

AICC Member slams BJP Govt for renaming MGNREGA, raises alarm over burning issues in J&K

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS  
JAMMU, JAN 18

Senior leader of the Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) and Member of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) today strongly criticized the BJP-led government at the Centre for its decision to change the name of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), terming it an act driven by “political vendetta rather than public interest.”

Addressing a public meeting, the senior Congress leader said that MGNREGA is not merely a scheme but a historic, rights-based legislation enacted by the UPA government to provide employment security and dignity to rural households. “Changing the name of MGNREGA reflects the BJP’s deep-rooted intolerance towards the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress party. This move will neither improve rural livelihoods nor address unemployment; instead, it exposes the BJP’s obsession with erasing the contributions of previous governments,” he remarked.

He further pointed out that in Jammu and Kashmir, MGNREGA has been a lifeline for lakhs of rural families, especially in far-flung and border areas, where employment opportunities are scarce. “Instead of strengthening the scheme by ensuring timely wage payments, increasing workdays, and enhancing allocations, the BJP govern-



ment is busy in symbolic politics that offer no relief to the common people,” he said.

Highlighting other burning issues confronting the people of J&K UT, the senior Congress leader expressed grave concern over rising unemployment, inflation, and the deteriorating economic conditions. He said that educated youth in J&K are facing an uncertain future due to shrinking job opportunities, delayed recruitments, and lack of a clear employment policy. “The BJP’s tall claims of development stand exposed as unemployment and price rise continue to break the backbone of ordinary citizens,” he added.

He also criticized the government over the prolonged delay in restoration of full

democratic rights in Jammu and Kashmir. “Even years after the downgrading of the erstwhile state, people are still waiting for the restoration of statehood and meaningful empowerment of elected representatives. Governance through bureaucratic control has alienated the masses and weakened grassroots democracy,” he asserted.

The Congress leader further raised issues related to rising electricity tariffs, frequent power cuts, poor road connectivity in rural and hilly areas, inadequate healthcare facilities, and the plight of daily wagers, casual labourers, and contractual employees. “From daily wagers to NHM and other scheme-based employees, thousands of workers are

struggling for job security and fair wages, while the government remains indifferent,” he said.

Reiterating the Congress party’s commitment to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, the senior JKPCC leader and AICC Member said that the party will continue to raise the voice of the people at every platform—on the streets, in legislatures, and before the nation. He appealed to the BJP government to stop indulging in divisive and cosmetic measures and instead focus on resolving the real issues affecting the lives and livelihoods of the people of J&K UT. “The Congress party stands firmly with the people of Jammu and Kashmir and will not allow their genuine concerns to be ignored,” he concluded.

Book on life & work of Yashpaul Nirmal released in world Book Fair 2026

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS  
JAMMU, JAN 18

Book based on the life and work of esteemed Dogri writer linguist and poet Sh. Yashpaul Nirmal written by Dr. Ashu Sharma, Sahitya Akademi New Delhi Awardee Released in the world book fair 2026 at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi on the stall of Sarv Bhasha Trust, New Delhi.

On this occasion Sh. Rajinder Ranjha, renowned poet and former Member Dogri Advisory Board, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi was the Chief Guest and S. Gagan Sandhu, Sahitya akademi Yuva awardee in Punjabi, presided over the function while eminent writer Ashok Pandey, Organisr Sarv Bhasha Trust Sh. Keshav Mohan Pandey, Sh. Arvind Tiwari, Sahitya Akademi Baal Sahitya Awardee, Sahitya Akademi and S. Gursevak Singh Punjabi Scholar and Poet were the



special guest on the occasion.

In this 200 pages book Dr. Ashu Sharma briefly express her view in different articles based on the life and work of Yashpaul Nirmal. While speaking on the occasion Chief guest Rajinder Ranjha said that Yashpaul Nirmal is a movement in himself. He wrote in different genres like poetry,

prose, children literature etc. His children novel Chhuttiyan translated into 27 major languages of India. He is encouraging the young generation for promoting Dogri language for the last 35 years under the banners of Dogri kala Manch, Akhil Bharti Dogra Sanskriti and Dogri Bhasha Akademi.

While delivering his pres-

idential address S. Gagan Singh Sandhu said that Yashpaul Nirmal is not only Dogri Literatureur and language activist, he is the National Research Director of Sarv Bhasha Trust.

He is a link between different languages across India. He also writes and do translation work in National language Hindi and Punjabi.

Army organises Rifleman Aurangzeb Memorial Volleyball Tournament Final at Salani

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS  
JAMMU, JAN 18

The final match of the Rifleman (Rfn) Aurangzeb Memorial Volleyball Tournament was organised at Salani village on 17 January 2026 under Operation Sadbhavana, commemorating the supreme sacrifice of Shaheed Rifleman Aurangzeb, Sena Medal (Posthumous). The tournament, conducted from 13 January 2026, witnessed enthusiastic participation from eight local teams, reflecting strong community involvement and sporting spirit.

The final match was played in an atmosphere



charged with excitement, pride and unity. Team Salani emerged victorious, lifting the coveted trophy amid loud cheers from villagers. The event was graced by Ex Hav Mohd Hanief, father of the braveheart, whose presence

added deep emotional significance. Locals gathered in large numbers to honour their brave son of the soil and paid tribute to his legacy of courage and sacrifice.

