

# Bhalla leads PoJK DPs delegation to CM, seeks ST2 Certificates and Rs 30 lakh package

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: JKPCC Working President Raman Bhalla on Tuesday led a delegation of Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK) Displaced Persons (DPs) to meet Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, seeking urgent intervention over the alleged denial of ST2 certificates to displaced members of the Pahari community.

Termining the issue one of "constitutional justice and equal treatment," Bhalla urged the Chief Minister to direct all district administrations to ensure uniform implementation of the Scheduled Tribe notification for the Pahari Ethnic Group (PEG), without discrimination based on present place of residence.

The delegation submitted a memorandum dated



JKPCC Working President Raman Bhalla calling on Chief Minister Omar Abdullah.

March 3, 2026, highlighting grievances of displaced Pahari families from PoJK currently residing in various districts of Jammu Division, particularly Jammu, Samba and others outside Rajouri and

Poonch. They alleged that eligible applicants fulfilling criteria under SO 176 dated March 15, 2024, are facing rejection or non-processing of ST2 applications in districts other than Rajouri and Poonch.

Bhalla asserted that displaced PoJK Pahari families meet all eligibility requirements, including proof of distinct ethnic, cultural and linguistic identity and valid documents certified by competent authorities. However, he claimed they are being denied ST2 status solely due to their current district of residence. "Ethnicity-not geography is the constitutional basis for ST recognition," he said, calling the alleged interpretation discriminatory and unconstitutional.

The delegation cited instances where siblings from the same displaced family have been treated differently-one granted ST2 status in Rajouri or Poonch, while another residing in Jammu has been denied the same. They said such inconsistencies violate the principle of equality and have created resentment among dis-

placed youth.

Bhalla also reiterated the long-pending demand for implementation of the Parliamentary Committee's recommendation of a Rs 30 lakh rehabilitation package for PoJK displaced families, stating that financial compensation and identity recognition must go hand in hand.

The Chief Minister gave a patient hearing and assured that the matter would be examined in accordance with law.

The delegation comprised Amrit Bali (Ex-Sarpanch), Retd Col Ravinder Sharma, Rajinder Singh (Ex-Sarpanch), Gurmeet Singh, Inder Pal Singh, Ankush Raina, Madan Lal Sharma, Romesh Raina, Koushal Kumar Shastri, Babu Ram Sharma, Tushar Sharma, Rohit Khujria and Retd SP Vijay Sharma, among other representatives of the displaced community.

# Yudhvir Sethi launches development works worth Rs 32 lakh in Ward No 5

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: MLA Jammu East Yudhvir Sethi on Tuesday commenced development works worth Rs 32 lakh in various lanes of Ward No. 5, Jammu East, aimed at strengthening basic infrastructure and improving civic amenities for residents.

The works include lane repairs, upgradation of drainage systems, and other essential improvements to enhance living conditions in the locality. The initiative is part of ongoing efforts to ensure sustainable urban development and address long-pending demands of the area.

Speaking on the occasion, Yudhvir Sethi said, "Our commitment is to provide better infrastructure and essential facilities to every household. These works will significantly improve connectivity, sanitation, and overall quality of life for residents of Ward No. 5." He added that development at the grassroots level remains his top priority and assured that similar projects would be



MLA Jammu East Yudhvir Sethi starting development works.

undertaken in other parts of Jammu East.

Sethi expressed special gratitude to Jammu Municipal Corporation officials, including JE Saksham Gupta and AEE Sahil Arora, for their technical support and timely execution of the projects. He emphasized that coordinated efforts between elected representatives and civic bodies are crucial for delivering effective results on the ground.

The programme was attended by East Mandal President Adarsh Jathiar, former

Corporator Gopal Mahajan, Vice President Kuldeep Khandari, Chaman Lal (Shakti Kender), Tajinder Singh, Shashi Pal Sharma, Master Jia Lal, Kanta Devi, Shashi Kumari, Anjad Sheikh, Majid Khan, Puneet Gupta, and other prominent residents.

