

J&K Youth Congress stages protest, demands action over Kathua killings

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Youth Congress (JKPYC) staged a massive protest in Jammu on Monday, condemning the central government for its alleged failure to prevent terrorist attacks in the Union Territory. The demonstration was organized following the recent killing of three youth in Kathua district, which has sparked outrage across the region. Led by JKPYC General Secretary Anirudh Sawhney, the protest saw Youth Congress members raising slogans against the ruling government and burning an effigy of the Union Home Minister as a symbolic gesture of their dissatisfaction. The protesters accused the government of being incapable of ensuring the safety of civilians and claimed that terrorism, once limited to Kashmir, has now dangerously expanded into the Jammu region.

Addressing the gathering, Anirudh Sawhney stated that the rise in terrorist activities in districts like Kathua, Udhampur, and



JKPYC members staging protest in Jammu.

Rajouri is alarming. "The government claims to have restored peace, but the reality is that terror attacks have only increased since 2014. More than 390 civilians have been killed in terrorist attacks, and over 1,750 terror incidents have taken place in the last decade," he said. Sawhney further criticized the administration for making "hollow claims of normalcy" while people con-

tinue to live in fear.

He also questioned the rationale behind converting J&K into a Union Territory, stating, "Was this why J&K was made a UT? Instead of improving security, crime and terrorism have only worsened." Sawhney stressed that security lapses raise serious concerns about the government's intelligence and operational preparedness. Other Youth Congress

leaders, including Divyansh Singh, Ranjith Singh, and Amit Sial, strongly criticized the government and demanded the resignation of the Union Home Minister, holding him accountable for the deteriorating security situation. "The people of J&K deserve peace, not empty promises," they said, adding that the immediate restoration of statehood is necessary to ensure proper governance.

Ajay Lakhotra, another Youth Congress leader, asserted that the government must stop using J&K as a "political tool" and take concrete steps to combat terrorism. He warned that the JKPYC will continue its agitation until their demands are met and real security measures are implemented.

The protest reflected growing frustration among the people of Jammu, who believe that their region is being ignored despite the worsening security crisis. The Youth Congress members accused the administration of failing to act decisively, allowing terrorism to spread into previously peaceful areas.

The demonstration was attended by several prominent Youth Congress leaders, including Surinder Kumar, Divyansh Verma, Happy Randhawa, Rahul Tandon, Sunny Parihar, Tanveer Singh, Anmol Kohli, Rishabh Kohli, Gaurav Sharma, Sardari Lal Bitti, Akhil Bogia, Raghav Khajuria, Anuj Sharma, and Nishant Sharma, among others.

DSS reacts sharply to J&K Budget



Members of Dogra Sadar Sabha after the meeting.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Dogra Sadar Sabha (DSS) held meeting of its executive committee today, following the return of its President, Th. Gulchain Singh Charak, from his tour outside Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting focused on the recently presented Union Territory Budget by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who also holds the Finance portfolio.

The DSS acknowledged some progressive initiatives in the budget, such as the establishment of Shakti Sadans, PoJK Bhawan, grid connectivity to Shri Amarnath Shrine, and an increase in pensions across all categories.

They expressed hope that

the pension increase would also benefit gallantry awardees and their war widows. However, the provisions for old age homes and free bus rides for women in state-owned buses were deemed largely cosmetic rather than impactful.

A major concern raised during the meeting was the economic downturn in Jammu caused by recent infrastructure developments, particularly the direct railway and roadway connectivity to Katra and the Kashmir Valley. The DSS highlighted that while these projects have improved accessibility, they have also severely affected the livelihood of hoteliers, transporters, traders, and small shopkeepers in Jammu, pushing them

towards financial distress. The budget's allocations to mitigate these losses were deemed insufficient.

The DSS strongly criticized the budget for its apparent regional imbalance, arguing that while significant funds were allocated for the enhancement of well-developed tourist spots in Kashmir-such as Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Sonmarg, Doodhpathri, and Kokernag-equally promising areas in the Jammu region, including Kishtwar, Sanasar, Nathatop, Padri, and Sarthal, were largely neglected.

