

# Dr Jitendra addresses Pensioners' workshop at Jammu, describes elder citizens as essential stakeholders

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**  
**JAMMU:** "Pensioners and elder citizens are essential stakeholders in making a developed India by the year 2047", said Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh here on Friday. He said the government is simplifying procedures related to disbursement of pensions in order to provide to beneficiaries ease of living, and consign their energies to the task of nation building.

Dr Singh was speaking at the 54th Pre-Retirement Counselling Workshop organised by the Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare under the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions at Convention Centre, Jammu.

"The Government is utilising the latest and best available technology to minimise delays and improve the administrative procedures concerning pension", the Minister said. He stated that the government has resolved to utilise the expertise of retiring employees and make them part of a 'Team



Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh addressing the Pre-Retirement Counselling Workshop at Convention Centre, Jammu on Friday.

India which has been tasked with realising the goal of a developed India.

The Union Minister said that under the patronage of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, the government has ushered in revolutionary administrative reforms and done away with colonial, archaic and obsolete rules and laws.

"All this has been done to ensure citizen-centre governance, with increased transparency, accountability and ease of living", he pointed out. Dr Singh informed that divorced daughters and widows as well as spouses of missing or disappeared government servants, particularly in J&K, are now entitled to receive pension, which was not the case in the past.

Dr Jitendra said that facial recognition technology is now being used to issue Digital Life Certificates (DLC) to pensioners to prevent fraud, bring in ease and comfort as well as save time and energy of the pensioners. "The government has introduced human intervention in Artificial Intelligence. This unique and out-of-the-box initiative is aimed at gathering feedback from complainants through the setting up of a Human Desk' with a human touch, he highlighted.

The Union Minister expressed delight at the success of CPGRAMS which is an online platform available to the citizens round-the-clock to lodge their grievances to the public authorities on any subject related to service delivery. "This success story is being emulated by Bangladesh, the Maldives and South Africa", he informed.

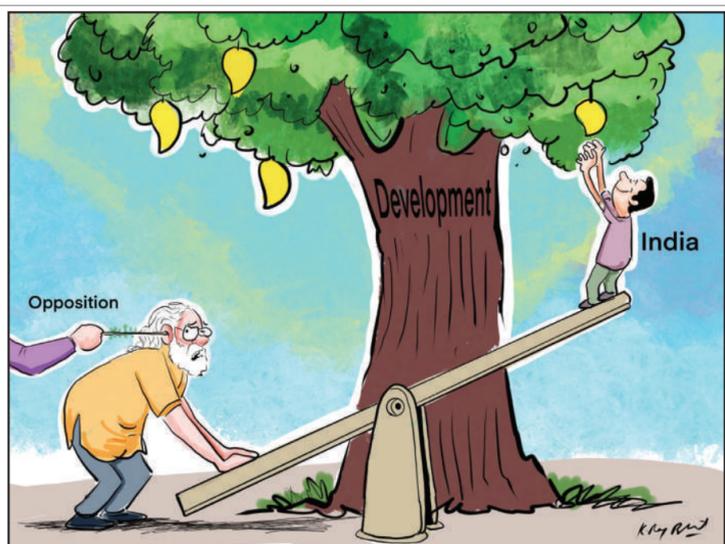
The Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare has been conducting Pre-Retirement Counselling workshops, throughout the country, as part of Good Governance, to facilitate officials who are about to retire, in the superannuation process.

The Workshop, being held for the benefit of retiring employees of the Government of India, is a revolutionary step in the direction of 'Ease of Living' for the pensioners. In the workshop, soon to be retiring employees, will be provided

relevant information related to the retirement benefits and pension sanction process.

In order to facilitate the smooth transition for the retiring employees, various sessions on BHAVISHYA Portal, Integrated Pensioners Portal, Retirement Benefits, Family Pension, CGHS, Income Tax Rules, ANUBHAV, Digital Life Certificate, Investment modes and opportunities, etc. will be conducted. All these sessions have been curated to make the retirees aware of the process to be followed and forms to be filled pre-retirement and to provide information about the benefits available to them post-retirement.

It is expected that about 250 retirees, due to retire in the next 9 months, will be benefited hugely from this Pre-Retirement Counselling (PRC) Workshop. The Department will continue to hold such workshops, as part of Good Governance to ensure a smooth and comfortable transition for Central Government retirees. The department is taking all efforts to keep them updated of the Government initiatives being taken so that they can avail all the benefits, post retirement.



# Nai Basti shopkeepers protesting for relocation before demolition of shops

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**  
**JAMMU:** Traders in Nai Basti held a strong protest against the widening of roads and construction of a flyover by the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI).

The agitating traders, who had gathered outside their shops in large number, claimed that the road and bridge construction works will affect their businesses which are already facing challenges due to consecutive lockdowns and the political turmoil in the region.

"This protest was observed to wake up the NHAI administration and the Union Territory Government from the deep slumber as they're evicting people from their lands and businesses forcibly," one of the protestors said.

