

# IIM Jammu, CSIR-IIIM ink MoU to foster interdisciplinary research, innovation, entrepreneurship

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (CSIR-IIIM), Jammu, to foster interdisciplinary research, innovation, entrepreneurship, and regional development.

This strategic partnership brings together CSIR-IIIM's scientific leadership in natural product discovery, biotechnology, and drug development, and IIM Jammu's strengths in management education, business research, and innovation-led governance. The MoU was formally signed by Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu, and Dr. Zabeer Ahmed, Director, CSIR-IIIM, in the presence of senior faculty members and officials from both institu-



Director IIM Jammu, Prof. B.S. Sahay, and Director CSIR-IIIM, Dr. Zabeer Ahmed signing MoU at Jammu on Wednesday.

tions. The agreement establishes a broad framework for collaboration, aligning IIM Jammu's capabilities in strategic management, public policy, executive education, and entrepreneurship and CSIR-IIIM's expertise in scientific research, integrative medicine, and translational technologies with. Built on shared institutional values and a commitment to interdisciplinary excellence, the collaboration seeks to address complex societal challenges through a synthe-

sis of technical innovation and managerial acumen. The partnership is designed to facilitate joint research projects and interdisciplinary studies, with a particular focus on innovation management and the commercialization of scientific outcomes into scalable, market-ready solutions—especially in the domain of herbal and natural products. The MoU envisions academic and student exchanges, faculty and scientist mobility for collaborative engage-

ment, and joint organization of seminars, conferences, workshops, and policy roundtables to enhance knowledge dissemination. Prof. Sahay remarked that the MoU represents a significant step in bridging the gap between science and management. He noted that this collaboration between two premier institutions will not only drive innovation but also generate sustainable, socially relevant outcomes that will contribute to the development of the Jammu

and Kashmir region and beyond. Dr. Zabeer Ahmed highlighted the importance of the partnership, stating that this MoU marks a pivotal milestone in bridging scientific innovation with management acumen. It will drive advancements in areas like pharma commercialization, sustainable agro-technologies, and biotech entrepreneurship, ultimately translating discoveries into societal benefits. Also present on the occasion were Prof. Rajesh Sikka, Faculty, IIM Jammu, Er. Abdul Rahim, Chief Scientist & Head, RMBD& IST; Dr. Saurabh Saran, Principal Scientist; Dr. Suphla Gupta, Senior Principal Scientist; and Dr. Love Sharma, Scientist, CSIR-IIIM, Jammu; and Cmr. Kesavan Baskkaran, Chief Administrative Officer, IIM Jammu.

# Home Guard Welfare body renews demand for Legal status, benefits

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: The National Home Guard Welfare Association (NHWA) has submitted a memorandum to the Director General of Home Guards, urging immediate government action on long-pending demands concerning the legal status, wages, and welfare of Home Guard personnel across India. The association demanded the implementation of the 2015 Supreme Court order, which directed that Home Guards be paid duty allowance and minimum wages on par with police constables. It also pressed for the extension of essential service benefits, including EPF, DA, HRA, health insurance, pension, gratuity, and compassionate appointment. The NHWA reminded the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 2014 assurance in Jammu & Kashmir to mainstream Home Guards and expressed disappointment over the lack of progress even after a



NHWA delegation submitting memorandum to Director General of Home Guards.

decade. It also pointed to the unfulfilled promise of amending service rules made during the 14th All India Home Guards & Civil Defence Conference in Gandhinagar (2024). The association criticized the continued classification of Home Guards as "volunteers" despite their involvement in law enforcement, traffic management, and disaster response duties. Referring to the Uma Devi and Karnataka Supreme Court judgments, the NHWA demanded that the Home Guard Act be amended to pro-

vide them with government employee status. The memorandum concluded with an appeal for swift policy action to ensure justice and dignity for lakhs of Home Guard personnel who serve the nation without adequate recognition. The document was signed by NHWA Chairman Jhalkan Singh Rathor; President Manoj Kumar Kapila, Senior Vice President Joginder Chodiya, Vice Presidents Kamla Sharma and Mukesh Dwivedi, General Secretary Raj Shekhar; Secretary Rakesh Kumar; and Press Secretary Anirudh Dixit.

