

CM Omar calls for stronger banking partnerships to drive J&K's growth



HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, APR 14

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today addressed the Axis Bank Senior Management Confluence in Srinagar, underscoring the critical role of the banking sector in strengthening financial inclusion, supporting entrepreneurship, and driving sustainable economic growth in Jammu & Kashmir.

Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, MLA Gulmarg Pirzada Farooq Ahmed Shah, MLA Zadibal Tanvir Sadiq, MLA Hazratbal Salman Ali Sagar, Director Tourism Qamar Sajad, Managing Director & CEO of Axis Bank Amitabh Chaudhry, Executive Director Munish Sharda, President & Head Branch Banking (North) Reynold D'souza, along with regional heads and senior officials, were present on the occasion.

Appreciating Axis Bank for organizing the Confluence and its continued engagement with Jammu & Kashmir, the Chief Minister noted that the bank, with its network of 54 branches across Jammu and Kashmir, has played a significant role in advancing financial inclusion.

Reflecting candidly on the region's economic landscape, the Chief Minister said that Jammu & Kashmir may be relatively small in terms of geographical size, market scale, and natural resources compared to other states, but it is rich in opportunities. He emphasized that sectors such as MSMEs, tourism, agriculture, and horticulture offer immense potential for growth and investment.

Highlighting the region's transformative trajectory, he said Jammu & Kashmir is witnessing sustained progress driven by infrastructure development, tourism expansion, agri-

cultural advancement, and a growing entrepreneurial ecosystem. He reiterated that the banking sector plays a pivotal role in enabling credit access, promoting digital finance, and supporting enterprise growth.

Speaking on tourism, the Chief Minister described it as a sector close to the collective aspirations of both the government and private stakeholders. He pointed out the need to enhance customer experience at key destinations such as the Gulmarg Gondola, suggesting improvements in queue management, introduction of time-slot based ticketing, and plugging operational gaps. He noted that such areas present opportunities for collaboration between the government and financial institutions like Axis Bank, particularly in deploying technology-driven solutions.

At the same time, he un-

derlined that while tourism is important, agriculture and horticulture remain the largest contributors to Jammu & Kashmir's GSDP. He called for innovative partnerships with the banking sector to deliver tailored financial solutions, strengthen value chains, and improve market access for farmers and horticulturalists.

The Chief Minister also highlighted opportunities in urban governance, including municipal services such as collections and disbursements, where banking institutions can play a greater role through efficient and technology-driven systems. He acknowledged that banks operating in Jammu & Kashmir are familiar with the region's unique challenges and encouraged them to innovate within this context.

Calling for stronger collaboration, he urged the banking sector to expand its role in startup financing, MSMEs, and youth entrepreneurship, and to increase its footprint in underserved regions while supporting key sectors such as handicrafts and tourism through CSR initiatives.

Reaffirming the government's commitment, the Chief Minister stated that Jammu & Kashmir is ready to partner with financial institutions to build a resilient, inclusive, and future-ready economy.

No duty higher than serving those in need: LG Sinha

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, APR 14

Stating that there was no duty higher than serving those in need, LG Manoj Sinha today said that serving food to the hungry was among the most sacred acts a human being could perform.

"There is no duty higher than serving those in need. Sewa Bharti has honored that duty by nourishing bodies, restoring souls, and affirming the dignity of every human life. To strengthen Apna Bhojanalaya is to strengthen the very fabric of our society," he said in his address after attending the ceremony marking the upgrade of 'Apna Bhojanalaya' at Government Medical College, Jammu. The community kitchen is run by Sewa Bharti and supported by J&K Bank along with other donors.

"To serve food to the hungry is among the most sacred acts a human being can perform. When a hand extends in need and another rises to nurture, divine grace moves quietly



between them. This act is not merely kindness. This is humanity at its absolute finest," the LG said.

He lauded the noble initiative and partook in a meal at Apna Bhojanalaya. "Sewa Bharti's enduring spirit of giving back, empowers individuals and strengthens communities," he said.