Following the final, the Rashtriya Rifles Battalion

distributed sports equipment to students of Government High School Salani, located in a remote and underdeveloped area. This gesture aimed at encouraging sports, physical fitness and positive youth engagement.

The initiative was warmly appreciated by students, teachers and villagers, who expressed gratitude for continued support towards youth empowerment and community development. The tournament not only promoted sporting excellence but also strengthened bonds with the local population, reinforcing peace, goodwill and national integration in the region.

Sunil LoP receives PM Modi in Guwahati

GUWAHATI, 18 JANUARY 2026: Leader of Opposition in Jammu & Kashmir Assembly Sunil Sharma today received Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Guwahati, Assam.

The arrival of the Prime Minister in Assam has infused renewed energy and enthusiasm among party workers and the people of the state. Under the Prime Minister’s leadership, Assam has witnessed significant progress in infrastructure, connectivity, peace, and economic development, strengthening its role as a gateway to the North-East.

Welcoming the Prime Minister, Sunil Sharma stated that Narendra Modi’s visionary leadership continues to provide clear direction to the nation, steering India on a path of inclusive growth, development, and prosperity. His steadfast commitment to national



progress and people-centric governance has further strengthened India’s position both domestically and globally. The visit is ex-

pected to further reinforce ongoing developmental initiatives in Assam and the wider North-Eastern region, and underlines the

Prime Minister’s continued focus on the North-East as a vital partner in India’s growth and development story.

BJP Panchayati Raj & Cooperative Cells hold meeting at party headquarters

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS  
JAMMU, JAN 18

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Jammu & Kashmir conducted a meeting of the office bearers and executive members of the Panchayati Raj and Cooperative Cells at the party headquarters, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu.

J&K BJP General Secretary & J&K Incharge VB GRAM G Janjagran Abhiyan Baldev Singh Billawaria and BJP All Cells Incharge Ved Sharma, addressed the meeting with the objective of strengthening grassroots outreach and enhancing the effectiveness of party cells at the ground level.

Addressing the meeting, Baldev Singh Billawaria provided a detailed briefing on the GRAMG Bill, highlighting its vision, objectives, and far-reaching impact on rural empowerment and local self-governance. He emphasized that the bill is aimed at strengthening democratic institutions at the village level, promoting transparency, accountability, and inclusive development. Billawaria urged the leaders and office bearers of Panchayati Raj and Cooperative Cells to act as messengers of the party’s policies and initiatives, and to actively take the message of the GRAMG Bill to society, especially to rural and semi-urban areas. He stressed that educating



the public about such transformative legislation is essential for building awareness, trust, and participation in the democratic process.

Ved Sharma elaborated on the organizational working of various party cells and clearly defined their roles and responsibilities. He underlined that party cells are a vital link between the organization and the people, and their strength lies in consistent engagement at the grassroots. He called upon the cell members to move beyond office-based activities and reach the ground

level, interact with the masses, understand their issues, and work as a bridge between the people and the party leadership. He emphasized coordination, discipline, and commitment as key pillars for strengthening the BJP’s organizational structure.

The meeting was conducted by All Cells Co-Incharge Munish Khajuria, who efficiently managed the proceedings. Jitender Sharma welcomed all the members present, while Ankush Gupta delivered the vote of thanks, expressing

gratitude to the leadership and participants for their active involvement.

Prominent leaders present in the meeting included Sham Langer, PC Sharma, Pawan Singh, Puneet Mahajan, K. L. Sharma, Basant Raj, Deepak Gupta, Deepak Kapahi, and others. The meeting concluded with a collective resolve to strengthen grassroots engagement and effectively implement the party’s vision across Jammu & Kashmir.

Rajesh Kesri holds awareness meeting on drug menace at Naradani Village

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS  
JAMMU, JAN 18

In a significant step towards curbing the growing threat of drug abuse among youth, ShivSena Hindustan, Jammu Kashmir unit, organized a crucial awareness meeting in Naradani village, Block Palwal. The meeting was presided over by Pandit Rajesh Kesri, President, ShivSena Hindustan, Jammu Kashmir, and witnessed participation from local leaders, elders, and youth.

Addressing the gathering, Kesri expressed deep concern over the alarming rise in drug trafficking in the region. He alleged that Pakistan-sponsored narcotic terrorism is being perpetrated through drones, which drop drugs in border areas. Kesri highlighted that innocent villagers, particularly farmers, are being targeted by drug peddlers who lure their children into addiction by selling small packets of narcotics near



schools and playgrounds.

Kesri further emphasized the wider consequences of drug abuse, noting that it has contributed to a spike in crimes such as theft and burglary, with some addicts even harming their own families. He strongly urged parents to remain vigilant about their children’s activities and warned of the severe dangers posed by heroin and other addictive substances. The meeting resolved to work closely with

local authorities and the police to combat the drug menace effectively. Kesri appealed to the community to share information regarding drug peddlers, assuring that the identities of informants would remain confidential, thereby strengthening collective vigilance.

The session saw the active participation of several prominent leaders, including Border President Sanjeev Sharma, Rajkumar,

Shyamlal, Vinod Kumar, Rajesh Kumar, Saurabh Sharma, Seema Devi, Darshana Devi, Anu Devi, Mani Devi, along with dozens of village elders and children. The meeting concluded on a determined note with a pledge to protect the youth, raise awareness about drug abuse, and safeguard the future of the nation, reflecting ShivSena Hindustan’s commitment to social responsibility and community welfare.