

Collective efforts key to realising vision of 'Viksit Bharat 2047': Governor Kavinder Gupta

Highlights contribution of Vaishya community to India's economic & social fabric

STATE TIMES NEWS

LUDHIANA : The Governor of Himachal Pradesh, Kavinder Gupta said that the Vaishya community has a vital role to play in realising Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Viksit Bharat 2047'. He said that the energy, entrepreneurship and philanthropic spirit of the community can significantly contribute to making India an economically strong, self-reliant and prosperous nation by 2047.

This was stated by the Governor while addressing the Abhinandan Samaroh organised in his honour by the International Vaishya Federation, at Ludhiana, Punjab today.

Highlighting the contribution of the Vaishya community to India's economic and social fabric, Shri Kavinder Gupta said that for centuries, this community has treated trade not merely as a means of livelihood, but as a responsibility and a form of service to society. He said the community's identity goes beyond commerce - it embodies honesty, hard work, philanthropy and community welfare, reflecting the timeless Indian ideal of Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah.

The Governor noted that many institutions and trusts established by members of the Vaishya community continue to render exemplary services in the fields of



Governor of Himachal Pradesh, Kavinder Gupta being honoured at Abhinandan Samaroh by International Vaishya Federation at Ludhiana.

education and healthcare, strengthening the social fabric of the nation. He said such initiatives are a living example of the community's deep commitment to nation building.

Gupta said that in today's rapidly changing global landscape, entrepreneurship and innovation have become the primary drivers of national progress. He urged the Vaishya community to channelise its traditional strengths of foresight, integrity and enterprise into modern avenues of technology, innovation and start-up culture. He said the younger generation of the community must blend ancestral wisdom with contemporary tools to lead India's economic

transformation and help achieve the goal of 'Viksit Bharat'.

The Governor emphasised that 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' means every trader, entrepreneur and young person contributing to the nation's development to the best of their ability. He called upon the Vaishya community to remain at the forefront of this national mission and set an example for others through their work, values and service.

Kavinder Gupta also apprised the gathering regarding the cultural of Jammu & Kashmir and put light on the life of Shyama Prasad Mukherjee who strongly opposed the special status given to Jammu and Kashmir under

Article 370, advocating the slogan "One nation, one constitution, one flag." Expressing gratitude for the warm felicitation, Kavinder Gupta said that the honour was not merely personal, but a recognition of the spirit of service and values with which individuals strive to fulfil their responsibilities towards society and the nation.

Earlier, State President of the International Vaishya Mahasammelan, Shri Surendra Singla, welcomed and honoured the Governor. Senior office bearers and prominent members of the Vaishya community were present in large numbers.

Surinder Singla in his address apprised the Governor regarding various activities being conducted by the IVF all over India, which mainly includes, one lakh financial support to those Aggarwal students, who cleared IAS Preliminary Exam and are preparing for the IAS Main Exam, organising blood donation camps and the supply of other need based items to the needful persons.

Among those who were present included Harkesh Mittal, Devinder Aggarwal, Dinesh Aggarwal, Amit Goyal, Hira Mani Aggarwal, Dinesh Modi, Dr Sanjeev Goyal, Pritam Bansal and Sourbh Garg.



Safe tanker passage in Hormuz shows India's global clout: Gaurav

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: BJP spokesperson and Convenor - International Affairs, BJP J&K, Gaurav Gupta today hailed Iran's decision to allow India-flagged vessels to pass through the strategically critical Strait of Hormuz as a major diplomatic triumph for India.

Gupta said that amid escalating tensions in the Gulf region involving Iran, Israel, and the United States, the safe passage granted to Indian oil tankers such as MT Pushpak and MT Parimal reflects India's rising global stature and credibility on the world stage.

He noted that the development came after constructive and proactive discussions between External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar and Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, which safeguarded India's strategic and energy interests despite the volatile geopolitical scenario. "India commands respect globally. The decisive leader-



ship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi combined with the strategic diplomacy of Dr. Jaishankar has ensured that India's national and economic interests remain fully secure, even in the most complex international crises," Gupta said.

