

AIIMS Jammu conducts Swachhata Pakhwada with wide participation



HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, APR 16

AIIMS Jammu successfully organized Swachhata Pakhwada 2026 from April 1 to 15, a fortnight-long campaign aimed at promoting cleanliness, hygiene and environmental responsibility across the institute. The initiative, aligned with the Swachh Bharat Mission, witnessed enthusiastic participation from faculty members, MBBS and nursing students, administrative staff, hospital attendants and housekeeping personnel.

During the campaign, extensive cleanliness drives were carried out across key areas including the Outpatient Department (OPD), Emergency Room (ER), academic blocks, hospital wards and hostels. Special emphasis was laid on critical zones such as the ICU,

Operation Theatres (OT) and Inpatient Department (IPD) to maintain stringent hygiene standards.

A series of educational and awareness activities were also organized. MBBS and nursing students participated in essay and poetry competitions, while a nukkad natak effectively conveyed messages on sanitation. The Department of Microbiology conducted interactive sessions, and the Department of Community Medicine led outreach drives in nearby areas to spread awareness about hygiene and its importance for public health.

To further enhance engagement, the institute organized an e-photography contest, awareness walks and sensitization programmes for sanitation and housekeeping staff, recognizing their crucial role in

maintaining cleanliness.

The campaign was closely monitored through inspection rounds by senior officials, including Dr. Raj Shree, Additional Director General of Health Services, who carried out detailed inspections across key hospital areas to ensure compliance with prescribed standards.

The programme concluded on April 15 with a valedictory ceremony, where Dr. Raj Shree attended as Chief Guest and emphasized the importance of cleanliness for societal well-being. Prof. (Dr.) D. N. Sharma, Executive Director and CEO of AIIMS Jammu, graced the occasion as Guest of Honour and stressed that cleanliness must be adopted as a continuous habit rather than a periodic activity.

Awards were presented to the best-maintained wards

and outstanding house-keeping and hospital attendants during the ceremony, encouraging sustained efforts.

The campaign was executed under the guidance of the Swachhata Committee led by Dr. Shruti Sharma, along with committee members, whose coordinated efforts ensured smooth implementation of activities.

Dr. Shruti Sharma also presented a comprehensive report highlighting the progress, impact and active participation observed throughout the fortnight. The successful conduct of Swachhata Pakhwada 2026 at AIIMS Vijaypur reflects a strong collective commitment towards maintaining high standards of sanitation, hygiene and public health awareness in line with national objectives.

City of Temples to witness Grand Aarti by Matrishakti at Shri Raghunath Ji Temple

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For the first time in the City of Temples, a grand Aarti of Mahashakti is set to be performed by learned Shastri priests and Matrishakti daughters at the revered Shri Raghunath Ji Temple.

Under the aegis of "Shri Raghunath Ji Ki Jammu Aarti Sanstha," with the objective of preserving the Dogra cultural and ancient religious identity of Jammu, the Shri Raghunath Ji Temple — the largest and oldest temple in North India — is home to 365 rare idols and 12 lakh Shaligrams, enshrined as manifestations of Bhagwan Narayan Ji. It is believed that merely completing four circumambulations of this Siddhpeeth sacred temple bestows the blessings of 33 crore deities. With the blessings of the honourable Dr. Karan Ji and the support of the Dharmarth Trust, the "Jammu Aarti" was formally inaugurated by the distinguished Lt. Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, the visionary development leader Shri Manoj Sinha Ji. Expressing its heartfelt gratitude to the Lt. Governor, and in accordance with his guidance, the "Jammu Aarti Sanstha" is now set to commence a weekly series of evening Aartis every Sunday at 5:30 PM at Shri Raghunath Ji Temple, beginning on the auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya, 19 April 2026.

Addressing a press conference, the Sanstha's Chairperson Kunwarani Dr. Ritu Singh and its Founder & Vice Chairman Shri Baldev Khullar stated that feeling the need of the hour, the "Jammu Aarti Sanstha" is dedicating "Shri Raghunath Ji Ki Jammu Aarti" to the religious and tourism sectors of Jammu in order to fulfil these cherished objectives. The primary purpose of the Maha Aarti is to express complete devotion, gratitude, and love towards the Almighty. Through this sacred act, devotees dispel darkness (ignorance) and receive divine knowledge and positive energy; they seek prosperity, peace, and spiritual elevation; and they express gratitude towards creation, including the five elements — Earth, Water, Fire, Air, and Sky.



