

Jal Shakti employees demand pending wages, regularization, implementation of Minimum Wages Act

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
UDHAMPUR: The Jal Shakti PHE Employees and Workers Association held its monthly executive body meeting at the PHE Complex Udhampur, under the chairmanship of Som Nath, District President & Senior Trade Union Leader (Jammu Province). The meeting focused on key issues affecting daily wagers, including the release of pending wages, implementation of the Minimum Wages Act, and acute staff shortages.

Addressing the gathering, Som Nath stressed the need for the government to immediately release pending wages and implement the Minimum Wages Act in Leh UT. He emphasized that these crucial demands must be discussed during the

upcoming Assembly Session from April 7-9. He warned that if the government fails to address these long-standing concerns, the daily wagers will be forced to resume their agitation.

The Jal Shakti Minister, Javed Rana, assured the media that the government is aware of the workers' plight and will take necessary steps to resolve their genuine demands as soon as possible.

One of the primary concerns raised during the meeting was the regularization of daily wagers. The association demanded that CP, ITI, and Land Case Workers who have completed seven years of service be regularized under SRO-64 without any further delay. It was also stressed that all pending documentation

should be completed to ensure timely wage disbursement in the future.

The meeting also highlighted the issue of pending wages, as workers have not received their salaries for 65-70 months (2014-2020). The association demanded that these long-overdue wages be released with interest, including dues for retired employees who have served 25-28 years in the department.

Another major demand was the implementation of the Minimum Wages Act. The association pointed out that while Leh UT has enhanced daily wage rates, the Lieutenant Governor of J&K has yet to take similar action. Currently, daily workers in Jammu are paid a mere ₹311 per day, one of the lowest rates in the entire

country. The association urged the government to align wage rates with those of Delhi UT to ensure fair compensation for workers.

A significant issue discussed was the acute shortage of staff in the department. Thousands of workers are needed to maintain newly commissioned water supply schemes, yet no provision has been made for their recruitment. Many schemes are now non-functional due to staff shortages, and daily wagers are being overburdened with additional work without proper wages. The association made it clear that no worker should be forced to take on the duties of retired employees or new projects without proper staffing and compensation.

Additionally, the association demanded that the

pending 2% DA (Dearness Allowance) be released immediately for UT employees, as the Central Government has already approved it.

Som Nath appealed to the government to take immediate action and end the delaying tactics that have caused extreme hardship for daily wagers. He urged authorities to fulfill these long-overdue demands and ensure that workers receive the rights and benefits they deserve.

The meeting was attended by several senior leaders, including Vijay Kumar Sharma, Suraj Parkash, Dinesh Kesar, Sham Singh, Karan Singh, Rattan Lal, Mohan Singh, Janit Ali, Puran Chand, Prabu Lal, and Shanker Dass, who all supported the demands put forth by the association.

Mohan Lal releases water in new Pratap Canal ahead of schedule to benefit farmers



MLA Akhnoor, Mohan Lal Bhagat releasing water in New Pratap Canal on Wednesday.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
AKHNOOR: MLA Akhnoor, Mohan Lal Bhagat, on Wednesday released water in the New Pratap Canal (NPC) from the Head Works Site in Akhnoor. The initiative ensures that farmers will receive ample irrigation water for the upcoming Kharif season. The event was attended by I/C Xen Rajesh Gupta, AEE Mohit Bharti, AEE Sunil Sharma and other officials.

Speaking on the occasion, the MLA stated that the canal had been reopened after the completion of essential de-silting and modernization works. Annually, the canal remains closed for two months for de-silting and renovation to enhance its water-carrying capacity and ensure water reaches villages at the tail end. The modernization of the New Pratap Canal worth Rs 28 Crore is being carried out in a phased manner. The works of Phase One were completed this year. The canal was closed on

January 10 and has now been reopened on April 2, ten days earlier than usual, to address the needs of farmers.

The New Pratap Canal, originating from the right bank of the Chenab River, spans 33.69 km with a discharge capacity of 438 cusecs, irrigating 9,069 hectares. Its 157 km long distribution system caters to the irrigation needs of agricultural fields in Akhnoor and Chhamb. The canal serves 96 villages and benefits lakhs of people.

Mohan Lal reaffirmed his commitment to the overall development of his constituency. He emphasized that a major portion of Akhnoor consists of agricultural land, and he is dedicated to ensuring all necessary facilities for the farming community. Furthermore, for the areas still lacking proper irrigation facilities, he is making concerted efforts to get the Kandi Canal project sanctioned to extend irrigation benefits to every corner of the constituency.

GDC Marheen in collaboration with IBT organises expert lecture



Resource person delivering lecture.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
MARHEEN: The Career Counseling Cell of Government Degree College (GDC) Marheen in collaboration with IBT organized an expert lecture that aimed at guiding students of the 6th semesters in exploring various courses provided by IBT for different career options.

The primary objective of this lecture was to aware the students about different courses under IBT for respective careers like SSC, SSB, CGL CHSL etc.

