Waqf Amendment legislation aims to uplift marginalised Muslims: Dr Jitendra

RAIPUR: Union Minister, Dr. Jitendra Singh on Thursday defended the recently introduced Waqf Amendment Bill, asserting that the legislation is not only pro-Muslim but also a necessary corrective to protect the interests of marginalised sections within the community

Addressing a press conference here, Dr. Jitendra said the new provisions aim to restore transparency and fairness in the management of Waqf properties, which have often been subject to misappropriation.

"Contrary to the misinformation being spread, this bill has been brought in the interest of the Muslim community," the Minister said.

HC assigns charge of **Special Tribunal Jammu**

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: On the elevation of Sanjay Parihar as Judge of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court, Registrar General (Officiating) MK Sharma has ordered that in the interest of administration, charge of the Member, Tribunal, Jammu is assigned to Member, ${\rm J\&K}$ Special Tribunal, Srinagar. Besides, the Chairman, J&K Special Tribunal shall make arrangements regarding the Member, J&K Special Tribunal, Srinagar attending the business of Jammu



Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh addressing a press conference on "Wagf Amendment Bill, 2025" at Raipur on Thursday.

Army jawan martyred in avalanche cremated

with full military honours in Kathua

brought to the village in a

flower-decked vehicle and

cremated amid a gun

salute and the final bugle.

Army, police and civilian

officers, besides political

leaders, attended the

jawan's cremation.

Singh's

The Minister highlighted wealth meant for their welwidespread allegations of fare is being misappropriated." Dr. Jitendra said. "The corruption and illegal encroachments on Waqf new bill is inspired by Prime properties across several Minister Narendra Modi's vision of inclusive developstates, including Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, ment-where no community, Maharashtra,

no region, and no section of Chhattisgarh. He cited society is left behind." instances of high-value land Dr Jitendra rejected critibeing misused to build shopcism over provisions involvping malls and luxury district collectors, hotels, diverging completely explaining that revenue offifrom the original charitable cials are best positioned to intent of Waqf. "The irony is verify land records and prethat while 31% of India's vent fraudulent claims. Muslim population still lives "This isn't about Hindus or below the poverty line, the

trative integrity. Without the collector's involvement, how can the authenticity of a land claim be verified?"

Describing the bill as a step toward justice and genuine empowerment, Dr. Singh added, "This amendment not only aligns with constitutional values but also honours the true spirit of Islam, which calls for honest charity and support for the needy.'

Framing the initiative as part of a broader national effort to clean up institutional corruption and deliver

nance, the Minister reiterated that the government remains committed to the upliftment of the last person in the queue-"Antyodaya," as envisioned by the Prime Minister.

As the debate around the Waqf Bill continues, Dr. Singh's remarks underscore the government's effort to balance constitutional principles, social justice, and administrative transparency, while pushing back against what he called "vested interests" distorting the narrative for political gain.



Dr Darakhshan hands over appointment letter on Compassionate grounds to brother of Syed Adil Hussain

Bravery Award given posthumously to martyr Syed Adil Hussain

SRINAGAR: Darakhshan Andrabi. Chairperson of Jammu & Kashmir Waqf Board on Thursday handed over the appointment letter on compassionate grounds to Nazakat Shah, brother of Shaheed Syed Adil Hussain who lost his life in Pahalgam terror attack while saving the people from attack-

Jammu and Kashmir Waqf Board has provided the job on compassionate grounds to the brother of the martyr and also presented the Bravery Award to the martyr Syed Adil Hussain. Dr Andrabi was accompanied by the BJP J&K President Sat Sharma, General



over appointment letter to Nazakat Shah.

