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Can't advise J&K people to seek employment outside UT: CM Omar

Samba: Citing recent incidents in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand as a cautionary warning, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday said he cannot advise the J&K people to seek employment outside the Union Territory.

Talking to reporters here, CM Omar, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, “Unemployment is a major challenge. We cannot solve it solely through government jobs. Like other states, I cannot tell my people to leave J&K for employment elsewhere. Have you seen what happened in Himachal or Uttarakhand? Instead, our focus must be on strengthening opportunities within J&K.”

He stressed the urgent need to build a strong industrial and entrepreneurial ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir to engage the youth.



The Chief Minister said, “Our goal is to nurture a culture of entrepreneurship and start-ups in J&K. A foundation has already been laid and it is now our responsibility to build upon it.”

The CM stressed importance of policy reforms and timely interventions, stating, “We need to introduce policy changes that facilitate entrepreneurship, ensure funding for ideas and highlight local success stories so

that people are inspired to innovate.”

Responding to questions about remarks made by a local National Conference MLA regarding Kashmiri Pandits: “He is my MLA, but he has his own opinion. BJP’s MLA has also issued statements, but the party has clarified that this is not its official position.”

Referring to industrial challenges, the CM said, “Many factories have closed down. We will try to assist those who have shut down their operations. We will help struggling businesses and, if a need arises, reallocate land to more productive ventures.”

He said, “This is the first time since the 1990’s that J&K is witnessing a central package and incentives for industry. We are working with the Centre to secure a comprehensive package that will promote industrial growth in the region.”—(KNO)

77th Republic Day celebrations culminate with Beating Retreat Ceremony

JAMMU: The Customary ‘Beating Retreat’ ceremony on Thursday marked the culmination of the four-day-long Republic Day celebrations, at the MA Stadium here. According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha graced the occasion as the Chief Guest.

The atmosphere was filled with national pride as the Brass and Pipe Drum bands of the Armed Forces and J&K Police performed a series of enchanting patriotic compositions. The audience was enthralled by soulful musical renditions of “Ae Mere Watan Ke Logon” and other clas-

sic melodies.

In recognition of their outstanding display and artistry, the Lieutenant Governor felicitated the contingents of Jammu Kashmir Police and Security Forces; Parade Commander, Ex-Servicemen; Pipe and Brass bands, marching contingents (Boys & Girls), daredevils, commentators, cultural performers and best Tableaux.

The ceremony also featured the felicitations of winners of the Vande Mataram singing competition and UT-level online essay writing competition organized by the Department of Information and Public Relations.

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CS reviews progress of digital connectivity projects

JAMMU: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo today chaired the 10th State Broadband Committee (SBC) Meeting to review the status of key digital infrastructure initiatives, including 4G Saturation Project, Amended BharatNet Programme (ABP), 5G Readiness, Call Before You Dig (CBuD) and other allied telecom projects being implemented across J&K.

The meeting, convened by the Information Technology Department was attended by ACS, PWD; Commissioner Secretary, Forests; DDG, LSA, J&K; Secretary, Information; Secretary, RDD; Representatives from BSNL and other concerned officers from different departments here.

Deputy Commissioners Cont. on page 7

LG pays tributes to Mahatma Gandhi on his Punyatithi

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha today paid tributes to the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi on his Punyatithi.

“I believe that Bapu is a living guide for today’s world. His philosophy of non-violence, truth, and self-reliance proves as essential today as during India’s independence struggle, providing timeless wisdom for navigating contemporary crises and brid-



ing divides that threaten future,” the Lieutenant Governor said.

He was speaking at the solemn event organised by the Gandhi Global Family, J&K. The Lieutenant Governor also remembered and paid homage to the sacrifice and dedication of all great men and women on Martyrs’ Day.

Addressing the gathering, the Lieutenant Governor spoke on Jammu Kashmir’s unwavering desire for peace and the timeless relevance of Gandhian values

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Jammu Protest Turns Violent: Police Gypsy Vandalised, National Emblem Disrespected Near Tawi Bridge

JAMMU: A protest over the National Law University (NLU) issue in Jammu turned violent on Tuesday, raising serious concerns about law and order.

The incident took place near Tawi Bridge during an ongoing demonstration. Several protesters were present at the site when tensions escalated.

Police Vehicle Targeted During Protest: Jammu protest National Emblem

According to eyewitnesses, a group of protesters linked to the Yuwa Rajput Sabha surrounded a white Jammu and Kashmir Police Gypsy. The vehicle was deployed for maintaining order at the protest site. Jammu protest National Emblem disrespect

Soon after, the protest-



ers allegedly deflated the tyres of the police Gypsy. As a result, the vehicle was forced to stop on the road. This action blocked traffic and restricted police movement in the area.

Protester Climbs Police Gypsy Bonnet

The situation worsened moments later. One protester climbed onto the bonnet of the police vehicle in full public view.

The bonnet clearly displayed the words “Jammu

and Kashmir Police”. Jammu protest National Emblem disrespect, the Ashoka Lion Capital, was also visible on the same surface.

The protester stood on the emblem while wearing shoes.

Visual Evidence Sparks Outrage

Meanwhile, images and videos of the incident quickly appeared on social media. The visuals show

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Severe Snowfall and High-Velocity Winds Ravage Pir Panjal, Poor Family Left Homeless in Mandi

MANDI (POONCH): The recent spell of severe snowfall accompanied by high-velocity winds along the Pir Panjal mountain range has caused widespread disruption and damage in several remote areas, severely affecting economically weaker sections of society.

According to local sources, a poor resident of Danoo Gam village in Mandi tehsil, identified as Ali Mohammad, son of Habib Dar, suffered complete destruction of his residential house after powerful winds swept through the area.

Following the incident, Ali Mohammad and his family, including women and children, are currently forced to live under the open sky amid harsh winter conditions. With temperatures continuing to remain low and fresh snowfall reported in nearby areas, the situation has raised serious humanitarian concerns among local residents.

Villagers stated that the affected family belongs to a financially vulnerable background and lacks the resources to arrange temporary shelter or meet basic necessities on their own. The destruction of the



house has further compounded their difficulties, exposing them to health and safety risks during the ongoing winter season.

Residents of the area have appealed to the district and tehsil administrations to take immediate cognizance of the matter

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Rana reviews development progress in Poonch

POONCH: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment, and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, today chaired a review meeting at Poonch to assess the progress on ongoing developmental works and welfare initiatives being implemented across the district.

The meeting was attended by District Development Commissioner, senior district officers, sectoral heads and representatives of line departments.

Choudhary Mohammad Iqbal, former Director Agriculture Kashmir and CEO, SKUAST-Kashmir, was present as a special invitee.

During the meeting, District Development Commissioner, Ashok Kumar Sharma presented a comprehensive overview of the physical and financial status of projects being executed under UT Capex, District Capex and other flagship schemes.

The briefing covered a wide range of sectors, including Minor Irrigation, Elementary Education, Health, Public Health Engineering (PHE), Youth Services & Sports, Social Welfare, Agriculture, Horticulture, Urban Develop-



ment and allied departments.

Key infrastructure and institutional projects reviewed included the Mini Secretariats at Mendhar and Poonch, Ekalavya Model Residential School (EMRS) at Mendhar, University Campus and Motorable Double-Lane Bridge at Sathra.

The Minister also reviewed the implementation and progress of major social sector initiatives such as Amrit Sarovar, Jal Jeevan Mission and various tribal welfare programmes.

Emphasizing the importance of timely execution, Rana directed all the departments to ensure expeditious completion of ongoing projects, stating that delays directly affect the public service delivery. He underscored the need

for a robust monitoring mechanism to guarantee that the benefits of government schemes reach the intended and genuine beneficiaries.

The Minister stressed that teamwork, transparency, accountability and integrity must remain central to governance at all levels.

Reviewing the progress under National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), the Minister instructed the officers to scale up the formation of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to enhance livelihood opportunities and promote economic empowerment, particularly among the rural and tribal communities.

Tourism development also featured prominently in the deliberations.