# Dr Sudhaa takes over as Secretary General NIGF

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: Dr Sudhaa Sharma, Senior Gynaecologist Madaan Hospital and Research Centre Jammu, has the honour of taking over as Secretary General of prestigious organisation North India Gynaecologist Forum (NIGF) at National Conference of NIGF held at Jhansi. This Forum has member gynaecologists from 7 States and 2 UTS of North India. Prof Dr Sudhaa delivered an invited guest lecture on "Fertility issues @ forty, solution and challenges" and



highlighted that Advanced Maternal Age Pregnancy is on rise globally and has potential of having wide range of adverse obstetric outcome at times, hence needs pre-conception risk assessment and

positive intervention. Quality, Individualized continuum of obstetric care can give good obstetric outcome in majority of the cases, she said. Dr Sudhaa has been working for women health for many decades and is already President Elect of Indian Menopause Society. She has been Member National Advisory Board and Journal Committee for the Journal of FOGSI (JOGI) for 5 years. She has 90 publications, 11 book chapters and edited 10 books in the field of Menopause and women health.

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: Senior BJP leader and MLA from Bahu Assembly Constituency, Ch. Vikram Randhawa, held a Public Darbar at the BJP Headquarters, Trikuta Nagar, here to address the public grievances. A large number of deputations from various areas of Jammu participated in the darbar and raised issues concerning civic amenities, infrastructure, and public services. Among other deputations, deputations from Gangval, Deep Nagar, and Laxmipuram requested for the clearance of deep drains.



MLA Bahu, Ch. Vikram Randhawa listening to public grievances at public Darbar.

Deputations from Nanak Nagar presented an issue related to CAPD for bifurcation of ration cards and a theft case. A deputation from ward 56 sector 2 Gangval garden requested for the con-

struction of central drain. A deputation from Gole Gujral requested for the issue of Rehri License. A deputation from SRTC volunteer retired employee's association requested for the

clearance of pending arrears. Deputations from Adarsh Enclave and Shiv Nagar complained about leaking PHE pipes. Deputations from Nai Basti and Karan Bagh requested for the repair of lanes and drains. A deputation from Ashok Nagar Satwari raised request for the repair of non-functional street lights. Randhawa gave a patient hearing to all deputations and immediately took up many of the issues with the concerned departments. In several instances, he issued written instructions to ensure timely action. Speaking on the occasion,

Randhawa said, "The BJP believes in reaching out directly to the people and addressing their issues on priority. These interactions help us stay connected with the ground realities. I assure the people that their grievances will be resolved in a time-bound manner. We are committed to ensuring transparency, accountability, and development across all sectors." The event was coordinated by Er. T.K. Sharma, Co-convenor of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, J&K BJP, who facilitated smooth interaction between the public and the party leadership.

# ESIC organizes awareness camp for traders, Industrialists

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: In a significant step towards strengthening social security for workers, the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) organized an awareness camp at Digiana, Jammu, aimed at sensitizing traders and industrialists about ESIC schemes and encouraging registration of their workforce. The event was spearheaded by the Regional Director of ESIC, along with Joint Director Dushyant Pandey, who addressed a gathering of business leaders and industrial unit representatives. The primary focus of the camp was to inform employers about the ongoing ESIC registration scheme, under which employers can register their left-out employees without facing any penal-



Regional Director ESIC with others at a programme.

ties. This special initiative is valid from July 1 to December 31, 2025, and is aimed at bringing more workers, especially from the unorganized sector, under the ESIC umbrella to avail benefits such as medical care, maternity leave, disability support, and more. The ESIC authorities emphasized the importance of ensuring social protection for all workers, especially those employed in small-scale industries. "The welfare of workers is

a shared responsibility. By registering employees, employers not only comply with the law but also contribute to a healthier and more secure workforce," said the Joint Director. The event witnessed active participation from members of the J&K Small Scale Industrial Association, Digiana, which includes prominent office bearers: Jatinder Aul (President), Sanjay Chopra (Sr. Vice President), Anil Modi (General Secretary), and

