CEC reviews arrangements for upcoming visit of Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang Rinpoche

STATE TIMES NEWS

LEH: The Chairman/CEC, LAHDC Leh convened a meeting at the Council Secretariat to review the preparations for the proposed visit of His Holiness the 37th Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang Thinley Lhundup , Green Ambassador of the Union Territory of Ladakh.

The meeting was chaired to oversee and coordinate all necessary arrangements required to ensure a smooth and suc cessful visit of His Holiness.

The visit, which is expected to witness large gatherings, includes significant stopovers and short visits across various locations including Phyang, Lingshed, Durbuk. Shachukul, Chushul, Skindiang, Kargyam Satho, Bodhkharbu, Humla and others. The Chairman stressed on timely execution of all required works, with special focus on road connectivity, cleanliness and infrastructure readiness, particularly at Singay-la and Tulchung. As

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Scrutinizing

Committee for the upcoming

elections of the Chamber of

Commerce & Industry (CCI)

Jammu held a meeting at the

Chamber House on Sunday,

under the leadership of Shiv

Partap Gupta, Election

The committee also included

members Manmohan Singh,

Vijay Gupta, and Kulbhushan

Gupta (Manu). The meeting

focused on reviewing and veri-

fying the nomination papers

submitted by candidates con-

testing for various posts of

After a thorough and detailed

scrutiny, the committee found

that all nomination papers

were in order, confirming the

eligibility of the candidates to

contest the elections scheduled

for Sunday, 11th May 2025, at

the Chamber House, Jammu.

For the prestigious post of

President, two strong con-

President.

Office Bearers.



part of the preparations, it was informed that a Jio network engineer along with the Jio Telecom team will visit Sumpata Gongma, Kungyam, Lingshed and Spangmik to assess the existing BSNL network conditions.

Divisional Sub The Magistrate and the concerned Block Development Officer will also conduct visits to these areas to oversee the work and coordinate nec-

tenders-Arun Gupta and

Rakesh Gupta (Giga)-have

filed their nominations. In the

race for Senior Vice President,

Anil Gupta and Deepak

The post of Junior Vice

President will see a contest

between Rajiv Gupta (Kaka)

and Sunil Gupta (Kodha),

while for the role of Secretary

General, Manish Gupta and

Rahul Mahajan are the nomi-

For the position of Secretary,

the candidates include Ashu

Gupta and Rajesh Gupta

(Rinku). Meanwhile, the con-

test for Treasurer will be

among Manik Gupta, Rajesh

Gupta (Raju), and Rajeev

All contesting candidates

were handed a copy of the Code

of Conduct for election cam-

paigning and were urged to

strictly adhere to its provisions

to ensure a fair and dignified

Horticulture and Livestock

Farming (NGA-25)" organized

by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

University of Agriculture &

Technology (SVPUAT) &

SIDAVES at Modipuram,

Meerut. SIDAVES is a regis-

tered professional society/scien-

tific organization, encompass-

ing diverse areas of socio-eco-

nomic growth of human society

through excellence in science,

academics and ecological devel-

opment with its core contention

of Vasudhaiya Kutumbakam

Parma Sukham i.e., the whole

world is one family and SIDAV-

ES strives for its sustainable

SIDAVES with its tech-

nocrats and applied knowledge

development.

nated candidates.

Langer.

Aggarwal are in the fray.

Nomination process concluded for CCI Jammu

Elections 2025; 13 candidates in fray

that this visit holds deep spiritual and cultural value for the people of Ladakh and called upon all departments and stakeholders to work in close coordination to ensure the success of the event.

The meeting was attended by the Nominated Councillor Konchok Tsepal, Superintending Engineer PWD Circle Leh, Commander 13 Task Force, Sub Divisional Magistrate Khaltsi, Executive Distribution Division Leh. Executive Engineer Public Health Engineering Division Leh, Executive Engineer R&B Khaltsi, Block Development Officer Khaltsi/Singay-Lalok, and officials from Jio Telecom Leh. Among the stakeholders were Lama Utchos/Lopon from Phyang, Lamayuru, Shachukul and Lingshed Monastery; Numbardar Lingshed, Yulchung and Photoksar, and other important delegates from BJP

Dr. Narinder demands ST-II status for PoJK refugees settled in Jammu

to exclude them from the

ST category solely based

on their current place of

residence," Dr. Singh said.

As Pahari-speaking people,

their historical and linguis-

tic roots make them equal-

ly eligible for the benefits

extended to the Pahadi

Referring to a response

received in the J&K

Assembly, Dr. Singh noted

that the government had

clearly stated that area is

not a criterion for granting

ST-II status based on

Pahari ethnicity. Despite

Department refuses to

Kashmiri Pandit community.

ernment's uncertain intent.

sincere and sustained effort.