The Chief Executive Officer, Tourism, briefed

the meeting on ongoing tourism-related projects.

The Minister highlighted Poonch's immense untapped tourism potential and called for focused efforts to strengthen the infrastructure and promote sustainable tourism.

Additionally, the Minister reviewed the implementation of major employment and livelihood schemes such as MGNREGA, IWMP and SANKALP, along with an assessment of the district's achievements and future development targets.

Rana urged all the officers to work with renewed dedication and a people-centric approach, ensuring that development initiatives are completed within stipulated timelines and genuinely improve the quality of life for the people of Poonch.

Scores of delegations call on Javed Rana at Poonch

POONCH: Scores of public delegations from various parts of the district today called on Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana at Dak Bungalow Poonch and apprised him of a range of pressing civic, developmental and sector-specific issues concerning their areas.

The delegations highlighted water-related problems being faced by residents of the city and adjoining areas, stressing the urgent need for strengthening and upgrading existing pumping stations to ensure uninterrupted and adequate water supply.

The Minister was informed about operational bottlenecks, aging infrastructure and the growing demand due to population increase.

Issues pertaining to the Public Health Engineering (PHE) Department also came up for discussion, particularly those related to the functioning of the water testing laboratory.

Employees of the PHE water testing laboratory raised concerns regarding service-related matters and sought early redressal

of their long-pending grievances.

The delegations further brought to the notice of the Minister various matters related to CAMPA and afforestation activities in the district.

They emphasized the need for transparency, timely execution of plantation drives, involvement of local stakeholders and effective monitoring to ensure environmental conservation and ecological balance.

District Development Council (DDC) member Riyaz Bashir Naaz also led a separate delegation, which raised development-centric issues and sought focused attention towards improving basic amenities and accelerating ongoing projects in the area.

The Minister gave a patient hearing to all delegations and assured them that their genuine concerns would be taken up with the concerned departments on priority.

He reiterated Omar Abdullah Government's commitment to addressing public issues in a time-bound manner and ensuring sustainable development of the district.

DC Poonch reviews Youth Empowerment and Employment Plan

POONCH: Deputy Commissioner Poonch, Ashok Kumar Sharma, today chaired a meeting in the Conference Hall of the DC Office to review and strengthen the Youth Empowerment and Engagement Plan in the district. The meeting focused on the effective implementation of various centrally sponsored schemes aimed at generating employment and self-employment opportunities for the youth.

The Deputy Commissioner held detailed discussions with concerned officers on ongoing government initiatives aligning with local employment needs. Emphasis was laid on ensuring maximum outreach of welfare schemes and encouraging youth participation in skill development, entrepreneurship and livelihood generation programmes.

It was decided that eligible youth would be provided employment opportunities under different government-sponsored schemes, with special focus on skill enhancement, vocational training and support for self-employment ventures. The Deputy Commissioner directed officers to identify potential beneficiaries,

streamline procedures and ensure timely delivery of benefits to the youth.

The DC stressed the importance of coordinated efforts among all departments to empower young people and make them active contributors to the socio-economic development of the district. He also called for regular monitoring and awareness campaigns to ensure transparency and effective implementation of the schemes. The meeting was attended by the Chief Planning Officer, Shama un Ahmed; Assistant Commissioner Development, Shakeel Ahmed Malik; Principal GDC Poonch; Professors from GDC Surankote, Mandi and Mendhar; Chief Medical Officer; Deputy Director Employment; District Social Welfare Officer; District Panchayat Officer; Assistant Director FCS & CA; District Information Officer; Chief Horticulture Officer; Chief Agriculture Officer; Chief Animal Husbandry Officer; District Sheep Husbandry Officer; Assistant Labour Commissioner; Assistant Floriculture Officer; Superintendent ITI Poonch; DYSSO; LDM J&K Bank, besides other concerned officers.

CM Omar Abdullah explores collaboration opportunities during visit to IICT-NFDC campus in Mumbai

MUMBAI,: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has visited the Indian Institute of Creative Technologies (IICT) campus at the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), Mumbai, on January 15, to explore avenues for institutional collaboration and student exchange between IICT and the Government of Jammu & Kashmir.

The visit, held at the IICT-NFDC Campus, was hosted by Dr. Vishwas Deoskar, Chief Executive Officer, IICT, along with Munjal Shroff, Governing Council Member, IICT.

During the visit, the Chief Minister was taken on a structured walkthrough of the IICT main campus, providing an overview of the institute's academic ecosystem and advanced technology infrastructure. As part of the programme, he attended a curated audiovisual presentation at the Rangayan Preview Theatre, which showcased IICT's vision, academic framework, and capabilities in creative and immersive technologies.

This was followed by a live demonstration at the Anubhuti Drishya Immersive Studio Lab, where applications of augmented



reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and mixed reality (MR) were showcased through hands-on experiential interactions.

The visit also featured a Digital Twin demonstration at the Photogrammetry Studio, where a live 3D photogrammetry scan was conducted to create a digital avatar, highlighting the practical applications of emerging immersive technologies.

A strategic discussion session was held to deliberate potential areas of collaboration between IICT and the Government of Jammu & Kashmir. The discussions focused on student exchange and institutional cooperation, particularly in skill development and capacity building in AVGC

and emerging creative technologies; digital heritage and cultural preservation through immersive tools; and the development of a collaborative startup incubation and innovation ecosystem aimed at empowering youth from Jammu & Kashmir.

Speaking during the interaction, the Chief Minister said, "If we want Jammu and Kashmir to become an attractive destination for filmmaking, then human talent and post-production capability must be created locally. That is where a relationship with an institution like IICT becomes important for us."

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Vishwas Deoskar, CEO, IICT said that they look forward to explor-

ing meaningful collaborations that can benefit students and young talent from Jammu & Kashmir by enabling skill development, fostering innovation, and creating sustainable employment and entrepreneurship opportunities."

Following the discussions, the Chief Minister was escorted to the NFDC Bharat Pavilion and Museum, which chronicles India's cinematic and creative heritage. The visit highlighted the role of the NFDC Museum as a national cultural repository dedicated to preserving, presenting, and celebrating India's film and creative legacy, before the Chief Minister proceeded to his onward engagements at the NFDC campus.

J&K Waqf Board Honours Mir Waiz Poonch, Mufti Farooq Hussain Misbahi with Syed Baba Budhan Ali Shah Award on Republic Day 2026

POONCH: The Jammu & Kashmir Waqf Board presented the Syed Baba Budhan Ali Shah Award for Outstanding Services to Mir Waiz Poonch, Mufti Farooq Hussain Misbahi.

The award recognized his extraordinary contributions to religious guidance, community welfare, and social development. The ceremony celebrated dedication, service, and the values of faith and unity.

The event took place at a well-organized venue in Poonch. Hon'ble Chairperson, Dr. Syed Darakhshan Andrabi, personally conferred the award. Prominent scholars, local officials, and members of the community attended.



In her remarks, Dr. Andrabi praised Mufti Misbahi's decades-long commitment to education, spiritual guidance, and humanitarian initiatives.

Moreover, the ceremony emphasized the role of

community leaders in fostering social harmony and public welfare.

Citizens and attendees applauded the recognition of Mufti Misbahi's unwavering efforts.

Mufti Farooq Hussain

Misbahi thanked the J&K Waqf Board and Chairperson Dr. Andrabi for the honor. He highlighted the importance of service, faith, and social responsibility.

He also reaffirmed his commitment to education,

healthcare, and spiritual awareness across Poonch.

Over the years, his initiatives in religious education, charitable services, and interfaith harmony have strengthened local communities. In addition, his work inspired younger generations to engage in social and religious welfare activities.

Significance of the Award

The Syed Baba Budhan Ali Shah Award recognizes extraordinary service marked by sincerity, humility, and impactful action. By receiving this award, Mufti Misbahi set an example for civic responsibility and leadership.

Syed Baba Budhan

Ali Shah Biography / Recognition

Furthermore, the event coincided with Republic Day celebrations, linking the recognition of personal achievement with national pride.

The ceremony reflected patriotism, social cohesion, and respect for community values.

