

Dr Jitendra informs LS, cloud burst like Himalayan vulnerabilities being evaluated

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The government has rolled out a dedicated Mission Project, National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem (NMSHE) to evaluate and sustain the fragile Himalayan ecosystem and another "Mission Mausam" to boost forecasting and early warning systems, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, Dr. Jitendra Singh told the Lok Sabha on Wednesday.

The Minister's announcements gains significance in the light of the increasing frequency of cloudburst like Himalayan vulnerabilities, disaster proneness and other extreme weather events that have triggered widespread damage in recent times, including the recent cloud bursts in Kishtwar and Kathua in Jammu & Kashmir and, similar incidents in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh.

"Efforts are also being made to address urbanisation challenges and the pressure of tourism," Dr. Jitendra



said, adding that a national programme on urban climate and new research calls on extreme events have been initiated.

The Minister said the Department of Science and Technology (DST) has sanctioned over Rs 111 crore since 2018 under the NMSHE.

The mission is studying the vulnerabilities of the Himalayan region to cli-

mate change, with a focus on landslides, soil erosion, glacial changes, and increasing urbanisation pressures. Vulnerability assessments have already been carried out across 698 districts in the country, including Surat, which has been identified among the high-risk zones for flooding.

Dr. Jitendra informed that State Climate Change Cells have been set up in 13 Himalayan States and Union Territories to conduct risk assessments and assist in the implementation of state-level climate action plans.

The Minister underlined that the mission is timely, given the increasing frequency of cloudbursts and other extreme weather events that have triggered widespread damage in the Himalayan belt in recent years.

"Efforts are also being made to address urbanisation challenges and the pressure of tourism," Dr. Jitendra said, adding that a national programme on urban climate and new research calls on extreme events have

been initiated.

Linking this to broader climate preparedness, Dr. Jitendra also informed Parliament that the Ministry of Earth Sciences has launched Mission Mausam, aimed at making India "weather-ready and climate-smart." The initiative seeks to strengthen forecasting systems, improve disaster management, and ensure last-mile delivery of weather services.

Under the mission, the India Meteorological Department has developed BharatFS, a six-kilometre resolution weather model-currently the highest-resolution operational forecasting system in the world. This will allow forecasts at the block and panchayat levels, making them more useful for farmers, disaster authorities, and local communities. In addition, the ministry is expanding observational networks, integrating artificial intelligence into prediction models, and improving outreach through state-wise climate statements and open-access reports.



Khatana flags drug menace in J&K in Rajya Sabha, seeks community action

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Sr. BJP leader and Rajya Sabha MP Gulam Ali Khatana on Wednesday raised concern over the rising drug menace in Jammu and Kashmir during the Special Mention in Parliament, describing it as a crisis that was "consuming the youth and weakening society from within."

Khatana said an estimated 1.35 million people in the Union Territory-around 8 per cent of the population-are victims of substance abuse, and pointed out that 90 per cent of these users are young people between the ages of 17 and 33 years. The growing dependence on opioids, especially heroin, had created a serious health emergency, he said.

"The situation is such that Hepatitis C prevalence among injecting drug users has reached nearly 20% due to shared needles," the MP informed the House.



He stressed that enforcement agencies alone could not address the problem, which he described as a social epidemic requiring collective will.

Khatana urged the government to encourage village-level anti-drug committees to counter the menace at the grassroots. These bodies, he suggested, should actively involve teachers, community leaders, religious figures, and women.

"The role of women is crucial. All-women committees can help break

stigma, spread awareness in families and support rehabilitation," he said.

Highlighting the gaps in infrastructure, the BJP MP said Jammu and Kashmir lacked a comprehensive rehabilitation policy. While detoxification centres exist, the absence of structured follow-up often leads to relapse, leaving youth trapped in cycles of addiction.

He pressed for the expansion of de-addiction centres, systematic post-recovery support, and skill development programmes to help rehabilitated individuals reintegrate into society with dignity.

Khatana emphasised that the drug problem was not only a law-and-order challenge but also a question of public health and community stability.

He argued that sustained awareness campaigns, combined with grassroots mobilisation, were needed to save an entire generation from being lost to drugs.

AIIMS Jammu-First Govt Institution in Jammu Region to offer Corneal Collagen Cross Linking

Landmark sight-saving procedure brings hope to young patients with rare eye disorder

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Vijaypur, Jammu, has achieved a major milestone in patient care with the successful conduct of its first Corneal Collagen Cross Linking (C3R) procedure, further strengthening its cornea super-speciality services.

A young girl from a remote area of Jammu, diagnosed with Keratoconus, underwent this life-changing procedure. Keratoconus is a rare, progressive eye disorder in which the cornea-the clear front layer of the eye-thins out, leading to distorted vision and, if untreated, may result in permanent visual impairment. Corneal Collagen Cross Linking is a specialised, advanced procedure that halts the progression of Keratoconus, thereby preserving vision.

