

CM addresses valedictory function of IIT Jammu's Summer School



Chief Minister Omar Abdullah with students and faculty at valedictory function of Summer School: 2025 at IIT Jammu.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday presided over the valedictory function of Summer School: 2025 at the Indian Institute of Technology Jammu, marking the successful conclusion of a month-long programme that brought together over a thousand students from across the nation. Speaking at the ceremony, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah lauded IIT Jammu as a hub of talent and underscored the significance of such initiatives in providing young people, particularly from Jammu and Kashmir, with platforms to grow and realise their potential.

Such programmes must encourage broad-based participation and give students from J&K the opportunity to turn their ideas into action, the Chief Minister emphasised.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah revealed that the J&K Government is actively exploring collaborative opportunities with IIT Jammu across multiple domains, including water conservation, climate change

adaptation, industrial growth and business incubation. IIT backing lends credibility to any project, he observed, adding that the government remains committed to fostering venture funding framework that support innovation. The Chief Minister welcomed the institute's proposals on tourism interventions and green transport solutions, while encouraging students from outside the region to explore Jammu and Kashmir and serve as its ambassadors.

Reflecting on recent challenges, the CM struck an optimistic note, "The unfortunate incident earlier this year is behind us now. Our focus is to hand over a better, more empowered Jammu and Kashmir to this generation. May the future generations carve out opportunities through challenges". Advisor to the Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani, who was also present at the function, described IIT Jammu as a landmark institution of the region and stressed the need to enhance and expand

sectors such as tourism and hospitality. Tourism is our unique strength and we must continue to build on it through innovation, training and infrastructure, Wani stated. The initiative, organised under IIT Jammu's innovation ecosystem, witnessed remarkable participation from students representing more than 25 states and union territories. In a significant indicator of the region's growing aspirations for technical skills, nearly one-third of the participants, 319 students, came from Jammu and Kashmir itself.

Students from diverse backgrounds converged at the campus, including representatives from Delhi, Punjab, Karnataka, Bihar, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Manipur and several northeastern and eastern states. The programme offered structured learning modules in cutting-edge technologies including Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity, Full Stack Web Development, Internet of Things (IoT), Data Science and Additive Manufacturing.

Each module comprised over 40 hours of intensive instructions, combining theoretical lec-

tures with hands-on training, industry interactions and feedback-driven mentoring sessions.

The programme brought together faculty, researchers and education partners, including alumni-led startups, who contributed significantly to the initiative's delivery.

The ceremony was attended by senior dignitaries including Director IIT Jammu Dr Manoj Gaur, Board of Governors' Chairman Sharad Kumar Saraf, Chief Innovation Officer Prof MT Arvind and Dr Navneet, along with faculty and students.

BJP felicitates Kavinder Gupta on appointment as Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In a grand and emotionally charged function held at the BJP headquarters, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu, hundreds of leaders and activists of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Jammu & Kashmir, gathered to felicitate senior leader Kavinder Gupta on his appointment as the new Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh Union Territory.

The auditorium was packed with enthusiastic party workers and supporters who came together to celebrate the elevation of one of the party's most dedicated leaders.

Among the prominent leaders present were J&K BJP President Sat Sharma, Leader of Opposition Sunil Sharma, BJP General Secretary (Organization) Ashok Koul, MP Jugal Kishore Sharma, former Dy CM Dr. Nirmal Singh, General Secretary & MLA Dr. Devinder Kumar Manyal, General Secretary Adv. Vibodh Gupta, former MLA Ashok Khajuria, and MLA Ch. Vikram Randhawa, among others.

Kavinder Gupta, who earlier served as Deputy Chief Minister and Speaker in the erstwhile BJP-PDP coalition government, has had an illustrious political journey.



J&K BJP senior leaders felicitating Kavinder Gupta.

He also served thrice as Mayor of Jammu, has remained a committed RSS Swayamsevak from his student days, served the jail term during emergency and played his part on key party positions.

Speaking on the occasion, Sat Sharma lauded Kavinder Gupta's appointment and termed it a proud moment for every party worker. "Kavinder's elevation is not just a personal achievement but an inspiration for every grassroots activist. His disciplined life, ideological clarity, and organizational commitment set him apart

as a leader with both vision and humility. We have all seen him grow through the ranks, and he has remained grounded throughout. His journey shows how BJP nurtures leadership from the bottom up," Sharma said, adding that the party remains united as a strong ideological and organizational force. Leader of Opposition Sunil Sharma called Kavinder Gupta's political journey a beacon of hope for thousands of BJP workers. "His life teaches us that hard work, dedication, and ideological conviction can help one reach any position," he said.

Ashok Koul emphasized that BJP values the contribution of every activist and stands firm on its ideological and organizational pillars.

Jugal Kishore Sharma praised Gupta's commitment and his selfless service in every responsibility he has shouldered.

Expressing his gratitude, Kavinder Gupta shared anecdotes from his early days as an RSS volunteer and highlighted how his political journey was driven by service, dedication, and teamwork.

"From Sangrur during the Emergency to serving in various key roles, it has been a long journey. In BJP, no background is too humble, only commitment matters," he said. He also reiterated his commitment to serving the people of Ladakh with utmost sincerity and dedication.

