

## !! Continuations from Page 1 !! J&K Govt committed...

culture and centuries-old traditions of amity and brotherhood, stressing that the administration is dedicated to preserving unity in diversity.

"We are firmly committed to maintaining peace and harmony -- ensuring that the aspirations of our people are protected from divisive influences -- and cultivating an inclusive society built on mutual respect and harmony," he added.

He said the government had taken proactive measures to accelerate the recruitment process, ensuring a transparent, merit-based and efficient selection system.

"These efforts aim to streamline appointments across various sectors, providing greater employment opportunities and strengthening the workforce," he added.

The government is further strengthening the grievance redress mechanism through 'JK Samadhan' and 'Raabta', ensuring greater accountability, transparency and fairness in service delivery, the lieutenant governor said.

"These initiatives enhance citizen engagement by providing efficient and responsive platforms for addressing public concerns effectively."

Sinha asserted that the government was committed to the dignified rehabilitation of Kashmiri migrants into the valley by ensuring a safe and secure environment.

"Efforts will be intensified to accelerate the construction of transit accommodation projects for migrant employees, providing them with suitable housing at designated locations. These initiatives reflect our dedication to restoring confidence, fostering inclusivity and ensuring a stable and prosperous future for all communities," he said.

The government is dedicated to strengthening healthcare infrastructure across the Union Territory, ensuring quality, accessible and affordable medical services for all.

"Prestigious institutions such as AIIMS - Jammu and AIIMS - Kashmir, along with newly-established paediatric and cancer hospitals, are transforming tertiary healthcare delivery. The expansion of critical care facilities, dialysis centres and telemedicine services is significantly improving access to affordable and specialised care, ensuring that every citizen benefits from enhanced healthcare facilities," he said.

Under the universal health coverage scheme Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana SEHAT, 15.35 lakh free treatments have been provided, offering critical medical support to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, Sinha said.

"This initiative has resulted in savings of approximately Rs 2,765 crore in out-of-pocket expenses for patients, ensuring financial protection and improved access to quality health care for all.

To ensure swift and accessible medical assistance, 489 ambulances have been integrated into the 102-108 ambulance network, providing immediate transportation and emergency care, according to the lieutenant governor.

"This initiative has already benefited 4.50 lakh patients, reinforcing my government's commitment to strengthening emergency healthcare services across Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said AIIMS - Kashmir was nearing completion and expected to become operational soon, significantly enhancing healthcare infrastructure in the region.

To further strengthen medical education, the government is taking steps to increase MBBS and postgraduate seats in the 2025-26 session, expanding opportunities for aspiring doctors, he said.

The government is intensifying its effort in the fight against substance abuse by expanding functional drug de-addiction centres, reaffirming its commitment to addressing this critical issue, Sinha said.

"This initiative adopts a comprehensive approach focused on rehabilitation, awareness and prevention, with the ultimate goal of creating a drugs-free and healthier society," he added.

Highlighting his government's governance model, Sinha said, "Good governance remains the cornerstone of a prosperous and harmonious future for J-K. My government is committed to transparent and accountable decision-making, ensuring efficient allocation of resources so that every penny spent benefits the people."

The LG elaborated on key initiatives, including digital governance, streamlined public service delivery, effective grievance redressal mechanisms and socio-economic programmes aimed at bridging developmental gaps and strengthening public trust.

Focusing on economic progress, the Lieutenant Governor said his government would work relentlessly on the three principles of economy, ecology and equity.

"We are committed to balancing economic growth, environmental sustainability and equitable development to ensure a better and brighter future for all," he said.

Praising the government's response to snowfall in Kashmir, Sinha said for the first time, a coordinated effort between the government and elected representatives minimised disruptions to daily life.

"This synergy enabled one of the swiftest restorations of essential supplies, including efficient snow clearance. Additionally, the power supply remained one of the most reliable, with minimal interruptions," he said, appreciating the administration's dedication to winter preparedness.

Sinha highlighted the government's initiatives to empower the youth through education, skill development, innovation and entrepreneurship.

