

Two Army Brigades, mobile network established in remote Billawar areas: Dr Jitendra

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BILLAWAR: Two Army Brigades and mobile network in remote areas of Billawar region have been established, which would not only provide security to the local people but also ensure surveillance through mobile connectivity and ease of communication in far-flung areas.

This was disclosed here today by Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh during a Public Durbar held by him.

The Public Durbar was attended by senior officers of the district administration with representatives from all the engineering wings and health department, in the presence of elected representatives including MLA Satish Sharma, DDC Chairman Col Mahan Singh, DDC Members Vikram Singh, Narayan Dutt Tripathi and Neeru Rajput, former Municipal Chairman Basotra, BJP District President Gopal Krishan , Amrik Singh, Romi Khajuria, all the panches, sarpanches and former DDCs.

Dr Jitendra further informed that one Armed Brigade had already been established at Sarthal and now another similar Armed Brigade has been set up in Rampur township of Billawar. This will not only provide round the clock army surveillance in the area but the Army personnel will also maintain regular liaison with the civil administration with the concerned Brigadier and the DM constantly being in touch with each other.



Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh holding a Public Durbar at Billawar on Saturday.

As for the Mobile network, Dr Jitendra said, the far-flung areas, particularly areas beyond Lowang in the Bani area, were deprived of connectivity ever since independence and only yesterday evening, the first mobile phone call was made after the installation of the Mobile Tower and mobile network. This has not only come as a huge facility for the local residents including particularly students and youth, but this will also enable the armed forces to maintain round the clock real time surveillance, he said.

All these measures, taken as a result of the personal follow up on a day to day basis by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, have instilled a lot of confidence and sense of security among the local people.

Dr. Jitendra further informed that the long pending demand of the widening of the Dhar Road has been taken up with impetus received from the Home and Defence Ministries in the wake of the recent armed conflict and very soon the BRO will hand over this road to National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) for widening.

Dr Singh recalled that in the last summer, the main demand from this region was regarding the shortage of drinking water. He informed that this too has also been taken care of with 55 Jal Jivan Mission (JJM) schemes approved for region of which nearly 70% work has been completed at a cost of Rs. 131.55 Crore. This, he said, has ensured drinking water supply to 14875 households.

Under the AMRUT 2.0 scheme, the

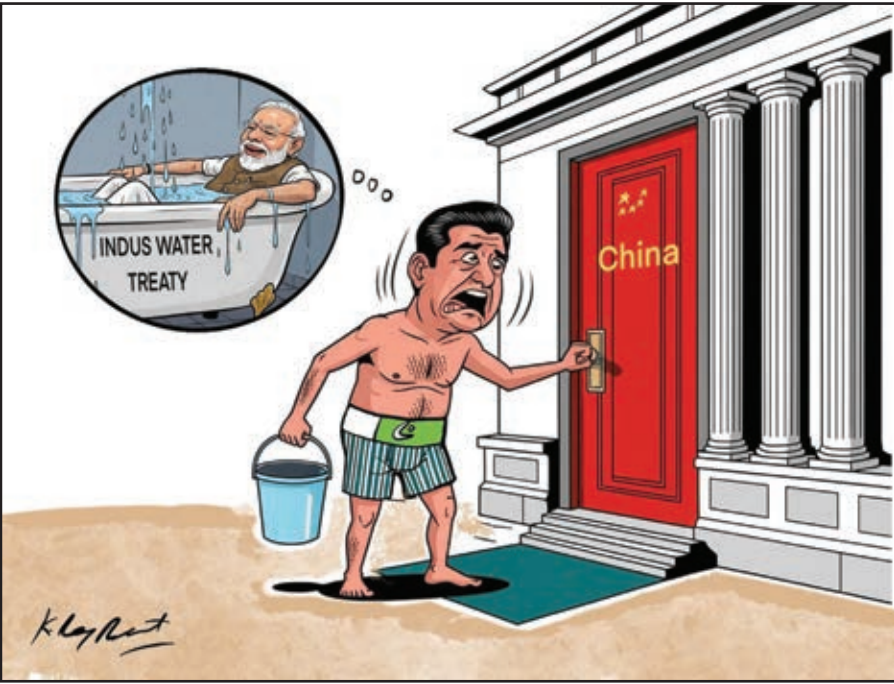
Minister informed that another 1250 households in the Billawar town will be given the facility of drinking water supply at a cost of Rs.11.03 Crore .

Dr. Singh informed that he has suggested a proposal for a Master Plan for Sukrala Mata which can be taken up at its next Board meeting. This could enable this entire area to attract a new genre of tourists like Mussoorie etc.

