

DoPT abolishes 1,600 obsolete rules to promote ease of governance: Dr Jitendra

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI: Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences, MoS Personnel Public Grievances and Pensions, MoS PMO, Department of Space, Department of Atomic Energy, Dr. Jitendra Singh today released the latest edition of the RTI Journal and unveiled an E-Journal on the website of the National Federation of Information Commissions in India (NFICI).

The Minister was addressing the Inaugural Session of the 15th Annual General Body Meeting of NFICI at the Central Information Commission (CIC), New Delhi.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Information Commissioner of India, Heeralal Samariya, State Chief Information Commissioners and Information Commissioners from across the country.

Highlighting some of the landmark DoPT (Department of Personnel & Training) reforms since 2014, Dr. JitendraSingh recalled the abolition of over 1600 obsolete rules, starting



Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh addressing gathering after releasing the latest edition of the RTI Journal at CIC Bhawan, New Delhi on Tuesday.

with the practice of getting documents attested by gazetted officers. "This reform sent out a message that this Government trusts the youth of this country, who comprise 70% of the population," he said.

Dr. Jitendra Singh underlined the enormous push given by the Government over the last decade to foster transparency, accountability and public disclosure of information for citizen-centric governance. He recalled how, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dictum of "Maximum Governance, Minimum Government", transformational changes were introduced to enhance credibility, disposal rates, and transparency through technology-driven options. He praised the CIC and

State Commissions for achieving almost 100% disposal of RTI cases, even during the COVID-19 lockdown, when sittings were conducted remotely to ensure uninterrupted functioning. "This speaks volumes of the kind of tools that are now available and effectively used to strengthen transparency," he noted.

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Similarly, the abolition of interviews for government recruitment was a bold step to eliminate subjectivity and favoritism and nepotism, making the process more objective, transparent, and merit-based. Dr. Singh said this decision, though initially questioned, ultimately strengthened public trust and credibility in governance.

Dr. Jitendra Singh also spoke about the innovative 'Human Desk' experiment introduced to enhance satisfaction levels. "Disposal is important, but so is the citizen's happiness index. After every RTI disposal, a personal call for counselling or feedback ensures that applicants feel heard and engaged," he added.

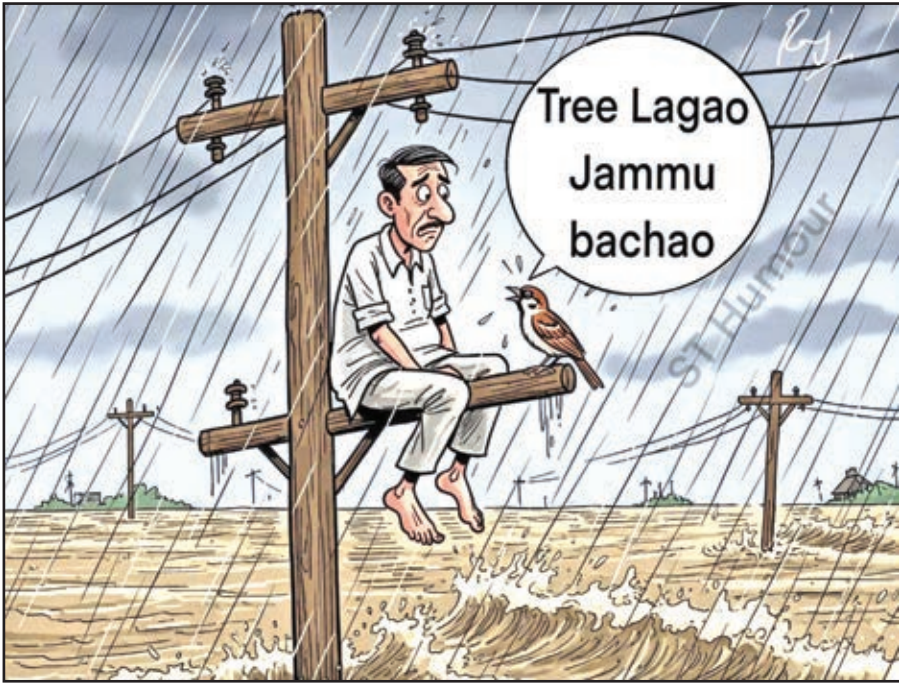
The Minister stressed that most government orders and

decisions are already placed in the public domain on official websites, reducing the need for repetitive RTI queries. He suggested that efforts must be made to filter out avoidable or repetitive applications, while strengthening norms and SOPs for efficient redressal.