"We are building a dynamic ecosystem where the talent and energy of our young generation drive the progress of the region. Our policies focus on youth engagement, employment opportunities and digital transformation," he said.

He reassured the people that the administration is working alongside the youth to transform Jammu and Kashmir into a hub of opportunity, growth and innovation.

Praising Chief Minister Omar Abdullah for carrying out a mammoth grassroots-level exercise, the Lieutenant Governor said the Jammu and Kashmir Budget carries historic significance as it is the first in over seven years to be introduced by an elected government in the region.

Asserting that the path ahead presents challenges, Sinha said all should work together beyond political affiliations for the welfare of the people and the holistic development of J-K.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasised that the occasion is historic because elected representatives are participating in the Assembly after seven years, ensuring that the voices and aspirations of the people are reflected in the Budget formulation.

"This Budget carries historic significance as it is the first in over seven years to be presented by an elected government in Jammu and Kashmir. It symbolises the people's power as it is prepared by the representatives chosen by the people themselves," Sinha told members of the Legislative Assembly.

He said it is not merely a financial document but a testament to the aspirations of the masses, reflecting their hopes for a brighter future.

"The path ahead presents challenges but it is also filled with immense opportunities. Together beyond political affiliations, we must work for the welfare of the people and the holistic development of Jammu and Kashmir," he added.

"I am confident that with our collective resolve, we will achieve new milestones and transform Jammu & Kashmir into a beacon of peace, progress, and prosperity", he said.

The Lieutenant Governor highlighted the Chief Minister's direct engagement in Budget planning, stating, "For the first time, the Chief Minister has personally chaired meetings for all 20 districts separately, engaging directly with elected representatives to understand their aspirations, regional needs and development priorities in Budget formulation."

Sinha said the Budget is a true celebration of democracy - an expression of the dreams and expectations of every household, community and region of J-K.

He underscored that it represents a new era of participatory governance, ensuring that the needs and aspirations of the common man remain at the heart of policy-making.

The Lieutenant Governor said Jammu and Kashmir's economy has experienced notable growth in recent years, citing a rising Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), infrastructure advancements and improved socio-economic indices. However, he acknowledged the challenges of regional disparities, unemployment and sustainable development.

"My government is committed to refining and strengthening the developmental framework to make it more robust, balanced and participatory, ensuring inclusive and equitable growth for all," Sinha said.

Sinha said infrastructure remains a key driver of progress with significant advancements in connectivity. He pointed out recent projects, including the

inauguration of the Sonamarg Tunnel (Z-Morh) and the completion of two segments of the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway - Banihal Bypass and Ramban Bypass - which have reduced travel time.

"My government is committed to fast-tracking major connectivity projects by streamlining land acquisition, securing forest clearances and addressing encroachment issues," he said, adding the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project has reached a historic milestone and is poised to transform connectivity and development in the region.

To enhance air connectivity, evening flights have been made operational, and the expansion of Jammu Airport is underway to accommodate increased passenger traffic and boost tourism and trade, he said.

Sinha underscored the untapped potential of J-K's water resources, stating, "My government is committed to harnessing their full potential so that their economic dividend enhances people's lives and strengthens J&K's financial position."

Tourism, a vital economic pillar, has seen record-breaking visitor numbers in 2024, underscoring the region's global appeal.

"To further enhance the visitor experience, my government is implementing innovative projects to diversify tourism offerings while ensuring sustainable tourism practices," he said.

Regarding the annual Amarnath Yatra, Sinha reiterated the government's commitment to its smooth conduct.

"Building on the success of last year's Yatra, my government will ensure seamless logistics, enhanced infrastructure and eco-friendly initiatives," he said, adding efforts will balance ecological preservation with an enriching spiritual experience for devotees.

The Lieutenant Governor highlighted industrial development under the Rs 28,400-crore central sector scheme and said 971 units have been registered, with 1,150 more in process.

"To further accelerate industrial expansion, my government is expediting infrastructure provision in industrial estates," he said.

He also emphasised the significance of the handicraft sector which employs over 4.22 lakh people and efforts to boost its market reach.