The award ceremony sent a clear message: service to society, dedication to faith, and promotion of public welfare are as important as national pride. Mufti Farooq Hussain Misbahi's recognition during Republic Day 2026 inspires citizens and leaders to uphold unity, compassion, and civic responsibility.

Republic Day Celebrated with Patriotic Fervour at Poonch Sports Stadium

POONCH: The district headquarters of Poonch witnessed grand and well-organised celebrations of the 76th Republic Day at the Sports Stadium, Poonch, where the main official function was held amid a vibrant patriotic atmosphere.

The event was marked by discipline, enthusiasm and a strong sense of national pride.

Minister Javed Ahmed Rana Unfurls Tricolour

The Chief Guest, Minister Javed Ahmed Rana, unfurled the National Tricolour and took the salute at the ceremonial parade. With this, the Republic Day celebrations formally commenced in the district.

Senior officers of the district administration, police officials, public representatives, students and citizens attended the function in large numbers.

Address Highlights Constitutional Values

Addressing the gathering, Minister Javed Ahmed Rana extended warm greetings to the people on the occasion of Republic Day. He described the day as a cornerstone in India's democratic history.

Meanwhile, the ceremonial parade was coordinated by local forces and Jammu & Kashmir Police, while cultural performances reflected the values enshrined in the Constitution of India.

He said that the Constitution of India guarantees justice, equality, liberty and fraternity to all citizens. He added that democracy thrives only when constitu-



tional values are respected in letter and spirit.

The Minister urged citizens, especially youth, to contribute positively towards nation-building.

Tributes Paid to Freedom Fighters and Martyrs

Furthermore, he also paid rich tributes to the freedom fighters and martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the nation. He said their struggles laid the foundation of a sovereign and democratic India.

He called upon the people to honour their sacrifices by strengthening unity and harmony.

Colourful Cultural Performances by Students

Students performed patriotic songs and folk dances, captivating the audience with their colourful presentations.

Students from various schools across the district participated in the Poonch Republic Day 2026 cultural performances, showcasing patriotism and national unity. The celebrations were further enriched by colourful cultural programmes presented by school students from various educational institutions of the district. Patriotic songs, folk dances and thematic performances reflected India's cultural diversity and national unity. Meanwhile, the performances received wide appreciation from the audience.

Role of District Administration and Deputy Commissioner

Deputy Commissioner managed all arrangements efficiently, ensuring smooth conduct of the event.

In addition, the smooth conduct of the event reflect-

ed the effective coordination of the district administration under the leadership of the Deputy Commissioner, Poonch.

All arrangements, including logistics, seating, stage management and public facilitation, were executed in a planned and timely manner.

SSP Shafqat Hussain Butt Ensures Tight Security

SSP Shafqat Hussain Butt ensured strict security measures throughout the celebrations, coordinating police and volunteers effectively.

From a security point of view, elaborate and fool-proof security arrangements were put in place under the supervision of SSP Poonch, Shafqat Hussain Butt.

Earlier Poonch Police Tricolour Rally

Multiple security layers, strict access control and effective crowd management ensured the peaceful and incident-free conduct of the programme. The coordination among police, security agencies and volunteers remained commendable throughout the event.

Celebrations Conclude Peacefully

Finally, the Republic Day function concluded peacefully. Patriotism and unity filled the atmosphere. The event reaffirmed the commitment of the administration and citizens to uphold democratic values.

The celebrations at the Sports Stadium made Republic Day a memorable occasion for the people of Poonch.

Republic Day Celebrations at Poonch Fort Held with Solemn Dignity



POONCH : The ceremony was presided over by Additional Deputy Commissioner Tahir Mustafa Malik, who hoisted the tricolour and presented a ceremonial salute. Senior officers of the civil administration and police personnel were present on the occasion.

Notably, the Republic Day Celebrations at Poonch Fort formed part of the nationwide observance of the day, during which flag-hoisting ceremonies are traditionally held at important monuments and government institutions to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution of India.

Addressing the gathering, ADC Tahir Mustafa Malik extended warm Republic Day greetings to the citizens. He said the day serves as a reminder of the immense sacrifices made by the founding leaders and freedom fighters to secure a democratic and inclusive future for the nation.

Furthermore, he highlighted the strength and grandeur of the Indian Constitution, noting that it guarantees equality, justice, and fundamental rights to people of all religions, languages, and communities. He added that the Republic Day Celebrations at Poonch Fort symbolise national unity as well as the responsibility of every citizen to uphold constitutional principles.

In addition, the ADC stressed that citizens must continue striving to realise the dreams and vision of those who laid the foundation of the Republic. He underlined that peace, discipline, and respect for democratic institutions are essential for sustainable national progress.

Constitution of India – Government of India

Finally, the event concluded with special prayers for sustained peace, communal harmony, and prosperity across the country. Prayers were also offered for the well-being of the people and continued progress of the nation on the path of democracy and development.

The Republic Day at Poonch Fort thus stood as a meaningful tribute to India's constitutional legacy and a reaffirmation of the collective resolve to uphold the ideals enshrined in the Constitution.

THOUGHT OF THE MONTH: "Every day is a new beginning. Take a deep breath, smile, and start again."

Drones, Social Media Spectacle, and the Quiet Erosion of Border Security

KHAWAJA AJAZ MADNI

DRONE SECURITY RISKS

In an age where technology has outpaced wisdom, the most serious threats to national security no longer always arrive wearing uniforms or carrying weapons. Sometimes, they arrive as short videos, aesthetic aerial shots, or viral reels uploaded casually, consumed endlessly, and forgotten quickly, while the damage they cause remains invisible and enduring.

Nowhere is this contradiction more stark than in India's sensitive border districts such as Poonch. Nestled along a volatile frontier, this region has historically carried the burden of vigilance, sacrifice, and strategic importance. Yet today, it is increasingly being turned into an open visual archive by unregulated drone cameras operated in the name of social media content creation. What is presented as art, tourism promotion, journalism, or digital storytelling often masks a far more troubling reality: the uncontrolled aerial documentation of a strategically sensitive region.

Drone technology is not inherently dangerous. Like all tools, its impact depends on how it is used. However, in border areas, visibility itself can become vulnerability. Aerial footage reveals far more than scenic landscapes. It captures terrain contours, road connectivity, settlement patterns, elevation gradients, and infrastructural layouts information that, when aggregated, can offer a comprehensive spatial understanding of the region. In modern conflict dynamics, such information is invaluable.

What once required intelligence networks, reconnaissance missions, and high-risk operations can now be passively gathered through publicly shared videos. The uncomfortable truth is that open social media platforms have become repositories of strategic data, often curated unwittingly by citizens themselves. This is not speculation. It is the established reality of contemporary hybrid warfare. A particularly concerning

aspect of this trend is its association with what is increasingly termed citizen journalism, a phrase that has lost much of its original meaning. Journalism, in its classical sense, was bound by editorial oversight, ethical codes, accountability, and an understanding of public interest versus public harm.

Today, in many cases, the title of journalist is self-assigned, the newsroom replaced by a smartphone, and editorial judgment substituted by algorithms. In districts like Poonch, this has resulted in drone usage by individuals with no institutional affiliation, no professional training, no editorial supervision, no understanding of security sensitivities. The pursuit is not public awareness but visibility, monetization, and digital relevance. In this environment, virality has replaced verification, and spectacle has eclipsed responsibility. Defenders of such content often argue that their intent is benign promoting tourism, cel-

ebrating natural beauty, or documenting adventure. Intent, however, is not the sole determinant of consequence. A border region is not merely a canvas for creativity. It is a layered space where civilian life, security infrastructure, and strategic geography coexist delicately. What appears to one person as an artistic aerial sweep may to another serve as a detailed spatial reference.

