

# Omar Abdullah government fulfilling election promises despite financial constraints: Sadhotra

## STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: National Conference Additional General Secretary and former Minister Ajay Kumar Sadhotra on Monday lauded the J&K Budget 2025-26, presented by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, as a bold and people-centric financial roadmap. Speaking at a workers' meeting in Basohli, organized by Block President Raja Rafiq, Sadhotra commended the government's commitment to fulfilling election promises despite economic challenges inherited from the previous regime.

Highlighting key provisions in the budget, Sadhotra praised the allocation of 200 units of free electricity per month for domestic consumers and 10 kg of free ration for Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families, terming them as significant relief measures for economically weaker sections. He emphasized that these initiatives reflect the National Conference's commitment to improving the quality of life for the people of Jammu and



NC Adl General Secretary Ajay Kumar Sadhotra during a public meeting at Basohli.

Kashmir, ensuring basic necessities like power and food security.

Sadhotra also lauded the budget's focus on farmers and rural development, noting that interest-free crop loans, fertilizer subsidies, and improved irrigation facilities would help boost the agricultural sector. He stressed that these measures would provide much-needed support to farmers, strengthening the region's economy.

The senior National Conference leader expressed confidence that the government would create thousands of job opportunities across

various sectors through merit-based and transparent recruitment processes. He welcomed the special training initiatives aimed at equipping youth with modern skills, enhancing their employability in both government and private sectors. Additionally, he praised the expansion of universal health insurance coverage for BPL families, ensuring access to free medical treatment for the underprivileged.

Describing the investment in education as a game-changer, Sadhotra hailed the Omar Abdullah government's significant fund allocation

for modernizing schools, colleges, and technical institutes to improve the quality of education. He also acknowledged the emphasis on expanding road networks, including new highways and rural roads, to enhance connectivity across Jammu and Kashmir. Furthermore, he appreciated the party's commitment to economic empowerment, social justice, and women's development in Jammu and Kashmir.

Prominent leaders present at the event included Mohd Ayub Malik, Ch Naresh Bittu, Raghbir Singh, Randhir Singh, Ashwani Charak, Devinder Mehta, Ch Hameed, Maheshwar Chalotra, Vishwajeet Singh, Sahil Singh Chib, Dharam Pal Kundal, and several other district and block-level party functionaries.

and promotion of Basohli Paintings—a unique traditional art form. He noted that the establishment of artisan training programs and art hubs would encourage local artists, helping these paintings gain recognition at national and international levels while ensuring economic viability for artisans.

Urging people to strengthen the National Conference, Sadhotra emphasized that the party, under Omar Abdullah's leadership, is dedicated to holistic development and people-first governance. He reaffirmed the party's commitment to economic empowerment, social justice, and women's development in Jammu and Kashmir.

During the release ceremony, Sat Sharma (CA), highlighted that Guru Ravidass spread the message of humanity, equality, and devotion. He opposed caste-based discrimination and preached love, compassion, and truth. He believed that God is one and that all human beings are equal. His teachings promote harmony in society.

# Sat releases second edition of Balbir's Dogri poems

## STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In a literary event, Jammu and Kashmir BJP President, Sat Sharma, along with former minister Choudhary Sukhmandan Kumar, and other prominent leaders, released the second edition of Dogri poems authored by Balbir Ram Rattan.

Balbir Ram Rattan is not only the spokesperson of the BJP but also a writer and columnist. He is also the National General Secretary of Guru Ravidass Vishwa Mahapeeth, the General Secretary of the Indian Branch of the British Ravidasia Heritage Foundation, and a member of Begumpura Vishwa Maha Sabha.

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Praising Balbir's literary



BJP President, Sat Sharma and others releasing poems.

contributions, Sat Sharma emphasized that he is actively working to spread Guru Ravidass Ji's teachings and messages to the masses. He underlined the importance of preserving and promoting regional languages and the lives of great saints. He stated, "Dogri is an integral part of our identity, and such literary works help keep our heritage alive for future generations." He also reiterated that the BJP is committed to support regional languages and ancient literature.

