

Yudhvir Sethi assures immediate repair of collapsed Bus Stand Bridge; shopkeepers call off protest



Jammu East MLA Yudhvir Sethi briefing media at protest site.

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Jammu East MLA Yudhvir Sethi after talking on phone with Deputy Commissioner Jammu Rakesh Minhas assured the for immediate repair of collapsed bus stand bridge.

Sethi visited the city Bus Stand today following the collapse of a bridge due to heavy rainfall yesterday and assured locals that repair work would begin immediately. On their assurance, shop-

keepers called off the protest they had been staging at the site, expressing frustration over the delays in repairing the structure.

The bridge, which had been partially damaged for months, finally gave way after yesterday's downpour, causing significant disruption to daily life and local businesses.

Around 150 shops in the area rely on traffic passing through the route. "This

bridge is the backbone of our area. With it broken, our livelihoods have been severely affected. Fruits are spoiling, hotels and shops cannot operate, and workers are left without wages," a shopkeeper said.

Residents and traders said they had repeatedly alerted the administration over the deteriorating condition of the bridge, but no effective action was taken.

"Our MLA, Yudhvir Sethi, had personally visited and assured us that funds would be released and repairs carried out immediately," another protester said.

MLA Sethi emphasized that the administration is taking the matter seriously and is coordinating with the concerned departments to restore connectivity as quickly as possible. The collapsed bridge not only disrupted commuters but also severely impacted the economic activity of shopkeepers in the area.

Locals expressed hope that with the MLA and DC personally intervening, the bridge reconstruction would be expedited to minimize further losses.

Authorities have urged the public to exercise caution around the damaged site while repair work is underway and assured that all necessary measures will be taken to restore normalcy promptly.

Officials from the JMC were also present on the occasion.

Modi Govt opened doors of dignity, opportunity, growth for poorest of poor: Rekha to Congress

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: BJP J&K Vice President Rekha Mahajan strongly criticized Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for his statement alleging that the BJP has shut the doors of opportunities for the poor.

She termed the remarks as "baseless, misleading, and politically motivated," asserting that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, the last decade has been a historic era of empowerment for the poor, marginalized, and deprived sections of society.

Mahajan said Rahul Gandhi and the Congress party, which ruled India for decades, have no moral right to speak about poverty and opportunities.

"It was during Congress regimes that corruption, nepotism, and policy paralysis thrived, leaving the poor dependent on slogans instead of solutions. Today, the same leaders who ignored the poor for political gains are lecturing the nation," she remarked.

Highlighting the achieve-



ments of the Modi government, Mahajan pointed out that crores of poor families have benefited from transformative schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana for housing, Ayushman Bharat for healthcare, Ujjwala Yojana for free LPG connections, PM-KISAN for farmers, and Jan Dhan Yojana which brought the poor into the banking system.

She said these initiatives have truly opened doors of dignity, opportunity, and growth for the poorest of the poor.

She further noted that under the Modi government,

the mantra of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas has ensured that opportunities are not confined to the privileged few but extended to every citizen, regardless of caste, creed, or region. "From Digital India to Skill India, from start-up incentives to Mudra loans, today's youth and poor families have unprecedented opportunities that Congress governments could never provide," she added.

Rekha Mahajan accused Rahul Gandhi of deliberately misleading the public to cover up Congress' failures. She said the people of India are wise enough to see the difference between empty promises of Congress and the ground realities of Modi-led development.

"Rahul Gandhi's politics thrives on negativity and divisive rhetoric, whereas Prime Minister Modi's politics is about empowerment, opportunity, and nation-building," she concluded.

CCRC, CUJ organizes Orientation Programme

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Centre of Comparative Religion and Civilizations (CCRC) of Central University of Jammu (CUJ) under the leadership of Prof. Sanjeev Jain, Vice Chancellor, an orientation programme for the newly joined MA students and Research scholars was organized on Monday. Faculty members also discussed various career opportunities for the students. Director of CCRC Prof. Niranjana Bhandari said that students have ample opportunities to enrich themselves with new ideas. They can explore their hidden potentiality and can do better for themselves, their families, society and ultimately for the nation. Faculty members Dr. Arvind Rituraj, Dr. Vikas Singh, Dr. Ajay Kumar Singh, Dr. Ashwani Kumar, Dr. GV Sniigdha Raj, research fellows Dr. Narendra Bharti, Prabhakar, research scholars Naresh, Arpit, Rohit, students of MA Aman, Aditi, Ashtha, Himanshi, Ojsvie, Remu, Sonia, Anjali, Sourav participated in the programme.

Sadhotra visits rain-hit Jammu North areas, assures relief and restoration

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: National Conference Additional General Secretary and former minister, Ajay Kumar Sadhotra, today visited flood-affected areas in Jammu North Assembly Constituency to assess the situation caused by heavy rainfall and waterlogging. The areas visited included Nai Basti, Lala-da-Bagh, Kalika Colony, Lower Muthi, and Lower Roop Nagar, covering Municipal Wards No. 66 and 67.

