

# VC felicitates senior University functionaries for their contribution to NAAC A++ Accreditation

## STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In a significant gesture of appreciation, the Vice Chancellor (VC), University of Jammu Prof Umesh Rai on Thursday felicitated the Deans, Rectors, Directors, Heads of Teaching Departments and senior officers for their exemplary contribution in securing the prestigious NAAC A++ Accreditation. Acknowledging their relentless dedication and commitment to academic excellence, the Vice Chancellor praised their pivotal role in achieving this milestone.

Addressing the gathering, Prof. Rai extended his heartfelt gratitude to all the stakeholders of the university for their tireless efforts in enhancing the university's academic and research profile. He emphasized that this remarkable achievement was a reflection of the collective perseverance of faculty members, officers, and staff.

The Vice Chancellor also commended the Research Policy of the University introduced by Office of the Dean Research Studies, recognizing it as a crucial initiative in strengthening the



VC, JU Prof Umesh Rai along with senior staff during the programme.

university's research ecosystem. He expressed confidence in the faculty, staff and all associated departments, reaffirming his belief that their dedicated efforts would continue to propel the university towards greater heights.

"I have personally observed the dedication and relentless efforts of our academic and administrative teams. What stands out even more is the strong sense of ownership within the university fraternity, which played a pivotal role in securing this prestigious accreditation. Their commitment has been the driving force behind this achievement, and I am confident that with the same

determination, we will reach even greater milestones in the future," the Vice Chancellor remarked. He also announced that other key contributors would also be felicitated in the coming days.

The Chief Guest of the event, Prof. M. M. Chaturvedi, former Director, Cluster Innovation Center, University of Delhi and visiting Professor at the School of Biotechnology, University of Jammu commended the University on its remarkable achievement.

Prof. Chaturvedi emphasized that this achievement is a reflection of the university's dedication to quality education, research, and

holistic development. "This success represents the collective hard work of the university's leadership, faculty, staff, scholars and students, who have worked tirelessly to uphold its legacy of excellence," he remarked.

He further underscored the importance of transparent governance, innovative academic initiatives, and a dynamic learning environment, which have positioned the University of Jammu as a model institution in higher education.

Encouraging the university to continue on this trajectory, he noted that such accomplishments set new benchmarks and inspire future progress.

The ceremony was also graced by Prof. Anju Bhasin, Dean Academic Affairs, Prof. Meena Sharma, Dean Planning and Development, Prof. Naresh Padha, Convener, Steering Committee for NAAC. They also addressed the gathering, highlighting the collective efforts that contributed to this significant accomplishment.

As a token of appreciation, the Deans, Rectors, Directors, Heads of Teaching Departments and senior officers were presented with mementos in recognition of their outstanding contributions.

Earlier, the formal welcome address was delivered by Dr. Ginny Dogra, Director, DIQA.

Akanksha Sharma, Assistant Registrar, DIQA conducted the proceedings of the event while the event was coordinated by Er Ameet Targotra, Assistant Director, DIQA along with other staff members.

Among others present were Deans, Rectors, Directors, heads of various teaching departments and senior officials of the University.

# Randhawa emphasizes BJP's commitment to quality healthcare access

## Inaugurates Lovely Medicos at Channi Himmat

## STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Senior BJP leader and MLA Bahu Constituency, Vikram Randhawa inaugurated the Lovely Medicos shop at Channi Himmat, reinforcing the party's commitment to ensuring accessible and quality healthcare facilities for the residents.

The inauguration ceremony witnessed the presence of local dignitaries, party workers, and enthusiastic residents who appreciated the efforts made by the BJP leadership in addressing the healthcare needs of the community.

Speaking at the occasion, Randhawa emphasized the significance of enhancing local healthcare infrastructure and ensuring the availability of essential medicines and healthcare products at affordable prices. He highlighted the Modi government's focus on transforming healthcare services across Jammu and Kashmir and reiterated his commitment to bringing similar initiatives to Bahu Constituency.

"Access to quality healthcare is a fundamental right



MLA Bahu Vikram Randhawa inaugurating medical shop.

of every citizen. The opening of Lovely Medicos is a step towards fulfilling that right for the people of Channi Himmat. We will continue to work relentlessly to upgrade healthcare facilities and ensure that no one is deprived of essential medical services," he added.

The senior BJP leader lauded the proprietor of Lovely Medicos for his initiative and urged local businesses to contribute towards the welfare of society by maintaining high standards of service and affordability. He also took the opportunity to interact with the residents, listening to their grievances and assuring them of swift redressal.