This advanced treatment, often prohibitively expensive in private facilities, was provided completely free of cost at AIIMS Jammu-ensuring equitable access to sight-saving care for underprivileged patients. Importantly, AIIMS Jammu is the first and the only Government Institution in the Jammu region to provide this cutting-edge service.

The patient underwent comprehensive evaluation with state-of-the-art diagnostic equipment under



the supervision of Dr. Bhavani Raina, Additional Professor & Head, Department of Ophthalmology,

AIIMS Jammu. Patient was diagnosed with advanced Keratoconus in both eyes, and her siblings were also screened for early detection and prevention.

The successful surgery was performed by a dedicated team led by Dr. Bhavani Raina, supported by Dr. Ridham Nanda (Assistant Professor), Dr. Sumedha Ghai (Senior Resident), Dr. Vaishnavi Gaur, Dr. Parmeet Kaur, Dr. Shrikhar (Junior Residents), along with Nursing Officers Tamisha and Ankit.

On this achievement, Prof. (Dr.) Shakti Kumar Gupta, Executive Director & CEO, AIIMS Jammu, congratulated the Ophthalmology team for their commitment and emphasized, "AIIMS Jammu is dedicated to providing world-class, super-speciality eye care to the people of this region. With the latest technology and highly skilled professionals, we shall continue to ensure that patients receive advanced diagnostic and therapeutic services at par with global standards."

This accomplishment marks a significant step in AIIMS Jammu's mission to deliver accessible, affordable, and advanced healthcare to the people of Jammu & Kashmir, setting new benchmarks in super-speciality medical services.

LG Kavinder Gupta meets Union Civil Aviation Minister in Delhi

Seeks enhanced air connectivity for Ladakh



Lt Governor Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta calling on Union Minister of Civil Aviation, Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Lieutenant Governor of UT Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, on Wednesday called on Union Minister of Civil Aviation, Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu, at his office in New Delhi and discussed critical issues concerning air connectivity in Ladakh.

During the meeting, the Lt Governor strongly advocated for operationalising air services from Kargil and Thoise (Nubra) under the RCS-UDAN scheme, highlighting that these regions remain inadequately connected for most of the year

due to difficult terrain and prolonged road closures.

He pointed out that the current IAF-operated winter services under Operation Sadbhavana are limited in capacity and only cater to emergency travellers, students, and patients, leaving a vast section of the population dependent on restricted options.

The Lt Governor urged the Ministry to clear existing bottlenecks and facilitate fixed-wing operations with turboprop aircraft of up to 50 seats for sustainable connectivity.

He further proposed that a table-top feasibility exercise be conducted at Kargil Airport with representatives of MoCA, DGCA, AAL, and other stakeholders to finalise operational standards, aircraft categories, and pilot requirements for regular services.

The Lt Governor also raised the issue of high airfares on existing routes to Ladakh, pressing for a fair regulatory mechanism to ensure affordable travel for residents and visitors alike.

Another major agenda discussed was the speedy completion of the new terminal at Kushok Bakula Rimpochee Airport, Leh, which is vital for handling the increasing passenger traffic and strengthening Ladakh's connectivity with the rest of the country.

The Union Minister gave a patient hearing and assured full cooperation from the Ministry in addressing these concerns and working towards improved air services for the people of Ladakh.

Sham Sharma chairs Rogi Kalyan Samiti meeting, directs upgradation of healthcare at SDH Bhalwal

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: MLA Jammu North Sham Lal Sharma, on Wednesday chaired a meeting of the Rogi Kalyan Samiti (RKS) at Sub-District Hospital (SDH) Bhalwal which focused on strengthening healthcare delivery, improving patient care, and addressing the infrastructural and operational challenges faced by the hospital.

In his opening remarks, Sham Sharma emphasized that healthcare is one of the most crucial sectors directly impacting the lives of people and that ensuring accessible, affordable and quality medical services remains his top priority.

He stressed that patients must feel confident that whenever they enter a government hospital, they will receive dignified, timely and effective treatment without discrimination. He underlined that hospitals



MLA Jammu North Sham Lal Sharma chairing meeting of Rogi Kalyan Samiti.

should not be seen as mere institutions but as lifelines for the people, where every doctor, nurse and health worker must perform their duties with compassion and dedication so that patients are not only cured but truly cared for.

The meeting deliberated upon several pressing issues, including making the Gynecology Department and Eye

Department fully functional with adequate staff, specialized doctors and essential equipment, thereby enabling local patients to access specialized care without the need to travel long distances.

Detailed discussions were also held on improving the quality of patient care, ensuring better hygiene in wards, waiting areas and sanitation blocks, and creating a patient-friendly environment within the hospital.

Sham Sharma also directed that surgeries must be conducted in a smooth and systematic manner with proper operation

theatre management, availability of instruments, post-operative care facilities and timely interventions. He also expressed concern over the unsatisfactory status of certain ongoing works and instructed the officials to remove all bottlenecks and complete the projects within set timelines.

Sharma laid special emphasis on the optimal utilization of available resources, strengthening diagnostic services, maintaining uninterrupted supply of medicines and emergency care, and enhancing coordination among staff members for efficient service delivery.