Highlighting the strategic importance of the Strait of Hormuz, Gupta said the narrow waterway carries over 20 million barrels of crude oil daily nearly one-fifth of global consumption and a significant share of liquefied natural gas shipments worldwide. Any disruption in this chokepoint could have severe

repercussions on global energy markets.

He added, "India's ability to ensure uninterrupted movement of energy supplies through one of the world's most critical maritime corridors demonstrates the strength, credibility, and influence of Indian diplomacy today."

Gupta further emphasized that the successful passage of India-flagged vessels underlines the Modi government's capability to protect national interests while maintaining balanced, strategic relations with nations across geopolitical divides.

"This development is a testimony to India's emergence as a responsible, assertive, and influential global power under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It sends a clear message that India's energy and strategic interests are non-negotiable and will always be safeguarded," he added.

Yasha Mudgal reviews functioning of JCCB

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Commissioner Secretary, Cooperative Department, Yasha Mudgal, on Thursday chaired a comprehensive review meeting with the senior officers of Jammu Central Co-operative Bank Limited (JCCB) to assess bank's overall functioning, with emphasis on its financial health, operational efficiency and key performance indicators.

The meeting was attended by Registrar Cooperative Societies J&K, Mohammad Shafiq Chak; Managing Director/CEO, JCCB, Bal Krishan; Executive Manager, JCCB, Paramjeet Singh Slathia; General Manager, NABARD, Vikas Mittal; Branch Heads of JCCB and other concerned officers and officials.

During the meeting, the Managing Director delivered a detailed presentation outlining the bank's current operational status, key financial parameters, ongoing challenges and the strategic roadmap for enhancing performance. He also provided updates on physical and financial achievements vis-à-vis allocated targets.

The review placed significant focus on the bank's financial health, including its advances portfolio, priority sector lending, Non-Performing Assets (NPAs),



Comm Secy, Cooperative Dept, Yasha Mudgal chairing a comprehensive review meeting.

recovery performance, and deposit mobilization, particularly Current and Savings Account (CASA) deposits to bolster the financial base. The bank currently serves over 2.28 lakh deposit accounts, with total deposits standing at approximately ₹1282.90 crore.

The Commissioner Secretary underscored the critical need for strengthening financial discipline and improving core banking parameters. She emphasized expanding the credit portfolio in productive sectors while maintaining prudent risk management and robust recovery mechanisms. She directed the bank authorities to intensify efforts to reduce NPAs by exceeding recovery targets through sustained follow-up, borrower engagement, and inculcating a culture of timely repayment among borrowers and cooperative members.

The Commissioner Secretary further instructed

for preparation of a well-defined action plan for the upcoming financial year in advance to ensure achievement of enhanced targets in loan disbursement and NPA recovery.

Highlighting the customer service and compliance, she mandated 100 per cent saturation of Know Your Customer (KYC) completion across all accounts within the next three months. She also stressed that every branch of the bank must strive to achieve operating profit, signaling a push toward greater self-sustainability and efficiency.

The Commissioner Secretary advocated adoption of modern technology and digital banking solutions to enhance operational efficiency, transparency and service delivery. She reiterated the importance of robust recovery drives to bring down NPAs and strengthen the bank's overall financial resilience.

Khatana raises concerns in RS over protection, preservation of J&K's historical buildings

STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI : Senior BJP leader and Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha Nominated) Er. Gulam Ali Khatana today raised concerns in the Rajya Sabha (RS) regarding the protection and preservation of historical buildings, including Shri Maharaja Gulab Singh (SMGS) Hospital, Shalamar and Ranbir Higher Secondary School (formerly SRML / Ranbir Pathshala).

