur, whose presence added grace and inspiration to the occasion. Speaking at the inauguration, Rekha Mahajan appreciated the initiative for addressing an often-overlooked aspect of women's lives with sensitivity and dignity.



BJP J&K Vice President Rekha Mahajan and others at launching ceremony.

ering women begins with acknowledging their health needs and providing accessible, natural, and supportive solutions. Mahajan highlighted that such innovations align with the broader vision of promoting women-led wellness initiatives and fostering self-reliance through indigenous knowledge systems. She noted that integrating traditional practices with contemporary lifestyles not only preserves cultural heritage but also offers sustainable and effective health solutions. The atmosphere reflected empowerment, elegance, and community support. The event was organised and managed by The Lioness Club, known for curating impactful platforms that bring women together for growth, collaboration, and celebration.

Speaking at the launch, Founder Sarika Chopra shared that "Soothe Me is more than a product line - it is a promise to make women feel understood, supported, and cared for in every phase of life."

J&K Plus 2 Lecturers' Forum felicitates Dy CEO Jammu, holds monthly meet



J&K Plus 2 Lecturers' Forum felicitating Dy CEO Jammu, Pardeep Singh Rakwal.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir +2 Lecturers' Forum, jointly organised by its Kashmir and Jammu Division units, held a grand felicitation function in Jammu today to honour Pardeep Singh Rakwal, Deputy Chief Education Officer (Dy CEO), Jammu, in recognition of his dedicated and proactive services and his recent elevation to the position.

The function was presided over by Ajit Sharma, Chief Education Officer, Jammu, while proceedings were expertly anchored by Pardeep Koul, District President, J&K +2 Lecturers' Forum Kishtwar. Koul conducted the programme with finesse, blending insightful commentary with poetry, evoking repeated applause from the audience.

Apart from Rakwal, several eminent educationists, officers, and trade union leaders

were honoured, including Ajit Sharma (CEO Jammu), RS Salathia (Chairman, J&K +2 Lecturers' Forum), RG Dogra (Principal, DIET Jammu), Dr Manzoor (President, Principals' Forum & former Chairman SBECC), Mohd Younus Gurezi (President, Lecturers' Forum Kashmir Division), Ganesh Khajuria (Chief Patron, JKTF), and other senior officials. The Management Committee for the event, comprising BK Tiekoo, RK Padroo, Pardeep Koul, Renu Lenghe, Rajeev Sharma, and Gh Nabi Malik, was appreciated for smooth coordination.

RS Salathia, Chairman of the Forum, presented the welcome address, setting the tone with a thought-provoking speech. In his presidential remarks, CEO Jammu Ajit Sharma expressed gratitude to both units of the Forum for organising the programme and recognising

the services of both serving and retired officers.

Senior trade union leaders, including Ganesh Khajuria, Dr Manzoor, and Mohd Younus Gurezi, highlighted the urgent need for regularisation of Incharge Lecturers, calling for unity among teaching unions to press the School Education Department to honour legal provisions. Other key issues raised included the grant of ACP and the change in nomenclature of DIET Principal as CEO Academics and CEO as CEO Administration to enhance transparency and clarity of roles.

In his address, Pardeep Singh Rakwal thanked the Forum for the felicitation and expressed gratitude to CEO Ajit Sharma, Principal DIET RG Dogra, serving and retired officers, and trade union leaders, describing the event as both motivating and memorable.

WR collects over Rs 172 Cr as fine through intensive ticket checking drives

Around Rs 3.5 Cr recovered as fine from AC Suburban locals

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Western Railway continues its steadfast efforts to curb ticketless and irregular travel through extensive and sustained ticket checking drives across its network. In line with its commitment to revenue protection and passenger discipline, the Ticket Checking staff of Western Railway has shown exemplary performance during the current financial year.

According to a press release issued by Chief Public Relations Officer of Western Railway, Vineet Abhishek, a highly motivated team of ticket checking staff, under the active supervision of Senior Commercial Officers, has undertaken rigorous checks in Mumbai Suburban locals, long-distance Mail/Express trains, passenger services, and holiday special trains. The objective has been to minimize revenue leakage and enhance travel discipline.