He further suggested organizing community outreach programs and awareness camps on preventive healthcare, maternal and child health, and lifestyle-related diseases to bring about a positive change in public health at the grassroots level.

The meeting was attended by SDM Jammu North Deepak Kumar, BMO Bhalwal Rabia Khan, Tehsildar Bhalwal Monika Sharma, BDO Bhalwal Sunil Sharma, CPO Mohit Kumar, ZEO Bhalwal Ali Khan, besides other members of the Rogi Kalyan Samiti and concerned officials.

Concluding the meeting, Sham Sharma assured that all genuine requirements of the hospital would be taken up with the concerned authorities and the Government for early redressal.

He reaffirmed his commitment to further strengthening healthcare facilities in Jammu North so that patients, particularly those from rural and remote areas, are provided quality treatment at their doorstep.

ACB registers case in major financial scam

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Wednesday registered a case in connection with misappropriation of government funds and tampering in J&K Paysys in the Accounts Section of the Directorate of Tourism, Kashmir in the year 2020-21.

On receipt of a written complaint, an ACB enquiry said, a preliminary enquiry was conducted by the Anti-Corruption Bureau, which revealed that public servants posted in the Accounts Section, namely Javed Ahmad Bhat, Junior Assistant (the then In-charge Bill Clerk) and Tawseef Dilshad Zargar, MTS (the then Assistant to Bill Clerk), fraudulently manipulated the Government's sensitive soft-

ware J&K Paysys.

They altered the account numbers of legitimate agencies in whose favour payments were due, replacing them with their own bank account numbers or those of their close relatives. Through this manipulation, the accused facilitated the illegal transfer of government funds into their own accounts and those of their family members, thereby misappropriating public money to the tune of lakhs of rupees, the official said.

The enquiry further established that the accused public servants, by abusing their official positions and acting in well-knit conspiracy with each other and others, fraudulently conferred undue pecuniary benefits upon themselves at the cost of the government exchequer.

The acts of omission and commission on their part constitute offences punishable under Sections 7, 13(1)(a) & 13(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, and Sections 120-B, 420, 467 of IPC, official said adding that accordingly, FIR No. 16/2025 has been registered against Javed Ahmad Bhat, Junior Assistant (then In-charge Bill Clerk), son of Late Ghulam Hassan Bhat, resident of Sheikh Mohallah, Brein, Nishat, Srinagar and Tawseef Dilshad Zargar, MTS (then Assistant to Bill Clerk), son of Late Dilshad Ahmad Zargar, resident of Chowdriground, Shopian and others involved in the misappropriation and forgery in J&K Paysys.

The investigation of the case has been taken up, the official said.

Newly promoted officer decorated at Special Crime Wing CB Jammu



■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In a ceremony held on Wednesday at the Zonal Headquarters Special Crime Wing, Crime Branch (CB) Jammu, Sanjay Parihar, SSP Special Crime Wing, Crime Branch Jammu, decorated Assistant Sub-Inspector Mohd Aslam with his new rank insignia on the occasion of his recent promotion.

While congratulating the officer, the SSP, SCW extended his best wishes and lauded ASI Mohd. Aslam for his commitment, sincerity, and professionalism in the discharge of his duties. He further encouraged

him to continue working with the same zeal, dedication, and integrity, thereby setting an example for others in the force.

The event was attended by Javid Iqbal Tabassum, DySP (Hqrs), Special Crime Wing Jammu, along with other officers and officials of the unit, who also conveyed their greetings and good wishes to the promoted officer.

The ceremony reflected the spirit of recognition and encouragement within the organization, aimed at motivating personnel to excel in their professional responsibilities.

JKPSO Association delegation meets BAR Association Jammu

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A team of the J&K Prosecution Service Officers (JKPSO) Association, led by its President Anil Mangotra, along with General Secretary Sunil Sharma, Joint Secretaries Puja Nijhon and Raj Kumar, and Treasurer Yuv Raj Singh, called upon the office bearers of the BAR Association, Jammu. The association members were accompanied by senior prosecutors posted

The delegation extended their congratulations to Nirmal Kotwal, President of the BAR Association, Jammu, on being designated as a Senior Advocate by the Full Court in terms of the High Court of J&K and Ladakh (Designation of Senior Advocates) Rules, 2025. The visiting team was received by BAR Association office bearers, including Vice-President Advocate Baldev Singh, General Secretary Advocate Pardeep Manjotra,



JKPSO Association delegation meeting with Jammu BAR members.

at District & Sessions Court, Jammu (Sadder Court), including Manzhar Khayam, Mohi Amir Almansoor, Vikram Parihar, Arvind Rathore, Ashwani Kumar, Joginder Lal, and Riaz Ahmed Bhatti.

and Joint Secretary Advocate Anshu Mahajan. On the occasion, the BAR Association, Jammu expressed gratitude for the felicitation and extended its full support to the J&K Prosecution Service Officers Association in future initiatives.