Former minister Choudhary Sukhmandan Kumar commended the poet's devotion and literary contributions, stating that his poems depict traditions and emotions. He remarked, "The poet's words resonate with people and inspire

them to connect with their cultural roots."

Expressing his gratitude, Balbir Ram Rattan said, "This second edition of Dogri poems symbolizes my respect and love for Guru Ravidass Ji and my mother tongue. I sincerely thank all the dignitaries present today. Literature has the power to connect people, and I hope this effort will promote the Dogri language and inspire the youth to learn about the lives of great saints."

Several prominent BJP leaders who attended the event, included Vikram Malhotra, Prof. Kulbhushan Mohtra, Jaideep Samyal, Anu Bhasin, Ashok Gandhi, Yashpal Shivgotra, Hansraj Loria, Parshotam Amit Manhas, Premnath, Puran Chand, and Sanjay Bakshi.

# Kunwrani Dr Ritu Singh launches Rajmata Tara Devi Ji Sankirtan Mandal

## STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Amidst the serene ambiance of the ancient Shri Raghunath Ji Temple in Jammu, where the air is filled with the fragrance of incense and the soft glow of oil lamps illuminates intricate carvings, the Rajmata Tara Devi Ji Sankirtan Mandal, under the leadership of Chairperson Kunwrani Ritu Singh, organized a grand Maha Aarti at the Temple premises in Jammu. This auspicious event coincided with the 94th birthday celebration of Maharaja Dr. Karan Singh ji, former Sadr-e-Riyasat of Jammu & Kashmir.

On the occasion, Maharaja Dr. Karan Singh ji was the Chief Guest while M.K Ajatshatru Singh, R.K Ranvijay Singh, Kunwrani Dr Ritu Singh, Rajkumari Adhishree Singh, Brig RS Langleh, President J&K Dharmarth Trust, Ashok Sharma, Secretary and prominent people of the society were present.

The Maha Aarti was conducted in the traditional style reminiscent of ceremonies held in Haridwar, Rishikesh, and Kashi. Renowned singers Seema Murti, Sonali Dogra, and Raghuvir Raghuvanshi captivated the audience with their melodious perform-



Chairperson Kunwrani Ritu Singh and others participating in grand Maha Aarti at Shri Raghunath Ji Temple.

ances.

Seven specially trained Pujaris from Purnmandal led the Aarti, which encompassed five distinct rituals: 33 Koti Devi Ki Aarti with Aggarwati, Ganga Maiya Aarti, Bhagwan Shiv Aarti of Mantalai, Shiv Tandav Stotra Aarti, and Bhagwan Ram Ji Arhana. The Pujaris also sanctified the devotees by sprinkling Amrit Jal while chanting Vedic mantras.

Students of Shri Ranbir Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya Birpur, run by J&K Dharmarth Trust also participated in the programme and chanted Vedic Mantras. Speaking on the occasion, Maharaja Dr. Karan Singh ji lauded Dr. Ritu Singh for her dedication in organizing the Maha Aarti, stating that it was the first time he had witnessed such a Grand ceremony at the Shri Raghunath Ji Temple. He highlighted the temple's

significance, noting that it enshrines 365 deities and houses 12 lakh Shaligrams of Lord Narayana, symbolizing the sacred abode of 33 crore deities. The temple's sanctum resonated with divine chants during the ceremony.

Kunwrani Dr. Ritu Singh, in her address, emphasized that the establishment of the Rajmata Tara Devi Ji Sankirtan Mandal aims to revitalize the spiritual heritage of Jammu and Kashmir by organizing events like the Maha Aarti. She expressed that the aim of conducting this Aarti was to reconnect people with the ancient temple.

Dr. Ritu Singh also highlighted the significant contributions of Rajmata Tara Devi Ji to the regions of Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh.

