

# Dr Jitendra inaugurates ‘Sagar Bhavan’ at Goa, refers to geopolitics of oceans

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

GOA: Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology; Earth Sciences and Minister of State for PMO, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr. Jitendra Singh today inaugurated "Sagar Bhavan" and "Polar Bhavan", two first-of-its-kind facilities in India and among the very few in the world at Goa's "National Centre of Polar and Ocean Research" (NCPOR).

At a time when nations across the world are deliberating over the nuances of the ocean geopolitics or geopolitics of oceans, the Minister expressed confidence that in the times to come, the institute will facilitate India's increased role in geopolitics and even enable India to play a global role in ocean geopolitics. In addition, the new facilities will also enable the institute to gain supremacy in the study of weather patterns as also to address the climate concerns, he said.

The newly inaugurated facility marks a significant step in India's growing focus on polar and ocean studies.

The Minister's visit coincided with the Silver Jubilee of NCPOR.

Dr Jitendra Singh also unveiled a



Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh inaugurating the "Sagar Bhavan" and other first-of-its-kind facilities at the "National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research" (NCPOR) Goa, on Thursday.

documentary highlighting NCPOR's 25-year journey and took a virtual walkthrough of the upcoming museum, which is expected to offer immersive, science-based public engagement experiences. He also launched the "Science On Sphere (SOS)" initiative, a 3D visualization platform for displaying earth systems and climate-related data.

Polar Bhavan, now the largest building at the NCPOR campus, spans 11,378 square metres and was constructed at a cost of ₹55 crore. It includes laboratories for polar and ocean research, 55 rooms for sci-

tific personnel, a conference room, seminar hall, library, and canteen. It houses the newly inaugurated SOS facility and will eventually serve as the home of India's first Polar and Ocean Museum.

Sagar Bhavan, covering 1,772 square metres, was built at a cost of ₹13 crore. It includes two -30°C ice core laboratories and +4°C storage units for archiving sediment and biological samples. The building also features 29 rooms, including a metal-free Class 1000 clean room for trace metal and isotope studies.

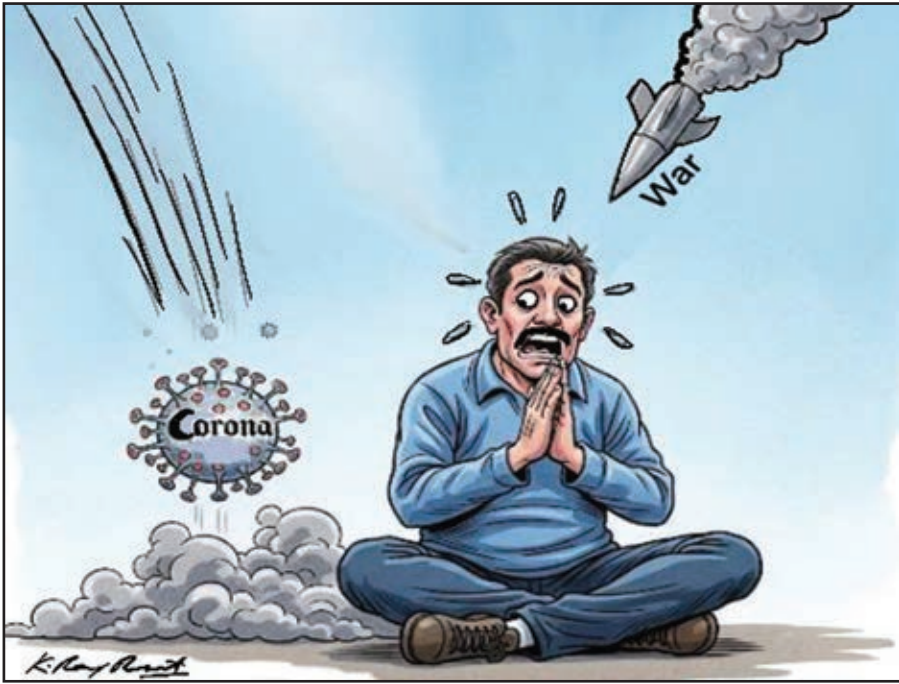
Dr. Jitendra Singh, clad in warm

Antarctica clothing also visited the Minus 20 degree Centigrade lab section.

The Minister noted that the addition of these facilities positions NCPOR among a select group of institutions with integrated polar and ocean research capabilities. He highlighted that the institute's scientific efforts are not only regionally relevant but globally significant, given the transboundary nature of polar phenomena.