During the supplementary questions session, Khatana highlighted the historical and public importance of these institutions. He stated that SMGS Hospital, located in Shalamar, was inaugurated by Maharaja Hari Singh on 6 May 1940 and has since been serving patients from across the Jammu region, particularly in specialized departments such as Pediatrics and Gynaecology. Khatana also drew attention to Ranbir Higher Secondary School, earlier known as Ranbir Pathshala and later SRML, one of the premier educational institutions of the region. The school was founded by Maharaja Ranbir

Singh in 1872 and its building was constructed by Maharaja Pratap Singh in 1884. The Rajya Sabha MP appreciated that since Prime Minister Narendra Modi assumed office, the condition and protection of historical monuments across the country have significantly improved. Khatana sought clarification from Union Minister for Culture and Tourism Gajendra Singh Shekawat regarding whether the buildings of SMGS Hospital and Ranbir School fall under the supervision of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and raised concerns about their current condition, repair needs, and possible expansion or modifications.

Responding to the query, the Union Minister stated that the ASI strictly follows its conservation rules and does not allow any modifications or expansion in protected monuments. The Ministry also assured that necessary inquiries would be made regarding the preservation and upkeep of these historic structures and that appropriate steps would be taken to ensure their protection.

CSIR-IIIM and ICMR-NIV inked pact to boost collaborative research, public health initiatives

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In a landmark move to strengthen public health research and virology capabilities in North India, CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (CSIR-IIIM), Jammu today inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Council of Medical Research - National Institute of Virology (ICMR-NIV), Pune, through its North Zone office at Jammu.

The agreement formalizes cooperation between the two premier institutions in areas of diagnosis, outbreak investigation, biomedical research, biosafety, biosecurity, and public health sciences, with the aim of addressing emerging health challenges effectively.

Speaking at the occasion, Dr. Zabeer Ahmed, Director of CSIR-IIIM Jammu, highlighted the significance of collaborative research in building robust public health



Director CSIR-IIIM Jammu, Dr. Zabeer Ahmed and Director ICMR-NIV, Dr. Naveen Kumar with others officials at MoU signing ceremony.

systems and advancing scientific expertise in the region.

"Partnerships like these are critical not just for research, but for ensuring rapid and coordinated responses to outbreaks that may impact communities," he said.

Under the MoU, CSIR-IIIM will monitor local disease patterns and potential viral outbreaks, while coordinating with ICMR-NIV for testing, sample collection, and outbreak investigations.

Both institutions will develop joint Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to guide investigations, facilitate data sharing, and ensure research findings are published collaboratively, enhancing transparency and scientific credibility.

The agreement also paves the way for joint research projects in priority health areas, funded by national agencies including CSIR, ICMR, DBT, and DST, as

well as external sources.

Researchers, faculty, and students from both institutions will have access to each other's state-of-the-art facilities, encouraging knowledge exchange and innovation in life sciences, virology, and allied disciplines.

Academic and training initiatives are a core part of the collaboration. Faculty and student exchange programs, workshops, lectures, and symposia will allow participants to gain hands-on exper-

ience in epidemiology, clinical diagnostics, bioinformatics, biomedical sciences, environmental health, and other relevant areas.

The initiative is expected to empower young scientists, strengthen institutional expertise, and enhance the region's preparedness for emerging health threats.

Officials present from ICMR-NIV included Dr. Naveen Kumar, Director, and Dr. Qaiser Farooq Dar, Scientist-C and Office Incharge, North Zone, Jammu, while CSIR-IIIM Jammu was represented by Dr. Zabeer Ahmed, Er. Abdul Rahim, Dr. Shashank Kr. Singh, Dr. Govind Yadav, and Dr. Mir M. Asrar.

This collaboration marks a milestone in scientific partnership, combining the strengths of CSIR-IIIM's integrative medicine expertise with ICMR-NIV's virology capabilities.

PIB Jammu organises Media Workshop on AI Impact Summit 2026; Conducts training session on Use of AI for Journalists

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Press Information Bureau (PIB), Jammu organised a media workshop 'varta' on the theme 'AI Impact Summit 2026' at Press Club here on Thursday. The programme was aimed at building awareness and capacity among journalists on the growing role of Artificial Intelligence in the media ecosystem. The workshop also featured a dedicated capacity building session on the use of AI tools for journalists to enhance productivity and improve newsroom workflows.