"To feed a hungry soul is to invite grace into your own," he said and added, "Our aim should be selfless service to the neighbour, the city around us, and the

nation that unites us. A strong J&K means strong families, strong communities, and citizens empowered to lead, to contribute & to rise. When we lift every sector, we lift the Union Territory itself. Commit to this cause and build a legacy worthy of pride," he added. "The change needs no vast resources but just the spirit for selfless service, vision, persistence and love for the community," he said and commended Sewa Bharti, volunteers & donors for transforming millions'

lives with their selfless service.

"You did not merely feed the hungry, you upheld the dignity of millions. And today, let us take a pledge that this service will never stop. The kitchen of Apna Bhojanalaya will never grow cold and every hand in our society will give to the best of its capacity to those who need it the most," the LG said.

On the occasion, he called upon every section of society to join the war against drug abuse. Jai Dev, Akhil Bharatiya Chatrawas Pramukh, Sewa Bharti; Parmeet, Sangathan Mantri, Sewa Bharti; Rakesh Jha, President; Pradeep Kapoor, General Secretary; Sushil Kapoor, Bhojanalaya Sanchalak; Trilok Singh Negi, Ajay Takoo and other officer bearers and volunteers of Sewa Bharti J&K were among those present on the occasion.

Amitava Chatterjee, Managing Director and CEO of J&K Bank Limited; Dr Ashutosh Gupta, Principal GMC, Jammu, also attended the ceremony.

Army Organises Vibrant Baisakhi Celebration at Banihal

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, APR 14

The Indian Army organised a vibrant and culturally enriching celebration of the auspicious festival of Baisakhi at Bn Hq Banihal in Ramban district, fostering a spirit of unity, harmony, and cultural pride among the local population.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from local residents, youth, elders, and Army personnel, highlighting the strong bond between the Indian Army and the people of the town.

Special arrangements were made to spread awareness about the importance of the festival, which symbolizes prosperity, harvest, and new beginnings. The Army also used



the occasion to promote communal harmony and encourage youth towards positive and nation-building activities.

Local elders and community leaders expressed their gratitude towards the In-

dian Army for organising such events that not only preserve cultural traditions but also strengthen mutual trust and cooperation. The celebration concluded with the distribution of Prasada & Langar among all atten-

dees, spreading joy and festivity.

Such initiatives by the Indian Army continue to play a vital role in enhancing civil-military relations and promoting peace, stability, and goodwill in the region.

Joint LADC inspection at Special Jail Pulwama held to identify inmates eligible for early release

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, APR 14

In a coordinated effort to strengthen access to justice and ensure timely relief to eligible inmates, the Legal Aid Defence Counsels (LADC) of Shopian and Pulwama conducted a joint inspection of the Special Jail, Pulwama.

The visit was undertaken with the primary objective of identifying cases suitable for early release in accordance with the categories outlined in the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the forthcoming Under Trial Review Committee meeting.

The joint inspection team included Chief LADC Shopian, Rafie Ahmad Ganie, along with Assistant LADC Shopian, Aamir Ayoub.

Representing Pulwama were Chief LADC Mehrajuddin Wani, Assistant LADC Ashiq Ahmad, and Junior Assistant DLSA Pulwama, Shakir Ahmad.

The team was facilitated by the Jail Superintendent, Dr. Aijaz Ahmad, who provided comprehensive insights into the inmate population and extended full cooperation during the inspection process.



During the visit, the LADC teams conducted a detailed and systematic review of individual inmate cases.

The assessment focused on identifying prisoners eligible for consideration under various SOP categories, including undertrials who have completed half of the maximum prescribed sen-

tence, first-time offenders involved in minor offences, elderly or infirm inmates, prisoners granted bail but unable to furnish surety, and other relevant categories specified under UTRC guidelines.

The teams also interacted directly with inmates across multiple barracks to verify legal documentation,

assess case status, and ensure that no eligible individual is deprived of relief due to lack of awareness or legal assistance.

Following the inspection, a consolidated list of eligible cases has been prepared and will be presented before the upcoming UTRC meeting for necessary consideration and orders.