"To further promote 'Brand J&K', my government is actively facilitating GI tagging for traditional products. Under the Vishwakarma Scheme, 1.19 lakh artisans have received skill training, with J&K ranking third nationwide in training performance," he said.

The region has also witnessed a surge in handloom and handicraft exports, strengthening local artisans' livelihoods and positioning J-K as a key player in the global handicrafts market.

"My government is focusing on transforming Jammu and Kashmir into an educational hub with strategic investments in higher education," Sinha said, noting that IIT Jammu and IIM Jammu are now operational.

"Jammu University has attained A++ status while the Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) leads in skill development and innovation. Faculty from the University of Kashmir has been recognised among the top two per cent of global scientists by Stanford University," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said that the Omar Abdullah-led government will seek the Centre's support in tapping the full potential of Jammu and Kashmir's energy sector. He said Jammu and Kashmir was endowed with an abundance of water resources that were yet to be fully harnessed.

"My government is committed to harnessing the full potential of these water resources so that their economic dividend enhances people's lives and Jammu and Kashmir's financial position. My government will seek the support of the central government to make a significant leap in our energy sector," he said.

Sinha said the Union Territory's energy sector was undergoing a transformative phase, with the government committed to ensuring early completion of key hydroelectric projects, including the Pakal Dul, Kiru, Kwar and the Ratle.

"These projects will collectively add 3,014 megawatt capacity, significantly strengthening the region's energy security. Several other projects such as the Dulhasti-II and the Kirthai-I are in the pipeline, further reinforcing Jammu and Kashmir as a hub of renewable energy," the lieutenant governor said.

He said significant strides had been made in strengthening the Union Territory's power infrastructure.

"Transmission capacity has increased 50 per cent with the successful completion of 28 projects. The distribution capacity has gone up 40 per cent with the execution of 194 projects. Additionally, construction of several receiving and grid stations are being expedited by the government, further fortifying the transmission and distribution network, minimising power losses and enhancing efficiency," Sinha said.

The Abdullah dispensation is committed to installing solar panels on all government buildings in phases, promoting sustainable energy adoption, he added.

Under the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana, solar panels are being installed in more than 80,000 households in the Union Territory, ensuring access to affordable and clean energy while advancing the region's renewable energy goals, Sinha said.

The government is also committed to achieving 100 per cent smart metering to ensure the reduction of aggregate technical and commercial losses and increasing revenue generation, he added.

## Omar pays tributes...

policies that paved the way for economic reforms, transforming India from a struggling economy to one of the world's largest. The economic liberalization he spearheaded, including the dismantling of the license-permit raj, unleashed the potential of the private sector and set India on a path of sustained growth," he said.

The Chief Minister also highlighted Dr. Singh's contributions beyond economic reforms. "His government initiated crucial social welfare measures, including the Indira Awas Yojana, which provided housing for the poor, and MGNREGA, which ensured employment for millions."

Acknowledging Dr. Singh's contributions to J&K's infrastructure development, the Chief Minister said, "The Jammu-Srinagar Highway, a critical lifeline for the region, was initiated under his tenure. The Chenab Rail Bridge, the highest railway bridge in the world, was another testament to his commitment to connecting Kashmir with the rest of India. Though he did not live to see the first train cross that bridge, its completion remains a tribute to his vision." Recalling Dr. Singh's last press conference, Omar quoted him as saying, "History will be a better judge of me than contemporary times." He remarked, "Today, as we reflect on his legacy, we recognize the wisdom in those words. He was a leader respected not only in India but across the world-from Washington to London, from Tokyo to Beijing."

Sharing his personal experience, the Chief Minister said, "I had the privilege of working closely with Dr. Singh and learning from his quiet yet resolute leadership. He never raised his voice, never sought attention, and never hesitated to correct a mistake when needed." He concluded by stating that "His absence leaves a void, but his contributions will continue to shape India for generations to come." The Chief Minister also paid rich tributes to other former legislators during the obituary reference.

## J&K inks MoU...

economy principles.