Gupta paid tribute to icons like Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, and Pandit Prem Nath Dogra, and said he draws strength from their vision.

He pledged to work in close coordination with the administration in Ladakh and leave no stone unturned in fulfilling the aspirations of the people.

Central Secretariat Officers call on Dr Jitendra, discuss their promotion issues



A delegation of young Central Secretariat Officers calling on Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh at DoPT, North Block, New Delhi on Wednesday.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: A delegation of young Central Secretariat Officers comprising Assistant Section Officers (ASOs) of the 2014 batch, currently posted across various Ministries and Departments of the Government of India, on Wednesday called on Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology, Dr. Jitendra Singh, and expressed their gratitude for his consistent support in addressing promotion-related matters and other service issues.

The members of the delegation also took up with the Minister, the issue of pending promotions, to which the latter gave a patient hearing and issued instructions to resolve the same.

During the interaction, the officers appreciated the proactive steps taken under PM Narendra Modi's leadership to resolve their long-pending concerns. They acknowledged that the stagnation in promotions and service matters had been taken up seriously and resolved from time to time.

The officers especially thanked Dr. Jitendra Singh for his personal indulgence in listening to their grievances and for his guidance in ensuring

timely and effective redressal through the concerned departments.

Dr. Jitendra commended the young officers for their dedication and commitment, and encouraged them to make the most of the government's flagship capacity-building programme, Mission Karmayogi, by actively using the iGOT Karmayogi portal to upskill and align themselves with the future needs of governance.

"In the Amrit Kaal of India's growth journey, it is imperative that every government servant becomes a catalyst of change and a proactive contributor to Viksit Bharat@2047," said Dr. Singh.

As part of the interaction, Dr. Jitendra also highlighted the importance of the Central Staffing Scheme (CSS), which offers a unique opportunity for officers to gain exposure to diverse areas of governance by serving in key positions at the Centre.

He encouraged the ASOs to aspire for such roles in the future, emphasizing that the scheme not only enhances an officer's administrative acumen but also plays a vital role in shaping national policy.

JKB Financial Services crosses Rs 400 Cr milestone in Mutual Fund Asset Management

J&K Bank MD & CEO hails JKBFSL as a key growth catalyst

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: JKB Financial Services Limited (JKBFSL) - the wholly owned subsidiary of J&K Bank - celebrated a major milestone today by crossing Rs 400 Crore in Mutual Fund Assets under Management (AUM) at a special function held here at its corporate office.

The function was presided over by J&K Bank MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee, who also chairs the JKBFSL Board, in the presence of Bank's Executive Director Sudhir Gupta, General Manager (Cross Selling) Narjay Gupta, General Manager (Subsidiary Management) Syed Rais Maqbool and MD JKBFSL Syed Aadil Bashir Andrabi. The function was also attended by JKBFSL's Company Secretary Mudassir Ahmad, Chief Financial Officer Ashiq Hussain Sheikh, Head Technology Sakib Ali, Risk Head Zaffer Hamid, Territory Heads of J&K and other senior functionaries of both the Bank and JKBFSL.

While congratulating the subsidiary for the milestone, MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee said, "I congratulate the entire team of JKBFSL for this milestone, which reflects the trust our cus-



tomers have placed in Brand J&K Bank. I consider JKBFSL one of the most important arms of the Bank and a catalyst in its growth journey."

"Brand JKB provides you a spring board to take JKBFSL to greater heights - and you will always have our full support and guidance", he added.

Commending the company's growth trajectory, Amitava Chatterjee added, "Although your numbers and performance reflect your commitment and hard work, but we cannot rest on laurels only. The mutual fund space offers tremendous untapped potential, both within J&K, Ladakh and in rest of the country. Let's work together to position JKBFSL

SL as the go-to trading and investment platform."

On the technology front, he expressed pleasure with the way JKBFSL's digital infrastructure has evolved over the years. "You offer one of the best trading apps with a user-friendly interface. The time is ripe to deepen our presence in the trading ecosystem by delivering superior service and offering relevant, high-quality products to clients-anytime, anywhere", he remarked.

Executive Director Sudhir Gupta also lauded the team FSL, saying, "You truly deserve applaud for the outstanding performance in FY 2024-25, which saw significant improvement across all

key parameters. I am confident your growth story will only get stronger in the years ahead, with JKBFSL emerging as a shining star of the J&K Bank Brand." Sharing an overview of the subsidiary's performance on the occasion, MD Syed Aadil Bashir said, "In less than fifteen months, our AUM has doubled, the overall trading volume has increased considerably while our cost-to-income ratio has trended downward, and we have expanded our suite of digital offerings through state-of-the-art interventions."

Highlighting the customer trust along with guidance from Bank's leadership as key enablers, he said, "The trust reposed in us by our customers and the guidance of our parent organization and its leadership give us the confidence and motivation to redouble our efforts and aim even higher. We are committed to building on this momentum and expanding our offerings with the same dedication."

The event concluded with a vote of thanks and a collective in reiteration to contribute meaningfully to the growth story of the Bank and along with its subsidiary.