History repeatedly teaches that harm does not always arise from malice; it often arises from ignorance coupled with access. Contemporary security challenges are no longer confined to borders and bunkers. They extend into data ecosystems, digital platforms, and open-source intelligence spaces. Militaries and hostile actors worldwide actively study publicly available imagery to understand terrain, access routes, and settlement behavior. In this context, the casual uploading of drone footage from sensitive areas becomes part of a larger,

unintended intelligence chain. No passwords are hacked. No systems are breached. The information is simply handed over free, high-resolution, and contextualized. The paradox is unsettling: the same citizens who live under the protection of security forces may inadvertently undermine that very shield. This issue cannot be addressed through enforcement alone. While regulatory clarity and administrative vigilance are necessary, they are insufficient without public awareness and ethical restraint.

Border communities have historically demonstrated resilience and loyalty under extraordinary circumstances. That legacy must now extend into the digital domain. The question is no longer whether one has the right to record, but whether one has the responsibility to refrain. Freedom without discernment weakens societies from within. This editorial is not an argument against technology, creativity, or expression. It is an appeal for maturity individual, social, and institutional. Sensitive regions require

sensitive behavior. Not everything visible must be shown. Not everything recordable must be recorded. And not everything shareable must be shared. In border districts, silence can be strategic. Absence can be protective. And restraint can be the highest form of patriotism. National security is not compromised only by overt acts of hostility. It is often eroded quietly, incrementally, and unintentionally through habits that normalize exposure and glorify visibility without reflection. As the line between private content and public consequence continues to blur, society must ask itself a difficult question:

Are we documenting our homeland for pride or displaying it at a cost we do not fully understand? In regions like Poonch, the answer to that question may determine far more than online engagement metrics. It may determine the difference between safety preserved and security diluted. And by the time that distinction becomes visible, it may already be too late.

Poonch Police 2025: The Battle for Peace in a Border District and the Road Ahead

The year 2025 stands as a defining chapter in the security and administrative history of Poonch a strategically sensitive border district that has long remained on the frontline of conflict, terrorism, and cross-border challenges. Against this complex backdrop, the performance of Poonch Police during the year deserves close examination, not merely as a record of statistics, but as a broader narrative of resilience, coordination, public engagement, and future preparedness.

Located along a 114-kilometre-long Line of Control (LoC), Poonch continues to face persistent threats emanating from across the border, ranging from infiltration attempts and terror modules to narcotics smuggling and cyber propaganda. In such an environment, policing is not limited to routine law enforcement; it becomes an exercise in sustained vigilance, intelligence-led operations, and community trust.

Counter-Terror Operations and Intelligence Success : One of the most significant achievements of Poonch Police in 2025 has been its intelligence-driven counter-terrorism operations in close coordination with the Indian Army. Police-generated inputs shared with security forces resulted in two successful joint operations during the year, leading to the elimination of four terrorists and the recovery of a large cache of arms and ammunition. These operations prevented potential large-scale incidents that could have severely disrupted peace in the district. Equally noteworthy was the busting of a terror module operating in the Mandi area. Timely intelligence and swift

police action led to the immediate arrest of three individuals involved in terror-related activities. The subsequent investigation resulted in the recovery of an AK-747 rifle along with a substantial quantity of arms and ammunition, underlining the seriousness of the threat that was neutralized. In addition, six terrorist hideouts were detected and destroyed during the year a sharp increase compared to previous years. These hideouts, used for storing weapons and logistics, posed a grave risk had they fallen into the hands of anti-national elements.

OGW Network, Cross-Border Propaganda, and Legal Action A major shift in the security assessment of Poonch during 2025 has been the updated identification of individuals operating across the LoC. While earlier records cited around 49 such persons, fresh verification exercises revealed that over 300 individuals are actively involved in cross-border propaganda, radicalisation, narcotics trafficking, and terror facilitation. Poonch Police initiated strict legal action against these elements and issued a clear warning that any family members or local contacts found assisting or maintaining links with such individuals would face legal consequences. Surveillance on Over Ground Worker (OGW) networks has been intensified, and action against terror associates remains ongoing.

UAPA, Narcotics, and Asset Seizure :- The impact of new criminal laws, enhanced training, and fast-track investigation mechanisms became evident in the handling of UAPA cases. While 20 UAPA cases remained under investigation at the

end of the previous year, pendency has been reduced to just six cases in 2025 a significant administrative and legal achievement. On the narcotics front, Poonch Police dismantled a major drug module, recovering three kilograms of heroin — one of the largest recoveries in the district. For the first time, forward and backward linkages in a narcotics case were effectively traced. Property seizures under NDPS laws rose sharply, from Rs 46 lakh last year to over Rs 1.40 crore in 2025, sending a strong deterrent message.

Women Safety, Cyber Crime, and Public Outreach :- Recognizing the rising number of complaints related to women, a dedicated Women Police Station was established in Poonch during the year.

This initiative significantly improved access to justice for women and ensured sensitive handling of complaints. A Cyber Police Station was also set up, resulting in faster response to cyber fraud cases and doubling the recovery of defrauded money to over Rs 18 lakh. The police also acted against misuse of VPNs and online platforms for anti-national propaganda, registering FIRs and warning of strict future action.

Operation Sundoor and Civilian Support:- During Operation Sundoor and the subsequent Pakistani shelling, Poonch Police played a critical humanitarian role. Officers reached damaged homes, assisted injured civilians, and supported bereaved families under extremely dangerous conditions.

For the first time, a Help Desk for Terror Victims was established under LG Administration directives, enabling long-suppressed

grievances to surface and receive official redressal, including government job assistance in deserving cases.

Youth Engagement and Community Policing Understanding that long-term peace depends on youth engagement, Poonch Police conducted extensive Civic Action Programmes, sports events, awareness drives, and de-radicalisation initiatives. In 2025 alone, over 250 public awareness programmes were conducted, covering nearly every village in the district an unprecedented outreach effort. Preventive policing also saw improvement, with enhanced tenant verification, SIM vendor surveillance, and community punishment measures under new criminal laws for public disorder offences.

Looking Ahead: The Road to 2026:- As Poonch steps into 2026, the police leadership has made it clear that the district will witness zero tolerance towards terrorism, narcotics, and anti-national activities. The focus will remain on intelligence strengthening, cyber surveillance, youth awareness, and community trust-building.

At the same time, internal accountability and policing reforms will be prioritize to address shortcomings observed during 2025. The ultimate objective remains clear: to establish Poonch as a terror-free, incident-free, and crime-controlled district. The relative peace witnessed in 2025 was not accidental. It was the outcome of coordinated security efforts, public cooperation, media responsibility, and institutional resolve. As challenges evolve, so must policing strategies and Poonch Police appears determined to meet that test.

Poonch Police Arrest Accused for Social Media Hate Speech

POONCH: The Poonch Police hate speech arrest helped prevent a possible communal disturbance after police detained a man for posting abusive content on social media.

Police identified the accused as Onkar Singh Makhan.

He allegedly shared offensive remarks against followers of a particular religion. The posts created concern among residents in the sensitive border district.

Jamaat Ahl-e-Sunnat Raises Issue Lawfully

Jamaat Ahl-e-Sunnat, Province of Jammu, raised

the matter in a calm and lawful manner. The organization urged authorities to act strictly under the law. Members also appealed to the public to maintain peace.

Later that night, Mufti Farooq Hussain Misbahi, Vice President of the Jamaat and Khateeb of Poonch, spoke directly with the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Poonch. He explained the seriousness of the issue.

Swift Police Action Prevented Escalation

The SSP immediately ordered action. Acting quickly, the Poonch Police

arrested the accused. Officials confirmed that the timely step stopped the situation from escalating.

Local observers praised the coordination between civil society and police. They said responsible reporting and quick action helped protect communal harmony.

According to officials, the content had the potential to disturb public order. Police therefore treated the matter with urgency and seriousness.

Observers described the development as a positive example of coordination between civil society and

law enforcement agencies.

Police Reiterate Zero Tolerance Policy

Under the leadership of SSP Shafqat Hussain Butt, the Poonch Police continue to enforce law and order. Police officials stated that freedom of expression does not allow hate speech.

Authorities warned that strict legal action will follow any misuse of social media that threatens peace.

The police administration reaffirmed that it will continue to act firmly against activities that threaten peace, harmony, and public safety in the region.