As the wife of Maharaja Hari Singh ji and mother of

Dr. Karan Singh ji, Rajmata Tara Devi Ji played a pivotal role in promoting social welfare and cultural preservation, she added.

Kunwrani Ritu Singh assured Maharaja Dr. Karan Singh ji that the Rajmata Tara Devi Ji Sankirtan Mandal, Jammu, will continue its efforts and is committed to transforming Jammu into a spiritual hub, fostering cultural preservation and community engagement through various initiatives.

The event was made possible through the contributions of several prominent individuals, including Rajesh Devan, Jirendra Gupta, Anoop Jain, Tanishq Mahajan, and Baldev Khullar. Members from various organizations such as Raghunath Bazaar, Shalamar Road, Karan Market Association, Rambir Market Association, Lower Hari Market Association, Hari Market Association, New Hari Market Association, Gummat Bazaar Association, Lower Raghunath Bazaar Association, Sunder Singh Gurudwara Association, Veev Marg Association, and Residency Road Association were also present to witness the grand event.

# VC JU highlights importance of life skills, holistic development at YES Plus Workshop



VC JU, Prof. Umesh Rai along with others after the workshop.

## STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Vice Chancellor, University of Jammu, Prof. Umesh Rai, highlighted the importance of life skills training, emotional well-being, and mindfulness practices in shaping students' overall development. He emphasized that such initiatives play a crucial role in preparing students for the challenges of the modern world by cultivating resilience, confidence, and leadership abilities.

Prof. Rai was speaking at the valedictory function of the five-day YES Plus Course workshop, organized for Design Your Degree students of Semesters 2 and 4 by the Skill Incubation Entrepreneurship Development Centre (SIEDC), University of Jammu, in collaboration with The Art of Living

Foundation. The workshop aimed at enhancing students' personal and professional growth through practical skill-building exercises and mindfulness techniques.

The sessions were led by Rohit Ranjan, Ritwik Mahajan, Akshita Sharma, along with Kanika Sharma, Jogeshwar, and Stuti Mahajan from The Art of Living, Jammu, who provided valuable insights and hands-on learning experiences.

Throughout the workshop, students participated in guided meditation, breathing exercises, self-reflection sessions, leadership training, and communication skill-building activities. Engaging exercises such as ice-breaking games, teamwork challenges, and practical demonstrations of mindfulness techniques further

enriched the learning experience. A key highlight of the workshop was the talent hunt and team-based cooking challenge, where students collaborated to prepare nutritious meals. This activity promoted teamwork, creativity, leadership, and the importance of healthy living.

Speaking at the event, Prof. Alka Sharma, Director, SIEDC, delivered the welcome address and emphasized the objectives and achievements of the workshop. She expressed gratitude to Prof. Umesh Rai for his visionary leadership and support in student-centric initiatives that bridge the gap between academic learning and real-world skills.

The contributions of Prof. Sadaf Shah and Dr. Jatinder Manhas, Associate Directors; Dr.

Chinmoyee, Deputy Director; Prof. K.S. Charak, Prof. Anil Gupta, Prof. Sarika Manhas, Dr. Pallavi Sachdeva, Dr. Sandeep Arya, Dr. Sarika Verma, Dr. Sandeep, Dr. Sunil Kumar, Dr. Ripu Dhawan, and Dr. Manish, along with faculty members of SIEDC, were acknowledged for their role in ensuring the success of the program. Additionally, Dean Students Welfare, Prof. Prakash Anthal, and Dr. Daud Iqbal Baba, Directorate of Sports and Physical Education, were recognized for their contributions.

Special appreciation was extended to office staff members Ruquaiya, Divya Sawhney, Arjun, and Manav for their dedicated efforts in the smooth execution of the event.

The valedictory function was attended by Prof. Rajan Salalia from SKUAST Jammu and State Coordinator for The Art of Living, Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh.