"During the period from April 2025 to January 2026, more than 27 lakh ticketless/irregular passengers, including unbooked luggage cases, were detected, resulting in the realization of an amount to the tune of about Rs 172.55 Crore, marking almost 47% increase over the corre-

sponding period last year," Vineet said adding that in the month of January, 2026, 2.82 lakh cases of ticketless travel/irregular passengers were detected and an amount of more than Rs 17 Crore was recovered, registering around 31% increase over the previous year.

In the Mumbai Suburban section, intensive ticket checking drives have yielded significant results.

"During the month of January 2026, a total of 1.02 lakh cases of ticketless/irregular travel were detected, resulting in the realization of an amount to the tune of Rs 4.34 Crore. Cumulatively, during the period from April 2025 to January 2026, 9.75 lakh cases were detected in Mumbai Suburban section with a total recovery of Rs 45.60 Crore (including fines in AC locals) reflecting Western Railway's sustained focus on ensuring disciplined and authorised travel across its suburban network," Vineet said.

Western Railway has also maintained focused checking drives in AC suburban local trains. Frequent surprise checks were conducted to prevent unauthorized travel by general ticket holders. Between April 2025

and January 2026, more than 1 lakh penalty cases were booked in AC local services, resulting in recovery of Rs 3.38 Crore as fine, registering an increase of almost 97% over the corresponding period last year.

Vineet further stated that Western Railway (WR), Mumbai Division, has intensified joint enforcement drives to curb the rising instances of passengers travelling using fake or forged UTS tickets. During one such drive, a case of fraudulent ticketing was detected by ticket checking staff, Deepika Murty, Chief Ticket Inspector, Mumbai Central, while on duty in a Virar-bound local train. In the women's first-class compartment, a lady passenger produced a virtual UTS AC local pass on her mobile phone which appeared suspicious. Upon verification, it was confirmed that the pass was not officially issued through the UTS system.

The passenger was deboarded at Bandra, where she admitted that the pass had been generated using a fraudulent UTS application shared via WhatsApp. With the assistance of RPF staff, the passenger was handed over to the Railway Police for further legal action.

AESL signs MoU with Army to extend educational support & welfare benefits to serving personnel



AESL officials at MoU signing ceremony with the Indian Army.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

UDHAMPUR: Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL), the national leader in test preparatory services, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Army to support the welfare of Army personnel and their families, including serving members, retirees, gallantry awardees, personnel with disabilities, and families of those who have died in service.

Under this MoU, AESL will provide benefits to Indian Army students who wish to enroll in its courses across its PAN India centres and branches. The agreement was signed by Colonel, Ceremonial & Welfare, Indian Army, and Dr Yash Pal, Chief Academic & Business Head, Delhi-NCR, AESL.

The MoU focuses on promoting the welfare of Indian Army personnel and their families, including offering scholarships for courses at AESL centres nationwide. Registration Fee only is payable, 100%

waiver on all other fee components for the wards of personnel who died while in harness; 100% tuition fee waiver for the wards of personnel with more than 20% disability and gallantry awardees; 20% tuition fee waiver for the wards of serving and retired personnel, applicable after other scholarships are deducted.

These scholarships are in addition to AESL's existing scholarship programs, which are available to all students seeking admission.

Chandra Sekhar Garisa Reddy, (MD & CEO), Aakash Educational Services Limited, said, "At AESL, we believe education is the strongest foundation for a brighter future. Partnering with the Indian Army allows us to honour the sacrifices of our brave soldiers by empowering their families with quality education and guidance. Through scholarships, mentoring, and counselling, we aim to ensure that the wards of our heroes are equipped to

achieve their fullest potential and become leaders in their own right."

During the tenure of the MoU, AESL will also provide comprehensive mentoring and counselling support to the wards of Indian Army personnel, addressing academic and career-related queries through both virtual and physical platforms.

AESL also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the recent past with the Central Reserve Police Force Family Welfare Association (CWA) to provide comprehensive academic support, scholarships, and career guidance to the children and families of CRPF personnel across India.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Indian Institute of Management Jammu successfully concluded the Advanced Management Development Programme (AMDP) under the Entrepreneurship Skill Development Programme (ESDP) of the Development Commissioner, MSME (DCMSME), Government of India, with a valedictory ceremony held at its Jagti Campus on Friday. The ceremony was presided over by Prof. Jabir Ali, Dean, Faculty and Research, IIM Jammu, and was attended by Prof. Rajesh Sikka, Co-

National Conference on Tourism concludes at JU

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The second day of the National Conference on "Tourism, Technology and Talent: Shaping Future-Ready Managers," organised by the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, University of Jammu (JU), was marked by a series of academic, industry, and policy-oriented deliberations focusing on the evolving landscape of tourism, innovation, and education.