During his tour, Sadhotra interacted with affected families and expressed solidarity with residents whose homes and belongings, including household goods and rations, had been severely damaged. He emphasized that the sufferers must not feel abandoned and assured them that the National Conference gov-



National Conference Additional General Secretary and former minister, Ajay Kumar Sadhotra visiting flood-affected area.

ernment led by Omar Abdullah, along with party cadre, stands with them in this difficult time.

Sadhotra urged the administration to undertake immediate restoration work on a war footing. He called for pumping out water from inundated

colonies and low-lying areas to prevent further damage and to restore normalcy quickly. He stressed mobilization of men and machinery for rapid recovery and highlighted the urgent need to address the looming threat of water-borne diseases through health and

hygiene interventions, including sanitization drives, provision of clean drinking water, bleaching powder, and regular health camps. He also called for immediate relief and assistance, including interim financial aid and essential commodities, to mitigate

the hardships of affected families. During his visit, Mr. Sadhotra met the Deputy Commissioner Jammu and apprised him of the ground realities, urging swift action, three months' free ration for each affected family, timely restoration of power supply, and adequate health coverage to prevent any disease outbreak.

Accompanying him were Raghbir Singh Manhas, Raj Roop Singh, Randhir Singh, Tilak Raj Bhagat, Rakesh Kumar Sharma, Sandeep Singh Manhas, Capt Tarsem Singh, Veer Ji, Salathia, and Vijay Kumar.

Conveying heartfelt sympathy, Mr. Sadhotra said, "In this hour of crisis, our foremost duty is to stand by the people, share their pain, and work collectively to restore normalcy with compassion and urgency."

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: BJP J&K General Secretary and former Deputy Mayor Jammu, Baldev Singh Billawaria, on Monday inaugurated a free health check-up camp at Ward 55, Deep Nagar, Kunjwani, organised by Jai Durga Amba Charitable Trust. The initiative aimed to offer free medical services and health awareness to the local population. Doctors Sumit Gupta, Anjana Bhalwal, and a team of health workers conducted free screenings for blood pressure, sugar levels, and provided general health consultations. Medicines were also distributed at no cost. Speaking at the event, Billawaria emphasized the importance of accessible healthcare, saying, "Health is the greatest wealth. This camp ensures that even those who cannot afford regular check-ups receive essential health services."

He noted that such camps



Doctor examining patient at a camp.

benefit those who often overlook health due to financial constraints. He highlighted the BJP's commitment to uplifting underprivileged communities, aligning with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of holistic development encompassing health, education, and infrastructure. Billawaria informed that more health and social welfare programs will be organised

at the ward level. He urged citizens to take advantage of government welfare schemes for a better future.

Local residents appreciated the initiative. Prominent attendees included Ranjit Singh, Rajinder Singh (Poppy), Sushpal Singh, Kulwant Singh, Charanjit Singh, Mahinder Singh, and Darshan Singh.

Jammu Bar celebrates President K. Nirmal Kotwal's designation as Senior Advocate

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The J&K High Court Bar Association Jammu congratulated its President, K. Nirmal Kotwal, on his prestigious designation as a Senior Advocate by the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

This remarkable achievement reflects his exceptional legal acumen, dedication, and exemplary service to the legal fraternity.

To honor this milestone, a felicitation ceremony was organised by office bearers of the Association, who acknowledged K. Nirmal Kotwal's unwavering com-



JKHCBA Jammu congratulating its President, K. Nirmal Kotwal, on prestigious designation as a Senior Advocate.

mitment to justice and his leadership in advancing the Association's objectives.

Association extended its

congratulations to K. Nirmal Kotwal and wishes him continued success in his illustrious career.

Balwant Thakur engages with Roman Actors at Bath

STATE TIMES NEWS

BATH: Balwant Thakur, India's eminent theatre director and cultural diplomat currently in the UK, visited the historic Roman Baths in Bath-one of Britain's most celebrated heritage landmarks and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Dating back nearly 2,000 years, the Roman Baths were once central to the spiritual, social, and cultural life of Roman Britain. Today, they remain a global attraction, renowned for their innovative use of live theatre in heritage interpretation.

At the site, costumed actors portraying Roman priests, soldiers, citizens, and attendants animate the ancient complex through dialogue, storytelling, and ritual demonstrations.

These performances transform the monument into a living cultural stage, allowing visitors to experience history as a vibrant human narrative rather than a



Balwant Thakur interacting with Roman Actors.

static display.

Engaging with these Roman actors, Thakur praised Bath's creative integration of theatre into heritage storytelling. For Thakur, celebrating landmark productions such as Bawa Jitto and

Ghumayee, which bring India's folk traditions and cultural histories to life the visit underscored the universal role of theatre in preserving and communicating cultural identity.

"The Roman Baths demonstrate how performance can connect people across centuries," Thakur remarked. "This is precisely what theatre has the power to do-transform the past into a lived, shared experience for contemporary audiences."