Dr Jitendra recalled his recent visit to International border and said, that nearly 2500 Family Bunker constructed along the Hiranagar sector over the last seven years have been found highly convenient and received appreciation from the local people that now demands are received from other areas including the LoC for construction of similar family bunkers. He said, this could be accomplished because we had taken up the task of planning and constructing such family bunkers for nearly 10 years, and we went ahead in a very meticulous manner.

As a result, today, he said, these Family bunkers in the Hiranagar sector have emerged as a role model for the country to build bunkers elsewhere along the border.

Later, Dr Jitendra held a Public Durbar, which lasted for nearly two hours. During his interaction, the Minister gave a patient hearing to individuals and sought to dispose of their grievances and demands on the spot by issuing the required instructions to the administration.



CGPWA holds lecture on environment for destitute students



Former Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, S D Swatantra delivering a lecture.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Central Govt Pensioners' Welfare Association, Jammu (CGPWA) in collaboration with the BALRAN on Saturday organised an inter-active lecture on 'Environment Protection and Sustainable Development' for inmates of BALRAN.

The Life member of CGPEA & former Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, S D Swatantra IFS (Retd) delivered an illuminating lecture on this important theme. This was the ninth lecture under the initiative of CGPWA to use the talent of former senior civil servants to upgrade the knowledge of the destitute students.

Talking about the importance of protecting the environment while working for sustainable development, Swatantra said that the role of youth in protecting a reasonably good environment is immensely important and as such they should understand this global issue relevant to the survival of humanity.

He explained five components of the environment which he named as land, water, air, living organisms, and human-made structures

and modifications to the environment.

These components, he said, are interconnected and interact with each other to form ecosystems and influence life on earth. Over the years, these components have come under huge pressure and threatened our ecosystem. He said, the time has come to restore this ecosystem and for this, understanding of the dangers looming large on mankind, and cooperation of all sections of society, especially the youth, are vital.

Swatantra also explained the background of launching of Sustainable Development by the United Nations in 2015 and said that these 17 goals are critical to address global challenges and promote sustainable development by 2030. These goals aimed to end poverty and hunger, improve health and education, reduce inequality, tackle climate change, and protect the planet.

He said that the Govt of India has formulated an Action Plan to achieve the SDGs and so far, good work has been done on these SDGs, adding that according to Niti Ayog, India has

registered 70 percent achievements on these. What we need is the partnership for effective results.

He also explained the growing cause of concern on burning of 'parali' in agricultural fields, dwindling of forests, forest fires, unchecked air pollution in cities, use of non-biodegradable polythene is very harmful for our environment and must be discouraged in our daily life.

It was followed by a question-answer session and students evinced keen interest in understanding solutions to the environmental concerns. The President of BALGRAN Vinod Raina IFS(retfd) and General Secretary Prof R D Sharma, former Vice Chancellor moderated the interactive session.

Those present on the occasion included General Secretary CGPWA K B Jandial, Treasurer O P Sharma, Prem Gupta, V K Padha of CPPWA, Chief Patron BALGRAN Er. A K Arora, Patron Er. A K Khajuria Er. Vinod Gupta, Er. H C Jerath, Er. Ravinder Gupta, Er. Purshottam Kohli, Director School, Sadhna Kachru, Advisor School Urnil Arora & Principal Neelam Sharma.

AIIMS Jammu to open advanced unit for safer pregnancies and healthier babies

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: AIIMS Jammu is set to enhance maternal and child healthcare services in the region with the upcoming launch of a dedicated Maternal and Fetal Medicine (MFM) unit. This specialized unit, operating within the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, will offer expert care for mothers and their unborn babies, particularly during complicated pregnancies. The initiative marks a significant advancement for healthcare in Jammu and Kashmir, as AIIMS Jammu joins a select group of hospitals in India providing such comprehensive MFM services.

Maternal and Fetal Medicine specialists are doctors with advanced training focused on the health of both the mother and the developing baby during pregnancy. They use specialized knowledge and technology to monitor pregnancies closely, especially when there are existing health concerns for the mother; if she is expecting multiple babies, or if there's a possibility of a health issue with the baby. Their goal is to identify and manage potential problems as early as possible.

The new MFM unit at AIIMS Jammu will concentrate on the early screening and proactive management of significant pregnancy complications. This includes careful screening for conditions like pre-eclampsia, a serious issue involving high blood pressure in

pregnant women through early checks and specialized ultrasound scans. This allows for timely steps to protect both mother and baby.