Speaking on the occasion, Director, PIB Jammu, Neha Jalali emphasized that accessibility, democratization of AI technology, and responsible use of artificial intelligence were the core principles of the AI Impact Summit 2026. She said Artificial Intelligence is increasingly influencing every sector, including media and communication. She emphasised the need for media professionals to collectively prepare for the evolving technological landscape and adapt to emerging AI-driven tools. She highlighted that AI offers immense potential for enhancing productivity, improving content creation, and strengthening fact-checking mechanisms in journalism.

Jalali further underlined that the government is proactively



Director, PIB Jammu, Neha Jalali with others at Media workshop.

advancing initiatives under the national AI mission to promote inclusive technological growth. She informed that initiatives such as IndiaAI Mission, YuvaAI, and SOAR Initiative are aimed at democratizing technology and ensuring equitable access to AI tools. This, she said, would help bridge the digital divide, and enable responsible use of technology for societal good. The Director also highlighted the initiatives of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, including the establishment of the Indian Institute of Creative Technology (IICT), with significant budgetary allocation to strengthen India's media and entertainment technology ecosystem.

Speaking on the occasion, Vice President of Press Club of Jammu, Zorawar Singh Jamwal said that journalism is undergoing

rapid transformation globally, and it is the need of the hour for media professionals to understand and responsibly use AI technologies. He encouraged young media professionals to become well-versed in AI tools to enhance efficiency and remain future-ready.

Addressing the participants, Vinit Utpal, Professor at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, said that Artificial Intelligence is transforming the global media ecosystem. He said it is redefining journalism through automation, data analysis and AI-assisted content generation. He noted that newsrooms across the world are adopting AI-driven tools to enhance productivity, storytelling and information verification. He also elaborat-

ed that AI enables automated data collection, monitoring of social media trends, and real-time information analysis during breaking news situations. AI-powered tools also help journalists track information, verify data and combat misinformation. Bhawani Singh, Assistant Professor at IIMC, Jammu, spoke about prompt engineering and the personalisation of AI tools for journalistic work. He stressed the importance of AI ethics, urging journalists to verify AI-generated outputs, clearly disclose the use of AI in content creation, and treat AI as an assistant rather than a replacement for human judgement. Divyvasu Sharma, Business Head, 25 Technoarts, highlighted the growing relevance of AI in crisis communication and

sentiment analysis. He explained how AI-driven insights can help organisations and media professionals better understand public perception and respond effectively during sensitive situations.

Earlier, in his Welcome Address, Media and Communication Officer, Zakir Nazeer said that AI Impact Summit marked a significant milestone in the global artificial intelligence landscape. He informed that the Summit witnessed extensive participation, with approximately 6 lakh attendees in person and over 9 lakh cumulative views through live virtual streaming. Delegations from more than 100 countries and 20 international organisations participated in the proceedings. The India AI Impact Summit Declaration was endorsed by 92 countries and international organisations, he added. The workshop witnessed participation from more than 40 journalists. The workshop provided practical insights into the responsible and effective use of AI in journalism, including tools for productivity, content generation, data analysis and fact-checking.

Targeting political leaders through violence unacceptable: BJP

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The BJP has strongly condemned the attack on National Conference president and former chief minister Farooq Abdullah, saying "targeting political leaders through violence is unacceptable" and demanded a thorough probe into the incident.

During a meeting of the BJP spokespersons in Jammu and Kashmir;

the leaders discussed the incident and expressed serious concern over the attack, said Advocate Sunil Sethi, a party spokesperson.

Addressing the meeting, Sethi said violence has no place in a democratic society and political differences must be addressed through dialogue and constitutional means.

"The BJP firmly opposes such acts

and reiterates that the party does not support any activity that threatens peace and democratic functioning," he said. He stressed the need to maintain a healthy political environment in Jammu and Kashmir and said targeting political leaders through violence is unacceptable.

"A thorough and transparent probe should be conducted into the incident

so that the circumstances surrounding the attack can be properly examined," he said.

Party spokesperson Tahir Chowdhary said attempts to harm political leaders undermine democracy and create an atmosphere of fear and instability. He lauded the prompt action of security personnel in preventing any loss of life.