DDC Poonch chairs high-tech meet for rollout of Sampoonnata Abhiyan 2.0 in Mankote

POONCH: District Development Commissioner, Poonch, Ashok Kumar Sharma today chaired a high-tech meeting to review and finalize preparations for the rollout of Sampoonnata Abhiyan 2.0 in Aspirational Block Mankote.

The DDC highlighted the objectives of Sampoonnata Abhiyan 2.0 and stressed upon achieving saturation of the identified key indicators through effective inter-departmental coordination, focused planning and timely execution.

He issued clear instructions to all concerned departments to ensure seamless implementation of the Abhiyan within the

stipulated timeline.

The DDC emphasized the use of technology-driven monitoring to ensure measurable outcomes on the ground, particularly in Aspirational Block Mankote.

The meeting was attended by District Statistics & Evaluation Officer, Javied Ahmed; Chief Education Officer, Mukhtar Manhas; Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Parvaiz; Chief Animal Husbandry Officer, Mohd Ashraf Malik; Aspirational Block Programme Fellow (ABPF), Ajaz Ahmed; CDPO Mendhar, Veterinary Assistant Surgeon, Mankote, Sectoral Medical Officer, Mankote along with other concerned officers and officials.

18-Year-Old Kashmiri Youth Assaulted in Uttarakhand

SRINAGAR: The incident has raised serious concerns over the safety of migrant traders from Jammu and Kashmir.

Kashmiri Youth Assaulted in Uttarakhand

An 18-year-old Kashmiri youth was allegedly assaulted in Uttarakhand's Vikasnagar area on Tuesday evening, raising serious concerns over the safety of migrant traders from Jammu and Kashmir.

According to family members, the teenager had travelled to Uttarakhand with his family for seasonal trade.

Like many Kashmiri families, they sell shawls during the winter months to earn a livelihood.

Kashmiri Youth Assaulted After Identity Questioning

According to, the youth was stopped by a group of local individuals.

They questioned him about his identity and place of residence.

When they learned he was a Muslim from Kashmir, the situation reportedly turned violent.

The attackers fractured his left arm. He got serious head injuries. Witnesses saw him bleeding heavily



after the attack.

Family Members Attacked During Assault on Kashmiri Youth

Meanwhile, the attackers also assaulted other family members present at the scene. They dragged and slapped them and physically abused them during the incident.

Hospitalization of Injured Kashmiri Youth

However, family members first took the injured youth to a nearby local hospital.

Because his injuries were serious, doctors referred him to Doon Hospital in Dehradun for further treatment.

Meanwhile, the attackers also assaulted other family members present at the scene.

Following the incident, the incident gained public attention

after social and student activist Jasib Shabbir shared details on social media. He described the assault as deeply disturbing and demanded strict legal action against those responsible.

Additionally, the activist also appealed to Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama to intervene. He urged the CM to ensure the registration of a proper case and guarantee the safety of migrant Kashmiri traders.

Police Action in Kashmiri Youth Assault Case

Later, police have taken Sanjay Yadav into custody, and further investigation is underway.

According to authorities, legal proceedings will continue in accordance with the law. They will take action against anyone found involved in the assault.

NC Students Wing Protests Closure of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Medical College in Jammu



JAMMU: Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Medical College closure: The students' wing of the National Conference (NC) on Monday held a protest in Jammu against the closure of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Medical College, terming the move arbitrary and harmful to the future of students in the region.

The protesting students said the decision had caused widespread anger and disappointment among the youth of Jammu, irrespective of religion or community. They alleged that a small group of political elements was attempting to create a misleading narrative that the people of Jammu supported the closure, a claim they categorically rejected.

Addressing the protest, NC student leaders said Jammu had always demanded educational

institutions, not their shutdown. "From the Science College agitation to movements for Jammu University, IIT, IIM and AIIMS, the youth of Jammu have consistently fought for education.

Today, celebrating the closure of a medical college is shameful," they said.

The protesters stressed that the issue was not political but educational. They clarified that while hospital services continue, the withdrawal of permission for the medical college would directly affect future admissions, depriving local students of the opportunity to pursue medical education in Jammu.

Questioning the administration's stand, the students pointed out that the same college had been granted full operational powers only a few months ago. "If the college met

requirements then, how can it suddenly be declared unfit now?" they asked, demanding a clear explanation.

Highlighting social unity, the speakers said Jammu's youth Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian and Scheduled Caste stood united in demanding the restoration of the medical college. They also referred to affected students, including those from Jammu, who were later adjusted elsewhere, stating that temporary arrangements could not replace a permanent institution.

The NC students' wing demanded immediate restoration of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Medical College, asserting that the protest represented the collective voice of Jammu and Kashmir's youth seeking education, justice and sustainable development.

Winter Break Wraps Up: Jammu Schools Reopening on January 12

POONCH: Jammu schools reopening has been officially confirmed to begin on January 12, 2026. All government and private schools in the Summer Zone will resume classes as per the scheduled academic calendar, with no extension of winter holidays.

Officials stated that teachers are already on duty and have been

instructed to report to their respective schools on Saturday. Students are expected to resume classes from January 12 according to the existing academic calendar. This ensures that the academic year stays on track without any disruption. This clarification comes in response to baseless reports suggesting that winter holidays

could be extended due to prevailing weather conditions. Authorities have dismissed these claims and urged parents, teachers, and students to rely only on official government updates.

Further, education department officials assured that necessary arrangements for the smooth resumption of classes have been

made, and school administrations have been instructed to strictly adhere to the scheduled academic calendar to ensure there is no disruption to student learning.

Officials also emphasized that any changes to holidays or the academic calendar will only be announced through official channels. Public reliance on rumors

can create unnecessary confusion, hence authorities appeal for caution. According to the latest directives, the winter break officially ends on January 10, 2026. Students will return for regular academic activities starting January 12, 2026. Parents are encouraged to prepare their children for a smooth transition back to school.

Serious Violations by Notaries in Property Matters Come Under Government Scanner in J&K

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir Government has taken a firm stance following the emergence of widespread and serious violations of law by Notaries Public in property-related matters across the Union Territory.

Official disclosures have revealed that several notaries have been illegally attesting and effectively portraying property documents including agreements to sell, ownership papers, and even documents related to State land as "registered", thereby misleading the public and undermining statutory provisions.

According to observations made by the Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, notaries across Jammu and Kashmir have been found repeatedly overstepping their legally defined authority and performing functions strictly reserved for registering authorities under the Registration Act, 1908.

These violations include

treating notarised agreements to sell as registered instruments, authenticating property transactions in the absence of executing parties, and notarising documents related to State land actions that are illegal on the face of the law.

The Government has categorically clarified that under the Notaries Act, 1952, the role of a notary is strictly limited to verification, authentication, certification, attestation of documents, administration of oaths, and other specifically permitted notarial acts. A notary does not possess the authority to register documents or validate the transfer of immovable property.

The distinction between attestation and registration, the Government reiterated, is fundamental, settled, and non-negotiable under law.

Despite this clear legal framework, authorities have found that some notaries have been creating and certifying documents in a manner "unknown to law", giving a false impression of legality to property transac-

tions. Of particular concern is the notarisation of agreements to sell.

The Government has underlined that an agreement to sell does not, by itself, create any right, title, or interest in immovable property, and any attempt to project such documents as legally effective amounts to a gross misuse of authority.

An even more alarming aspect has been the involvement of certain notaries in notarising documents related to State land.

The Government has unequivocally stated that such documents are void ab initio and non-existent in the eyes of law.

Their notarisation not only misleads citizens but also facilitates unlawful dealings involving public land. Termining these acts as serious professional misconduct, the Government has noted that such violations attract action under Rule 13 of the Notaries Rules, 1956, read with relevant provisions of the Notaries Act, 1952.

Fake Notaries Cast Dark Shadow Over Poonch Courts: Innocent Lives Disrupted Amid Lawyers' Collusion Govt Urged to Enforce Circular

POONCH: A dark and alarming trend has emerged in the courts of Poonch, a sensitive border district in Jammu & Kashmir, where fraudulent notary practices are reportedly ruining innocent citizens' lives. Within the corridors of justice, where fairness is expected, fake agreements, forged signatures, and thumb impressions are being used to stake claims on properties worth crores of rupees.