With the aim of preserving and propagating ancient Sanatan culture, "Jammu Aarti" seeks to create a powerful religious atmosphere in Jammu — the Land of Temples — and to reawaken the glorious religious and cultural identity of Jammu city. It is a primary resolve of

the Sanstha to spiritually connect the youth through the organisation of "Jammu Aarti" in the sacred premises of Shri Raghunath Ji Temple, to inspire them towards a drug-free life, and to spur economic development in Jammu's ancient commercial areas alongside the promotion of religious consciousness.

"Jammu Aarti" will not only become a symbol of faith, but will also prove to be a powerful medium for Sanatan culture, youth empowerment, and socio-economic upliftment. A key objective of this initiative is to acquaint pilgrims of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji and Shri Baba Amarnath Ji, as well as tourists, with Jammu's rich cultural heritage, ancient religious treasures, and historical glory — and to draw them towards these divine destinations.

This endeavour will establish Jammu not merely as a gateway, but as a living centre of Sanatan culture, faith, and tradition.

On this occasion, the Sanstha's President Shri

Rajesh Diwan humbly appealed to all residents of Jammu to become ambassadors of their city and to invite visiting pilgrims, tourists, and their own family members to attend Shri Raghunath Ji Ki Jammu Aarti, and to introduce the youth to Jammu's rich culture.

The Sanstha's General Secretary Shri Anoop Jain requested all media friends to extend their valuable support in reaching this initiative of Jammu Aarti to the masses through their respective channels and newspapers.

Other office-bearers present on the occasion included Jitendra Gupta — Senior Vice President; Tanishk Mahajan — Secretary; Ankush Sethi — Treasurer; Sachin Raina — Organisation Secretary; Ridham Gupta — Media Secretary; Executive Members Smt. Seema Murti, Sunali Dogra, Smt. Monika Saraf, Swati Dedeeci and Esther William and the Presidents and Representatives of market associations in the vicinity of Shri Raghunath Ji Temple.

LG says export will ensure financial benefits to farmers, strengthen Ladakh's unique identity recognition

LEH, APRIL 16: The unique Ladakhi Apricots, famous for their exceptionally rich sweetness and flavour, are all set to make a grand foray in the global markets this season. Consequently to a major push by Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena, for promoting the branding and export of Ladakh's GI-tagged "Raktsey Karpoo" apricot variety, as well as the region-specific "Halman variety", the UT Administration today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with global conglomerate, UAE-based Lulu Retail, for export of 1000 MT of apricots this season, which is a historic first for Ladakh. This export volume is a quantum jump from just 1500 kg of apricots that were exported during the last two years.

Shri Saxena, on Wednesday, held a meeting with representatives of the Lulu Retail and APEDA to finalise the export potential. The MoU has been signed with Lulu Retail through the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) and the Ministry of Food Processing Industry (MOFPI), Government of India. The MoU was signed by Shri Bhupesh Chaudhary, Secretary, Horticulture, UT Administration and Shri Salim MA, Group Director-Global Operations, Lulu Retail, in the presence of Lieutenant Governor Shri



VK Saxena.

It was agreed upon in the meeting with the Lieutenant Governor that Lulu Retail will procure at least 1000 MT of apricots from the farmers in Ladakh this season and process, package and market the product in international markets, while upholding the identity of Ladakh.

As of now, the farmers face a tough time sorting, cleaning, packaging and marketing apricots using traditional methods that often lead to heavy losses during processing and packaging. However, with the MoU in place, the farmers, at the time of harvest, will hand over their apricot fields to the exporter that will be responsible for plucking, sorting, processing, packaging, transporting and marketing of the product in the international markets.

This, the Lieutenant Gov-

ernor said, would ensure minimal loss of the produce and would also earn fair pricing for the farmers. "The unique apricots of Ladakh are an agricultural heritage of this region. The MoU aims at tapping the immense yet under-utilised potential of apricot cultivation in Ladakh, which is known for producing the finest apricot varieties in the world. This will eliminate the processing and marketing struggles of the farmers and will ensure enhanced pricing for the farmers. At the same time, this initiative will strengthen Ladakh's recognition at the national and international levels," Shri Saxena said, while addressing a two-day national workshop on "Enhancing Apricot Cultivation and Value Chain in Ladakh" organised by the UT Administration.

Termining the MoU as

"historic," the Lieutenant Governor described it as a major achievement for Ladakh's horticulture sector and said that the MoU will ensure direct economic benefits to farmers by opening international export channels. He added that talks are also going on to market Ladakhi apples abroad.

Shri Saxena also underscored the need to establish processing units in Ladakh to minimise wastage and enhance value addition. He assured that the Administration would take all necessary steps to support infrastructure development and promote Ladakhi products in international markets. He further announced plans to launch Ladakh's own e-commerce portal, on the lines of major platforms like Amazon and Flipkart, to provide farmers with direct market access.

