

# Welfare of artisans, folk-artists one of my prime objectives: LG

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**  
SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha attended the Srinagar Heritage Festival 'Soan Meerass' at Kashmir Haat, on Friday.

In his address, the Lieutenant Governor extended his felicitations to all the participating artisans & artists, and appreciated the collaborated initiative by the District Administration Srinagar and Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA), Regional Centre J&K. He said, the Srinagar Heritage Festival commemorates the achievements and contribution of our great artisans, folk artists, writers and honours our unique and diverse cultural heritage which will inspire the future growth.

The Lieutenant Governor reiterated his resolve to revive the cultural and artistic heritage of Jammu Kashmir and drive positive changes in the lives of the citizens, especially those associated with the world of art, crafts and culture.

"Welfare of artisan community and folk-artists is one of my prime objectives. I also wish to see that every child is connected to the roots and every youth carrying the rich legacy of artisan community is empowered to contribute in



LG Manoj Sinha at the Srinagar Heritage Festival at Kashmir Haat on Friday.

J&K's economic growth," the Lieutenant Governor said. The Lieutenant Governor highlighted that, in the last four and a half years, under

resources and opportunity to prosper and flourish. The Lieutenant Governor also spoke on the emergence of Srinagar city as the cultural

ties. He further emphasised the important role of youth, artists community and enlightened citizens in pre-

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- ▶▶ I believe culture is a way of life and we must involve young generations, inheritors of our rich legacy, to protect cultural and natural heritage
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the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, well-planned policies and their time-bound implementation has ensured that our craftspeople, artisans and artists are provided with better

nerve centre of Jammu Kashmir: He shared the dedicated measures taken by the government to transform the cities of the Union Territory into the confluence of ancient traditions and modern facilities.

Preservation and promotion of heritage is crucial for sustainable development of the cities and to improve

urban quality of life. I believe culture is a way of life and we must involve young generations, inheritors of our rich legacy, to protect cultural and natural heritage," the Lieutenant Governor said.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor released a book titled "Iconic Women of J&K". He also felicitated the students and artists participating in Srinagar Heritage Festival.

Earlier, the Lieutenant Governor visited the Traditional village, Art Gallery and witnessed exhibitions, live demonstrations of sports and various traditional cultural activities.

During the Srinagar Heritage Festival, a number of events were organised at Jhelum Riverfront, Dal Lake and Kashmir Haat providing a memorable experience for participants and visitors, besides building a strong sense of identity, fostering community cohesion. Vijay Kumar Bidhuri, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; Rajiv Omprakash, DIG CKR; Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar; Shruti Awasthi, Regional Director; IGNCA; senior officials of Security forces, Police and Civil Administration, artisans, artists, youth and people from all walks of life were present.



## PCI issues advisory on unauthorized use of term 'Press Council'

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: The Press Council of India (PCI) has issued an advisory cautioning against the unauthorized use of the term 'Press Council' by various organizations.

The advisory issued by the Press Council of India (PCI) reads, "The Press Council Act, 1978 was enacted with the twin objectives of preserving the freedom of the press and maintaining and improving the standards of newspapers and news agencies in India. The Secretariat

of the Press Council of India is located at Soehnna Bhawan, CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi. It has neither any State branch nor has it authorized or constituted any other body with the same or a similar name to function on its behalf. It has come to notice that some press organizations are using the term 'Press Council' in their name. Such unauthorized usage not only erodes the institutional value of the Press Council of India but also infringes

upon its unique domain and title. The Department of Legal Affairs has opined that the use of the term 'Press Council' by any other organization, without the permission of the Central Government, is in violation of Section 3 read with Entry 7(ii) of the Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act, 1950. All concerned are advised to refrain from the unauthorized use of the term 'Press Council' to avoid legal consequences."

## Sakeena Itoo reviews preparations for International Women's Day celebration across J&K

Advocates recognition, celebration of contributions of womenfolk



Health Minister Sakeena Itoo chairing a meeting.

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, on Friday emphasized the importance of recognizing and celebrating the contributions of womenfolk in various fields across Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister made these remarks while chairing a meeting held at the Civil Secretariat here to review the preparations for forthcoming International Women's Day being held on 8th March.

Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare Department, Sanjeev Verma; Commissioner Secretary, Culture department, K Ramesh Kumar; Director Social Welfare Kashmir, Mohammad Akbar Wani; Director Social Welfare Jammu, Rupesh Kumar; Director School Education Jammu;

Director Colleges J&K; Director Health Services Jammu, Director Health Services Kashmir; Mission Directors of ICDS, ICPS and Mission Shakti besides other concerned officers attended the meeting, either in person or virtually.

The Minister stressed on the need to highlight contributions of women in various fields for awareness of common masses, particularly the female fraternity. "We must not only acknowledge the incredible contributions of women in every field but also ensure they have opportunities and support to excel further in their goals and dreams" Sakeena maintained.