Vikram also appealed to the youth to proactively avail the benefits of various welfare schemes launched by the Modi Government, emphasizing that these initiatives are designed to empower them with better education, employment opportunities, and financial support, thereby paving the way for a brighter future and contributing significantly to the development of Jammu and Kashmir.

Among those who were present included Naresh Singh (District President), Kulveer Singh Charak, Pankaj Bral, Owner Sourab Jandiyal, Naraian Singh, Ashok Jandiyal, Ashudeep Kohli.

# IIM Jammu gears up for Empyrean 2025-A Celestial Odyssey

## STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu is set to host its flagship cultural festival, Empyrean 2025 - A Celestial Odyssey, from March 7 to 9, 2025 at its Jagti Campus.

This highly anticipated event promises a spectacular blend of music, dance, fashion, and artistic expression, bringing together students and artists from across the country.

The star-studded lineup for Empyrean 2025 features some of the most celebrated names in the entertainment industry, including Playback Singer Jubin Nautiyal, Music Composer and Performer Rauhan Malik, and electrifying beats by DJ Carnivore & DJ HOLY C. Alongside these exhilarating performances, the festival will host an array of thrilling competitions, including Battle of Bands, Street

Battles, a Gaming Arena, Fashion Show, Cultural Performances, and an array of food stalls and experiences. Speaking on the occasion, Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu, said, "Empyrean 2025 is not just a cultural festival; it is a confluence of talent, creativity, and passion. At IIM Jammu, we believe in fostering holistic development, and this grand celebration reflects our commitment to nurturing the cultural vibrancy of our students. With a dynamic lineup of performances and competitions, we aim to make Empyrean 2025 an unforgettable experience for everyone."

Prof. Jabir Ali, Dean Academics, IIM Jammu, added, "Empyrean is a platform where creativity meets innovation, offering students an opportunity to showcase

their talents and build lifelong memories."

The event is co-powered by IIM Jammu and the Central Bank of India, with generous support from Central Bank of India, New Edge Stock Edge, Vardi, Life Insurance Corporation of India, Coca-Cola, Canara Bank, Geetanjali Salon, ED Times Youth Blog, SONY, Union Bank of India, J&K Bank, and The Bak-LoL TV. Their contributions are instrumental in making this grand celebration possible. The event is being coordinated by Student Body in close coordination with Office of the Student Affairs, IIM Jammu.

The students also organized a flash mob across various locations in Jammu city. A blood donation camp was organized at the Campus on 06th March 2025.

# Dr. Karan Singh inaugurates J&K Art Exhibition at Kala Kendra

## STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Former Union Minister, Dr. Karan Singh on Thursday inaugurated the "Jammu and Kashmir Art Exhibition" at Kala Kendra, Jammu, in the presence of prominent artists, painters, and art enthusiasts.

The ten-day exhibition, showcasing the rich art treasure of Jammu and Kashmir, has been jointly organized by Kala Kendra Society, Amar Mahal Museum and Library, and the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture, and Languages across all five galleries of Kala Kendra. While inaugurating the exhibition, Dr. Karan Singh emphasized that the artistic journey of J&K is deeply intertwined with the cultural legacy of the region.

He lauded the contributions of J&K artists and painters in promoting local



Former Union Minister, Dr. Karan Singh inaugurating Art Exhibition at Kala Kendra, Jammu.

ethos at national and international levels.

Expressing his love for music, visual arts, performing arts, and all forms of creativity, Dr. Singh congratulated Amar Mahal Museum, Kala Kendra Society, and JKAACL for organizing this significant event. Dr. Javaid Rahi, Secretary, Kala Kendra Society, in his welcome

address, highlighted the objectives of the exhibition, stating that a series of events, including art and painting camps, as well as workshops on various art forms, will be conducted during the ten-day exhibition. Jotishna Singh mentioned that this exhibition coincides with the 3rd Tawi Art and Culture Festival, which is being celebrated in

Jammu. She stated that the festival aims to promote the culture and languages of J&K while organizing various art activities in the City of Temples, with this exhibition being an integral part of the larger event. Dr. Lalit Gupta, eminent art historian under whose supervision of the event is being held, stated that the exhibition features rare and exceptional works of top painters from J&K. He urged people to visit and appreciate the different artistic expressions on display.

Padma Shri Rajinder Tickoo, curator of the exhibition, highlighted that the event showcases the continuity of J&K's artistic legacy spanning over a century. He added that the exhibition features the works of eminent artists carefully selected to represent the region's diverse artistic journey. Suman Gupta, a promi-

nent artist and designer of the exhibition, elaborated on the artistic evolution of Jammu and Kashmir, stating that the exhibition will serve as a guiding force for the younger generation in understanding contemporary art.