Caste enumeration is included in forthcoming population census, Muslims too will have to mention the 'caste' there

Including caste enumeration in forth coming Population census may help in making some indirect evaluation analysis in the spirits of Art-341 of COI NDA-IV Modi Govt deciding to include caste enumeration in Census raises hopes for real good to many SC/ST /OBC

■ DAYA SAGAR

One may ask what has been the need for the Nitish Kumar lead Bihar Government to get caste census conducted for the State of Bihar and why the Rahul Gandhi had been so particularly requesting GOI to include mention of caste in the next population census which is overdue? Why present central government has also decided to include Caste enumeration in forth coming Population census ?, To have some idea for the reasons for caste census demands let us have a look at the spirits / intentions of the constituent assembly of India that drafted Art -334 laying down that the reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes in the House of the People and in the Legislative Assemblies of the States to cease after 10 yrs (upto 1960) had surely very hopefully hoped that the leadership in Independent India would take the common welfare as priority number one, where as the achievement has been nowhere to the anticipations since instead even the title of Art-334 has been to read as, Art - 334 [Reservation of seats and special representation to cease after certain period] and as regards the limiting

period it has been also amended [Subs. by the Constitution (One Hundred and Fourth Amendment) Act, 2019, s. 2, for "seventy years" (w.e.f. 25-1-2020)] to read [< Notwithstanding anything in the foregoing provisions of this Part, the provisions of this Constitution relating to... reservations... shall cease to have effect on the expiration of a period of eighty years in respect of clause (a) from the commencement of this Constitution:] . That means constitution has been amended 7 times to further increase the reservations. Additionally Art-335 had also provided that . Claims of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to services and posts consistently with the maintenance of efficiency of administration, in the making of appointments to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State. The reservations were also created for SC and ST in services and educational institutions in same proportions for SC & ST although Art-335 did not specify any quantum and time limits. Not only that even need was felt for more backward people/ classes for providing special sports over the years in the name of OBC (other backward classes) but they have not been

given reservations in the legislative assemblies / Lok Sabha. That means the schemes / policies

as implemented over 7 decades have not been able to benefit the masses as was anticipated. Extensions have given and new 'members' have been included/ identified as OBC without pinning the reasons for not achieving the goals/ for short falls .

Constitution of India had provisioned in terms of Art- 340 for Appointment of a Commission to investigate the conditions of backward classes laying down that-(1) The President may by order appoint a Commission consisting of such persons as he thinks fit to investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes within the territory of India and the difficulties under which they labour and to make recommendations as to the steps that should be taken by the Union or any State to remove such difficulties and to improve their condition and as to the grants that should be made for the purpose by the Union or any State and the conditions subject to which such grants should



A Look through the Mist Part-II

be made, and the order appointing such Commission shall define the procedure to be followed by the Commission. (2) A

Commission so appointed shall investigate the matters referred to them and present to the President a report setting out the facts as found by them and making such recommendations as they think proper: (3) The President shall cause a copy of the report so presented together with a memorandum explaining the action taken thereon to be laid before each House of Parliament. But it appears that provisions of this article have not been truthfully used to pin the failures of implementing agencies so as to apply corrections since had that been done the position would have different and the benefits of special provisions would have reached to the majority of the under privileged and the discriminated so as to reduce the number of suffering subjects of India. Other aspect that need critical attention is that under Art 341 and Art 342 identification of Socially and educationally backwards (SC) and Schedule Tribes (ST) were left to executive without

any pointedly named parameters. For general understanding SC can be introduced something like < SC means those castes, races, or tribes characterized by historical social and ritual disabilities, marginalization, and oppression in the Indian context > and ST means those indigenous or tribal communities characterized by distinctive culture, traditional dependence on forest or land-based livelihood and historical marginalization in the Indian context > . Not only that whole mass of SC and ST have all these years been treated as a homogeneously backward community comprising of thousands of castes/sub castes/ tribes/ sub tribes with varied degree of backwardness within them. May be backwards within backwards have not been able to lay hands on the special supports and have still remained fence sitters.

So now with caste census the heterogeneous mass of the SC & ST and even the OBC would be better known . Some meaningful investigations using the provisions of Art-340 would be conducted , even some pinning expressions about the backwardness would be well crafted which could have not been intimately done in 1950 thereby making the supports extended in

the form of reservations in legislature and superior administration not to reach adequately the 'backward' amongst the backwards who remained standing in the back rows all these years .

Yes the Muslim too will have to name their castes (sects) this time and this could be good opportunity for their socio political leadership of Muslim to also accept that in them also social discrimination exists (if it is so like 'Hindu') as had been accepted by SIKH and Buddhist leaderships whose socially backward castes have also been given the status of SC. They should shed the demands in the name Pasmanda Muslims from among Muslims as a separate identity of under privileged Indians based on religion. Once they too accept social discrimination having prevailed in them also they would be entitled to become part of SC and reservation for SC could be raised beyond present 15 % and they would also come out of the unfair influence of political leaderships giving them hopes for religion based unconstitutional provision to come.

To be continued (The writer is Sr Journalist & analyst of J&K affairs)