Health Awareness Drive on Cervical Cancer and HPV Vaccination Held at GHS Greater Kailash

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, APR 14

A health awareness program on cervical cancer and HPV vaccination was organized at Government High School, Greater Kailash, Jammu, on the occasion of World Health Day by Unnat NGO.

The event was conducted by Neena Abrol, General Secretary of Unnat NGO. The program was presided over by the Principal of the School, Vandana Sharma.

The primary objective of



the session was to raise awareness among students about cervical cancer, including its causes, symptoms, and preventive measures, with special emphasis on the importance of HPV

vaccination.

Neena Abrol highlighted the significance of early prevention, regular health check-ups, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

She also shared alarming

statistics, noting that globally, a woman dies every two minutes due to cervical cancer, while in India, one woman loses her life every eight minutes. Emphasizing the broader impact of women's health, she stated, "A healthy woman is the foundation of a healthy society, and a healthy society ensures a progressive nation."

Students actively participated in the session and were educated about the importance of personal hygiene and timely vaccination in preventing serious health conditions like cervical cancer.

SRINAGAR, APRIL 14:

The National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar on Tuesday commemorated the birth anniversary of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar with enthusiasm and reverence, highlighting his enduring legacy as the architect of the Indian Constitution and a pioneer of social justice.

The event was organized by the SC/ST Cell under the leadership of its Coordinator and Liaison Officer for SCs/STs, Dr. Kurella Swamy, with the active support of the student organizing committee and under the esteemed guidance of Director NIT Srinagar Prof. (Dr.) Binod Kumar Kanaujia.

The commemorative event was presided over by Prof. Roohie Naaz Mir, In-charge Director, and Prof. Atikur Rehman, Registrar, alongside senior faculty members, including Prof. Mohammad Shafi Mir, Dr. Yeshwant Mehta, and others.

The observance witnessed participation from faculty members, staff, and students, who gathered to pay tribute to Dr. Ambedkar's contributions towards building an inclusive and equitable society.

In-charge Director Prof. Roohie Naaz said that there is a need to uphold



the core values of justice, equality, and fraternity in both institutional and societal frameworks.

She urged participants to imbibe the principles of equality, social justice, and constitutional morality in their daily lives while striving for excellence in their respective fields.

Registrar Prof. Atikur Rehman also said there is relevance of Dr. Ambedkar's ideals in today's academic and social landscape.

He urged students to imbibe the values of equality, justice, and knowledge, and to contribute meaningfully towards building an inclusive and progressive society.

Prof. Rehman further emphasized the role of educational institutions in shaping responsible citizens committed to social transformation.

Prof. M.S. Mir, in his address, highlighted that the

vision and thoughts of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar must be effectively implemented to achieve the goal of making India a fully developed nation.

He stressed that true progress can only be realized by embracing equality, social justice, and inclusive growth across all sectors.

Dr. Yeshwant Mehta presented a comprehensive review of a book on Gautam Buddha, offering insights into his teachings and their continued relevance in modern society.

He emphasized the importance of understanding Buddha's philosophy as a pathway to peace, ethical living, and social harmony.

Dr. Kurella Swamy highlighted the transformative power of education, drawing inspiration from the profound literary legacy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

"Babasaheb not only

identified the roots of social evils but also offered sustainable solutions. It is essential for us to engage deeply with his writings to truly understand and eradicate societal challenges," he added.

Dr. Nitika Kundan, Member Secretary of the SC Cell, reflected on Ambedkar's life and struggles, urging students to draw inspiration from his ideals in their academic pursuits and social responsibilities.

Earlier the programme began with the traditional lighting of the ceremonial lamp and garlanding of portraits of Gautam Buddha, Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, and Dr. Ambedkar, followed by Buddhavandana, symbolising peace and reflection.

Students added vibrancy to the event by expressing their admiration for Babasaheb through speeches and poetry, paying tribute to his life, vision, and enduring contributions to society.

Dr. Shahnawaz Ahmed, Member of the SC/ST Cell, concluded the celebrations by expressing gratitude for the support and encouragement extended to the successful Ambedkar Jayanti programme at NIT Srinagar.