Citing expert assessments, the Minister said that nearly 70% of the world's freshwater is held in polar ice. If significant melting were to occur, it could lead to a sharp rise in sea levels, affecting low-lying coastal regions. With India's coastline now estimated at over 1,000 kilometres, such changes pose environmental and socio-economic challenges that demand sustained scientific monitoring and response.

He further acknowledged NCPOR's role in maintaining India's research presence in critical zones, including Antarctica (with stations Maitri and Bharati), the Arctic (Himadri), and the Himalayas (Himansh). The institute also leads India's Deep Ocean Mission, a key initiative under the country's Blue Economy roadmap.



## DC reviews Social Welfare initiatives, emphasises outreach and timely assistance



Deputy Commissioner Jammu, Sachin Kumar Vaishya chairing a meeting.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: "No eligible beneficiary should remain unaware of their entitlements. We must reach every household and ensure welfare schemes translate into ground reality," said Deputy Commissioner Jammu, Sachin Kumar Vaishya, while chairing a review meeting of the Social Welfare Department on Thursday.

The meeting reviewed schemes including Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), Ladli Beti Scheme and Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana. The DC stressed timely application processing and awareness campaigns for better outreach.

The status of pension for widows, elderly and differently-abled persons was reviewed thoroughly. On the State Marriage Assistance Scheme, the DC directed

timely application processing and enhanced public awareness.

The DC further assessed the functioning of the District Hub for Empowerment of Women (DHEW) and the impact of its interventions on the ground. Sub Divisional Magistrates were directed to monitor Anganwadi centres, ensure inclusion of all eligible beneficiaries, facilitate registration under the Ladli Beti Scheme and engage with the public to raise awareness about available schemes.

The DC emphasised outreach to those unaware of their entitlements. He stressed strict legal action in cases of violence against women, ensuring empathy and dignity is maintained.

Priority was laid on health check-ups, tests and awareness drives, particularly in

remote areas lacking medical access. Identification and support of talented female athletes and performers was highlighted, with directions to link them to relevant government schemes for growth and recognition.

Schemes such as the National Foundation for Communal Harmony (NFCH) and the Central Scheme for Assistance to Civilian Victims of Terrorist, Communal and Naxal Violence were discussed for their support to affected families.

The DC also issued instructions to monitor NGOs and prioritise rescue and education of street children.

The meeting was attended by PO ICDS Pankaj Anand, CPO Uttam Singh, District Coordinator Mission Shakti Shagun Manchanda, TSWOs and others.

# Sunil slams NC for ignoring Op Sindoor, questions it's silence on Pakistan's role in cross-border terrorism

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Sunil Sharma, Leader of Opposition in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, expressed his deep concern over the recent resolutions passed by the National Conference (NC) during its Executive Meeting. Sharma criticized the party for deliberately ignoring the monumental success of Operation Sindoor, a landmark counter-terrorist military operation conducted by the Indian forces, which has received global acclaim.

Sharma said Operation Sindoor has not only boosted India's counter-terrorism credentials but has also showcased the unmatched professionalism, valour, and strategic precision of the Indian armed forces. "It is disappointing that in all the seven resolutions passed by the National Conference,

there is not a single word of recognition or appreciation for the Indian forces who put their lives at risk for the unity and integrity of the nation," he said.

The senior BJP leader emphasized that Operation Sindoor was a well-coordinated and meticulously executed mission that inflicted heavy damage on terror camps across the border, including inside Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu & Kashmir (PoJK).

"The bravery of our forces is unmatched. Their dedication to safeguarding the sovereignty of India deserves nothing but the highest honor and recognition," Sharma stated.

He further slammed the NC for including a resolution advocating Indo-Pak talks, calling it "beyond the scope" of a state party. Sharma

reminded the NC leadership that matters related to international diplomacy fall strictly within the ambit of the Union Government and the Ministry of External Affairs.

"By making such suggestions, the National Conference is overstepping its constitutional boundaries and confusing the people with unrealistic expectations," he asserted.

Sharma also expressed his strong disapproval of the NC's continued insistence on discussing the special status of Jammu and Kashmir, referring to Articles 370 and 35A.

He pointed out that the Supreme Court of India has already delivered a decisive judgment on the issue, upholding the constitutional validity of their abrogation. "Talking about Article 370 now is nothing but a futile

exercise. It's part of history and has no place in contemporary political discourse. The NC is only trying to keep people in the dark by repeatedly raising this irrelevant issue," he said.

