

Dr Jitendra visits cloudburst-hit areas in Kathua, assures relief and rehabilitation measures

Announces establishment of Regional IMD Centre in Jammu

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KATHUA: Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh on Friday visited the cloudburst and flash flood-affected areas of Ghatti, Janglote, Bhed Blode, and Dhol Khad in Kathua district.

Expressing deep concern for the victims, Dr Singh met affected families, assessed the extent of the damage, and assured comprehensive assistance from the Centre.

He was accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Sharma and senior administrative officials, navigating difficult terrain to reach the damaged sites.

Interacting with the victims, Dr Singh reiterated the government's commitment to support them in this challenging time.

The affected families expressed trust and appreciation for Dr Singh's presence as their public representative. On-the-spot directions were issued to restore electricity and water supply by evening and to ensure adequate medical and sanitation facilities to prevent outbreaks in the calamity-hit zones.



Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh visiting the site of cloudburst sites and taking stock of the relief work at Kathua on Friday.

To address immediate needs, the Minister directed the deployment of water tankers, solar lights, and medical ambulances in the inaccessible areas.

He also announced that drinking water would be supplied through tankers until normal services resume, followed by restoration of mobile connectivity.

While speaking to the media, Dr Singh informed that preliminary loss assessment stands at Rs 25 crore.

He assured that the Centre is fully prepared to provide financial and material aid, and the long-term rehabilitation may cost over Rs 100 crore.

He announced that houses damaged in the flash floods will be rebuilt and land will be allotted to those who lost their property.

Dr Singh also distributed relief material, including ration kits from his personal resources, to the affected families.

He emphasized the importance of preventing future disasters by curbing illegal constructions near water bodies and holding contractors accountable for substandard infrastructure, especially poorly built bridges.

Highlighting future preparedness, the Minister, who also holds charge of the India Meteorological Department (IMD), announced the establishment of a Regional IMD Centre in Jammu to strengthen early warning systems.

He also mentioned the launch of a National Mission focused on the sustainability of the Himalayan ecosystem.

In the final leg of his visit, Dr Singh toured Government Medical College, Kathua, to meet injured victims. Accompanied by Principal Dr Atri, he reviewed the condition of patients, expressing satisfaction over their recovery. He also announced the upcoming upgrade of the day care Cancer Therapy facility in GMC Kathua, being run in collaboration with Tata Memorial Centre, Mumbai.



Modern infrastructure driving holistic development in Daman & Diu, Dadra & Nagar Haveli: LG Kavinder

Calls for Similar Developmental Roadmap in Ladakh

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SILVASSA: The Union Territory of Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli is witnessing a remarkable transformation through modern infrastructure and people-centric projects in healthcare, education, water management, wellness, and sports. These developments reflect the Central Government's vision under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta.

On the second day of his official tour, LG Gupta, accompanied by First Lady Bindu Gupta and Advisor to the Administrator Amit Singla, reviewed flagship developmental projects across the Union Territory.

The Lt Governor began his visit with an inspection of the expansion work at NAMO Hospital, being upgraded from 316 beds to a state-of-the-art 1,270-bedded multi-specialty teaching hospital at a cost of Rs 955 crore. This facility will serve not only the UT's residents but also neighbouring states.

He also visited Swami Vivekananda Vidya Mandir, one of the country's largest government schools, with over 12,000 students, 245 classrooms, and 214 teach-



Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta being welcomed at Galonda Kolipada Nandghar.

ers. Impressed by the ICT-enabled teaching, he called it a model for modern public education.

Further, he inspected the NAMO College of Allied Health Sciences and the NAMO Medical Education & Research Institute-both set up in 2019 to bridge the gap in paramedical and healthcare professionals.

At Galonda Kolipada Nandghar, developed under Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0, he appreciated the focus on child nutrition, early learning, and maternal support.

He reviewed the SCADA system at the Bhurkud Falia Water Treatment Plant, which supplies potable water to 11 villages across four

Gram Panchayats. He also lauded the operationalisation of all 95 Ayushman Arogya Mandirs providing quality primary healthcare. The final leg of his tour included visits to sports infrastructure projects on Naroli Road, including a multi-sports complex with a 10m Air Rifle/Pistol Range, courts for basketball and pickleball, and other youth engagement facilities.

LG Kavinder emphasized that this holistic development model must be replicated in Ladakh, with focused investment in health, education, connectivity, and youth empowerment to ensure balanced regional growth and improved quality of life.

Yudhvir Sethi conducts extensive tour of Ward No 71, listens to public grievances

Vows to make East Constituency a model of progress, harmony

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Senior BJP leader and MLA from Jammu East Constituency, Yudhvir Sethi, today conducted an extensive tour of Ward No. 71 and addressed multiple public meetings, where he interacted with locals and took stock of their issues and aspirations.