Dr. Jitendra Singh also appreciated the NFICI for emerging as a platform for coordination, mutual consultation, and sharing of best practices among Information Commissions. He urged Information Commissioners to be more forthcoming with suggestions during their tenure, so that their insights can be implemented in real time.

"RTI and Information Commissions play a pivotal role in reorienting governance towards greater transparency and accountability. With digital platforms like CPGRAMS and technology-driven mechanisms, we are moving closer to a governance system that is both transparent and citizen-friendly," Dr. Jitendra Singh said.

Heeralal Samariya, Chief Information Commissioner and President, NFICI, delivered the welcome address.



Government-Citizen cooperation is vital for achieving dream of Viksit Bharat: Director CBC



Director CBC Ghulam Abass inaugurating the event at Anantnag.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
ANANTNAG: A two-day long Integrated Communication and Outreach Programme (ICOP) organized by the Central Bureau of Communication (CBC), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt of India commenced on Tuesday at Doru in Anantnag district.

The outreach programme being organized at Government Model Higher Secondary School, Doru was inaugurated by Ghulam Abass, Director (J&K and Ladakh Region), Central Bureau of Communication.

Awareness about the themes like Mission LIFE, New Criminal Laws-2023, Drug and Substance abuse and Swachhata Hi Seva is being disseminated in an integrated manner, through photo exhibits, expert lectures, printed awareness

kits, theme based films and cultural activities.

In his keynote address Ghulam Abass, Director CBC, emphasised the importance of an aware and educated citizenry for the success of a multitude of public welfare schemes envisioned by the government. He underscored the need for grassroots awareness in ensuring an informed population.

Abass said that Government-Citizen (G2C) cooperation is vital for achieving the dream of a Viksit Bharat.

Earlier in the day resource persons from Jammu and Kashmir Police and Department of Urban Local Bodies delivered lectures on Drug and Substance Abuse and Swachhata Hi Seva respectively. The experts emphasised on the need for community participation for an addiction and garbage free

society.

Shahid Mohammad Lone, Field Publicity Officer, CBC Field Office, Anantnag gave a detailed overview of the two day event. He impressed upon the young participants to be Pro Planet ambassadors by adopting healthy and sustainable lifestyles and lead the fight against evils of drug addiction and environmental pollution. Among others who addressed the audience were Sheikh Tariq Hussain, Principal Government Model Higher Secondary School, Doru.

For engaging the students, special theme based Quiz, Eloction and Painting competitions are being organized by CBC on a daily basis.

The inaugural day saw an overwhelming participation of the enthusiastic students, teachers and community leaders despite heavy downpour.

ECCE diploma, certificate programmes on anvil: JKBOSE

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) is contemplating to launch Diploma and Certificate programmes to create professional in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE).

This was revealed during a consultative meeting of academicians, experts and officers of JKBOSE, Social Welfare Department, SAMAGRA Shiksha, CRC, IMHANS.

The consultative meeting was convened to finalize the curriculum of Diploma and Certificate Programs in ECCE and work out strategies for effective implementation of NEP 2020 regarding formalization of early childhood education in the Union Territory of J&K.

The inaugural session was



Secretary, JKBOSE, Ghulam Hassan Sheikh chairing the meeting.

chaired by Ghulam Hassan Sheikh, Secretary, JKBOSE, who highlighted the importance of developing contextually relevant, inclusive, and skill-oriented curricula to prepare trained ECCE professionals.

"The edifice of learning is founded at this stage, so the educators handling this age group should be sensitized to be rational, reasonable and logical in their approach," he said.

In his inaugural address, Prof Sudhir Singh, Director Academics, JKBOSE, emphasized that these courses will not only professionalize the ECCE workforce but also strengthen the foundational stage of education envisioned under the NEP 2020.

Dr Naila Neelofar Assistant Director, Academics & ECCE Coordinator JKBOSE made a comprehensive PPT presentation to apprise the participants on the theme of the consultative meeting.