Ved Sharma (Vice President). Ved Sharma, who also serves as Vice President of the Association and Incharge of All Cells, BJP J&K, raised a key issue concerning unit holders. He highlighted the challenges faced by small-scale businesses in registering part-time and short-term workers under the current ESIC framework. "Small businesses often engage workers for short durations or on a part-time basis. The existing ESIC registration system doesn't accommodate such flexibility. If simplified procedures are introduced, more employers will be encouraged to come forward and register these workers as well," he stressed. On behalf of the Association, Sanjay Chopra expressed grati-

tude to the ESIC department and assured continued cooperation. He thanked the ESIC officials for conducting the awareness drive and acknowledged the efforts of association members in promoting worker welfare. The camp concluded with an interactive Q&A session where industrialists and traders sought clarifications on contribution rates, claim procedures, and employee eligibility. ESIC officials assured that all feedback would be duly forwarded to the higher authorities for necessary policy review and improvement in procedures. The awareness camp marked a significant milestone in expanding ESIC's reach and strengthening the social security net for the working class in Jammu and Kashmir.

# HC upholds PSA of anti-national

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: The High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh has upheld the preventive detention of alleged anti-national, Rehmatullah, son of Abdul Ghani Padder, a resident of Dessa Bhata, currently residing in Akramabad, Tehsil and District Doda, under the Public Safety Act (PSA). The detention, ordered under Detention Order No. PSA-02 of 2024 dated November 9, 2024, was challenged by the detainee through his counsel, Advocate Sheikh Shakeel Ahmed assisted by Advocate Rahul Raina. The detention was ordered by the District Magistrate, Doda (respondent no. 3) to prevent Rehmatullah from acting in any manner prejudicial to the security of the State. Justice MA Chowdhary,

while delivering the judgment, observed that the Detaining Authority had applied its mind after thoroughly examining the material and past conduct of the detainee, against whom five FIRs are registered. The Court found that the authority had rightly arrived at the subjective satisfaction that Rehmatullah's activities were prejudicial to the interests of the State and required preventive detention. The Court emphasized that preventive detention is a measure to safeguard society, especially when a person's actions may pose a risk to public life and property. Justice Chowdhary underlined that in circumstances where dangerous designs are suspected, it would be "dangerous for the people at large to wait and watch by the time ordinary law is set

into motion." Highlighting the principle of larger public interest, the Court noted "Where individual liberty comes into conflict with the interest of the security of the State or public order, the liberty of the individual must give way to the larger interest of the nation." While stressing that the power of preventive detention must be strictly construed in a democracy governed by the rule of law, the Court found no legal infirmity in the detention order. It ruled that the order was issued in line with the objectives of the PSA and supported by sufficient material and justification. Consequently, the petition was found to be without merit and dismissed. The Government was represented by Govt Advocate Eishaan Dadhichi.

# EPFO Jammu conducts seminars on PM Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana



**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), Regional Office Jammu, recently conducted two focused awareness seminars on the PM Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana at Jai Beverages Pvt. Ltd., Samba, and Jamkash Vehiclades (Maruti Suzuki Arena), Jammu. These seminars were part of EPFO's continuous outreach initiative aimed at educating and engaging establishments about the transformative potential of the scheme. The seminars were led by Sumeet Singh, RPF-CI, accompanied by Devinder Singh, Enforcement Officer, and Aman Dhandhi, Accounts Officer. They provided detailed presentations on the objectives, benefits, and implementation strategy of the PM Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana. A flagship initiative by the Government of India, the Yojana is designed to promote job creation and expand the formal workforce. It aims to bene-