Revenue

KPS welcomes Dr. Farooq Abdullah's statement,

urges concrete action for return, rehabilitation

JAMMU: The Kashmiri Pandit Sabha (KPS) has welcomed

the recent statement made by National Conference

President Dr. Farooq Abdullah, urging the Omar Abdullah-

led Union Territory (UT) government to work collaborative-

ly with the people of Kashmir to create a peaceful and con-

ducive environment for the return of the displaced

Dr. Farooq Abdullah emphasized that the return of the

Pandit community, which was driven out of the valley dur-

ing the late 1980s and early 1990s due to fear and threats,

must be rooted in ground-level efforts rather than rhetori-

cal assurances. He stressed the need for practical measures

that ensure the dignity, security, and holistic resettlement

The Sabha, in response, expressed cautious optimism,

acknowledging Dr. Farooq Abdullah as a towering figure in

the political landscape of Jammu and Kashmir. They noted

that his words inspire hope, but stressed that such senti-

ments must now be translated into real, visible action on the

Pointing out that six months have already passed since the

Omar Abdullah-led NC government assumed power, the

Sabha expressed concern over the lack of any concrete ini-

tiative regarding return and rehabilitation. Notably, no

funds were earmarked in the current state budget for this

purpose-a detail the Sabha views as indicative of the gov-

The Sabha also responded critically to Dr. Abdullah's call

for Pakistan to cease its interference. While acknowledging

the geopolitical reality, the KPS urged the government not

to hyphenate the return of Kashmiri Pandits with

Pakistan's actions. They insisted that the task must move

forward despite adversarial forces, and that responsibility

lies primarily with the state government to chart a roadmap

The KPS also thanked Dr. Farooq Abdullah for recogniz-

ing an observation published in the Daily Excelsior (April

8), which stated that both the government and the commu-

nity must work together to restore Kashmir's lost syncretic

While welcoming the spirit of Dr. Abdullah's remarks, the

that decades of delay have led to deep mistrust. They hope

that this time, the pledge to restore the aboriginal Kashmiri

Pandit community to its rightful place will not remain yet

another unfulfilled promise, but mark the beginning of a

Sabha urged for determined and committed steps

for return that is practical, inclusive, and long overdue.

of the community in their ancestral homeland.

JAMMU: Dr. Narinder Singh, BJP National Secretary and Member of Legislative Assembly from RS Pura-Jammu South, has strongly advocated for granting Scheduled Tribe (ST-II) status to the refugees from Pakistanoccupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK) who are settled in the Jammu region.

Speaking on the matter, Dr. Singh highlighted the discriminatory treatment faced by the PoJK displaced community, stating that while those residing in Rajouri and Poonch have been granted ST-II status under the Pahari ethnic group, their relatives settled in Jammu continue to be denied the same recog-

"All PoJK refugees are Pahari-speaking and share the same ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds as those in Rajouri and Poonch. It is

tificates to the eligible PoJK displaced persons living in Jammu. Dr. Singh said that all the

PoJK refugees are Paharispeaking, and the community should be treated on par with ethnic Pahari tribe. He criticized the selective granting of ST status, which is currently limited to displaced persons from the Rajouri-Poonch region, as discriminatory and unjust. He said that the displaced community, whose roots trace back to the partition of 1947, has immense hardships since their forced migration.

"This deliberate neglect adds to their historic neglect after the tragic displacement triggered by deadly violence, which adds insults to their wounds",

said Dr. Narinder Singh. He called upon the government to immediately extend the ST-II status to all PoJK refugees, regardless of their current place of settlement, and emphasized the need for policies that focus on inclusive justice and socio-economic development of all deprived sections of society.

Sat, Koul expresses grief over Ramban **Cloudburst tragedy**

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Bharativa Janata Party (BJP), Jammu expressed profound grief over the loss of lives and damage due to the devastating cloudburst at Seri Bagna area of Ramban district in Jammu and Kashmir, resulting in the tragic loss of precious lives.

Sat Sharma, President, J&K BJP, said that the incident also caused extensive damage to property and led to the closure of the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway due to landslides and flash floods. He said that the BJP extends heartfelt condolences to the affected families and emphasized the need for immediate relief and rehabilitation efforts

"The news of the natural disaster caused by cloudburst and landslide in Ramban is extremely sad. My condolences are with all the affected families in this difficult time. May God give everyone the strength to overcome

this crisis", Sharma said. Ashok Koul, General Secretary (organization), J&K BJP, assured the affected people that the whole BJP family stands with them. He further said that the BJP activists will assist with the other relief agencies and local administration to extend all possible help to the affected families.