They pointed out that these areas could be developed into premier ski resorts and adventure tourism hubs but have been overlooked.

Jammu is being forced to be separate: Shiv Sena

Remained empty handed in industry, employment, health, education, religious, other tourism



Manish Sahni, President Shiv Sena (UBT) J&K briefing media.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: All the claims made in the recently presented budget about the betterment of Jammu division and boosting the economy have once again proven to be hollow. Like Ladakh, Jammu division is also being forced to demand a separate state for its rights, stated by Manish Sahni, President Shiv Sena (UBT) Jammu-Kashmir unit.

In a press conference held today at the party's state central office, state chief Manish

Sahni said that discriminatory attitude towards Jammu division remains the same. In the recently presented budget by the Omar government, no special package was announced for the development of tourism, religious places and boosting the economy of Jammu. At the same time, no special amount was announced for the maintenance of Ranbir Canal and Dogra heritage sites, the life line of farmers. The BJP MLAs along with the government remained silent on the

promotion of Dogri language and culture. The hue and cry over the liquor ban in the temple city of Jammu did not go beyond the politics of pressure on the vendors. Sahni said that the time has come that all the well wisher organizations of Jammu should raise their voices in unity for the rights of Jammu division. Sahni said that as soon as the budget session is over, Shiv Sena and Sainik Samaj Party will jointly launch the "Jammu ko do Apna Haq" campaign, know the public sentiment on the demand of making Jammu the permanent capital and the status of a separate state.

Sahni said that if the Omar government wants to keep Jammu with Kashmir, then Jammu should be declared the permanent capital. Otherwise, like Leh Ladakh, the Jammu Division will be forced to raise the demand of creating a separate state for its rights.

IIM Jammu concludes Empyrean 2025

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu concluded its much-anticipated annual cultural festival, Empyrean 2025 - A Celestial Odyssey, with grandeur and enthusiasm. The three-day extravaganza, held at IIM Jammu's Jagti campus from March 7 to 9, 2025, brought together a vibrant mix of music, art, creativity, and talent, establishing new benchmarks in cultural engagement and student-led initiatives.

The festival commenced with a spectacular musical evening featuring acclaimed singer Jubin Nautiyal, who delivered an enthralling performance blending soulful melodies with Bollywood chartbusters. His captivating voice and magnetic stage presence electrified the atmosphere, making it a night to remember. The first



Dignitaries at the event at IIM Jammu.

day evening was graced by the presence of Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary, J&K, Anand Jain, ADGP, Jammu & Kashmir, and Prof. B.S Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu, Prof. Jabir Ali, Dean Academics, IIM Jammu along with faculty members, officers, staff, and students at the Institute. Their presence added to the grandeur of the event and set a celebratory

tone for the festival.

The second day of Empyrean 2025 featured an exciting array of competitions, cultural showcases, and musical performances. Students across institutions participated in events including Solo, Duet, and Group Musical Performances; Consuelza, Finedge, and Aapoorti (Flagship business competitions); Debate, Extempore

Speech, and Buzzer Quiz; Inter-College Music Competition; Scribble & Swap, Doodle the Wall, Mystery Box Art, Reverse Art Challenge; Fashion Showcase - Round 2

The cultural events provided a platform for students to express creativity and talent while fostering a spirit of collaboration and competition. As dusk set in, Rauhan Mallik, a celebrated singer, performer, and composer, took center stage with his band. Performing his hits such as Ishq from Lost & Found, Bezubaan, and a medley of popular Bollywood numbers, he captivated the audience with his energetic performance.

The event was graced by Manish K. Sinha, ADGP HQ & Coordination, Jammu & Kashmir, as the Chief Guest, accompanied by Prof. B.S. Sahay. Their

presence further inspired students to continue striving for excellence in all spheres. The final day of Empyrean 2025 ended on a euphoric note with a DJ Night, featuring renowned artists DJ Carnivore and DJ Holy.C, along with a mesmerizing performance. The event transformed the campus into a high-energy dance floor, with dazzling lights, electrifying music, and a vibrant crowd celebrating the culmination of three days of festivities. The event was graced by Prof. Pragati Kumar, Vice Chancellor, SMVDU and Joginder Singh, SSP Jammu.