The result is not only a drain on the judiciary's valuable time but also mental and social trauma for ordinary citizens, eroding public trust in the legal system. This is no fictional tale. It is a disturbing reality that has persisted in Poonch for years. Recently, the Jammu & Kashmir government issued a critical circular (No. LAW (Notary) 50/2021, dated December 16, 2025) attempting to curb this malpractice. The circular explicitly warns notaries against illegally registering or notarizing sale agreements and documents related to state land, highlighting that such actions violate the Notaries Act, 1952, and Notaries Rules, 1956. It clarifies that

notaries are strictly limited to attesting, verifying, or certifying documents—not performing registration functions reserved for registrars under the Registration Act, 1908. Despite the circular, sources reveal that in Poonch, the law remains largely unheeded. Small "notary centers" and intermediaries reportedly operate around the district court, producing fraudulent documents with forged signatures and thumb impressions.

Lawyers then file cases in court based on these documents, sometimes dragging matters on for years. The original owners—often local farmers or border residents—end up losing property, while the fraudsters exploit loopholes in the system. Poonch Context: Border Disputes and Rising Land Fraud Poonch has historically faced land disputes due to its border location and complex inheritance patterns.

In recent years, fake notary documents have transformed these disputes into an organized network of fraud. Investigations show that brokers and intermediaries often

duplicate deeds and sale agreements, creating a "minefield" where a single plot may be sold multiple times. In rural areas like Surnkot and Mandi, near the Line of Control, this trend has reached alarming proportions. Local victims report cases where fake agreements were prepared with forged signatures and attested by notaries, giving the appearance of legality. These documents have been used to initiate civil cases, criminal complaints, and even police actions. Despite this, the law clearly limits notaries to authentication and certification; they cannot confer property rights or register property. Yet, numerous cases in Poonch show notary documents being misrepresented as legally binding, misleading both courts and citizens. Lawyers' Collusion: Exploiting Legal Loopholes Compounding the problem, some lawyers are allegedly complicit, using these fraudulent documents to press cases in court. Legal experts indicate that such practices exploit the system's gaps, turning weak or illegal documents into courtroom arguments.

Poonch Child Welfare Committee Rescues Minor from Labor, Reunites Family in Aligarh in Swift Operation

POONCH: In a swift and successful intervention, the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) of Poonch rescued a minor child from a situation of labor and facilitated his safe reunion with his family in Aligarh, officials confirmed on Tuesday.

The operation began after the committee was alerted to a child found engaged in labor within the Poonch district. Acting promptly under relevant child protection laws, CWC members secured the child and presented him before the committee to ensure immediate care, protection, and necessary legal procedures.

Following the initial rescue, the child was provided with temporary shelter, psychosocial support, and comprehensive counseling.

After stabilization, the case was formally presented to the Deputy Commissioner of Poonch for further directives. Upon the Deputy Commissioner's review and approval, arrangements were made for the child's secure transit to Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, where he was successfully reunited with his family.

The entire rescue and



rehabilitation process was supervised by the office of the Deputy Commissioner, Poonch, and the District Child Protection Officer (DCPO) to ensure all legal and welfare protocols were followed in the child's best interest.

Officials credited the timely action and dedication of Rohit Khajuria, whose vigilance and efforts were instrumental in identifying the case and initiating the rescue.

The CWC Poonch praised his commitment, which they said ensured the child could escape exploitation and begin a safer, more hopeful chapter

with his family. In a statement, the CWC Poonch emphasized: "Every child deserves a childhood free from exploitation and abuse.

Child labor constitutes a grave violation of children's rights, and we remain steadfast in protecting every vulnerable child. We urge the public to report any instance of child labor or abuse to enable timely intervention."

The committee reiterated its commitment to enforcing child rights and encouraged community collaboration to build a protective environment for children across the district.

Kishtwar Anti-Terror Operation: Security Forces Detain Multiple Suspects Amid Ongoing Search

JAMMU: Kishtwar Anti-Terror Operation: Security forces intensified operations in the upper reaches of Kishtwar district, Jammu & Kashmir, on Tuesday. Officials confirmed that multiple individuals were taken into custody for questioning on the third day of the Kishtwar Anti-Terror Operation.

Gunfight in Chatro Belt

The operation began on Sunday in Sonar village near Mandral-Singhpura. It led to an exchange of fire with terrorists. One para trooper was killed and seven others injured. The fatalities were primarily due to shrapnel from a sudden grenade attack. The terrorists managed to escape into dense forest areas. However, their fortified hideout, containing large winter supplies including food, blankets, and utensils, was destroyed.

Top officials, including Jammu Zone Inspector General of Police Bhim Sen Tutti and CRPF Jammu Inspector General R. Gopala Krishna Rao, visited the encounter site. They are currently camped there, supervising the operation along with several army officers.

On Tuesday morning, a simple tribute ceremony was held in Jammu to



honour the slain Special Forces commando, Havildar Gajinder Singh. The ceremony involved placing a floral shroud on the officer. Brigadier Yudhvir Singh Sekhon, Officiating Chief of Staff of the White Knight Corps, led the proceedings. Later, the body was sent to his native town in Uttarakhand for the last rites.

The ceremony was attended by Deputy Inspector General of Police, Jammu-Kathua-Samba range, Shivu Kumar Sharma, Deputy Commissioner Jammu, Rakesh Manhas, and several officers from the police, CRPF, and BSF.

Officials revealed that several individuals were brought in on Monday afternoon for questioning. These were primarily Over Ground Workers (OGWs) linked to the operation site at an altitude of over 12,000 feet in Sutwari. Security forces are investigating the supply of rations, lentils, utensils, and other goods. These supplies could have supported at least four mil-

itants through the winter months.

On Monday, the White Knight Corps posted on social media platform 'X' that Operation Trashi-1 in Chatro is ongoing. The post stated:

"The cordon has been further tightened, and the search operation has been expanded. Corps troops, along with police and CRPF, are deployed to dominate the area." Officials added that multiple teams from the army, police, and paramilitary forces, assisted by drones and sniffer dogs, are combing the rugged terrain. Dense vegetation and steep slopes make the search difficult, restricting both visibility and movement.

According to officials, the operation is believed to involve two to three terrorists associated with Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM). Intelligence inputs suggest that handlers in Pakistan are attempting to infiltrate more terrorists into the region.

Poonch Police Organise Tricolour Rally Ahead of Republic Day; "Our Tricolour Flies High Because of Martyrs' Sacrifices": SSP POONCH

POONCH : Ahead of Republic Day celebrations, the Poonch Police Tricolour Rally was organised by District Police Poonch to promote patriotism and honour the supreme sacrifices of the nation's freedom fighters and martyrs.

In the run-up to Republic Day, the District Police Poonch on Saturday organised a grand Trico-

lour Rally under the leadership of Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Poonch, Shafqat Hussain Butt.

The rally was taken out from Poonch city, passed through various adjoining localities and surrounding areas, and culminated back in the heart of Poonch town. Police personnel marched with the national flag, reflecting

a strong message of patriotism, unity, and respect for constitutional values.

The event formed part of a series of programmes being organised across the district ahead of Republic Day. The rally aimed to reinforce national pride and to remind citizens of the sacrifices made for the country's freedom and sovereignty.

Addressing the media, SSP Poonch Shafqat Hussain Butt said that several programmes have been organised over the past few days in connection with Republic Day, and the Tricolour Rally was one such significant initiative.

He stated that the rally has been dedicated to the freedom fighters and martyrs of the nation, whose unmatched courage and

sacrifices laid the foundation of India's independence.

Jammu and Kashmir Police in service of Nation

The District Police Poonch reiterated its commitment to maintaining peace, harmony, and law and order in the region, while also continuing to engage with the community through positive and patriotic initiatives.

Continued from Page 1 77th Republic Day...

The Beating Retreat ceremony concluded with the ever-popular 'Saare Jahan Se Achha' with simultaneous display of spectacular fireworks and sound & light display followed by the National Anthem—(KNO)

CS reviews progress...

attended through video conferencing from their respective offices.