Healthy interactions regarding various nuances of the proposed course curriculum were held in the technical session.

Those who participated include Prof Romilla Bhatnagar (NCERT, New Delhi), Prof. Sushanta K Panda (University of Jammu), Dr Habibullah Shah (University of

Kashmir), Javed Bandy, Disstt Education Planning Officer & ECCE Coordinator ECCE Budgam, Gurudev Singh (J&K School Education Department), Fayaz Ahmad Fayaz (Samagra ShikshaJ&K), Sheikh Gulzar Ahmmad (JKSCERT), Dr Zafar Iqbal, CRC, Srinagar, Dr Bilal Ahmad (IMHANS, Srinagar) and officers from the Academics Division of JKBOSE including Dr Yasir Hamid Sirwal and Dr Arif Jan (Deputy Directors Academics), Dr Aliya Qayoom and Dr Naila Neelofar (Assistant Directors Academics), Kashif Hashimi, Sugandhi, Chander Sharma, Zubair Ahmad, Ms Yasmeen Ali and Iftikhar Imran (Academic Officers) and Shakeel Ahmad (Assistant Secretary, Academics-Central).

Ganesh Chaturthi 2025 to feature five auspicious Yogas, promises special blessings for devotees: Swami Amit Shukla

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Ganesh Chaturthi, celebrated on August 27 this year, holds exceptional spiritual significance with the rare occurrence of five highly auspicious astrological yogas, according to Swami Amit Shukla.

The festival marks the birth of Lord Ganesha, observed on the Chaturthi of Shukla Paksha in the month of Bhadrapada. Hindu families across India commemorate the occasion with a ten-day festival, popularly known as Ganesh Chaturthi or Vinayaka Sankashti.

Swami Amit Shukla highlighted that the most favorable time for performing Ganesh Puja this year will be from 11:05 AM to 1:40 PM on August 27, considered the divine birth hour of Lord Ganesha. Within this period, the Abhijit Muhurat, from 12:06 PM to 12:54 PM, is



believed to further enhance the spiritual merit of worship, offering devotees extraordinary blessings.

This year, after several decades, five rare yogas coincide on Ganesh Chaturthi, amplifying the festival's spiritual energy: Gajkesari Yoga, formed by the conjunction of Jupiter and the Moon, brings intelligence, fame, and social prestige.

Lakshmi-Narayan Yoga, arising from the alignment of Venus and Mercury, symbol-

izes prosperity and business growth. Dhan Yoga, linked to the favorable placement of the 2nd and 11th houses, is associated with sudden financial gain and wealth.

Aditya Yoga, from the combination of the Sun and Jupiter, grants knowledge, promotions, and honor. Lastly, Shubh Yoga, created by the rare alignment of date, weekday, and nakshatras, promises respect and recognition.

Swami Shukla emphasized that Ganesh Chaturthi is inherently a day that removes obstacles. Observing fasts and performing puja on this occasion is believed to bless devotees with longevity, good health, wealth, and success in all endeavors.

The festival is considered particularly auspicious for fostering family harmony, supporting business expansion, and promoting the growth and prosperity of children.

Flash floods surge through Gourikund Devak stream after cloudburst in upper reaches

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
GOURIKUND: A sudden rise in water levels was observed in the Gourikund Devak stream in Village Katwalt, Tehsil Chenani, on Tuesday following a reported cloudburst in the upper hill areas of Katwalt-Rengi, Sudhmahadev, and Gourikund.

The surge brought debris-laden waters rushing through the stream, causing intermittent flooding in surrounding areas.

Eyewitness footage captured fast-moving waters cascading down the stream, while torrential rainfall from the cloudburst led to landslides and washouts along the Chenani-Sudhmahadev road, severely affecting road infrastructure.

Local authorities and community volunteers have been deployed to monitor the situation and provide assistance where needed.