"I extend my heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and pray for speedy recovery of those injured", said Ashok Koul.

Vivek Bali demands urgent government relief for apple growers affected by hailstorm in South Kashmir

STATE TIMES NEWS JAMMU: Prominent politi-

cal leader Vivek Bali todav expressed deep concern over the severe damage caused to apple orchards in South Kashmir by a sudden and destructive hailstorm. The untimely calamity has badly affected crops in their early growth stage, leaving hundreds of fruit growers devastated. Vivek Bali, who has been consistently advocating for the welfare of farmers and horticulturists in the region, has urged the government to immediately dispatch assessment teams to the affected areas announce a comprehensive relief package.

the pride of South Kashmir's economy. This hailstorm has not only destroyed their crops but also shattered the hopes of thousands of families who depend on horticulture for their livelihood," Bali said. 'The government must intervene without delay to assess the losses and compensate farmers adequate-He further appealed to

"Our apple growers are

Horticulture $_{
m the}$ Department and the local administration to remain proactive and extend every possible help, including technical and financial support, to the affected farmers. Bali assured the farming community that he will personally continue to raise their demands at every platform until appropriate action is taken.

Kashmir should know that we stand with them in this hour of distress. I will leave no stone unturned to ensure their voices are heard and their losses are addressed," Vivek Bali added.

"The people of South

Dy CM visits cloud burst affected areas of Ramban; assures Govt's support to affected families



DyCM Surinder Kumar Choudhary interacting with locals at Ramban.

STATE TIMES NEWS

RAMBAN: Terming death of three persons in a cloud burst in Ramban district as unfortunate, Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Kumar Choudhary said that the government shares the grief of bereaved families and would provide them all possible support.

Deputy Chief Minister said this during his visit to cloud burst

affected areas in Ramban due to which vehicular movement on National

Highway has been stopped. Reaffirming government's seriousness towards providing relief to affected families, he took detailed assessment of the affected areas and interacted with

Deputy Chief Minister said that massive landslides triggered by continuous rainfall has severely impacted a section of the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway in Ramban district, bringing traffic to a complete stand-

He directed authorities to indulge in restoration and relief works to expedite their efforts and work main source of connectivity and concerned agencies should are working hard to restore the connectivity.

Meanwhile, the Deputy unnecessary movement and

round the clock to clear the debris and restore connectivity. He said that Jammu Kashmir highway is the

Chief Minister also advised the travellers to avoid stay updated through official channels about the weather forecast and high-

Dr. Vikas conferred SIDAVES Fellow Award 2025



Dr. Vikas Sharma receiving award.

STATE TIMES NEWS JAMMU: Dr. Vikas Sharma, son of Harbans Lal Sharma and Pushplata Sharma, resident of Channi Himmat, Jammu got prestigious Fellow Award 2025 of Society for Integrated Development of Agriculture, Veterinary and Ecological Sciences (SIDAV-ES) for his significant professional contributions of research/academics in the field of Biochemistry.

The Fellow Award conferred upon to Dr. Vikas by Padma Shri Dr. Vijaipal Singh, a renowned Plant Breeder of India at 3rd Annual Convention and National Symposium on "Next Generation Agriculture, bank is highly competitive body to address the arising problems of food security, hunger, malnutrition, unemployment, gender inequality and social unjust across regions of the world.

Dr. Vikas Sharma also delivered a lead lecture via power point presentation in the National Symposium Jammu where he highlighted about the use of minor fruits from the Kandi belt of Jammu region in the management of cancer:

He informed that we are in emergent need of drugs that are less toxic, endowed with fewer side effects and more potent in their mechanism of action to treat cancer cells.

Working as a Professor in the Division of Biochemistry, Faculty of Basic Sciences, SKUAST-Jammu, Dr. Sharma has guided 10 Ph.D and 07 MSc. students as a Major Advisor, he has published 80 full length research papers in refereed journals of National and International repute and got many prestigious awards from various Govt. Organizations for his contributions in bioprospection of medicinal plants.

Flash floods in Ramban: Volunteers defied fear to reach out to victims

BJP delegation calls on CEC, LAHDC Leh



BJP delegation calling on Chairman/CEC, LAHDC Leh, Adv. Tashi Gyalson.

STATE TIMES NEWS

LEH: A delegation comprising BJPPhyang President Tsewang Thinles and Vice President Tsering Nurboo, Former Mandal President Phyang Sonam Dorjey, Kisan Morcha General Secretary, and executive members from Saboo calledChairman/CEC, LAHDC Leh, Adv.

Tashi Gyalson to raise infrastructure concerns in

The delegation urged the CEC to intervene for early resumption of the ongoing PMGSY road construction work in Saboo.