Another key area will be addressing Fetal Growth Restriction (FGR), where a baby may not be growing at the expected rate inside the womb and Preterm labour (giving birth too early). The unit will also screen the women who might be at risk of FGR and preterm labour through ultrasound which helps doctors to keep a close watch on the baby's development and offer required intervention.

The new MFM unit at AIIMS Jammu will offer a range of important services aimed at early detection and care. An important early ultrasound, often called the Nuchal Translucency (NT) scan, is typically performed between 11 and 14 weeks of pregnancy. This scan helps in the early screening for certain chromosomal conditions and provides an initial assessment of the baby's well-being. Later in pregnancy, usually between 18 and 22 weeks, a detailed ultrasound known as the anomaly scan is conducted. This is a thorough examination of the baby, looking closely at all developing organs and structures to check for any physical or developmental issues.

A vital aspect of the unit's advanced care will be its close collaboration with AIIMS Jammu's recently established

Centre for Advanced Genomics & Precision Medicine. This partnership is particularly important when initial screenings or scans suggest a higher possibility of a genetic condition in the baby. It allows for highly specialized genetic testing, offering families more precise information and helping doctors tailor care.

If initial screening tests indicate a higher chance of a genetic condition, the MFM specialists will discuss further diagnostic testing options with the parents to get more definitive answers. One such test is Chorionic Villus Sampling (CVS), which usually takes place between 11 and 14 weeks of pregnancy and involves carefully taking a tiny sample of the placenta for genetic analysis. Another option, typically offered after 15 weeks of pregnancy, is Amniocentesis. This procedure involves taking a small sample of the amniotic fluid - the water surrounding the baby - which contains cells from the baby that can be tested for genetic information. These specialized tests, when necessary, empower parents with knowledge and help doctors plan the best course of care.

Dr. Vishakha Gupta, a Maternal and Fetal Medicine specialist at AIIMS Jammu, shared her enthusiasm: "With this new MFM unit, our aim is to bring comprehensive, world-class care to the families of Jammu and Kashmir under one roof. Expectant mothers will have

access to advanced ultrasound scans for a detailed look at their baby's health, alongside early screening for conditions like pre-eclampsia and growth issues. Our collaboration with the genomics team will be invaluable in providing precise information and support to families when there are concerns about fetal development. We are dedicated to guiding and supporting them throughout their pregnancy journey."

Prof (Dr) Shakti Kumar Gupta, Executive Director and CEO of AIIMS Jammu, emphasized the importance of this development: "AIIMS Jammu is committed to providing the highest standard of healthcare. This Maternal and Fetal Medicine unit, particularly with its linkage to our advanced genomics centre, represents a significant step forward. It will enable us to address complex pregnancy issues with greater precision, offering advanced and personalized care that is not widely available. We believe this will make a substantial difference in ensuring more healthy mothers and healthy babies in our region."

The launch of this new MFM unit at AIIMS Jammu, combining expert fetal care with the insights of modern genomic medicine, promises a brighter and healthier future for expectant mothers and their babies in Jammu and Kashmir.

Rahul meets victims of Pak shelling in Poonch

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

POONCH: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday met the victims of cross-border shelling by Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch and described the damage caused as a "big tragedy", pledging to high-light their plight at the national level.

The leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha visited Poonch town and interacted with the affected population, including the families who lost their members in the shelling between May 7 and May 10, for over an hour.

"It is a big tragedy. Many people lost their lives. They (Pakistan army) have hit civilian targets directly. I talked to the people and tried to understand their problems and they have asked me to raise their issues at the national level, which I will do," Gandhi told reporters.

Later, in a post on X, he said, "Today I met the families of those who lost their lives in shelling by Pakistani troops in Poonch. Damaged houses, scattered belongings, moist eyes and painful stories of losing loved ones - these patriotic families bear the biggest burden of war with courage and dignity every time. Salute to their courage."

"I stand strongly with the victim families -- I will definitely raise their demands and issues at the national level," he added.

Gandhi was accompanied by Jammu and Kashmir Jal



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi meeting with victims of cross-border shelling by Pakistan at Poonch.

Shakti Minister Javed Ahmed Rana; senior Congress leaders including AICC general secretary in-charge of the party's Jammu and Kashmir affairs Syed Naseer Hussain, AICC General Secretary G A Mir and J&K unit chief Tariq Hameed Karra; and former ministers Vikar Rasool Wani and Lal Singh.

This was Gandhi's second visit to the Union territory since the dastardly April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that claimed the lives of 26 people, mostly tourists.