She asked the officers to promote initiatives that empower women folk and create awareness among them about various initiatives of the government for their empowerment. "Every

woman should know about the schemes and support systems available to them to help her achieve her ambitions and purposes of life", Sakeena stated.

The Minister called upon the social welfare, education and health departments to work in coordination and organize this day collectively. She asked them to organize awareness programs and felicitations of women achievers in their respective districts. She also asked them to constitute teams in their respective districts for better coordination and smooth conduct of the programme.

While speaking on the significance of Women's Day, Sakeena reiterated the government for gender equality and called for collective efforts to create a more inclusive society. She encouraged participation from all sections of society to celebrate the strength and resilience of women.

During the meeting, Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare informed the Minister about the preparations being put in place by the department for the International Women's Day scheduled to be held on 8th March across Jammu and Kashmir.

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**  
NEW DELHI: Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh hosted a high-level European Union delegation led by Commissioner Andrius Kubilius, along with space sector experts, in New Delhi today. The delegation engaged in discussions regarding ongoing and future cooperation between India and Europe in the field of space exploration. On the Indian side, Shri V. Narayanan, Chairman of ISRO and Secretary of the Department of Space, along with other senior space scientists, attended the meeting.

Addressing the EU delegation, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology; Earth Sciences and Minister of State for PMO, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr. Jitendra Singh said "India - EU interactions in the field of space has a long history and is growing strong". Tracing India's space journey, which spans over six decades he hailed India's achievements in Space as a global benchmark, acknowledging its growth in the space sector in the last decade. "India has acquired independent capabilities in



A high-level European Union delegation led by former Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius, along with Space sector experts, calling on Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh at North Block, New Delhi on Friday.

building, launching, and operating satellites, as well as deriving applications from these satellites to benefit society," said Dr. Singh. He further emphasized recent successes, such as the Chandrayaan-3 mission, the SPADEX mission, and the ongoing progress of the Gaganyaan mission. Dr. Singh announced that India would be a major player in 21st century's Space exploration.

Highlighting India's dynamic space vision under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which is aligned with the broader goal of making India a Viksit Bharat@2047. Dr. Singh credited Prime Minister Modi's leadership for laying the foundation of India's

ambitious space agenda, which includes the continuation of the Gaganyaan program, India's human spaceflight mission, the establishment of India's space station - "Bharatiya Antariksh Station," and an Indian landing on the Moon.

Highlighting the long-standing cooperation between India and Europe in space exploration, Dr. Singh stated that the collaboration has been vast and enriching. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) collaborates with the European Space Agency (ESA), space agencies of individual European nations, and entities like EUMETSAT. European industries have also contributed to India's space program, with notable exam-

ples of support, including the development of liquid engines, the launch of India's first experimental communication satellite, and ESA's assistance in the Aditya and Chandrayaan-3 missions.

Dr. Singh also drew attention to the rapid expansion of India's space program, noting that from the late 2000s, India's space missions have included studies of the Moon, Mars, and the Sun, with plans for human spaceflight missions. Dr. Jitendra Singh informed the delegation that, earlier, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) was the sole entity responsible for space activities. However, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, space sector reforms were introduced in 2020 to open the sector for private investment. A new entity, the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Center (IN-SPACe), was established to promote and authorize space activities by non-governmental entities.

Dr. Jitendra Singh informed the delegation that ISRO will be hosting the Global Conference on Space Exploration (GLX) in association with the International Astronautical Federation in May 2025 in New Delhi. He

extended a warm invitation to all stakeholders in the European space ecosystem to participate in this landmark event.

Along with Commissioner Andrius KUBILIUS; Mr. Benjamin HARTMANN, Cabinet Expert; Capt (N) Mr. Fabrizio FALZI, EU Defence Attache were part of the delegation.

The high-level meet also witnessed participation of Dr. Rajiv Jyoti, Director, IN-SPACe; Mr. M. Ganesh Pillai, Scientific Secretary, ISRO; Dr. D. Govrisankar, Director, Office of International and Inter-agency Cooperation (OIIC), ISRO HQ; Mr. Prashant Jha, OSD, MOS Office; Mr. M. S. Anurup, Director, Space Transportation Programme Office, ISRO HQ; Dr. Rajeev Jaiswal, OSD, DOS and Ms. Seema Pujani, Deputy Secretary, D&ISA, MEA

Concluding the discussions, Dr. Jitendra Singh expressed his delight at hosting the EU delegation and acknowledged the significant interest shown by Commissioner Andrius Kubilius in strengthening space cooperation. He emphasized that space is the future, and the collaboration between India and Europe will continue to drive progress and innovation in this critical field.

## Secy RDD reviews MGNREGA draft Annual Action Plan for Kashmir division

Asks districts to work on livelihood generating activities, work spaces for SHGs

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: Secretary Rural Development Department and Panchayati Raj (RDD & PR), Mohammad Aijaz Asad, on Friday conducted a comprehensive review of the draft Annual Action Plan (AAP) and Labour Budget (LB) for MGNREGA for the fiscal 2025-26, focusing on 10 districts of Kashmir division.