fit approximately 1.92 crore first-time employees and facilitate the creation of over 3.5 crore new jobs, particularly in the manufacturing sector. Another session at Jamkash Vehiclades was conducted by Balkrishan and Aman Dhandhi, both Accounts Officers. The seminars focused on several key aspects, including the structure and purpose of the scheme, benefits for employers and employees, operational procedures, and the critical role employers play in formal employment generation and social security coverage. Around 60 to 70 key stakeholders, including top management and HR officials, actively participated in the sessions. Prominent attendees included T.S. Bedi, Director, Jai Beverages Pvt. Ltd. Samba, and from Jamkash Vehiclades, Maj. Gen. Jagdeep Singh Isher (CEO), Sheetal Kochar (DGM HR), and Arjun Magar (Asst. Manager HR). They praised the EPFO's efforts in creating awareness and bridging the gap between policy and implemen-

tation. T.S. Bedi remarked that such initiatives are instrumental in shaping the right approach to employment generation and ensuring the benefits reach the intended beneficiaries. He emphasized that many business houses are likely to enroll in the scheme, ultimately benefiting individuals and stakeholders alike. Participants appreciated the interactive nature of the seminars and the clarity with which the information was shared. They acknowledged EPFO's proactive role in demystifying government schemes and empowering both employers and employees through timely awareness drives. The EPFO Regional Office Jammu reiterated its commitment to organizing more such awareness sessions in the future. The organization remains dedicated to building a stronger connection between policy and practice, thereby promoting inclusive employment growth and financial security for the Indian workforce.

# Shreya, Vishal to represent India in World Championship

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: Top J&K fencers, Shreya Gupta and Vishal Thapar have been selected to represent India in the World Championship to be held at Tbilisi in Georgia this month. Both Shreya and Vishal have qualified for this prestigious tournament on the basis of ranking in recently held Asian championship at Bali in Indonesia. They had their rankings in the first eight in Sabre category, a hand-out issued by the Association here today informed. "The selection of these fencers in world championship is a result of hard work, rigorous train-



ing and commendable consistent performance put in by these prominent fencers of India," said general sec-

retary of the J&K Amateur Fencing Association, Bhanu Vijay Sharma. The Association lauded the performance of these fencers for their outstanding achievement and selection in this prestigious tournament. President of the Association, Nisha Sharma congratulated both Shreya and Vishal for bringing laurels and hoped that they will give their best to excel in the competition. The Secretary, J&K Sports Council, Nuzhut Gul has appreciated the efforts and dedication of the fencers for bringing continuously laurels for J&K at the world stage.



She said their selection has made the region proud thus thereby bringing another milestone for JKUT.

# VRS Union holds demonstration demanding long-pending dues

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: A demonstration and sit-in protest was held near the Press Club Exhibition Ground, Jammu under the leadership of Dev Raj Bali, President of the VRS Union Jammu. The protestors strongly condemned the indifferent attitude of the Transport Higher Authority and the Finance Department, alleging that both departments are working hand-in-glove to deliberately delay the settlement of the long-pending dues of VRS/GHS employees.

The union members expressed deep frustration, stating that despite the case being crystal clear and all bills already prepared and lying in the Secretariat Jammu, the authorities continue to harass them without justification. Their demands include the release of arrears, leave salary, gratuity, ex-gratia grant, and Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) arrears, which have been pending for over 12 years. The protestors highlighted the tragic fact that 75 VRS/GHS employees have passed away during this prolonged struggle, many of whom were unable to



VRS employees of RTC raising slogans during a protest.

afford proper medical treatment due to lack of funds. Their families have been left to suffer irreparable losses, and the government must be held accountable for this negligence. The union expressed disappointment over the false assurances they have repeatedly received from concerned authorities. Despite multiple representations, no concrete action has been taken. The union made a fervent appeal to the Hon'ble Chief Minister Jenab Omar Abdullah and the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir to personally intervene and resolve their legitimate demands without any further delay. The protestors reminded

the government of its original commitment that all dues would be cleared within 60 days from the date of VRS/GHS. However, this promise remains unfulfilled, and a balance amount of Rs 16,76,49,497.00 remains unpaid to 742 VRS/GHS employees of Jammu and Kashmir. They urged immediate disbursement of this amount to bring some relief to the suffering employees and their families. Among those who participated in the protest were Sat Bhushan Singh, Shine, Balwinder Singh, Shiv Kumar, Surinder Kumar, Surinder Singh, and several other members of the VRS Union.