Several prominent personalities graced the occasion, including Padma Shri Balwant Thakur, Zaffar Choudhary noted author and journalist, eminent artists writers Bhushan Koul, Bhashambar Mehta, Jang S. Vurman, Manoj Chopra, K.K. Gandhi, Milan Sharma, Rohit Verma, Ankush Kesar, Muha Verma, Deepak Kumar, Suresh Kumar Sharma and Rakesh Sharma.

The exhibition is open to the public for ten days, inviting art lovers and cultural enthusiasts to experience the artistic brilliance of Jammu and Kashmir.

# DB strictly bans commercial activities in and around Zero Point of Zojila Pass

## STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A Division Bench (DB) of Jammu and Kashmir High Court comprising Chief Justice Tashi Rabstan and Justice MA Chowdhary while hearing both the PIL, directed that to protect the environment and maintain tranquility, all types of commercial activities as also using of Snow Scooters/sledges in and around Zero Point of Zojila Pass are hereby strictly banned with immediate effect.

DB further banned Use of polythene bags, plastic packets, and other plastic related materials in and around Zero Point of Zojila Pass.

When the PIL came-up for hearing, Division Bench observed that one Abdul Wahid, Councilor, Behinbet, Drass addressed a letter dated July 1, 2024 to the Chief Justice regarding saving of Ladakh's Environment, Ecology and Land from encroachers and resolving the boundary dispute between District Kargil (UT of Ladakh) and District Ganderbal (UT of J&K). It is stated that Zojila Pass is situated within the territorial jurisdiction of District Kargil. When the National Highway was constructed at Zojila during the year 1962, keeping in view the need of the Ladakh region, the Border Roads Organization had suo motu picked a point in the middle of the mountains and divided the snow area distance by 50/50 to expedite the work while opening the road from both sides, naming it Zero Point.

It is stated the people of district Ganderbal of Kashmir region are misinterpreting this concept and have repeatedly encroached upon Ladakh's land, are endangering its natural

species, flora and fauna as also damaging the environment and ecology of Ladakh region, which has resulted in vital threat to climate change, air and water pollution, biodiversity loss, soil erosion and natural disasters and also causing serious threats of various ailments to the living beings of the region.

DB further observed that vide order dated July 23, 2024 the said letter was treated as Public Interest Litigation and Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir as well as Deputy Commissioner, Ganderbal were implemented as party respondent Nos.5 & 6 in the PIL. Notices on their behalf were accepted by the Government Advocate and he sought time to file response.

On August 28, 2024, four weeks' further time was granted to file response. Again, on October 28, 2024 four weeks another time was granted to the learned counsel appearing for respondents 5 & 6 to file response.

Once again, on December 11, 2024 four weeks more time was granted to do the needful. When, response on behalf of respondents 5 & 6 was not filed, then on February 18, 2025 last and final opportunity of four weeks was granted for doing the needful.

Today, when the matter came up for consideration, DB observed that it is seen that respondents 5 & 6 despite availing last and final opportunity have not come up with their response. However, status report on behalf of respondents 1 to 4/Chief Executive Officer, Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Kargil has been filed contending therein that the administration of Ganderbal and offi-

cial of Police Station Sonmarg often allow tourist vehicles upto zero point of Zojila Pass while restricting passenger vehicles from Ladakh, leading to traffic congestion and endangering lives on this treacherous route. While advocating the environmental regulations and protections to preserve the unique ecological balance of the area, it is averred that the Wildlife Warden, Kargil vide his report dated October 24, 2024 has also shown concern about the increased tourism and human activity in the fragile ecosystem of Ladakh, which has an adverse impact on the unique flora and fauna in this specific area, relevant portion of the report is reproduced hereunder:

**Habitat Destruction:** The unregulated tourism and increased human activities in the fragile landscape could lead to the destruction of natural habitats. This could impact species that are already adapted to the area's harsh climate and sensitive ecosystem, potentially leading to loss of biodiversity. The area is home to schedule I species like Himalayan Brown Bear, Long Tailed Marmots.

**Disruption of Wildlife migration and Breeding Patterns:** Increased human presence and activities such as moving in the habitat zones, usage of vehicles could disrupt the natural migration and breeding routes of Wildlife species. Many animals rely on specific migratory patterns for survival and interference in these patterns could lead to population decline.

**Pollution:** Heavy traffic, especially from vehicles, may lead to air and noise pollution. Additionally, improper waste disposal and littering from increased tourism can

contaminate the region, affecting plant life and animals that depend on clean water sources and unpolluted land."