Local residents welcomed the initiative and appreciated the MLA's efforts in addressing infrastructure concerns. The works are expected to be completed within the stipulated timeframe, ensuring minimal inconvenience to the public.

# District Level Sports Tournament concludes Grah Club beats Bhaiya Club, lifts volleyball trophy



MLA Hiranagar Vijay Kumar Sharma presenting trophy to a winner team.

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

KATHUA: A District Level Sports Tournament organized by Mera Yuva Bharat, Kathua, under the aegis of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, concluded successfully at Hiranagar. The tournament featured six major events, including three competitions for boys and three for girls, drawing enthusiastic participation from over 300 players representing various clubs and institutions across the district.

The closing ceremony, held on Tuesday, was graced by MLA Hiranagar Vijay Kumar Sharma as the Chief Guest. He distributed prizes, trophies and certificates to the winning and runner-up teams, as well

as to individual athletes who secured top positions in different events.

In his address, the MLA congratulated the young sportspersons for their impressive performances and lauded the organizers for conducting a well-coordinated and inspiring tournament.

He highlighted the vital role of sports in fostering discipline, teamwork, leadership and character among youth, and assured full support for future youth-centric initiatives in the Hiranagar constituency.

The highlight of the tournament was the thrilling final volleyball match played between Grah Volleyball Club and Bhaiya Volleyball Club. In

a closely contested encounter, Grah Volleyball Club emerged victorious with a 3-2 win.

Among the special guests present on the occasion were DySP Border Dheeraj Katoch, SHO Hiranagar Amit Sangra, and Kamal Sharma, President of the Volleyball Association Kathua and Joint Secretary of the J&K Volleyball Association. They appreciated the participants and encouraged them to continue pursuing sports with dedication.

Refreshments were served to all participants, and the event concluded with a formal vote of thanks, motivating youth to actively engage in sports and community development activities.

# IIM Jammu hosts DST iTBI Ignition Fest 2026; offers grant support up to Rs 50 Lakh to high-potential startups

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: The Indian Institute of Management Jammu hosted the DST iTBI Ignition Fest 2026, organized under the aegis of the DST iTBI at IIM Jammu, reinforcing its stature as a premier national-level startup pitching and grant evaluation platform. The event brought together promising innovators from across the country to present research-driven and scalable ventures before an eminent Governing Board comprising senior representatives from the Government of India, national research institutions, banking leadership, intellectual property experts, and industry bodies. Following a rigorous multi-stage screening process, 18 high-potential startups were shortlisted to pitch for the prestigious DST iTBI Ignition Grant, which offers grant support of up to Rs 50 lakh to selected incubatees. The shortlisted ventures demonstrated strong technological depth, commercialization readiness, scal-



IIM Jammu faculty with others at DST iTBI Ignition Fest 2026.

ability potential, and measurable societal impact.

The pitching sessions reflected the growing maturity of India's innovation ecosystem, showcasing solutions across deep technology, biotechnology, artificial intelligence, healthcare innovation, sustainability-driven enterprises, and technology-enabled social impact models. Each startup was evaluated on clearly defined parameters, including innovation quotient, intellectual property strength, market validation, financial sustainability, scalability, and alignment with national development priorities.

The evaluation was conducted under the guidance

of the DST iTBI IIM Jammu Governing Board, chaired by Prof. B. S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu. Prof. Jabir Ali, Dean of Faculty and Research at IIM Jammu, also graced the Governing Body meeting of DST iTBI IIM Jammu following the selection rounds.

The Board comprised Dr. Anil Wali, CEO, BITS BioCyTiH Foundation; Dr. Muqbil Burhan, Principal Investigator & Chairperson, Centre for Entrepreneurship Innovation & Skill Development, IIM Jammu; Shardul Rao, Scientist, Department of Science and Technology, Government of India; Dr. Saurabh Saran,

Principal Investigator, CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine - IIM Technology Business Incubator; Dr. Reema Mediratta, Scientist, Indian Council of Medical Research; Nidhi Jamwal, Assistant General Manager & Cluster Head, Jammu & Kashmir Bank; Rakesh Wazir, Chairman, PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Jammu Region Chapter); and Dr. Vivek Sharma, Chief Innovation Officer, IIM Jammu.