The DJ performances created an exhilarating atmosphere that brought together the entire IIM Jammu community in celebration, perfectly wrapping up the cultural odyssey.

CCI President condemns Kathua killings, calls for intensified anti-terror operations



■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In a meeting of office bearers of the Chamber of Commerce & Industry (CCI) held on Monday, President Arun Gupta strongly condemned the brutal killing of three youths from a village in Kathua district. The victims had been missing for several days after attending a wedding ceremony, and their bodies were discovered in the Ishu Nalah area of Malhar in the higher reaches of Kathua. Terming it a clear case of target killing, Gupta called it a deep-rooted conspiracy aimed at disturbing the peace, tranquility, and brotherhood among communities. However, he expressed confidence that the people of the Union Territory would stand united against such nefarious designs and uphold secular values. The meeting observed two minutes of silence in memory of the deceased and extended heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved families. Other office bearers present included Anil Gupta, Rajeev Gupta, Manish Gupta, Rajesh Gupta (Secretary), and Rajesh Gupta (Treasurer).

Delegation from Bogdang village, members of Petrol Pump Association Leh call on LG Brig Mishra

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

LEH: A delegation comprising ex-sarpanch and ex-panch from Bogdang called on the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Brigadier (Dr) BD Mishra (Retd), at the LG Secretariat. Chief Secretary, Dr Pawan Kotwal, IAS, was present in the meeting.

The delegates requested the LG's intervention in issuing Actual Line of Control (ALC) certificate to Bogdang village to benefit youth from the village while seeking government jobs, etc.

The LG informed the delegates about the exercise conducted by the Chairman of Reservation Commission for Actual Line of Control (ALC), UT Ladakh, Justice Bansil Lal Bhat, who submitted the final report almost three months



Delegation of Village Bogdang calling on LG Ladakh, Brigadier (Dr) BD Mishra (Retd).

ago to identify areas adjoining the actual line of control (ALC) of the Union Territory of Ladakh for reservation under the J&K Reservation Act, 2004. He stated that the recommendations made by Justice Bansil Lal Bhat would be reviewed and necessary steps would be taken thereafter. A delegation comprising members of Petrol Pump Association Leh led by Hon

Captain Chhepal (Retd) called on the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Brigadier (Dr) BD Mishra (Retd), at the LG Secretariat. Chief Secretary, Dr Pawan Kotwal, and Deputy Commissioner, Leh, Santosh Sukhadeve, were present in the meeting.

The delegates apprised the LG of the issues faced by the owners of petrol pumps in Leh district due to the increasing

number of petrol pumps in the district.

He informed that around 26 petrol pumps are functioning in Leh district alone which has affected their business and they are unable to pay salaries of their staff. The delegates requested the LG's intervention in conducting an assessment and consultation before issuing a no objection certificate (NOC) for establishing new petrol pumps in Leh district.

The LG asked DC Leh to write to petroleum companies such as Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and Hindustan Petroleum (HP), informing them about the issues faced by the petrol pump owners in Leh due to the opening of new branches of the petroleum companies in the district.

Khatana highlights steady growth in India's Personal Computer market

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Er. Ghulam Ali Khatana, a senior leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), has emphasized the steady growth of India's personal computer (PC) market, with total shipments increasing by 3.8% to 14.4 million units in 2024. He further highlighted that HP continues to lead the market with a commanding 30% share.

Khatana attributed this growth to the increasing demand for gaming and AI-enabled PCs, which have significantly contributed to market expansion. He also noted that shipments of notebooks and desktops rose by 4.5% and 1.8%, respectively, while workstation shipments recorded a remarkable growth of 10.9%. Moreover, Khatana pointed



out the 13.8% surge in sales of premium notebooks, priced at ₹80,000 and above, reflecting the growing consumer preference for high-performance computing solutions.

Khatana's statement underscores the resilience and continued strength of the Indian PC market, which is being driven by technological innovations and evolving consumer demands.