Dignitaries including Policy Makers, Thinkers, Researchers and Planners from all across the Country visited the J&K stall and applauded the initiative of transforming lake waste into valuable resources adopting sustainable waste management practices.

The J&K delegation, led by senior officials from the Housing and Urban Development Department, engaged in extensive knowledge-sharing sessions with the representatives from other states and Self-Help Groups (SHGs). Key focus areas included "Waste-to-Wonder Technologies", "Waste-to-Energy Innovations" and "Community-Led Circular Economy Models".

The forum offered a wealth of ideas, particularly in decentralizing waste management and empowering local communities. The visit provided an opportunity to explore best practices and modern technologies for potential replication in Jammu & Kashmir. The participation of Jammu & Kashmir in the forum highlights its unwavering commitment towards sustainable urban development and the promotion of circular economy principles, aligning with the broader vision of environmental conservation and resource efficiency.

Pertinently, CITIS 2.0 is a flagship initiative driving integrated waste management and climate action. Proposals for integrated waste management in smart cities were invited by the Ministry of Housing Affairs, GoI and 18 proposals worth Rs. 1800 Cr were shortlisted benefitting 18 cities across 14 states of the Country.

The 12th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum will continue in the coming days, featuring expert discussions, policy dialogues and collaborative initiatives aimed at shaping the future of sustainable urban development and circularity in the country.

## KDP Wing of DPAP demands Budgetary support and seat reservation for Kashmiri Displaced people

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: In a strong appeal to the authorities, the Kashmiri Displaced People (KDP) Wing of the Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) has called for reserved budgetary support and seat reservations in the upcoming Urban Local Bodies (ULB), Panchayat, and Municipal elections.

In a joint statement issued by President Sanjay Dhar, Chairman Piaray Lal Pandita, General Secretary Raj Kumar Ticku, Youth President Naveen Gosien, Publicity Secretary Charanjeet Singh, and other leaders, they emphasized that the Legislative Assembly's upcoming budget session is a historic event, being the first of its kind in over eleven years.

Given this, the KDP leaders have urged the government to allocate a reasonable share of budgetary funds from the state exchequer for the developmental rights of displaced Kashmiri Hindus in exile as well as for those still residing in the Valley.

The leaders highlighted that since their forced exodus in 1990, not a single penny has been allocated from the

State/UT Budget for the welfare of displaced Kashmiri people. Instead, their survival has solely depended on Central Government funds under security and relief measures.

They strongly criticized this step-motherly treatment and demanded that Kashmiri Displaced People, who have always been an integral part of the Valley's population, be granted constitutional and financial rights as equal citizens of Jammu & Kashmir.

The KDP leaders have urged that a special budgetary allocation be announced and passed during the ongoing budget session to support the developmental needs of Kashmiri Displaced People. Additionally, they demanded two reserved seats per district in the Valley for displaced Kashmiri Hindus in the upcoming Panchayat, Municipal, Local Bodies, and District Development Council (DDC) elections.

They further proposed that the displaced Kashmiri Hindu camps in Jammu be granted the status of Town Areas or Panchayats and receive full budgetary support based on the registered population of these camps.

This, they believe, would improve living standards and end the hazardous conditions faced by displaced communities.

A key demand put forth by the leaders is that the already announced three Assembly seats for the displaced community should be filled through elections rather than nominations. They argued that in the past, nominated MLAs failed to represent the community effectively, leading to further marginalization.

Lastly, the leaders called for the formation of district committees consisting of displaced Kashmiri Hindus from each respective district to act as caretakers of temples and shrines in the Valley. They demanded that trusts formed by individuals from other districts or outside J&K be abolished to prevent the misuse of financial resources belonging to temples and shrines.

With these demands, the KDP Wing of DPAP hopes to bring justice, financial security, and political representation to the displaced Kashmiri Hindu community, ensuring that their rights are safeguarded and their voices heard.

## Dr Jitendra virtually addresses National Science Day at Indian Embassy in Tokyo

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**  
NEW DELHI: In a landmark initiative, Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh virtually addressed the National Science Day (NSD) celebrations at the Indian Embassy in Tokyo, Japan, marking a new era of collaboration between India and Japan in Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI).