The workshop was coordinated by Dr. Shalpu Sehgal, who also conducted the proceedings of the valedictory function and presented the formal vote of thanks.

# UPI Transactions and Credit Card Spending Reach Record Highs: Khatana

## STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: New Delhi: Senior BJP leader and Rajya Sabha Member Er. Ghulam Ali Khatana highlighted the significant growth in UPI transactions and credit card spending, marking an all-time high.

He stated that in January 2025, UPI transactions surpassed 16.99 billion, with a total transaction value of ₹23.48 trillion. The cumulative UPI transactions for the financial year 2023-24 exceeded 131 billion, with the total transaction value crossing ₹200 trillion.

He further noted that



62.35% of UPI transactions in January 2025 were person-to-merchant, while 37.65% were person-to-person.

80% of retail payments are now facilitated through UPI.

Over 641 banks and 80+ apps are integrated into the UPI ecosystem.

80% of UPI transactions were for amounts below ₹500, highlighting its role in everyday payments.

Additionally, credit card spending reached a record ₹1.86 trillion in January 2025, with key investment segments witnessing a 69% growth over the past two years.

Er. Khatana emphasized that these figures reflect India's rapid digital financial transformation, reinforcing its position as a global leader in digital transactions.

# Coffee Table Book "Facets of Art" and Duggarsansar.com launched

## STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In a significant event celebrating the rich art and cultural heritage of the Dogra community, the coffee table book 'Facets of Art' and the digital platform Duggarsansar.com were launched today at the Jammu Press Club. The event marked a tribute to the vibrant artistic legacy of the region and was attended by prominent personalities and cultural advocates.

In a remarkable event held at the Press Club Jammu, the coffee table book 'Facets of Art' by Master Sansar Chand Baru was released amidst an audience of prominent citizens and art enthusiasts from Delhi, Jammu, and Himachal Pradesh. The event was graced by senior journalist Mahesh Baru, who compiled and pub-



Dignitaries during the book release function in Jammu.

lished the book, alongside notable personalities such as Sunny Dua, Shakti Singh, Dr. Naseeb Singh Manhas, Surinder Singh Dogra, and renowned cartoonist Chander Shekhar.

Speaking at the event, Mahesh Baru expressed his excitement and pride in presenting the book to the art community. "We are happy to present here our new pictorial coffee table book 'Facets of Art', available in both hardbound and Kindle versions. This book

explores the timeless connection between man's creative spirit and the portrayal of life and nature. From the cave murals to the sculptures that adorn palaces and temples, art has been a reflection of human thought and emotion."

"Facets of Art" delves into various dimensions of art, highlighting aestheticism, landscapes, sketches, war, portraits, and the portrayal of women,

among other themes. Through its simple and accessible language, the book guides readers to appreciate the love, emotions, and beauty that reside in the mind of an art lover. The detailed illustrations add further depth to the book's content, making it an enriching visual and intellectual experience. The book also presents a comprehensive overview of the history and growth of fine art, introducing readers to the proponents and pioneers of the art world across the ages. It explains the techniques, tools, nuances, and processes involved in painting, making it a valuable resource for both art students and enthusiasts alike. Shakti Singh and Dr.

Naseeb Singh Manhas lauded the efforts of Mahesh Baru in compiling such an exhaustive and beautifully illustrated book, which serves as a tribute to the rich legacy of fine art. Chander Shekhar, while expressing his admiration for the book, emphasized the importance of preserving and promoting the diverse facets of art in today's fast-paced world.

"Facets of Art" is now available on major platforms, including Amazon and Flipkart, in both hardbound and Kindle versions. The audience was encouraged to explore and experience the essence of fine art in its purest form through this thoughtfully curated collection.