Ashok Koul reviews BJP Prashikshan Mahabhiyan, other programmes in Srinagar

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Ashok Koul, General Secretary (Organization), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Jammu & Kashmir, chaired an organizational meeting with District Presidents of Kashmir, along with convenors and co-convenors of the Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Prashikshan Maha Abhiyan from various districts, at Amar Singh Club, Srinagar.

J&K BJP General Secretary Mohammad Anwar Khan, also addressed the meeting, which was held to review the progress of ongoing party programmes and to deliberate on key organizational matters aimed at strengthening the party structure across the Kashmir region.

Among others, BJP State Secretaries Arif Raja, Mudasir Wani (Program In-charge) and Program Co-convenor and Media Incharge Kashmir Advocate Sajid Yousuf Shah were also present in the meeting.

Ashok Koul, while addressing the meeting, emphasized the importance of continuous cadre develop-



ment and organizational discipline. He reviewed the progress of the Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Prashikshan Maha Abhiyan and directed party leaders to ensure its effective implementation at the grassroots level.

He stressed that the training programme is vital for equipping party workers with ideological clarity, leadership skills, and a deeper understanding of the party's policies and vision.

Koul further took stock of the recently concluded Foundation Day and

Ambedkar Jayanti programmes, appreciating the efforts of party workers in ensuring enthusiastic participation across districts. He instructed the district leadership to maintain the momentum generated during these programmes and to expand outreach activities to connect with every section of society.

Ashok Koul also called for strengthening booth-level structures, enhancing coordination among party units, and ensuring regular interaction with the public to address their concerns. He asked the leaders to actively

engage in public welfare initiatives and effectively communicate the achievements and policies of the government.

Mohammad Anwar Khan, in his address, reiterated the significance of disciplined organizational functioning and collective efforts in achieving the party's goals. He urged party leaders to work in close coordination and ensure the successful execution of all ongoing programmes, particularly the training Mahabhiyan, to further consolidate the party's base in Kashmir.

Sukhnandan Raises Concern Over Neglect of Minor Canals, Urges Immediate Intervention

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Former Minister and Senior BJP leader Sukhnandan Choudhary, accompanied by Dr. Pardeep Mahotra, Media Incharge, J&K BJP, addressed a press conference at the BJP Party headquarters in Trikuta Nagar, Jammu, to strongly highlight the pressing issues faced by farmers due to the alleged negligence of the National Conference (NC) government in maintaining irrigation infrastructure.

Addressing the media, Choudhary expressed serious concern over the failure of the concerned authorities regarding cleaning and desilting of 74 minor canals falling under irrigation Division-I and near about 150 others falling under divisions-II and

Akhnoor division. He stated that these canals are a vital source of irrigation for a large number of farmers in the region, and their current neglected condition has severely impacted agricultural activities. As the desilting of main Canals has been done by the department and water has already been opened in these main canals but of no use until unless the desilting of minor canals have not been done. If the water will not reach up to the tail end what is purpose of doing all this.

Choudhary pointed out that the accumulation of silt, debris, and overgrowth in these canals has obstructed the proper flow of water, depriving farmers of essential irrigation during a crucial period for crop cultivation. Paddy sowing season is about start



within two weeks time but the concerned departments are still not waking up to cleaning all these minor canals. "Farmers are the backbone of our economy, and such apathy to-

wards their basic needs is unacceptable," he said.

He further criticized the irresponsible and unaccountable behaviour of the NC government towards the

farming community of Jammu division in particular as the issues of farmers of Jammu division are always remain unheard, such as timely providing fertilizers, seeds or desilting of minor canals of Jammu divisions is concerned.

Highlighting the urgency of the matter, Choudhary appealed to the Lieutenant Governor, Shri Manoj Sinha, to personally intervene in the matter and ensure that immediate corrective measures must be taken on time.

He also tried to apprise the Hon'ble LG to appoint solely the commissioner secretary of PHE, Irrigation and flood control as the officer who is looking after this department as additional charge is already over burden of having charge of other depart-

ments. He urged the administration to initiate a comprehensive cleaning drive of all minor canals under all the divisions of the Jammu province and to establish a regular maintenance mechanism to prevent such issues in the future.

"The government must act swiftly to restore confidence among farmers and safeguard their interests. Timely action can prevent further losses and ensure that agricultural productivity is not compromised," Choudhary asserted.

He also called for greater transparency and accountability in the functioning of the irrigation department, suggesting that officials responsible for the delay and negligence should be held answerable.