Reflecting on the four-decade-long partnership, Dr. Singh announced 2025-26 as the India-Japan Year of Science, Technology, and Innovation Exchange. He lauded the Indo-Japan collaboration, which has been one of the most robust and enduring international S&T engagements of India, significantly advancing in fields like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning, Quantum Technology, and Space Research.

Highlighting the progress under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership since 2014, Dr. Singh underscored key achievements, such as the Sakura Science Program, which has facilitated 7,000 Indian science

students in gaining exposure to cutting-edge research in Japan. He also noted that the Japan Society for the



Promotion of Science (JSPS) has supported over 300 joint projects since 1993, with thousands of scientists benefiting from exchange programs.

To further strengthen bilateral ties, the 11th Indo-Japan Joint S&T Committee Meeting is set to take place in June 2025, reviewing ongoing collaborations and launching new initiatives. Additionally, India has invited Japanese science students for exposure visits, with a special focus on long-term exchanges, joint supervision, and internships, particularly for women scientists.

Dr. Singh emphasized

India's remarkable rise in global rankings, stating that India now ranks 3rd in research publications, PhDs, and start-ups, 9th in research quality, and 39th in the Global Innovation Index, a dramatic improvement from 80th place in 2014. He also highlighted India's growing space achievements, including the historic Chandrayaan-3 mission, which made India the first country to land on the Moon's south pole.

Discussing India's technological advancements, Dr. Singh pointed to the opening of the nuclear energy sector to non-government entities, enabling Bharat Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)-a groundbreaking step in India's energy landscape. He also reiterated India's commitment to fostering an inclusive ecosystem for young scientists and women researchers, ensuring their active participation in the nation's S&T growth.

Concluding his address, Dr. Jitendra Singh envisioned a future of deepened Indo-Japan cooperation, fostering scientific breakthroughs and technological advancements that will propel both nations to the forefront of global innovation and development.

## 21-days residential training of Yuva Aapda Mitra volunteers commences at CTI, Kot Bhalwal

Commandant General, HG/CD & SDRF hails selfless service of Volunteers

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: A 21-days residential training programme of Yuva Aapda Mitra volunteers as "Master Trainers" (TbT) commenced on Monday at CTI Kot Bhalwal Jammu in which 100 volunteers from Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Ladakh, Chandigarh and the UT of J&K are participating.

While inaugurating the programme, S.J.M. Gillani, (DGP) Commandant General HG/CD & SDRF J&K underscored the objectivity of the training course, which is being conducted under the aegis of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) New Delhi at 07 different locations in the country including Central Training Institute (CTI), Kot Bhalwal. He informed the participants that the training programme is being imparted to the previously best trained volunteers under the Up-Scaling of Aapda Mitra scheme. These volunteers can assist in saving lives using the basic techniques of disaster response.

On the occasion, Commandant General held an interaction session with



the trainees, who shared their experience while rendering their services to the administration and the society in their respective States/UTs during various contingencies. Commending their selfless spirit and commitment in reaching out for relief and rescue, the Commandant General lauded role of these young minds in pursuit of their voluntary service to the nation. He asserted that all preparations for smooth conduct of the programme have been done in consultation with Department of DMRRR UT of J&K and assured the participants of best kind of services both in capacity building and during their stay in the training campus.

Later, the Commandant

General HG/CD & SDRF J&K took stock of the facilities being provided to Volunteers at campus.

Atul Sharma, SSP Staff officer to Commandant General HG/CD & SDRF J&K [Nodal Officer], Zahid Naseem Manhas, SSP, Commandant SDRF 2nd Bn Jammu, Ms. Snober Jameel, Deputy Secretary to Govt, DMRRR J&K, Dr. Amir Hussain, CEO, Emergency Relief Organisation DMRRR J&K, alongwith other officers of SDRF and other allied departments also attended the inaugural function.

In the end, Principal CTI Kot Bhalwal Jammu gave a brief about the 21 days training which was followed by a lunch served to the trainees.