Secretary Ashok Koul, Vibodh Gupta, MLA Dr Maniyal and Sofi Yousuf. Speaking on the occasion Dr Darakhshan said that our fight against terrorism has to be supported and the

Waqf Board took a decision to produce a job in the Board to the brother of the brave martyr who held our head high during the massacre of the innocent

and hence, as a people's Board, we took a decision to honour the martyr and offer the job to the his brother so that the family gets a financial support", said Waqf Board Chairperson. Hailing the decision, BJP

"Mere lip service doesn't work

President Sat Sharma and General Secretary (Organisation) Ashok Koul and other leaders said that Waqf Board has shown us the way of which we are all proud.

Sved Nazakat, the brother of the martyr in his emotional outburst thanked the Board and the Chairperson Dr Andrabi for helping the family during

mony and military funeral "He laid down his life for of Sepoy Harish Singh of the country. He was guarding a border post in 18 Dogra Rifles were held in his native village, the difficult Kargil sector, One-month Internship Programme for



STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU; An Army jawan,

who lost his life in an ava-

lanche in Ladakh's Kargil

sector, was cremated with

full military honours in

his village in Jammu and

Kashmir's Kathua district

The wreath-laying cere-

on Thursday.

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The one-month programme concluded on Thursday at Directorate Information and Public Relations (DIPR), Jammu and Kashmir.

In a brief meaningful Director Information, Rajora, felicitated the interns and acknowledged their enthusiasm, dedication, and active participation throughout the duration of the programme. The internship aimed to

provide hands-on exposure to media operations, public relations, and the organized for students of communication frame- bridging the gap between the Central University work of the government. academia and practical The students were aspects of media management, content creation, enabling them to gain valuable practical experi-

> $\operatorname{Director}$ Information Nitish Rajora, while addressing the interns, encouraged them to conexploring the dynamic field of media and communication and appreciated their commit-

ment to learning. He highlighted the importance of such initiatives in work environments

The students expressed Directorate for providing them with this enriching learning opportunity and shared their positive experiences during the intern-

The DIPR reiterated its commitment to promoting youth engagement and skill development through such educational collabo-

resulted in his death. We are proud of him," Sona Singh, a relative of the slain jawan, said.

Bharatiya Janata Party MLA Rajiv Jasrotia paid tributes to the soldier and said, "He was a brave son of the soil from my Assembly constituency."

CCI Jammu Elections 2025: 13 candidates in fray

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI), Jammu, has officially released the final list of candidates contesting the upcoming organizational elections scheduled to be held on Sunday, 11th May 2025.

As per the election schedule, on Thursday, was the last date for withdrawal of nominations. No candidate withdrew their nomination until the 5:00 PM deadline, thereby confirming the final list of contenders for various key posts within the organi-

For the post of President, two prominent business figures will be contesting are Arun Gupta of M/s Ram Kaur Behari Lal, Kanak Mandi, and Rakesh Gupta of M/s Indian Health Corp. Nanak Nagar.

In the contest for Senior Vice President, Anil Gupta of M/s Shree Vaishno Flour Mills, Bari Brahmana, will face off against Deepak Aggarwal of M/s Deepak Syndicate, Kanak Mandi. Meanwhile, the post of Junior Vice President has also attracted notable nominations, with Rajiv Gupta (Kaka) of M/s Hotel Amar, Upper Gumat, competing against Sunil Gupta (Kodha) of M/s Sunil Traders, Nehru

The position of Secretary General will be contested by Manish Gupta of M/s Manish Finance Corp, Gandhi Nagar, and Rahul Mahajan of M/s Harnam Dass & Bros, Pacca Danga.

For the post of Secretary, the two candidates in the fray are Ashu Gupta of M/s New Ware House, Gandhi Nagar, and Rajesh Gupta (Rinku) of M/s B.R. Traders, Chand Nagar.

The role of Treasurer has drawn three candidates namely Manik Gupta of M/s Kashmir Handloom & Khadi Udyog, Hari Market, Rajeev Langer of M/s Leather Links, Gandhi Nagar, and Rajesh Gupta (Raju) of M/s Hari Market.