The seminar reached its peak during the dynamic Questions & Answers segment, where students eagerly engaged with the speaker. Several thought-provoking questions were posed, focusing on the current job market and career growth.

The speaker responded with personalized, actionable advice, addressing the concerns of each student while providing guidance for managing these transitions successfully. His responses not only clarified students' doubts but also empowered them to take proactive steps towards shaping their future careers. The event was managed by Dr Balbinder Singh (Convener, Career Counseling Cell), Prof. Anoop Sharma, Dr. Munisha Devi and Prof Manu Saini (Member, Career Counseling Cell). The other faculty members who were present during the program were Prof. Sandeep Chaudhary, Prof. Meenu and Prof. Naresh Kumar.

DDC inspects upcoming road, bridge, other projects in Block NSSB-Poonch

Participates in Greha Pravesh ceremony of PMAY- G Beneficiary

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
POONCH: District Development Commissioner (DDC) Vikas Kundal conducted a comprehensive inspection of ongoing road connectivity and other projects in Block Nangali Sahib-Sain Baba (NSSB), here on Wednesday.

The DDC inspected the progress of work on New Drungali Nala Bridge on NH144A, renovation of Old Drungali Nala Bridge and the Chandak to Dahlan PMGSY road.



DDC Vikas Kundal inspecting progress of dev works.

The Officer Commanding GREP Ashish Ranjan provided a detailed briefing on the status of work on the twin bridges. The DDC emphasized on expediting the pace of work on the projects to ensure timely completion.

He specifically directed the OC GREP to prioritize the restoration of the Old Drungali Nala Bridge, while also urging the construction team to accelerate the work on the New Drungali Nala Bridge on NH144A.

In addition, the Deputy Commissioner instructed the concerned executive engi-

neers of PMGSY to up-grade drainage system from the Main Chowk to Nangali Sahib and to address road maintenance by filling pot-holes.

Later, the DDC inspected the newly constructed Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) - Grameen Houses in village Kankote and participated in the Greha Pravesh ceremony of beneficiary Tariq Hussain. He lauded the beneficiaries for effectively utilizing government support and expressed his satisfaction with the scheme's impactful grassroots outcomes.

Earlier, the DDC inspect-

ed the Panchayat Ghar and Common Service Centre (CSC) in the village. He directed the concerned officials to expedite the recruitment of the operator for the CSC and ensure its functionality, thereby enhancing the delivery of essential services to the local community.

Accompanying the Deputy Commissioner were the Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Block Development Officer NSSB, and other relevant officials, emphasizing a coordinated effort to improve local governance and community welfare.

Poonch Admn accords farewell to outgoing ACR Qadeer Ul Rehman



ACR Qadeer Ul Rehman being given farewell.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
POONCH: The District Administration Poonch organized an farewell party on Wednesday at the conference hall of the DC office Poonch, honouring the outgoing Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Qadeer Ul Rehman.

The event saw the presence of Additional Deputy Commissioner, Tahir Mustafa Malik, Assistant Commissioner Development, Shafiq Mir, Tehsildar, Ashfaq Hussain, District Informatic Officer NIC, Parvinder Singh, Tehsildars and all staff members of the DC Office Poonch, making it a well-attended gathering.

Various speakers took the stage to highlight the significant achievements of Qadeer Ul Rehman during his tenure.

Deputy Commissioner, Vikas Kundal extending best wishes for his future endeavors. Many appreciat-

ed his commendable efforts as Returning Officer during the recent elections, underscoring his dedication and commitment to the district.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Poonch, Tahir Mustafa Malik, specifically recognized the hard work and dedication of ACR Rehman, emphasizing the positive impact he made while serving the community.

In his farewell speech, the outgoing ACR, Qadeer Ul Rehman Sagar, expressed his gratitude for the sup-

port and collaboration he received from the district administration, officers, and staff members throughout his tenure. He described the farewell event as "impressive" and thanked everyone for their warm wishes.

At the conclusion of the event, heartfelt felicitation gifts were presented to Qadeer Ul Rehman, commemorating his years of service and contributions to the District Administration Poonch.

Road checking drive conducted on Thanamandi-Berote NH

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
RAJOURI: On the directions of the Transport Commissioner Visheshpaul Mahajan, and Deputy Commissioner Rajouri Abhishek Sharma, a comprehensive road checking drive was conducted on Wednesday by the ARTO Rajouri Rajesh Gupta, at Thanamandi-Berote road.



The road checking aimed to reinforce compliance with traffic regulations and ensure road safety.

A total of 170 vehicles were checked during the drive, and 27 were issued E-challans for violation of the Motor Vehicles Act and

the Rules framed thereunder. The amount expected to be collected from these E-challaned vehicles is Rs. 67,000 (Sixty-Seven Thousand Rupees).

Additionally, 8 vehicles were seized for serious violations, as per the relevant

provisions of the law.

This initiative is part of the ongoing efforts by the district administration to improve road safety, enforce traffic discipline and ensure smooth movement of traffic in the region.