Secretary in RDD & PR Department, Rachna Sharma; DG Rural Sanitation, Anoo Malhotra; Mission Director JKRLM, Shubhra Sharma; Director Panchayati Raj, Sham Lal; Director Finance, Umar Khan; Director, RDD Kashmir, Shabir Hussain Bhat; Chief Executive Officer, IWMP, Rajnish Kumar; Additional Secretary RD&PR, Waseem Raja; Superintending Engineer REW Kashmir, Aamir Ali; Director Social Audit, Shafia Naqshbandi; Assistant Commissioner(s) Development and Executive Engineers of Kashmir division attended the meeting.

During the meeting, the Secretary emphasized the



Secretary RDD & PR Mohammad Aijaz Asad chairing a meeting in Jammu on Friday.

importance of realistic and achievable plans. He urged upon the officials to adopt a "people-centric" approach to planning, emphasising that communities should be actively involved in planning and execution of projects.

The meeting also addressed several areas including geo-tagging, use of the National MGNREGA Management System (NMMS), timely wage payments, implementation of the Area Officer app, compensation status, identification of Amrit Sarovar sites for Phase II and ensuring that PMAY beneficiaries receive the mandated 95 days of work until their houses are completed.

The Secretary laid

emphasis on Category B works and stressed that every PMAY-G beneficiary must be guaranteed 95 days of labor support under MGNREGA. He also instructed the district authorities to complete the PMAY-G survey by March 31st, ensuring that all eligible beneficiaries are included.

The Secretary emphasized the need to utilise MGNREGA funds for repairing and maintaining Panchayat Ghars, ensuring they function effectively as community hubs. He mentioned about establishment of Community Sanitary Complexes (CSCs) along highways to improve sanitation services for rural communities, ensuring bet-

ter hygiene and accessibility.

The Secretary asked the districts to prioritise livelihood activities, such as constructing orchard footpaths, desilting water bodies and planting fruit bearing trees to boost rural productivity. He asked them to prioritise low maintenance, cost effective and high revenue generating activities.

He also highlighted the importance of convergence in all allied works. He emphasized convergence with the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) to boost agriculture and allied sectors. He directed the officials to create professional workspaces for Self Help Groups (SHGs) in every panchayat, focusing on employment opportunities and boosting product sales.

The Secretary stressed on making panchayats self-reliant by generating revenue through sustainable initiatives. He also called for utilisation of convergence strategies to build marriage halls and community facilitation centres, enhancing social infrastruc-

ture in rural areas. He called for identifying and allocating land for dumping sites, incorporating these into development plans to ensure proper waste management.

The Secretary also called for retrofitting of single-pit Individual Household Latrines (IHHLs) to double pits under the Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin (SBM-G). He recommended promotion of fruit-bearing trees to enhance rural economic activity.

He emphasized the urgent need to prioritise identification and preparation of Amrit Sarovar sites for Phase II, issuing clear instructions to ensure that the groundwork is completed without any delay.

Additional Secretary RD&PR, Waseem Raja, provided a detailed presentation on the Annual Action Plan (AAP) for MGNREGA 2025-26, prepared with due consultation of the stakeholders highlighting key focus areas and challenges.

Earlier, the Secretary had conducted a thorough review of the Annual Action Plan (AAP) for ten districts in the Jammu division.

## JMC flags off bike expedition to mark International Women's Day



Joint Commissioner (Health & Sanitation) JMC flagging off bikers.

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: Joint Commissioner (Health & Sanitation) Jammu Municipal Corporation flagged off a bikers' expedition to celebrate International Women's Day.

The expedition consisting of 30 women bikers will cover Border Roads from Kathua to Poonch and spread awareness against drug abuse and protection of borders from illegal trafficking of drugs. They will also take the Swachhata Pledge with the people in the border villages. The expedition will cover 850 KM and pass through Kathua, Samba, Jammu, Rajouri & Poonch districts.

Joint Commissioner (H&S) Abdul Star appreciated the efforts of Shakti

Udghosh Foundation, the NGO behind this initiative. He emphasized that drug is the biggest challenge faced by society and 'we all must join hands to come on a common platform to fight against this evil.'

The key features of the program are A moving campaign, carrying a message of accelerating action against addiction and its consequences; Small talks at the border locations with the presence of Border Residents and Public representatives, propagating the message of drug free borders; Accelerate Action Challenge where youngsters pledge to take a stand against drugs; To promote awareness among the masses regarding Swachh Survekshan 2024 and to take

Swachhta pledge with the masses.

T-shirts were distributed among the participants on behalf of JMC which also has a QR code for citizen feedback, Swachh Survekshan 2024.

The objective of the program is to celebrate International Women's Day 2025 showcasing strength and leveraging the theme "Ride for strength, break the chain, say no drugs, let's sustain!"

Female Bikers from Chennai, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Punjab, Rajasthan are part of the expedition.

Health Officer, JMC, Veterinary Assistant Surgeon, JMC and other staff of JMC were also present on the spot.