The announcement was formally made by Shiv Partap Gupta, the Election President, who confirmed that the nominations process has concluded smoothly and the final candidates are now set to begin their campaigns.

The business community of Jammu now awaits a spirited and fair election to determine the next leadership of the CCI Jammu.

Swachhata Pakhwada commences at IIIM



Dr. Zabeer Ahmed, Director, CSIR-IIIM, Jammu planting sapling.

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In order to promote the cleanliness and sanitation aligning with the Swachh Bharat Mission, the CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (IIIM), Jammu has commenced the Swachhta Pakhwada on Thursday at the main campus of the institute. The Pakhwada was inaugurated by Dr. Zabeer Ahmed, Director, CSIR-IIIM, Jammu with the plantation of number of saplings, followed by a Swachhata pledge administered to scientific, technical and administrative staff, scholars, students and others. The Heads of the various Scientific and Administrative Divisions actively participated in the plantation drive. Dr. Zabeer Ahmed, while inaugurating the Swachhata Pakhwada activities schedule for next two weeks in the institute, said that Swachhata Pakhwada is a significant initiative under the Swachh Bharat Mission and it is imperative for government offices to provide a clean and healthy working environment for its employees/visitors. He also emphasised the need to educate people about the virtues of

good sanitation practices and urged everyone to undertake special drives to clean their work places. Further, Dr. Ahmed mentioned that various activities are planned for cleaning of labs, disposal of wastes and beautification of the institute during the Pakhwada. Essay and Painting/ Drawing competition on "Swachh Bharat" will also be conducted during the Pakhwada, he added.

It was also mentioned that CSIR-IIIM has a standing "Swachh Bharat Mission Committee" comprising of Dr. PN Gupta Senior Principal Scientist, Pharmacology Division, Rajesh Dr. Ajay Kumar, Principal Scientist, Pharmacology Divion, Dr. Ravi Shankar, Natural Products and Medicinal Chemistry, Dr.Rajendra Bhanwaria, Senior Scientist, Plant Science Agrotechnology, Dr. Love Sharma. Scientist, Project Monitoring and Evaluation Division, Rajesh Gupta, Administrative Officer, Bal Krishan, Security Officer Er. Jai Sharma, AEE, Arvind Kumar Yadav, Senior Technical Officer and Akash Verma Technical

After 1947 Distant/ Backward areas & people of J&K have not been given fair nearness to segments in administration

So is need for reviewing status of existing District Administrative Units & only then take to Reorganisation of Divisions in UT of J&K

rational Conference Manifesto for 2024 J&K UT Legislative Assembly elections also mentioned Reorganisation of Divisions and going by that since National Conference has now formed Government with Omar Abdullah as Chief Minister it could be expected that the government (true to manifesto) maybe in the process of increasing the Administrative Divisions in the UT of J&K to more than the present two divisions (Kashmir Division & Jammu Division). It would be worthwhile to mention the text as is there on page-40 of election manifesto which reads < Reorganisation of Divisions: Decentralised decision-making can result in more efficient resources allocation allowing Regions to prioritise spending and development projects that directly benefit their local economies and populations. Following administrative precedent we will reorganise divisions to take the decision making at the local level>. The intentions of the Omar Government could surely be taken as pious worth benefitting particularly the distant & backward areas &people w.r.t to administrative & legislative affinities . anyone professes that the people and areas of erstwhile districts of J&K State of pre 1947 days like that of Baramulla, Reasi, Kathua, Udhampur, (jagir administered from Jammu), Ladakh or in other words we can say erstwhile districts of pre 1978 davs like that of Baramulla, Kathua, Udhampur , Doda , Rajouri, Poonch , Ladakh etc even after independence have not been administratively fairly treated all these years as regards locating centers of local community development/ district administration.