JPS conducts its midterm CME, elects new office bearers



Members of Jammu Psychiatric Society after the meeting.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Jammu Psychiatric Society (JPS), affiliated with the Indian Psychiatric Society, conducted its midterm (CME) program on at Hari Niwas Palace, Jammu.

The event focused on the theme "Sleep Disorders" and witnessed an overwhelming participation of psychiatrists including postgraduates.

Psychiatrists from across the Jammu division convened in large numbers to engage in in-depth deliberations on sleep disorders and their management.

The CME was followed by

a General Body Meeting, graced by senior psychiatrists, including Dr. U.K. Mehta, Dr. Jagdish Raj Thappa, Dr. Manu Arora (HOD, Psychiatric Diseases Hospital, GMC, Jammu), and Dr. Abhishek Chowhan (Asst. Prof, Psychiatric Diseases Hospital, GMC, Jammu).

A event highlight was the election of the Jammu Psychiatric Society (affiliated with the Indian Psychiatric Society), wherein the new executive body was elected under the patronage of Dr. U.K. Mehta and Dr. Jagdish Raj Thapa.

The newly elected office bearers include Dr. Rakesh Banal (President), Dr. Rajesh Chandel (Vice President), Dr. Nikhil Gupta (General Secretary), Dr. Preeti Kour and Dr. Roopika Jandial (Joint Secretaries), and Dr. Akhil Menia (Treasurer).

The event concluded with the Jammu Psychiatric Society members reaffirming their commitment to advancing mental health initiatives, with a dedicated focus on combating sleep disorders and addressing the growing challenges in Jammu.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Provincial President of Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC), Adv. Rattan Lal Gupta, reaffirmed the Party's commitment to ensuring equitable development & progress for rural, border, and remote areas across Jammu and Kashmir.

He was addressing a gathering during a joining programme held at the Sher-e-Kashmir Bhawan in Jammu. Today along with supporters, including Panchs and Sarpanchs led by Manoj Kumar Gupta, and Prominent social activists from Billawar, joined the National Conference in the presence of Mr Babu Rampaul former minister and Central Zone President and other senior party leaders.

Rattan Lal Gupta also underscored the party's ambitious plans to boost employment and industrial



Provincial President of JKNC, Adv. Rattan Lal Gupta welcoming new entrants into partyfold.

growth in the region by initiating Yova Mission. "More than 46 industrial areas are proposed to be developed by Omar Govt across Jammu and Kashmir, which will create approximately 4.25 lakh jobs for the youth," he announced. He asserted that the present dispensation, headed by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, is committed to transforming the economic landscape of the Union Territory by encouraging industrial investments and providing

adequate skill development opportunities for the youth. The Provincial President urged the newly joined members to work dedicatedly at the grass-roots level to strengthen the party's base and spread awareness about its policies. He emphasized the importance of unity and collective efforts to defeat divisive forces and restore peace, progress, and prosperity in Jammu and Kashmir.

While addressing the workers Babu Rampaul

former minister and Central Zone President emphasized the need to strengthen the party at gross root level and hoped that the people were joining the party would work for the betterment of the party in their respective areas. Manoj Kumar Gupta, while addressing the gathering, assured Adv. Rattan Lal Gupta of unwavering support to the party's vision for a prosperous Jammu and Kashmir. He emphasized that the people of Billawar

have reposed faith in the leadership of National Conference due to its proven track record of transparent and effective governance.

Among those who joined the party fold include Jagdev Singh Sarpanch, Joginder Kumar Sarpanch, Satish Sharma Naib Sarpanch, Abdul Rashid, Sultan, Shoaq Ali, Rukhsar Ahmad, Sohan Lal, Jagan nath Sundan Social Activist,

Those who were present on the occasion included: Qazi Jalal Ud Din former MLA, Pardeep Bali, Arif Mir Provincial Secretaries, Ankush Abrol Joint Secretary Jammu Province, Dr. Vikas Secretary Central Zone and Coordinator District Jammu, S. Gurnam Singh Block President Jammu West, Vikram Gupta, Surinder Kumar, Rahul Gupta, Sanjay Anand and others.