It is stated on behalf of amicus curiae that in and around Zojila Pass there are many illegal commercial activities being going on and their unchecked expansion may not only lead to detrimental consequences for the fragile high mountain pass ecosystem and indigenous communities, but also pose significant environmental and social challenges, besides threat of habitat disturbance and poaching risks. It is further stated that recreational activities such as sledging and using snow scooters in the snow-bound high mountain pass can not only disturb the snow and ice cover, leading to soil erosion once the snow melts, but also contribute to air pollution through emissions from fuel consumption and the snow itself become contaminated with exhaust particles, oil spills, and other pollutants, thus posing a serious threat to ecological balance. Further, this high mountain range is home to numerous rare and endangered species, such as the snow leopard, Himalayan tahr, and various bird species. The noise and movement from snowmobiles can disturb these animals, disrupting their natural habitats and breeding cycles. Not only this, littering in this snow-bound mountain region in the shape of polythene bags, plastic packets, and other plastic related materials is causing several significant environmental and ecological problems. Polythene is a non-biodegradable material, when used in high-altitude areas, remains for years, leading to long-term pollution of soil, water sources,

and ecosystems. Thus, it is stated, that all this may ultimately lead to glacial retreat and altered snowfall patterns thereby destabilizing the environment of High Mountain Pass and, in such a situation, the immediate sufferers would be the people residing in the District of Kargil, UT of Ladakh and the people residing in District Ganderbal, UT of J&K.

DB after pondering over the above glaring allegations, considering the various submissions and suggestions made by counsel appearing for the parties and with a view and hope to put a hold on the deleterious results of reckless illegal commercial activities which are alleged to have been taking place, brazenly, in and around Zero Point of Zojila Pass, DB directed that to protect the environment and maintain tranquility, all types of commercial activities as also using of Snow Scooters/sledges in and around Zero Point of Zojila Pass are hereby strictly banned with immediate effect.

DB further ordered that use of polythene bags, plastic packets, and other plastic related materials in and around Zero Point of Zojila Pass are also strictly banned with immediate effect.

DB further directed to launch an extensive cleanliness drive of Zero Point of Zojila Pass and the nearby snowbound areas on war footing in collaboration with the officials of both the UTs as well as with the help of NGOs/social organizations.

DB directed SSP Ganderbal, UT of J&K and SSP Kargil, UT of Ladakh to strictly implement this order and file the action taken report well before the next date of hearing.

# RTO Jasmeet Singh takes charge, announces key decisions



RTO Jammu Jasmeet Singh chairing introductory meeting.

## STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Jasmeet Singh, the newly appointed Regional Transport Officer (RTO) Jammu, has taken charge and introduced several important decisions. In an exclusive conversation with the media, he stated that the driving trial days have been increased for the convenience of the public. Previously, trials were conducted only three days a week, but now they will be held six days a week. Additionally, the vehicle passing process has been made easier. Earlier, this service was available only once a week, but now it has been extended to three days a week. He mentioned that this decision was made considering the increasing workload and the difficulties faced by applicants. Regarding the delay in issuing driving license cards, he assured that a resolution would be reached soon.

Jasmeet Singh emphasized that the primary goal of the administration is to provide better and faster services to the people, ensuring they do not face any inconvenience.

# Srinagar getting sufficient portable water supply: Javed Rana

## STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Minister for Jal Shakti, Javed Ahmad Rana, on Thursday said that all areas in Srinagar have been covered and the people are being supplied scheduled portable water supply by the department.

The Minister was responding to a question from legislator, Shamima Firdous in the Legislative Assembly.

The Minister said that the government is committed to facilitate supply of essential services to the people and ensure timely repairing of defunct water supply schemes.

He maintained that no water supply pipeline is defunct in Srinagar city and whenever any distribution line gets damaged, the same is restored under stage contracts and the damaged pipelines beyond repair are replaced by new pipelines properly. The Minister said

that the department is providing sufficient potable water supply as per schedule of existing water treatment plants and currently there is no area as uncovered. MLA, Mubarak Gul, also raised supplementary questions on the question.

Replying to another question raised by MLA Reyaz Ahmad Khan, the Minister said that, PHE works are being executed by PHE Division Bijbehara while as irrigation works are being looked after by Irrigation Division Anantnag and flood related works are being executed by the Flood Control Division Anantnag for Shangus. The Minister said that there is no requirement for creating these facilities separately for Shangus as of now. He assured that the government is committed to provide all basic facilities to the people in all far flung areas.