On Saturday morning, the former Congress chief reached the Jammu airport and left for Poonch in a helicopter to assess the ground situation. He visited several homes that were damaged during the shelling, interacted with the victims and expressed solidarity with them.

He also visited Gurdwara Singh Sabha, Jamia Zia Ul Uloom, Sanatan Dharam Sabha and Christ High School.

The Poonch sector witnessed heavy artillery and

mortar shelling after India carried out precision strikes under Operation Sindoor on nine terror hubs in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir on May 7 in response to the Pahalgam massacre.

A wave of artillery shelling, missiles and drone strikes by Pakistan killed 28 people, 13 in Poonch district alone, and injured more than 70 across Jammu and Kashmir between May 7 and 10.

Thousands moved hearth and home from areas near the Line of Control and the International Border to seek refuge in government-run relief camps.

India and Pakistan reached an understanding on May 10 to end the military confrontation after four days of intense cross-border drone and missile strikes.

Expressing solidarity with the bereaved families, Jal Shakti Minister Rana said the locals have suffered immense pain and loss, and "we need to join hands and make a real difference in their lives".

"Our government led by

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is committed to reach all those households that have suffered losses. We are duty-bound to provide relief to them to help them rebuild their lives," the minister said.

The government has announced an ex-gratia relief of Rs 10 lakh for the families of those killed in the shelling by Pakistan.

Gandhi and Rana assessed the extent of damage caused by the shelling and assured the people of prioritising restoration work.

They emphasised the need for immediate action to address the humanitarian needs of those affected by the shelling, an official said.

Earlier, Rana conducted an extensive tour of the border areas and instructed officers to engage closely with the victim families and extend all possible support to them.

He directed that compensation to the affected people should be processed expeditiously, ensuring that they receive the necessary assistance to rebuild their lives.

Earlier in the day, J&K Congress chief Karra said, "Gandhi is the first national leader to reach out to the affected population to express his solidarity and share their pain."

During his visit to Jammu and Kashmir last month, Gandhi said the idea behind the terror strike was to divide the people of the country and it was imperative that India stands united to defeat terrorism once and for all.

Foundation stone of new infrastructure at Hazratbal by LG is foundation for a concrete journey ahead: Darakhshan

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir Manoj Sinha laid the foundation stone of Guest House Complex in presence of Chairperson of J&K Waqf Board Dr Syed Darakhshan Andrabi on Saturday in Dargah Hazratbal Complex in Srinagar.

The event was attended by a large number of religious scholars, intellectuals and the people of the area. Director General of Police Nalin Peabhat, IGP Viridhi Kumar Birdi, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Vijay Kumar Bhiduri and Waqf Board members Dr G N Haleem & Peerzada Mohammad Hussain Haqqani were also present on the occasion.

In her welcome address, Dr Andrabi thanked the Lieutenant Governor for gracing the event and laying the foundation for the new project today. She said that Waqf Board as the custodian of



Chairperson JKWB Dr Syed Darakhshan Andrabi honouring Lt Governor Manoj Sinha.

important spiritual centres throughout Jammu and Kashmir has completely transformed the management system and ensured a transparent financial management in the Board.

Dr Darakhshan thanked the LG and the administration for support to the Waqf Board for implementing its reformative projects amid grave opposition from the opponents. She said that upgradation of facilities

at Waqf Board managed shrines has remained the priority of the Board and we have succeeded to facelift all important spiritual sites in whole of the UT. Andrabi said that the need for a Guest House was assessed by the Board and we are feeling honoured by the blessings of Lieutenant Governor in this event.

Lieutenant Governor praised Waqf Board and Dr Andrabi for new infrastructural project

ADC reviews progress of work on Akhnoor-Poonch Highway project

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Additional Deputy Commissioner Jammu Rakesh Kumar on Saturday conducted a field visit to review the ongoing work on the Akhnoor-Poonch Highway project in the Akhnoor subdivision. During the visit, the ADC reviewed various aspects of the project and took stock of issues related to land acquisition and compensation. He interacted with affect-



ed landowners and local residents, and provided on-the-spot redressal in several compensa-

tion related cases, ensuring prompt resolution to facilitate smooth progress of work. ADC

Rakesh Kumar was accompanied by Assistant Commissioner Revenue Dr. Rajesh Kumar; SDM Akhnoor Mukhter Ahmed, Tehsildar Akhnoor Naresh Kumar and other concerned officers. The highway, being executed by the Border Roads Organisation, is a key infrastructure project aimed at enhancing regional connectivity and supporting strategic requirements.