On the NC's demand for restoration of statehood, Sharma termed it "untimely" and "politically motivated," arguing that the party should focus instead on ground realities. He mentioned that the Prime Minister and the Union Home Minister have already assured on the matter. He urged NC leaders to visit Pakistan-shelling affected areas such as Arnia, Hiranagar, Suchetgarh, RS Pura, Chamb, Akhnoor, Rajouri, Poonch, Uri, and Tangdhar. "It's shameful that the resolutions do not even mention the hardships of those living under con-

stant threat from across the border. Where is the demand for compensation or relief for these people?" he asked.

In conclusion, Sunil Sharma condemned the NC for not holding Pakistan accountable in its resolutions for the recent killing of 26 innocent tourists in Pahalgam.

"By ignoring Pakistan's role in terrorism, the NC has shown where its priorities lie. It is disheartening and irresponsible for any political party to overlook such grave matters," he said. Sunil Sharma called on the NC to act responsibly and work towards national unity, security, and the welfare of the people, especially those directly affected by cross-border hostilities instead of craving for their protocols by demanding statehood.

## AIIMS Vijaypur takes major step towards public safety with functioning of Poison Information and Management Centre

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Poison Information and Management Centre (PIMC) at AIIMS Vijaypur, Jammu, operational since July 2024, has emerged as a crucial lifeline for both the public and healthcare providers in the fight against poisoning incidents.

It plays a vital role in offering timely toxicological support, expert medical advice and poison surveillance, especially in rural and semi-urban areas where the risk of exposure to agricultural chemicals, animal bites, and household toxins is significantly higher. For any poisoning-related emergency or consultation, the public can reach the PIMC 24x7 helpline at 9103967500.

Since its inception, the Centre has responded to over 33 poisoning emergencies, including cases involving pesticide ingestion, accidental chemical exposure, snakebites and rare toxic

substances.

In each case, the prompt guidance provided by PIMC has contributed to effective treatment and, in many instances, has helped save lives.

Operating 24/7, the Centre is staffed with trained toxicologists and clinical pharmacologists who provide real-time treatment recommendations to doctors across the region.

In addition to clinical support, PIMC actively works to educate the public about poison prevention strategies, first-response actions and awareness on handling toxic substances safely.

Beyond emergency assistance, PIMC also supports data collection and toxicovigilance to help public health authorities track trends and develop preventive strategies.

The Centre is committed to strengthening the healthcare system by empowering medical professionals and ensur-

ing that communities are better prepared to deal with toxic exposures.

Prof. (Dr.) Shakti Kumar Gupta, Executive Director & CEO of AIIMS Jammu, has emphasized that the establishment of the PIMC reflects the institute's unwavering commitment to safeguarding public health. He stated that such dedicated centres are essential for building a responsive and resilient healthcare system capable of addressing modern-day toxicological challenges.

AIIMS Vijaypur urged the public and healthcare workers to report any poisoning incident without delay. Timely reporting and expert intervention can make a life-saving difference. The institution remains steadfast in its mission to protect lives through knowledge, preparedness, and swift medical response. For more information, visit: <https://www.aiims-jammu.edu.in>.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, on Thursday held a detailed meeting with NHAI, NHIDCL, Beacon and Project SAMPARK and sought reports from the executing agencies to furnish fortnightly reports about both the physical and financial progress registered in each project.

The meeting was attended by ACS, Forests; Principal Secretary, Finance and APD; Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir/Jammu; Secretary, R&B; Deputy Commissioners; Chief Engineers of PWD, representatives from NHAI, BRO, NHIDCL and other concerned officers.

The meeting took stock of progress made, so far, in completion of different National Highway projects across the length and breadth of the UT.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary maintained that these projects are being monitored at highest level for effective implementation. He asked for furnishing the weekly reports to the PWD and biweekly to his office for regular monitoring of these vital projects for completion on time.

He enjoined upon these agencies to ensure that those responsible for



delays should also be pointed out in these reports as the lackadaisical approach on anybody's part would be viewed seriously and action initiated against the non-performers.

Dulloo asked for working in double shifts wherever necessary and assured of all possible assistance on part of the district and divisional administration.

The Chief Secretary directed the Department of Mining to ensure that short term permits for mining of material to complete these highways are used exclusively for this purpose. He asked for marking all the vehicles carrying such material with RFID tags so that their monitoring becomes easy and efficient to curb the illegal use.

The Chief Secretary had a project wise appraisal of progress made, so Shubham far. He enquired about

the possible date of completion of work on each phase of these projects along with the current scenario of physical progress registered in each of them.

Principal Secretary, Finance, Shailendra Kumar, while speaking in the meeting, impressed upon the concerned Deputy Commissioners to assist the agencies in identification of blocks for regular supply of the mining material required for completion of these vital road projects.