During this meeting a detailed presentation was made by the Secretary, IT, Dr Piyush Singla on the incremental progress achieved since the last SBC meeting held in October. The Chief Secretary took note of the steady advancement across multiple verticals and emphasized the need for accelerating execution timelines to ensure timely completion of all sanctioned sites.

While reviewing the 4G Saturation Project, the Chief Secretary was informed that work orders have been issued for 775 mobile tower sites, aimed at providing 4G mobile connectivity to uncovered and remote villages, particularly in border, hilly and far-flung areas. The project is being implemented under the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) of the Government of India, with BSNL as the executing agency.

The Secretary further apprised that land has already been allotted at all identified locations, and power supply has been extended to most sites with the support of the Power Development Department (PDD). The Chief Secretary impressed upon the implementing agencies to further pace up installation and commissioning works, particularly for the 269 sites targeted for completion by March 31, 2026, and to fast-track approvals for the remaining locations.

The meeting also reviewed the status of border village saturation, covering 1,421 border villages, and stressed the importance of ensuring seamless connectivity in strategically important areas to bridge the digital divide and enhance service delivery.

Reviewing the Call Before You Dig (CBuD) platform, the Chief Secretary stressed strict adherence to its usage by all departments and agencies to prevent damage to underground utilities. He directed that the matter be regularly monitored through District Level Telecom Committee (DLTC) meetings, which are now being convened across all districts.

The Amended Bharat Net Programme (ABP) was also reviewed in detail. It was informed that the project, funded by Digital Bharat Nidhi and owned by the Department of Telecommunications, aims to provide optical fibre connectivity to all Gram Panchayats with a minimum 98 percent network uptime. Key milestones achieved include signing of agreements with Project Implementation Agencies, establishment of a Network Operations Centre (NOC) at Jammu, centralized billing mechanisms, and resolution of inter-departmental issues through a tripartite MoU.

On 5G preparedness, the IT Department highlighted initiatives taken for Right of Way (RoW) facilitation, 5G street furniture mapping, and capacity building, including a one-day workshop on 5G and RoW orga-

nized in November 2025 in collaboration with the Department of Telecommunications (DoT).

The Chief Secretary while assessing the rollout of the Samridh Gram Panchayat Pilot Project, which seeks to digitally empower rural institutions through FTTH connectivity, covering 2,234 schools and 1,138 Primary Health Centres in rural areas. He observed that digital connectivity at the grassroots level is critical for improving governance, education, health-care and entrepreneurship.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary reiterated the importance of close coordination between BSNL, district administrations and line departments, directing that district-level issues be addressed promptly to avoid project delays. He also called for regular DLTC meetings and time-bound redressal of issues through relevant mechanisms.

The meeting concluded with the Chief Secretary reiterating the Government's firm commitment to achieve the universal digital connectivity across Jammu & Kashmir. He emphasized that timely completion of these flagship projects would play a transformative role in strengthening governance, improving service delivery, and ensuring inclusive socio-economic development, particularly in remote and border areas of the Union Territory.

LG pays tributes...

and ideals that have guided us through generations.

"The world and global society is changing rapidly. The humanity is facing new challenges today. Amid such turbulence, Pujya Mahatma Gandhi's serene yet formidable voice offers strength and direction to the global society.

Pujya Babu showed through his life and works that meaningful change demands not merely strength, but character and dedicated effort," the Lieutenant Governor said. The Lieutenant Governor further elaborated on Babu's vision for a resilient, peaceful and inclusive society.

"Babu envisioned that safeguarding fundamental rights- human dignity, equality, justice, welfare of the marginalized, and women's and youth rights, dignity, and unity we can create unshakeable societal strength even amid gravest challenges," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor, in his address, called upon the younger generation to recognize Gandhi's nonviolence as supreme courage, not weakness. He stated that through sacrifice and Satyagraha, Gandhi ji showed nonviolence as actionable wisdom.

"Gandhi Ji throughout his life advocated dialogue instead of vengeance, compassion rather than rage, and understanding over confrontation.

"Babu demonstrated that moral values are humanity's core strength and invaluable treasure, enabling a united society to overcome any challenge," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He expressed his firm belief that in times of global despair, hope will emerge from Gandhian values and principles.

"Following Gandhi's values enable us to address current issues, build better

futures, create global harmony, and promote human welfare," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that the grand celebrations of Gandhi Jayanti in J&K over the last six years have had a transformational impact in society. This transformation is clearly visible in the massive public participation in national integration programs like the 'Tiranga Yatra', 'Har Ghar Tiranga', and 'Vande Mataram', he said.

He also called upon the citizens to take a collective pledge for an "Ujjawal Jammu Kashmir" and "Ujjawal Bharat,"

The Lieutenant Governor honoured the NoKs of martyrs, and family members of Late Dr. Raj Kumar Thapa, and civilians who lost their lives due to unprovoked firing by Pakistan during Operation Sindoor.

School students were conferred with the Shanti Doot Puraskar for their efforts in promoting Gandhian values. Additionally, officials on behalf of the Civil Administration, J&K Police, and Security Forces also received the Rashtriya Sewa Puraskar.

Earlier, a two-minute silence was observed as a mark of respect to the Father of the Nation and the martyrs who made the supreme sacrifice during India's struggle for freedom.

Padma Shri Dr SP Varma, President Gandhi Global Family J&K; Shri Yudhvir Sethi and Ms Devyani Rana, Members of Legislative Assembly; Shri Sanjeev Verma, Chief Electoral Officer J&K; Maj Gen Kaushik Mukherjee, GOC 25 Inf Division; Major Gen. Ajit M. Yeole, GOC 26 Division; Shri Bhim Sen Tuti, IGP Jammu; Shri Shiv Kumar Sharma, DIG Jammu-Samba-Kathua Range; Dr Rakesh Minhas, Deputy Commissioner Jammu; Lt Gen RK Sharma (Retd.), senior Vice President, Gandhi Global Family; senior officials; ex-Servicemen; family members of the martyrs, prominent citizens, youth in large number attended the commemorative event and paid tributes to Mahatma Gandhi.

Jammu Protest Turns...

the protester standing directly over the National Emblem.

Several people at the site were seen recording the act on their mobile phones. The footage soon went viral.

As the images spread online, public reaction intensified. Many users described the act as disrespectful and deeply disturbing.

Legal and Civic Concerns Raised

Legal experts have stressed that peaceful protest is a constitutional right. However, they also pointed out that this right has clear limits.

Damaging government property and insulting national symbols do not fall under lawful protest. Such actions, experts said, weaken democratic norms.

A senior advocate in Jammu said the act crossed a clear legal line. He noted that standing with shoes on the National Emblem carries serious implications.

Police Vehicle Vandalism Draws Alarm

Former police officials also reacted strongly to the incident. They said a police

Gypsy represents state authority and public order.

Targeting such a vehicle during a protest sends a dangerous signal. It encourages confrontation instead of dialogue.

Observers noted that similar tactics were earlier seen during violent street protests in the Kashmir Valley. Those incidents were treated as serious law-and-order challenges.

Law Protects the National Emblem

The National Emblem is protected under Indian law. Its deliberate disrespect can invite legal action.

In addition, damaging a police vehicle and obstructing officers may attract further charges. The final action will depend on the outcome of the investigation.

Police Reviewing Evidence

As of the time of filing this report, police had not issued an official statement. However, sources confirmed that video and photographic evidence is under review.

Authorities are examining the footage to identify those involved.

The incident has sparked a wider debate in Jammu. Civil society members have urged protesters to maintain discipline.

They emphasised that dissent must remain peaceful and lawful.

In a democracy, protest is a right. But when protest turns into vandalism and disrespect for national symbols, it undermines the rule of law.

Severe Snowfall and...

and provide urgent relief. Locals have stressed the need for temporary accommodation, blankets, ration supplies and financial assistance to help the family cope with the aftermath of the disaster.