Accompanied by officials and party leaders, Sethi visited several areas including Ragoora, Lower Ragoora, Sidhra, Majheen, Upper Majheen, and adjoining localities of Ward No 71 in Jammu East Constituency. During the tour, he engaged directly with residents, listened to their day-to-day problems, and assured them of timely redressal through government departments.

The MLA was joined by XEn PMGSY Bhupinder Singh, XEn PWD Sardar Khan, XEn Corporation Civil Rajesh, and other officials, who noted down the



MLA Jammu East Constituency, Yudhvir Sethi listening to public issues during visit to Ward 71.

issues raised by the people. Local BJP leaders including Bajalta Mandal President Shiv Sharma, Mahmood, Abdul Mahmood, Babu Ram, Saif Ali, and other Karyakartas were also present, expressing solidarity with the community and extending party support for developmental initiatives.

People in different localities highlighted concerns related to road connectivity, drainage, electricity supply, water scarcity, and sanitation.

He also demanded better infrastructure facilities for schools, health centers, and public amenities. Responding to the grievances, Sethi assured residents that all genuine demands would be addressed in coordination with the concerned departments.

Speaking at the gatherings, Yudhvir Sethi reiterated that the BJP government is committed to development at the grassroots level. He emphasized that no area

would be left neglected and every citizen's voice would be heard.

"Our focus remains on equitable growth and development. The problems being faced by people in these areas will be resolved in a phased manner, and necessary instructions have already been given to the officials on the spot," he said.

He further added that the participation of people in highlighting civic issues strengthens the spirit of

democracy. Sethi urged residents to continue their cooperation with government agencies and assured them that developmental works in Ward No. 71 will be expedited for long-term benefit.

"As your MLA, I am fully dedicated to the development of every section of society, irrespective of caste, color, or religion. My mission is to ensure holistic progress across all corners of my constituency, and your trust fuels my determination," he said.

The BJP leader highlighted the transformative impact of various Central Government schemes which have uplifted the underprivileged and improved living standards. He also urged the public to actively participate in the development process by providing suggestions and monitoring progress. He reiterated his dedication to making East Constituency a model of progress and harmony.

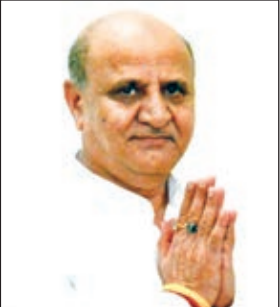
Congress appoints former Dy CM Tara Chand to AICC SC Advisory Council

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Indian National Congress has appointed senior leader, three-time legislator, and former Deputy Chief Minister of Jammu & Kashmir, Tara Chand, as a Member of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) SC Advisory Council.

The high-profile national-level Advisory Council includes eminent leaders such as former Speaker of the Lok Sabha Meira Kumar, former Union Home Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde, several former Union Ministers, Chief Ministers, and PCC Presidents from across the country.

The appointment of Tara Chand has been widely hailed by the leaders of the Jammu & Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee



(JKPCC), who termed it a significant move to further strengthen the Congress Party at the grassroots level in J&K.

Tara Chand, a three-time MLA from the border constituency of Chhamb, has served the party and the state in several key roles.

He remained the Leader of the Congress Legislative Party in 1996, served as Speaker of the J&K Legislative Assembly, and

later as the Deputy Chief Minister in 2008. His long political career has been marked by dedication to public service and strengthening democratic institutions.

Earlier, the Congress Party also entrusted him with the responsibility as Chairman of the Campaign Committee for J&K, where he played a vital role in mobilizing support and energizing the cadre base of the party.

Welcoming the appointment, senior Congress leaders in J&K expressed confidence that Tara Chand's inclusion in the AICC Advisory Council will give a strong voice to the aspirations of the people of Jammu & Kashmir at the national level and contribute significantly to the party's organizational revival.

DC reviews functioning of SED, calls for strengthening basic school infra

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Deputy Commissioner Jammu Dr Rakesh Minhas on Friday reviewed the functioning of the School Education Department in district Jammu here at a meeting held in the district Office.

Chief Education Officer Jammu Ajeet Sharma presented a comprehensive profile of School Education scenario in the district through a detailed presentation.

The Deputy Commissioner laid special emphasis on strengthening basic school infrastructure, stating that quality education is directly linked to the availability of proper physical facilities. He directed immediate focus on construction of adequate classrooms to meet enrolment needs, provision of separate toilets for boys and girls in all schools, development of playgrounds for the



DC Jammu Dr Rakesh Minhas reviewing functioning of School Education Department.

holistic growth of children and strengthening and repair of existing school buildings to ensure safe learning environments.

The Deputy Commissioner instructed all Zonal Education Officers to conduct a thorough assessment and submit detailed reports of infrastructure requirements in their respective zones within two weeks.