He asked these agencies to deploy more men and machinery in these sites and add as many working hours as possible to meet the set deadlines. He made out that only regular monitoring of the projects would fructify into their completion on time.

Some of the reviewed projects of NHAI included different phases of Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway,

work on the tunnel being constructed on Ring Road Jammu, Ramban-Banihal section of NH-44, Marog-Digdol and Digdol-Khuni MakeNallah tunnels, Makarkot-Sher bibi viaduct and different phases of Ring Road Srinagar.

The road projects of NHIDCL included completion of Zojila Tunnel, Jammu-Akhnoor Road, Chenani-Shudmahadev Road, Gohla-Khellani, Khellani-Khanabal Highway and Singhpoora-Vailoo tunnel.

The projects executed by BRO under project Beacon and Sampark which came up for discussion included Srinagar-Baramulla-Uri Highway, Rafiabab-Kupwara-Tangdhar Highway, Surankot-Narbal Highway, Khanabal-Baltal Highway, Akhnoor-Poonch Highway, Shopian-Surankot, Rajouri-Thanamandi-Surankot, Budhal-Mahore-Gul Road along with others.

The assessed R&B projects included construction of Flyover Sanat Nagar, Srinagar-Budgam-Pulwama-Shopian-Kulgam-Qazigund (NH-444) road, construction of fly-passes for three main towns of Pulwama, Kulgam and Shopian besides other road safety and strengthening works currently going on in different parts of the UT.

# Integrated Command & Control Centre operational at Vaishno Devi Shrine

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KATRA: As per the directives of the Hon'ble Chairman (Lt. Governor, JK-UT), the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board has operationalised the Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC) at Spiritual Growth Centre, Katra to enhance pilgrim safety and security. This state-of-the-art facility utilizes a network of 700 CCTV cameras equipped with advanced features like gesture, face recognition and PTZ, enabling real-time monitoring for efficient decision-making and swift response mechanism in the Shrine area.

A joint inspection of the

ICCC was conducted today by Anshul Garg, Chief Executive Officer, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board and Sarah Rizvi, DIG Udhampur-Reasi Range alongwith Addl. Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB; SSP, Reasi; Commandant, CRPF; Jt. Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB; SP, Katra; Tehsildar, SMVDSB and officers from Army, intelligence agencies, local administration and Shrine Board. The inspection was followed by a comprehensive security review meeting to discuss and strengthen various security measures brought out in the joint security review



CEO SMVDSB, Anshul Garg and DIG Udhampur-Reasi Range, Sarah Rizvi inspecting Integrated Command and Control Centre at Spiritual Growth Centre.

conducted last year.

Notably, the ICCC will enhance pilgrim safety and security by leveraging advanced technologies like

surveillance systems, data analytics and communication networks. A joint team from the Shrine Board and security agencies is now

conducting real-time monitoring of key areas including ingress points, movement of pilgrims and service providers and critical infrastructure on the track, ensuring a seamless and safe experience for prompt emergency response and improved situational awareness.

The security review meeting stressed for action on diverse fronts and crucial decisions were taken for hassle free pilgrimage including the issuance of fresh UHF cards to pithoo and ponyvallas and installation of readers to prevent impersonation and ensure their legitimate presence on the track.

The meeting also involved an in-depth discussion on identified threats with a focus on devising effective countermeasures to mitigate potential risks. Furthermore, measures were discussed to plug unauthorized ingress points in the Shrine area, thereby strengthening the overall security apparatus for a safer environment for pilgrims. The concerned quarters were directed to undertake the numbering of private shops along the track, facilitating easy identification and reference for security agencies. Emphasis was laid on early activation of the integrated hotline system to enable

seamless communication amongst the stakeholders for swift response to emergencies and further strengthening the security infrastructure.

The meeting also explored deployment of additional security personnel, area domination and the use of drones and other advanced technologies to monitor the Shrine and surrounding areas. The CEO reiterated the importance of effectively utilizing advanced security equipments crucial for maintaining robust security measures provided to security agencies. These equipments include X-Ray Baggage Scanners, Door

Frame Metal Detectors, Hand-Held Metal Detectors and Under Vehicle Search Mirrors / Scanners recently procured and installed by the Board in the Shrine area.

The meeting took a stern view of the begging menace in Katra, deeming it a nuisance to pilgrims and a potential security threat. Directions were given to concerned quarters to strictly curb the practice with a focus on rescuing and rehabilitating minors by sending them to shelter homes, thereby ensuring a safer and more dignified environment for pilgrims visiting from across India and abroad.