The presence of a nationally constituted selection body ensured transparency, accountability, and adherence to established innovation and commercialization benchmarks

throughout the evaluation process. The selectors emphasized that structured incubation support, early-stage grant assistance, and domain-specific mentoring at DST iTBI IIM Jammu will significantly accelerate the transformation of research-led ideas into scalable enterprises.

The Ignition Fest served not only as a competitive evaluation platform but also as a strategic mentoring forum, providing founders with constructive feedback to refine their business models and strengthen market-entry strategies.

The successful conclusion of DST iTBI Ignition Fest 2026 marks another milestone in strengthening the innovation pipeline and promoting technology-driven entrepreneurship. Through sustained institutional support and strategic ecosystem engagement, IIM Jammu continues to contribute meaningfully to India's expanding startup landscape and the vision of building a self-reliant, innovation-driven nation.

# Vibrant festive campaign "Real wale rang sab pe chadh jaaye" launched

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: Dabur India Limited, the leader in the packaged fruit juice category, announced the launch of its vibrant festive campaign, "Real wale rang sab pe chadh jaaye." Positioning Réal Fruit Power as the ultimate hydration and energy companion, the campaign celebrates the uninhibited, raw joy of India's most colorful festival. The "Real wale rang sab pe chadh jaaye" initiative encourages people to shed their inhibitions and embrace the "Rangbaaz" spirit-playing with their whole hearts while staying fueled by the natural goodness of fruit nutrition. At the heart of the campaign is a high-energy musical film that captures the soul of a modern Indian Holi: a seamless blend of tradition, spontaneous dance, and the authentic bonds of friendship. "Holi is more than just colors; it's an explosion of energy and emotions. With 'Real wale rang sab pe chadh jaaye,' we want to remind our consumers that the best way

to enjoy the festival is to be your authentic self. Réal Fruit Power provides the essential nutrition and hydration needed to keep that energy high, from the first splash of color to the last dance beat." Mayank Kumar, Vice President -Marketing, Dabur India Ltd. said. The campaign moves beyond the curated "Instagrammable" moments to celebrate the beautiful mess of the festival. As families gear up for large-scale celebrations, Dabur Réal's range of fruit juices serves as the perfect host for guests and a constant source of refreshment for revelers. "Our campaign film captures the essence of a 'No Filter' Holi. We believe that when you are fueled by the goodness of fruit, you have the stamina to go 'full-on-rangbaaz.' We are proud to be the trusted partner for millions of Indian households, ensuring that their festive spirit remains undiluted and their health remains a priority." Monisha Prasher, G.M. Marketing - Foods, Dabur India Ltd said.

# DHJ reviews horticulture dev initiatives in Marh Block

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: Director Horticulture Jammu (DHJ) Gul Syed on Tuesday conducted an extensive tour of Marh Block to review the progress of the horticulture development initiatives being implemented in the area.

He was accompanied by the Chief Horticulture Officer R.K. Kotwal and

field functionaries of the department. The Director inspected the Revised Modified High Density Plantation (RMHDP) created by beneficiary Pooja Suri through an empanelled agency. He reviewed the plantation layout, plant health, irrigation facilities and overall orchard management practices.

The Director also planted

a sapling in the orchard premises, symbolizing the Department's commitment towards promoting sustainable horticulture and encouraging plantation drives across the region.

Later, he visited mango and dragon fruit orchards in the area and interacted with the growers. He emphasized the adoption of scientific orchard management practices, proper

nutrient management and integrated pest management to enhance productivity and ensure better returns for farmers.

Gul Syed appreciated the efforts of the beneficiaries and motivated other farmers of Marh Block to avail benefits under various government schemes being implemented by the Department of Horticulture.

# JU hosts consultation on reservation policies under RUSA 2.0

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: A Stakeholder Consultation Conference under RUSA 2.0 (Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan) was held at the University of Jammu to review the implementation and community perceptions of reservation policies in public universities of Jammu & Kashmir.