"We've been living in Nai Basti and running our business establishments from this area for the past almost six to seven decades. Now that NHAI has been widening the roads and constructing the flyover against the will of people,



Nai Basti shopkeepers raising slogans during a protest.

Government should settle the affected people somewhere else prior to launching the forcible eviction and demolition drives," he further said, adding that this is "pathetic." They argued that their shops have been in operation for decades, and they are facing enough challenges due to economic downturns and political instability in the region. The protestors are demanding that the NHAI and the Union Territory Government relocate them and settle them somewhere else before starting any forced eviction or demolition drives.

They feel that their businesses and livelihoods should not be disrupted without proper arrangements being made for their relocation.

They criticised NHAI and the government for allegedly proceeding with the road widening and flyover construction plans without adequate consultation or consideration for the impact on local businesses and residents. The protestors accused them of acting against the will of the people and ignoring their concerns.

# STD lays focus on revenue argumentation, 100% return compliance

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**  
**JAMMU:** Additional Commissioner State Taxes Administration & Enforcement, State Taxes Department (STD) Jammu, Namrita Dogra on Friday chaired a dealers meet with taxpayers of Circle L-Jammu and reviewed first quarter's financial position of fiscal year 2024-25 ending this June. The meeting also deliberated on devising a strategy for revenue argumentation during remaining three quarters and ensure 100% return compliance. State Tax Officer, Circle-L, Kusum Gupta; State Tax Officer, Ruchi Gupta; State



Addl Comm STA, Namrita Dogra chairing a dealers meet.

Taxes Officer Additional Commissioner, State Taxes Roopali Sadotra, representatives of taxpayers dealing in trade like automobiles, work contracts, builders, oil paints & varnishing, service

Dealer' initiative, launched to increase communication of circle level officers with the taxpayers to know their trade specific grievances and shortfalls. The meeting pivotal for getting feedback from taxpayers and to make them aware of the consequences of non-compliance and tax evasions with a view to create deterrence amongst the taxpayers. Speaking on the occasion, Additional Commissioner appreciated the taxpayers for travelling all the way from different parts of country to attend meeting. She stressed on 100% return compliance and clearing all the blocked payments.

She also encouraged the business representatives to openly share their grievances at appropriate forums. The taxpayer's were also advised to keep their stock position and sales align with tax statements to ensure transparency. During the meeting, STO Circle-L, Kusum Gupta briefed the meeting about agenda of meeting and introduced the dealers. One to one discussion was held with each representative to assess the tax position in Jammu and Kashmir, as well as nationally.

On the spot directions were also issued to non-compliant dealers to clear their ITC reversals and mismatches, blocked of tax amount or any dispute shown in tax books.

# Sadhu Samaj playing vital role in successful conduct of Amarnath Yatra: Yudhvir Sethi

Highlights profound significance of Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra as a symbol of Peace & Harmony



Yudhvir Sethi, Vice President of J&K BJP speaking at a programme.

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**  
**JAMMU:** Yudhvir Sethi, Vice President of J&K BJP, emphasized the profound significance of Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra in Indian tradition, describing it as a symbol of peace, harmony, and inclusive growth.

The senior BJP leader was speaking during his participation in the ongoing Bhandara for Sadhus at Ram Mandir Purani Mandi in Jammu. Hundreds of BJP workers accompanied Yudhvir Sethi.

The Bhandara, organized annually by Maha Mandleshwar Mahant Rameshwar Dass Ji, provides food and accommodation for Sadhus from across the country who undertake the Amarnath pilgrimage. Yudhvir commended Mahant

Rameshwar Dass for his unwavering dedication to this noble cause, recognizing the vital role such efforts play in the success and smooth conduct of the Yatra.

"Shri Amarnath Yatra holds great relevance in our tradition, serving as a beacon of peace, harmony, and inclusive growth. This annual pilgrimage brings together seekers and keepers of divine wisdom from all corners of our nation to celebrate one of the oldest spiritual traditions of India," he added.

Yudhvir Sethi highlighted that the Yatra exemplifies the principle of Unity in Diversity, as people from various faiths and sects collaborate to ensure a seamless and enriching experience for the pilgrims. "The Yatra sows the seed of bliss and paves the path for inner transformation while promoting our rich cultural ethos," he added.

The Vice President of J&K BJP also expressed his admiration for the Sadhu Samaj, including Mahant Rameshwar Dass Ji, for their pivotal role in organizing the Bhandara.

"Their selfless service in providing food and accommodation to the Sadhus visiting Jammu for the Amarnath Yatra is truly commendable," Sethi remarked.

He reiterated that such initiatives not only facilitate the pilgrimage but also reinforce the spirit of unity and mutual respect among different communities.

Sethi concluded by urging everyone to support and participate in the Yatra, ensuring its continued success and the preservation of its sanctity.

# CS reviews progress of J&K EPFO transition to Central EPFO



Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo chairing a meeting.