To be brief though creation of more Divisions would be a welcome step but before that there is utmost need for reorganization of district administrative units (District) so that Divisions are now fairly compiled /created and not as new districts were created in 1979 & 2006-07. In case More divisions are created on the basis of the District administrative units as they exist on date there is every chance of the concerned committee / commission getting miscarried with the illusion that the irrational reorganizations of Districts done in 1979 & 2006-07 would make as a result

existing Divisions have 10 districts whereas before 1979 the areas (15948 sq)

km)under present Kashmir Division had only 3 districts and the areas (26.293 sq km) under present Jammu Division had 6 districts.

The politicians have been carrying on their "business" keeping the innocent masses of J&K trapped in the web of rivalries of regional or 26th Oct 1947 accession' related controversies and at occasions also making people enter into religion based controversies creating some ideological ravines even amongst the locals of same region. We often find many people reasoning the shortfalls in the economic & infrastructural development as well as representation in Legislature & in Executive / Administration , particularly that of Jammu region, being there for the reasons of religious demography (J&K being a Muslim majority state) but that is not logically true since even the areas outside Kashmir Valley that have reasonably

A Look through large muslim population have remained the Mist devoid of fair constitutional, administra-Part-I

tive and community development units. post independence onslaught on the people of the then Districts of Baramulla, Kathua, Udhampur, Doda, Rajouri, Poonch, Jammu of the erstwhile State of J&K was inflicted when they were disproportionately denied nearness to District Administrative Units (local administration) (districts) in 1979 the way 3 new districts (Badgam, Pulwama, Kupwara) were created in Kashmir valley under SRO 306 of 6/6/1979 increasing districts in Kashmir valley from 3 (Srinagar, Anantnag, Baramulla) to 6 (Srinagar, Badgam, Anantnag, Pulwama, Baramulla, Kupwara)but keeping the pre 1979 number (6)unchanged in Jammu Region (Jammu, Kathua, Udhampur, Doda, Rajouri, Poonch) and increasing in Ladakh districts from 1 to 2 (Leh, Kargil) . Another onslaught was made in 2007 in total defiance of even the recommendations

1984 recommended for increasing the Districts in Jammu Region from 6 to 9 and in Kashmir Region from 6 to 7 (one new in Baramulla district) but the recommendations were not implemented (though still were not as per demands of neglected areas) and instead through SRO 185 of 22 May 2007 Kashmir region was given 300 % more than the districts recommended in 1984by Wazir Commission increasing the Districts from 6 (Srinagar, Badgam, Anantnag Pulwama, Baramulla, Kupwara) to 10 (Srinagar, Ganderbal, Badgam, Anantnag, Kulgam, Pulwama. Shopian, Baramulla, Bandipora, and Jammu region was Kupwara given only 33 % more than what WC had recommended (1984) there by just increasing districts from 6 (Jammu, Kathua, Udhampur, Doda, Rajouri, Poonch) to 10 only ((Jammu, Samba, Kathua, Udhampur, Reasi, Doda, Kishtwar, Ramban, Rajouri, Poonch) where as by method of proportions Districts in Jammu Region should have been increased to 15 to 16 Districts and Baramulla & Kupwara

tricts instead of 3.

Since 2007 there have been repeated demands and requests for reorganizing the district administrative units in J&K, particularly Kathua, Udhampur ,Reasi, Doda,, Kishtwar, Ramban, Jammu, Rajouri, Poonch, Baramulla, Bondipora, Kupwara to correct the faulty reoganisations done in 1979 and 2007. The Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act, 1989 (Act No. IX of 1989) was amended to replace "District Planning and Development Board" by The District Development Council - DDC (which of course is a welcome amendment) but it has been very unfair at the same time so unfairly / strangely Section-45A -(iii) says that elected members of every District Development Council shall be fourteen in number. By that standard may it be Shopian District that had only one tehsil in 2007 or may it be Rajouri District that had 7 Tehsils in 2007 or Jammu or Baramulla or Kathua or Udhampur or Kupwara all will have 14 members each. Continued

(The writer is a Sr Journalist & a known analyst of J&K affairs)