The conference was convened by Prof. Manju Jamwal, Head & Dean, Department of Law, along with Dr. Vijay Saigal, Principal Investigator and Co-convenor. Prof. S.K. Sharma,



Dignitaries at a programme at JU.

Former State Information Commissioner and Former Dean, Department of Law, attended as Chief Guest and

stressed the importance of constitutional values, transparency, and accountability in implementing reservation policies. Prof. Santinder Kumar, Director, Centre for Inclusion & Exclusion, was the Guest of Honour, while the second technical session was graced by Prof. S.K. Pandita, Director, MMTCC.

The sessions were moderated by Dr. Kartika Bakshi and Dr. Nitan Sharma, Assistant Professors at The Law School. Several scholars and practitioners, including Dr. Monika

Bhardwaj, Dr. Neetu Kumari, Dr. Swati Sharma, Advocate Uma Kapahi, Advocate Sugandh Gandotra, Dr. Bhagwati, Avinash Choudhary, and Ms. Deepika, presented papers highlighting practical challenges and community views regarding reservation policies.

The conference concluded with a shared understanding of the need for continued dialogue and careful evaluation to ensure inclusive and transparent policy implementation in higher education.

# Shaurya Int'l celebrates Annual and Graduation Day



**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: Shaurya International School celebrated its Annual and Graduation Day 2025 with enthusiasm under the theme "Oorja: Sowing Tomorrow."

The grand event reflected the institution's commitment to nurturing young minds and fostering holistic development.

The Chief Guest on the occasion was Harvinder Singh, Director of Employment, Jammu and Kashmir. He was joined by Harinder Mahajan, Chairman of Shaurya Educational Society; Sahil Mahajan, Vice-Chairman; along with other esteemed trustees and dignitaries. The school Principal, Swati Kapoor, also graced the

occasion. The celebration commenced with the ceremonial lighting of the traditional lamp by the Chief Guest, accompanied by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, marking an auspicious beginning. Junior House Captain Shivanya Bhagat delivered the Welcome Speech, warmly greeting the gathering. In her address, Principal Dr. Swati Kapoor highlighted the school's achievements and reiterated the importance of academic excellence blended with character-building and creativity. A vibrant cultural programme formed the highlight of the event. Students from Nursery to Class III captivated the audience with energetic dance per-

formances and a lively school band presentation. The Graduation Ceremony for UKG students was an emotional and proud moment, as young graduates received their awards amid applause from parents and teachers.

Addressing the gathering, Harvinder Singh lauded the students' confidence and encouraged them to dream big and grow into responsible citizens. Chairman Harinder Mahajan expressed pride in the students' talents, while Vice-Chairman Sahil Mahajan emphasized the importance of collaboration between parents, teachers, and students.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by Junior Head Girl Aanya Bhagat.

# Nukkad Natak promotes "Hearing Care for All Children"

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: The World Hearing Day was observed on Tuesday by the Health Department in collaboration with the Department of Information & Public Relations (DIPR). A Nukkad Natak was presented at Government Hospital Gandhi Nagar to spread awareness on this year's theme: "Communities to Classrooms - Hearing Care for All Children." The programme focused on educating people about the common symptoms of hearing loss and ear diseases among



children, along with the crucial steps required to detect hearing impairment early-before it affects a child's cognition, speech and language develop-

ment. The Nukkad Natak by artists of the Cultural Unit effectively conveyed the message in an engaging and impactful manner; drawing the

attention of patients, attendants, medical staff and visitors at the hospital. The programme was conducted under the direction of Joint Director

Information, Deepak Dubey and under the supervision of Cultural Officer, Mohit Sharma. The event was attended by Director Health, Dr. Abdul Hamid Zargar; Medical Superintendent Dr. Narinder Bhatiyal; senior officers from the Health Department and Nodal Officer national programme for prevention & control of deafness Dr. Mridula Singh. A large number of people and medical interns were also present on the occasion and participated in the awareness interactions.