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**  
**SRINAGAR:** Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, on Friday chaired a meeting at Civil Secretariat to review the progress of transitioning the Jammu and Kashmir Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (JK EPFO) to the Central EPFO under the Ministry of Labour & Employment, GoI.

The meeting highlighted a substantial increase in subscriber accounts. Before 2019, there were 490,336 accounts, and this number has grown to 768,993 post-transition.

Similarly, the number of settled claims has risen considerably with 477,090 claims settled, amounting to ₹2,348 crore.

It was noted that the transition process is almost complete with the majority of subscriber accounts digitized and transferred to the Central EPF Database.

The meeting discussed the status of compliance with Government Order No.37-L&E of 2023 dated July 11, 2023, which pertains to the allocation of assets, manpower, and buildings between the J&K government and the Central EPFO.

Chief Secretary expressed satisfaction with the overall transition progress and directed immediate action to resolve any remaining pending issues.

# Cong and allies systematically denigrating security forces: Rana

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**  
**JAMMU:** Asserting his party's unwavering commitment to wipe out terrorism and its ecosystem from Jammu and Kashmir; Senior BJP leader, Devender Singh Rana on Friday expressed serious concern over the Congress and its allies were systematically and sinisterly working towards demoralizing and denigrating the security apparatus to weaken the country and overtly or covertly encouraging the nefarious break-India forces.

"These political outfits, having remained in the cradle of power in the past most of the time since independence, have been attempting to give the rogue neighbour in the backyards and her sympathizers in Jammu and Kashmir a psychological advantage, thereby compromising the national security", Rana said while interacting with media persons after holding a public hearing at the BJP headquarters accompanied by Mumish Sharma, BJYM Prabhari, Veena Khanna, Secretary BJP, and Prof. Kulbushan Mohitra. In charge Nanaji Deshmukh Library and e-library, here this afternoon.

Devender Rana said the actions of the Congress and its allies are not just limited to



Senior BJP leader, Devender Singh Rana listening to public issues.

shielding the terrorists by describing them as misguided youth but also voluntarily becoming an active part of creating narratives that question the legitimacy of national security measures and counter terror operations. This is a deliberate attempt to sow discord and destabilize the integrity of the nation, he added.

The Senior BJP leader castigated the political parties using militancy as a tool to garner support of vote bank, which in turn emboldens anti national elements as the attempt is to undermine the efforts of security forces to tackle terrorism effectively and decisively, he said, adding that such an irresponsible behaviour compromises safety and security of the people of the country in general and those in Jammu and Kashmir in particular.

Rana asserted the BJP's commitment to take stringent action against elements, trying to remain on both sides of the fence, for their covert support to break India forces and providing a sort of shield to separatists and violence mongers for scoring brownie political points. He said the Congress and its allies stand exposed for their divisive politics. These outfits can go to any extent in sheer desperation for the sake of power and this is time for compatriots to foil their machinations, he added.

Earlier, Rana listened to various individual and collective problems projected by the people during the public hearing and assured that these will be taken up at an appropriate forum for earnest redressal. He said the BJP has been endeavouring to ease the life of people by ensuring dependable utility services and deliverance of the promises.

# Is NEET a better option? What measures are required to infuse confidence among aspirants?

**Akarshit,** Law Student  
 The NEET results for the year 2024 can be described as one of the biggest fails of the National Testing Agency (NTA). It is a scam conducted by the bureaucrats of NTA with the diligent aspirants. This poor management in the working and commencement of exams could be seen in other NTA administered examinations like CUET UG and NEET PG. The stand of NTA in this entire episode still remains questionable.

**Raghav,** Student  
 The NEET paper leak scandal is a testament to the NTA's failure and the plight of the innocent and hard-working students, who dedicated their entire year preparing for the examination. But, the way in which the exam and results were handled show the vulnerabilities in our justice and education system. Such incidents shatter the morale of the students and can lead them into depression. Proper investigation is required.

**Akash Rajput,** Student  
 NTA is one of the prominent agencies in India. It is very disheartening and shameful to see such reputed agency allegedly turning education into a profit driven enterprise and jeopardizing the future of our children. The lack of accountability for the harm inflicted upon students is concerning. It's our plea to the government to ban the NTA completely and refrain it from conducting any exam in the future.

**Ajay Lakhotra,** President NSUI (J&K)  
 I view the paper leak scam as a clear failure on the part of the Government. Despite numerous evidences proving the involvement of several malpractices throughout the process still no action has been taken. Sadly, the issue of paper leaks has been normalized in our country. It is crucial to conduct a fair and proper retest and the procedure should be made more transparent for the general public.

**Prabdeep Singh,** General Secretary NSUI (J&K)  
 It is a matter of great shame and concern for our country that a career altering examination has reduced to a farce. The trust and the spirits of the students have been severely damaged, prompting us to question the role of the government, which has fallen asleep while such incidents keep on occurring frequently. All those found guilty should be suspended or dismissed. This is the need of the hour to alter the whole working system so that such incidents don't repeat in the future as well.