Thakur's interaction at Bath highlighted striking parallels in global practices of heritage interpretation. Just as Bath employs theatre to animate the Roman story, Thakur has pioneered the use of performance in India to ensure that local histories, traditions, and narratives remain accessible and relevant. His visit thus became a cross-cultural affirmation of theatre as a timeless medium that binds communities, cul-

tures, and histories together.

Balwant Thakur is a globally acclaimed theatre director, cultural administrator, and playwright, widely recognized for his contribution to Indian theatre and cultural diplomacy.

Best known for his iconic productions Bawa Jitto and Ghumayee, he has brought India's folk traditions and regional narratives to international audiences.

He has served as Secretary of the Academy of Art, Culture, Languages, Literature and Arts Education of Jammu & Kashmir; and as Regional Director of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR).

He later held the position of Cultural Diplomat of India to South Africa and Mauritius. Today, he continues to champion cultural exchange and heritage preservation through innovative theatre practices.

Court denied bail in ATM Guard Murder Case

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Court of 2nd Additional Sessions Judge Jammu, presided over by Anil Sharma, on Monday rejected the bail plea of accused Amir Yousaf, charged in connection with the sensational murder of an ATM guard during a failed robbery attempt in 2020.

The incident occurred on 21 January 2020 when accused persons Mohd. Kaif Lone and Vikas Bashir Lone allegedly tried to break into a J&K Bank ATM at Nanak Nagar, Jammu. The ATM guard resist-

ed the attempt and was brutally assaulted, leading to his death on the spot. The prosecution alleged that accused Amir Yousaf and Tahir Taraq waited nearby in an Alto car to facilitate the escape of the main assailants after the crime.

A charge sheet filed in 2021 booked all four accused under Sections 302, 120-B IPC and allied provisions, and the trial has since been underway.

Counsel for the applicant, Rohit Sharma, argued that there was "no iota of evidence" directly linking Amir Yousaf to

the killing. He stressed that Yousaf was not present inside the ATM at the time of the occurrence, and that his alleged role was limited to arriving at the spot after the incident. The defence also pressed for bail on the grounds of prolonged incarceration-over four years in custody-and parity, citing that a co-accused had already obtained bail on medical grounds. Opposing the plea, APP Arvind Rathore contended that the case involved a heinous crime punishable with death or life imprisonment. He

highlighted digital evidence, CDRs, eyewitness identification, CCTV footage, and voluntary disclosures that corroborated the accused's involvement in the conspiracy and post-crime activities. The court was also informed that the Alto car used for the escape was recovered at the instance of the applicant. After hearing both sides, the Court held that the evidence on record, including recovery of the Alto car; disclosure statements, and corroborative digital and forensic evidence, established reasonable grounds of

believing that the accused was connected with the conspiracy. It further noted that bail in such serious offences would undermine public confidence and pose risks of absconding and witness intimidation.

Rejecting the plea, the Court remarked that the case was still under trial and based on circumstantial evidence, which required the chain of events to be fully established. Accordingly, the Court dismissed the bail application of Amir Yousaf, directing that the order be made part of the main trial file.

Losses occurred due to flash floods must be compensated under SDRF/NDRF: Baru

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Omar government must take immediate measures to restore damaged to government properties and also release compensation to the public at large for the losses occurred due to flash floods during recent incessant heavy rains, overflow of drains and nallahs demanded by senior BJP (JK-UT) leader and former Councillor Sanjay Kumar Baru.

Earlier Sanjay Kumar Baru accompanied by Bohri-Patta-Chungi-AnandNagar Bazaar Association president Ashok Singh and local Social Leaders of the area visited the different Mohallas as well as bazaar of Talab Tillo to take stock of the cleanliness drive and inspect the ongoing desilting of Nallah at Wazir Lane and Kabir Nagar along with Health officer Dr.Vinod Sharma and senior official from Jammu Municipal Corporation.

Earlier, Sanjay Baru alongwith team of officers from the Revenue



Former Councillor Sanjay Baru interacting with JMC official.

Department and local leaders Ashok Singh, Jatin Sethi visited every house and shop adjoining said Nallah who had suffered huge losses and got prepared complete lists with all codal formalities requisite for release of compensation in favour of the aggrieved persons.

While talking to the media, Sanjay Baru said that every year during rainy season, people suffer losses. The district administration does work temporarily by holding meetings only. But to resolve this issue permanently, the encroachment on both sides of the Nallah / drain is required to be removed and thereafter nallah must be constructed

raising walls both the sides from Akhnoor Road via Chaman Vihar, Kabir Colony to Bagh Bain Camp Gole Gujral to solve this problem once for all. He further added that he made every best possible efforts to solve this problem in JMC. The DPR of this drain was also prepared but only Rs. 2.5 crore was made available by the administration, due to which a part of the Nallah has been constructed, but to complete it, it is necessary to build the whole Nallah/drain in one go. Since Amrit 2 is being funded, it should be approved as soon as possible so that the construction of this drain can be completed before next year's rains.