The day commenced with "Tourism Vimarsh: Roots to Routes," a co-created multi-stakeholder dialogue that brought together experts from academia, industry, policy, and community organisations. The first segment, titled "Roots and Knowledge: India's Tourism Soul," highlighted India's rich cultural heritage, indigenous knowledge systems, and the need to preserve



Prof. Parikshat Singh Manhas, Director, Consortium for Educational Commission, UGC with other dignitaries posing for a photograph.

authenticity while promoting sustainable tourism. Industry experts included Dr. D. K. Hari and Dr. D. K. Hema Hari, Founders of Bharath Gyan; Prof. (Dr.) Manager Singh, Former Director General, National Research Laboratory for Conservation; Chef (Dr.) Rajeev Goyal, President, India Food Tourism Organization; Chef Prashant Rohilla, Executive Chef, F2P Food Services LLP; Shuchi

Roy, Co-Founder, Anahad Foundation; and Prerna Prasad, Founder, Ecoplore India. Academic perspectives were shared by Prof. Sandeep Kulshreshtha, Central University of Himachal Pradesh, and Prof. Ashish Dahiya, MDU Rohtak.

The dialogue transitioned into the second segment, "Routes and Futures: New Pathways of Tourism," which explored future directions in

tourism development. Industry speakers included Rajan Bahadur, CEO, Tourism & Hospitality Skill Council; Ravi Gosain, President, IATO; Pankaj Chaudhary, Associate Director (Sales), FCM; Alok Singh, Founder, Enriching Journeys; Vijay Handa, AVM Travel Designers; and Navjot Jamwal, Founder, LakSat Journeys. Academic experts included Prof. Sampad Swain,

Pondicherry University; Prof. Jitendran K. J., IIM Sirmaur; and Prof. Prashant Gautam, Panjab University.

The academic engagements concluded with an impactful session chaired by Prof. Parikshat Singh Manhas, Director, Consortium for Educational Commission, UGC, titled "Reimagining Education: Technology, Tourism and Talent." The workshop focused on future-ready curricula aligned with Industry 5.0, digital transformation, and evolving skill demands. Faculty members from universities across the country actively participated.

The day concluded with technical sessions featuring paper presentations by academicians, researchers, and industry experts, offering valuable insights into emerging trends, innovations, and challenges in tourism and hospitality.

IIM Jammu concludes Advanced Management Development Programme under ESDP for MSMEs



Soman, Programme Director, IIM Jammu. The five-day residential programme witnessed the participation of 26 existing entrepreneurs from diverse sectors, representing a broad spectrum of

India's MSME ecosystem. Addressing the participants, Prof. Jabir Ali highlighted the Institute's collaborative initiatives with MSME and the Ministries of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, including the establishment of incubation centres in Jammu & Kashmir and Leh. Terming the participants as agents of change, he noted that their success would create a multiplier effect aligned with IIM Jammu's long-term vision.

Prof. Rajesh Sikka provided an overview of IIM Jammu's Executive Education and

Consultancy initiatives, outlining the Institute's academic and executive training programmes designed to support entrepreneurs, executives, and professionals. Dr. Sumesh P. Soman presented a comprehensive programme summary, noting that 20 structured sessions were delivered over five days, effectively meeting learning objectives and delivering tangible value to participants.

Participants shared reflections, describing the programme as a catalyst for personal and professional growth. Emphasizing continuous learn-

ing, they resonated with the thought "Yatha Dristi, tatha Sristi"-as the vision, so the creation.

Aligned with the theme "Capacity to Competitiveness: Strategize, Sustain and Scale," the programme focused on strengthening strategic capabilities, operational resilience, financial acumen, innovation, and market orientation through expert-led sessions, case discussions, experiential learning, and peer interactions. The vote of thanks was proposed by Prof. Pranab Ranjan Das.