They also pressed for immediate steps to improve mobile network connectivity in the Saboo Phoo area by facilitating for early installation of mobile tower.

The CEC assured the delegation of full support and said necessary steps would be taken to address

Mahant Lucky Baba organizes 28th Annual Vishal Bhandara at Vaishno Mata Mandir



Mahant Shri Lucky Baba serving Langar.

STATE TIMES NEWS

RAMBAN: Amid frightening thunderstorm and cloudbursts, hundreds of village volunteers were the first respondents to reach out to the victims of flash floods and landslide that struck several villages in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district early Sunday, leaving two minor brothers and an elderly man

Dozens of houses and a stretch of Jammu-Srinagar National Highway near Panthiyal were damaged, while a number of villages were inaccessible, cutting off from the district headquarters.

Deputy Commissioner Baseer-ul-Haq Chaudhary is closely monitoring the ongoing operations in the affected areas, where educational institutions will remain closed on Monday.

"I have never seen such a weather condition in my entire life. I was woken up by the deafening sound of the cloudburst at around 4.30 am and within no time heard cries for help," Mohammad Hafiz, $\,$

a Seri Bagna village resident, told PTI. Seri Bagna village was hit by flash floods that claimed lives of three people -

- Aqib Ahmad (12), his brother Mohd Saqib (10) and their neighbour Muni Ram (65).

"We managed to pull out the two brothers after a portion of their house collapsed due to the flash floods but both of them had dead." Hafiz said, adding that the volunteers defied their fear and continued the rescue operation despite

Former Sarpanch Teerath Singh said all the villagers continued their efforts and were hopeful of pulling out Muni Ram, who was alive and stuck under the debris. However, the elderly man could not be saved.

"It was a frightening scene as dark clouds were hovering overhead with heavy rains continuing. We lost three precious lives and many houses were

damaged." he said. The scene was no different in Dharam Kund village where police promptly acted and rescued over 100 villagers,

including women and children. "It was around 5.30 am when the local stream started overflowing after many deafening sounds of cloudbursts," said

Asgar Ali, one of the villagers who lost his house as he praised police's prompt

Ranjit Singh, Ali's neighbour and another victim of the flash floods, said his family of three had a narrow escape and they could not retrieve a single item from the house.

A number of cars were also washed away, he said. The villagers have been given shelter at

the government middle school with the

administration providing necessary support including ration. Around the same time, Sundari Mohalla and Bowhi Bazar areas were

struck by flash floods, dumping muck inside the homes and shops and hotels. "Ramban is devastated by this calamity," Jugal Kishore Chib said, hoping to

cope up with the situation. The weather department has predicted improvement in the weather from Monday, after two days of widespread rains in the plains and snowfall in high-

Ramban District Administration has launched an extensive rescue and relief operation amidst devastating rains and flash floods that affected several parts of the district.

Accompanied by Ramban Senior Superintendent of Police Kulbir Singh and other senior officers, Deputy Commissioner Chaudhary reviewed the ground situation and coordinated with the specialised teams engaged in relief

Teams from the police, SDRF, civil volunteers, Army and other stakeholder departments and agencies, besides volunteers from the local NGOs are actively engaged in rescue and restoration operations across the affected areas, an

"The administration is implementing government directives with utmost urgency to intensify rescue operations and ensure the safety and welfare of the affected people," DC Chaudhary said.

He appreciated the public response in adhering to advisories issued through social media and other communication channels, noting that people's alertness played a vital role in minimizing the loss of lives during the calamity.

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The air was filled with devotion and divine energy as the 28th Annual Vishal Bhandara was grandly organized by Mahant Shri Lucky Baba at the sacred Vaishno Mata Mandir, Bhagwati Nagar, Jammu. The event commenced with a spiritual Langar on Sunday, beginning at 2:00 PM, drawing thousands of devotees from across the region.

Continuing the divine fervour, a grand Jagran is scheduled for April 21, starting from 9:00 PM onwards, where Bhakti (devotion) will echo through the night in praise of Maa Vaishno Devi. The temple premises are being adorned to welcome an estimated gathering of over 1,000 devotees, all uniting in a celebration of faith, music, and spiritual

upliftment.

The event is set to be graced by several VIP guests, further adding to the occasion's significance. Mahant Shri Lucky Baba, known for his deep spiritual insight and selfless service, expressed his heartfelt welcome to all devotees and spiritual seekers, inviting them to be

The management has made meticulous arrangements to ensure the comfort and safety of all attendees. Media representatives are also warmly invited to cover the event and share the spirit of devotion with the wider community.

part of this divine celebra-

With the divine blessings of Mata Rani, the event promises to be a soulful experience-uniting hearts, invoking peace, spreading spiritual light.