DC presides over Weekly Block Diwas programme at Battal Ballian-Udhampur

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
UDHAMPUR: Deputy Commissioner Saloni Rai on Wednesday visited Panchayat Battal Ballian and interacted with the local residents at the weekly Block Diwas program.



DC Saloni Rai speaking at a public Darbar in Battal Ballian.

The DC patiently listened to numerous public grievances and developmental demands raised by the local people.

The event was attended by DDC Member Udhampur-1 Puran Chand; Additional District Development Commissioner, Rajinder Singh; Programme Officer Poshan Subash Dogra; General Manager District Industries Centre Kishore Singh Katoch along with

other district officers, former Sarpanches, Panches and a large number of people from adjoining panchayats.

During the interaction, the local people highlighted several key issues and demands including Education & Infrastructure, Additional accommodation,

construction of a boundary wall and an underground water tank at GHSS Battal Ballian, installation of solar lights, addressing acute drinking water shortages, installation of transformers and electricity poles and repairing of hand pumps and the filtration plant, blacktopping and

upgradation of the local roads and the development of Balltal Chowk to ease traffic congestion, bifurcation of ration cards, clearance of pending liabilities under MGNREGA, construction of playgrounds etc.

The DC assured the public that all genuine concerns

would be addressed in a time-bound manner. She directed the concerned officers to work with dedication and commitment to ensure the timely resolution of public grievances, emphasizing that governance must reach the doorstep of every citizen for efficient service delivery.

She also informed the public about the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, a government initiative encouraging households to install solar panels and reap the benefits of the schemes. The DC urged residents to take advantage of the scheme and directed the concerned departments to meticulously note all issues for necessary action.

DDC reviews implementation of Holistic Agriculture Development Programme in Kishtwar



■ STATE TIMES NEWS
KISHTWAR: District Development Commissioner Rajesh Kumar Shavan on Wednesday convened a meeting to review the imple-

mentation of the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) in the district.

The meeting aimed to assess the implementation status, address bottlenecks, and strategize for enhanced outreach and participation. Nodal Officer HADP/Chief Agriculture Officer (CAO) Amjad Hussain Malik, presented a detailed report on the programme's execution.

He provided insights into the initiatives undertaken, progress achieved and challenges encountered in the implementation process.

During the review, the DC emphasized the need for effective coordination among departments to max-

imize the impact of the programme. He directed field officers to intensify efforts for better outreach, ensuring higher participation from farmers and stakeholders. The review also included an assessment of both physical and financial progress across key sectors, including Horticulture, Fisheries, Sheep Husbandry and Animal Husbandry.

The DC instructed all allied departments to ensure that the pending approved beneficiaries are covered in the upcoming financial year. He further directed concerned officers to adhere strictly to the set targets to achieve top rankings within the Union Territory (UT).

Among others present in the meeting were Chief Horticulture Officer (CHO) Sajid Mustafa, District Sheep Husbandry Officer (DSHO) along with other officials from the agriculture and allied sectors.

Army organises lecture on Physical Fitness for students at Gursai



Army official delivering lecture.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
POONCH: A lecture on physical fitness was conducted at Govt Higher Secondary School, Gursai under the aegis Indian Army emphasizing the importance of regular exercise and healthy lifestyle habits for students.

The lecture was attended by 30 students and 12 teaching staff and covered various aspects of physical fitness including the benefits of exercise, nutrition, and stress management. Indian Army encouraged students to adopt healthy

habits and make physical activity a part of their daily routine.

The aim of this lecture was to educate students regarding the significance of physical fitness and encourage them to develop healthy lifestyle habits.

The lecture was made interactive, especially with students participating in discussions and asking questions.

The event was part of the Army's efforts to promote physical education and wellness amongst the students of the region.

Army organises awareness lecture on ‘Harmful Effect of Drug Abuse’ at Kotranka



Army official educating students.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
RAJOURI: Indian Army organised an awareness lecture on harmful effects of Drug Abuse at JNV, Kotranka.

The event was conducted under the theme of 'Protecting the youth and promoting welfare of humanity. Drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking are significant issues that plague societies worldwide.

Drug abuse refers to the harmful or excessive use of substances for non-medical purposes, leading to physical, mental and social harm. Illicit drug trafficking involves the illegal production, distribution and sale of drugs, contributing to a range of negative consequences for individuals and communities.

To effectively address the intertwined challenges of drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking, a multi-faceted and holistic

approach is essential.

Governments, communities, healthcare providers, law enforcement agencies and individuals play crucial roles in prevention, intervention and treatment efforts. Drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking are complex challenges that require a comprehensive and coordinated response from all sectors of society.

Drug abuse has wide-ranging harmful impacts

on health and well-being of individuals, families and society. A total of 04 teachers and 54 students attended the awareness lecture.

The students and local residents of expressed their sincere thanks and gratitude towards Indian Army for organising such awareness programmes and seminar on social issues which have greatly affected the youth and people of remote area.

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