# JKHCBA Jammu condemns tragic demise of three lives at Kathua

## STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The J&K High Court Bar Association, Jammu, in a meeting held in the office of J&K High Court Bar Association, Jammu, ON Monday under the Chairmanship of K. Nirmal Kotwal, (Advocate) President, J&K High Court Bar Association, Jammu along with all the office bearers namely Vice President Baldev Singh, General Secretary Pardeep Majotra, Joint Secretary Anshu Majahan and Treasurer Rahul Aggarwal strongly condemned the tragic loss of three lives at 'Tehsil Lohai Malhar, Billawar, District Kathua and unanimously expressed grief and condolences to the bereaved family members. Taking serious note on said horrific incident, K. Nirmal Kotwal (President) urged upon the UT administration and police authorities to take immediate action against those involved in the said incident and further urged that thorough probe be done in the said incident. K. Nirmal Kotwal (President) stated that such senseless acts of targeting innocent

lives is an attack on the democratic values of society and deserve to be universally condemned. They must be met with determination and collective action. I call upon the U.T Government and all concerned agencies to ensure that the guilty are brought to justice and law and order is maintained in the UT of J&K. The members of J&K High Court Bar Association, Jammu pray to the almighty to grant peace to the departed soul and the Association has shown full support to the bereaved families of demised persons.

The team of Young Lawyers Association, including President Amandeep Sharma, Vice President Bhagirath, General Secretary Saksham Gupta, Joint Secretary Hitesh Koul and Treasurer Sushel Thappa were also present in the condolence meeting. K. Nirmal Kotwal (Advocate) President, JKHCBAJ urged upon the U.T Government to grant ex-gratia relief to the bereaved families of the victims/demised persons. Two minutes silence was also observed in memory of the demised souls.

# "Viksit Yuva Samelan" at TSUS Jammu: Empowering Youth in Democracy & Governance

## STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Shri Ram Universal School, in collaboration with the Nations Development Association, affiliated with MYBharat-NYK under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, is organizing 'Viksit Yuva Samelan' under the Y20 Summit with the theme "Shared Future: Youth in Democracy and Governance."

This event, set to take place on the school campus, aims to empower young minds by fostering discussions on democracy, governance, and leadership, providing a platform for youth to engage with experts, policymakers, and industry leaders.

The event will be graced by Sunaina Mehta, Principal, Revenue Training Institute, as the Chief Guest.

A distinguished panel of experts will lead the discussions, including Aijaz Qaiser JKAS (Joint Director, Tourism), Anissa Nabi JKAS, (Senior Project Manager, J&K Rural Livelihood Mission), Ekshu Sharma JKAS, (District Information Officer), Dr. Akshay Parihar JKAS, (BDO Khellani), Maansi

Gupta (Director, MG Design), Jasleen Kour (Founder & CEO, Branding Elves), and Abheet Sangotra (Youth Advisory Council Member).

Complementing the panel discussions, prominent speakers such as Heena Mahajan, Sannak Shrivats, Ananya Manyal, Dheeraj Sharma, Sunita, Dr. Swati Mahajan, Sahil Bharti, and Tabassum Nabi will share their insights on the role of youth in democratic governance.

The event will also host delegates, including Preeti Choudhary, Narinder Singh,

Tarun Uppal, Rahul Kumar, Sahaj Sabharwal and Rakshant Balotra, who will contribute to meaningful discussions on youth-led development.

By bringing together policymakers, industry leaders, and aspiring young change-makers, 'Viksit Yuva Samelan' seeks to inspire the next generation to take an active role in governance and policy-making. Through engaging discussions and knowledge-sharing, this summit will encourage young leaders to drive positive change, shaping a more inclusive and participatory

democracy for the future.

The event is supported by associate partners including FM 91.2 Dhvani JU, ASC-CONE Hospital, Reacha Foundation, State Times, State Samachar, Tops News of J&K, 5 Dariya News, Khalsa News Express, Buzz Bites, PP Newslines, JK Monitor, 5 Dariya News, JK Voice, Jammu Dogra Express, JK Bishna Update, and The Nations Herald. Their collaboration highlights a shared commitment to youth empowerment and the role of young leaders in shaping a progressive society.