Residents have been urged to avoid approaching the Nallah, refrain from crossing causeways or footbridges, and seek shelter on higher ground until the water levels recede. Motorists traveling on the Chenani-Sudhmahadev corridor are advised to follow official traffic advisories and avoid unnecessary travel. Further assessments are underway to evaluate damage to adjacent properties, approach roads, and public infrastructure. Emergency response teams remain on high alert to assist residents and ensure safety in case of intensifying rainfall. Authorities continue to advise residents to keep emergency contact numbers handy and remain vigilant, particularly in low-lying and flood-prone areas. Community cooperation and adherence to safety guidelines are being highlighted as key to minimizing risk during such sudden natural events.

PUC reviews Audit Paras of I&C, JKSIDCO

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
SRINAGAR: The Committee on Public Undertakings of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly on Tuesday convened a meeting at the Assembly Complex, Srinagar, to review audit paras pertaining to the Industries & Commerce (JKSIDCO) Department.

The meeting was chaired by Committee Chairman Ali Mohammad Sagar, and attended by members Saifullah Mir, Ali Mohammad Dar, Baldev Raj Sharma, Mir Mohammad Fayaz, Ranbir Singh Pathania, Bashir Ahmad Veeir, Showkat Hussain Ganai, Saif Ud Din Bhat and Tanvir Sadiq.

Also present were the Senior Deputy Accountant General, Secretary Industries & Commerce Department, Additional Secretary GAD, Director Handicrafts & Handloom, Director Finance, MD SICOP, DG Finance Expenditure, GM SICOP, MD JKCL, CAO SIDCO/SICOP, Special Secretary Transport Department and other senior officials of the concerned departments.

The Committee held a comprehensive discussion on audit paras 5.3 & 5.4 (2017-18) and 10.3 & 10.4 (2020-21), relating to JKSIDCO. The members examined issues including low capacity utilization of the cement

grinding-cum-packing unit at Samba, blocking of funds and unfruitful expenditure on the failed International Trade Centre (ITC) project at Pampore, grant of interest-free advances to small-scale industrial units, and recovery of GST dues.

At the outset, the Chairman emphasized the need to tap J&K's industrial potential for revenue generation and employment opportunities, and called for sustainable measures to strengthen industrial units across the Union Territory.

The Committee directed the concerned departments to submit detailed reports on the status of operations and defunct units in J&K. It also stressed on ensuring timely

completion of projects such as the ITC, aimed at promoting local artisans and handicrafts.

Further, the Chairman instructed that responsibility be fixed on officers for delays and negligence in implementation of projects.

The Committee also reviewed the status of all ongoing projects and directed departments to submit a comprehensive progress report within 15 days.

Underscoring the importance of transparency and accountability, the Chairman called for rigorous audits, updated status reports of all public undertakings, and submission of relevant audit documentation to facilitate informed decision-making and necessary reforms.

Committee on Privileges holds meeting in Srinagar

Discusses privileges, protocols of legislators

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
SRINAGAR: The Committee on Privileges of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly on Tuesday convened a meeting at the Assembly Complex in Srinagar to discuss matters related to the constitutional privileges and entitlements of legislators.

The meeting was chaired by Committee Chairman Nizam-ud-Din Bhat and members including Vikram Randhawa, Javid Riyaz (Bedar), Salman Sagar, Sheikh Ahsan

Ahmed (Pardesi), Reyaz Ahmad Khan, Bharat Bhushan, and Javid Iqbal also participated in the meeting.

Also present were Secretary Law, Achal Sethi, Secretary Hospitality and Protocol, Bhupinder Kumar and special Secretaries of Law, GAD, and H&P departments.

The Committee discussed and asserted proper protocol for legislators is maintained by the officers. Directions were given for cooperation for smooth conduct of legisla-

ture and working by the legislators.

At the outset, the Chairman underscored the significance of legislators asserting their constitutional rights and privileges on all appropriate platforms.

The Chairman expressed confidence in the collective efforts and commitment of the Committee members, reaffirming their role in upholding the integrity of the institution. He assured that the Committee would cooperate and perform within its defined mandate to con-

tinue contributing to the public welfare.

At the outset, the members offered their valuable suggestions and feedback, asserting on maintaining protocols for legislators.

The Chairman stressed the need for a well-defined framework to safeguard the dignity, autonomy, and effective functioning of elected representatives.

The Committee resolved that a detailed report concerning the privileges and protocol issues of legislators be compiled and submitted within a stipulated timeframe.