The discussions on NEP 2020 centred on the theme "School: Building Block"

with sub-themes of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, Teachers' Continuous Professional Development and infrastructure.

The Stakeholders were provided with a structured format to record their suggestions and directed to submit their inputs on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy and Continuous Professional Development within two days.

The meeting also deliberated

on preparations for the upcoming 5th Chief Secretary Conference scheduled in October 2025. Chief Education Officer Ajeet Sharma apprised the meeting about the progress of developmental works, the current status of schools and the conference agenda, which focuses on the implementation of the National Education Policy 2020.

The meeting witnessed participation from principals, teachers and education

experts, who shared their views and concerns.

The Deputy Commissioner and Chief Education Officer assured that all suggestions would be considered while finalising district-level recommendations for the Chief Secretary Conference.

The meeting was attended by Assistant Commissioner, Anmol Rathore; Joint Director SCERT Jammu, Sindhu Kapoor; Chief Planning Officer, Ajay Pal Singh; Chief Education Officer, Ajeet Sharma; DEPO Jammu, BD Sharma; principals of higher secondary schools of district Jammu, Zonal Education Officers of all educational zones of Jammu district, principals and representatives of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas and Kendriya Vidyalayas, representatives from private schools, education experts and parents.

Forest Soil Health Cards for J&K: DG, ICFRE

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Director General of Indian Council for Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), Kanchan Devi, inaugurated a one-day capacity-building programme for Forest Range Officers (FROs) and frontline functionaries of the Jammu & Kashmir Forest Department at the Forest Information Centre, Birkam Chowk.

The training focused on Soil Test-Based Nutrient Management Practices and enhancing field-level knowledge of forest ecosystems. In her inaugural address, DG Kanchan Devi highlighted the significance of Forest Soil Health Cards (FSHCs), especially for Jammu & Kashmir. She emphasized that under a Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC)



initiative, FSHCs for all territorial forest divisions in J&K have been prepared to guide afforestation planning based on soil parameters.

She underscored the intrinsic link between vegetation and soil health, explaining that forest soils evolve through the interaction of cover, bedrock, and micro-organisms. The survival and productivity of trees are directly dependent on the nutrient status of the underlying soil. Unlike agricultural soils, forest soils are

shaped by natural nutrient cycling and rhizosphere biology, necessitating a separate scientific approach for assessment.

The FSHCs initiative, under the CAMPA scheme of MoEFCC, is the first of its kind in India, aiming to assess nutrient status in forest soils and formulate targeted management strategies for degraded areas. ICFRE, with its nine regional research institutes across India, is leading this effort.

Suresh Kumar Gupta, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Head of Forest Force (HoFF), J&K, lauded ICFRE and its regional institute, Himalayan Forest Research Institute (HFRI), Shimla, for completing the FSHCs for J&K. He urged officers to use these cards to raise high-quality nursery stock and ensure successful plantation outcomes. He emphasized the need to restore soil health to meet India's climate goals of creating a carbon

bon sink of 2.5-3 billion tonnes by 2030.

Dr. Sandeep Sharma, Director HFRI Shimla, shared that soil samples were collected from multiple forest types in J&K, analyzed under standard protocols, and integrated with GIS tools. The cards aim to help ground-level staff practically manage forest soils.

During technical sessions, Dr. R.K. Verma and Dr. Vijender Pal Panwar provided detailed insights into sampling methodologies, project execution, and GIS-based site selection.

Over 100 officers, including PCCFs, Conservators, DFOs, and Range Officers, participated in the programme both physically and virtually. The Forest Soil Health Cards of J&K were officially released during the event.

CEO, ERA reviews World Bank funded JTFRP

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Chief Executive Officer (CEO), JKERA, Shreya Singhal, on Friday chaired a meeting to review the progress on World Bank funded Jhelum Tawi Flood Recovery Project being executed by JKERA.

Chief Executive Officer, JKERA was apprised that 197 sub-projects, out of the total of 213 sub-projects taken up under the World Bank funded Jhelum Tawi flood Recovery Project, have already been completed while as work on remaining sub-projects is under execution.

The Chief Executive Officer, JKERA interacted with the officers of the various PIUs (project



CEO, JKERA, Shreya Singhal chairing a meeting.

implementation units) which are executing various components of the World Bank funded JTFRP.

CEO, ERA directed all the PIU's (Project Implementation Units) to ensure completion of all works within the stipulated timelines.

The meeting was attended by MD, JKMSCL, Chief Accounts Officer, JTFRP,

Project Manager, JKERA, Jammu/Kashmir, S.E (PWD) (R&B), Baramulla, S.E, Srinagar Municipal Corporation, Executive Engineer, (PWD)(R&B) North, Executive Engineer, (PWD) (R&B) South, Deputy Project Managers of JKERA and officers of Srinagar Municipal Corporation, PWD (R&B) Central, North and South.