Public representatives, including the Member of Legislative Assembly from Haveli constituency and the concerned Member of Parliament, have also been urged to intervene and facilitate prompt relief measures. Community members expressed hope that the affected family would be included under disaster relief norms and provided assistance at the earliest.

The Pir Panjal region frequently witnesses extreme weather conditions during winter, often resulting in damage to poorly constructed houses in remote villages. Observers believe that timely assessment and swift relief can prevent further hardship for vulnerable families affected by such natural calamities.

As winter conditions persist, local residents have emphasized the importance of proactive disaster response mechanisms to ensure that no family is left exposed to life-threatening conditions during extreme weather events.

several remote areas of Poonch district, particularly in Mandi local news reports, have witnessed similar damage during the ongoing winter spell.

According to advisories issued by the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the Pir Panjal region has been experiencing extreme winter conditions.

With harsh winter conditions continuing, the impact of Pir Panjal Snowfall is expected to remain a serious challenge for vulnerable communities in the region.

Sports is a powerful force that shapes individuals, brings communities together, and plays a vital role in nation-building: LG Sinha

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha on Saturday inaugurated the two-day 'National Level Sports Conference - SRIJAN', organised by Department of Youth Services and Sports at Jammu.

The Conference will identify the actionable strategies to further strengthen sports systems in J&K UT, prepare a roadmap for effective implementation of the National Sports Policy 2025 & J&K Sports Policy 2022 and highlight measures for shaping a resilient and future-ready generation.

In his address, the Lieutenant Governor called for linking Sports with education and essential life skills. He said, with integration in education curriculum, sports can become a powerful tool for the complete and holistic development of youth.

"Sports is a powerful



force that shapes individuals, brings communities together, and plays a vital role in nation-building.

For youth, sports serve as a real-life school which teaches discipline, values, and leadership through lived experience. It is a strong medium for empowerment, social awareness, and the overall progress of the society," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasised that sports

should be kept away from politics.

He observed that sporting talent can only be nurtured in a peaceful environment.

In order to make India a true sporting powerhouse, we must keep sports and politics strictly separate.

The Lieutenant Governor said that the Politics should not interfere in sports and the talented youth should not be deprived of the

opportunities they deserve.

"We must move forward and create a system where there is no room for doubt on the selection process," he said.

He also reiterated the administration's resolve to extend requisite support to the sportspersons and developing state-of-the-art sports infrastructure at grassroots level.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasised on giving special focus and strong

encouragement to the participation of women and youth in sports and working towards removing the major barriers that hold them back.

He said the policymakers and industry leaders should create avenues of opportunity through sports.

"Investing in sports means investing in disciplined citizens and a confident future to shape the destiny of the country.

To truly build a sports culture, we must bring sports into the heart of daily community living and connect sports with education and life skills," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor commended the Department of Youth Services and Sports, J&K for its unique endeavour aimed at advancing the national sports agenda through sharing of best practices in

governance, participation, athlete development and performance excellence.

He urged sports councils, federations, administrators and officials to chalk-out a strategic development plan specifically designed to elevate performance in international competitions.

Shri Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary; Ms. Yasha Mudgal, Commissioner/Secretary to Government, Youth Services and Sports; Padma Shri Dr Karnam Malleswari (Olympian) Vice Chancellor, Delhi Sports University; Shri Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Ms Anuradha Gupta, Director General Youth Services and Sports, senior officials, representatives of Sports Authority of India; eminent sports personalities; sports-experts and youth in large number attended the inaugural ceremony.

Dy CM inaugurates mega health camp at Seri

Surinder Choudhary, Satish Sharma inaugurate border sports festival 2026 at Nowshera

NEWSHERA: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today inaugurated a mega health camp organised by the 80th Infantry Brigade in collaboration with the health department and Shafa multi-specialty clinic Nowshera at Senior Secondary School, Seri, Nowshera, providing medical services to a large number of people from border and far-flung areas.

Later, the Deputy Chief Minister alongwith Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Information Technology, Youth Services & Sports and Transport, Satish Sharma, inaugurated the Border Sports Festival-2026 at the Sports Stadium, Nowshera.

On the occasion, the dignitaries also laid foundation stone for construction of a volleyball court, practice pitch and other allied works at the stadium. The programme commenced with a welcome address by Secretary, J&K Sports Council, Nuzhat Gul, who highlighted the government's initiatives to strengthen sports infrastructure and promote sporting culture in border areas. Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Chief Minister said that projects worth Rs 2 crore have been sanctioned for improving sports infrastructure in Nowshera. He announced that the sta-

dium will be equipped with proper lighting facilities and released Rs 20 lakh from his Constituency Development Fund (CDF) for further development works.

The Dy CM warmly welcomed international players participating in the Border Sports Festival and emphasised that sports play a vital role in steering youth away from drugs. He said the government is actively considering the regularisation of Rehbar-e-Khel and appealed the parents to encourage their children to actively participate in sports.

Highlighting the patriotic spirit of the region, he said the people of Nowshera have always stood firmly with the nation and defence forces, citing their courage and resilience during Operation Sindoor. He reaffirmed that the government is committed towards safeguarding the rights of players, farmers and residents of far-flung border areas.

Satish Sharma, while speaking on the occasion, said the govt is fully committed to promote border sports, developing employment hubs and strengthening indoor sports facilities. He remarked that "today's sweat becomes tomorrow's success" and reiterated the government's resolve to combat drug menace and narco-terrorism.

Sports achievements reflect strength of youth, SRIJAN paving way for inclusive sporting ecosystem: Satish Sharma

JAMMU: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Youth Services & Sports, Information Technology, ARI & Trainings, Satish Sharma, today said that the remarkable achievements of Jammu and Kashmir's youth are a powerful testament to what can be accomplished through fair opportunities, modern infrastructure and unwavering government support.

Addressing the gathering during the SRIJAN initiative conference, the Minister stated that the success of young athletes clearly demonstrates that with the right ecosystem in place, the UT youth are capable of overcoming every challenge and competing confidently at national and international platforms.

LG flags-off the first Group of Mera Yuva

Bharat's Kashmiri Youth Exchange Program

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha today flagged off the first Group of 120 youth from Kashmir Division under Kashmiri Youth Exchange Program "Watan Ko Jaano".

The flagship initiative, sponsored by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India and executed by Mera Yuva Bharat -MY Bharat Jammu Kashmir under the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, aims to foster national integration and empower the youth of the Kashmir Valley.

The Lieutenant Governor



Highlighting the core focus areas of the SRIJAN programme, Satish Sharma said "the initiative is playing a transformative role in strengthening the sports landscape of the Union Territory by expanding grassroots sports infrastructure across Jammu, Kashmir and other regions. This is being done by ensuring transparent, merit-based selections free from any bias; integrating sports with education and skill development; promoting greater participation of

girls and enhancing inclusivity and establishing sports as a dignified and sustainable career option with viable livelihood opportunities, he asserted.

Reaffirming the government's firm commitment, the Minister informed that sustained efforts are underway to create international-standard sports facilities, including modern cricket stadiums in Jammu and Srinagar. He also highlighted the strengthening of Khelo India Centres, promotion of traditional

sports such as Dangal and enhanced collaboration with the Union Ministry to transform Jammu & Kashmir into a national sports hub.

"As Sports Minister, I assure our athletes that the government stands firmly with them. Our focus is not only on infrastructure creation but also on nurturing talent, discipline and confidence among the youth," he said.

The Minister lauded the determination, resilience and dedication of young sportspersons, describing them as the living legacy of the SRIJAN mission. He urged them to continue training with passion, remain disciplined and dream fearlessly, assuring them of full institutional support at every step of their journey.

LAST WORD

A Newspaper's True Duty

A newspaper's true duty is not merely to inform, but to illuminate. Beyond headlines and breaking news lies a deeper responsibility—to provide context, encourage reflection and give voice to those often unheard.

In times of uncertainty, journalism must resist noise and haste. It must choose accuracy over speed, depth over sensation and public interest over convenience. Only then can it earn trust—not for a day, but over time.

This publication aspires to be a record of events and a forum for thought, grounded in facts and guided by conscience.