

# JAMMU & KASHMIR

## CM Omar hails Jammu-Srinagar rail link as transformative for economy, mobility, trade

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS  
JAMMU, APR 30

Jammu, April 30: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today attended the flag-off ceremony marking the historic extension of the Vande Bharat Express service from Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra to Jammu, enabling for the first time a direct rail connection between Jammu and Srinagar.

The train was flagged off by Union Minister for Railways Ashwini Vaishnaw in the presence of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; Earth Sciences; MoS PMO, PP/DoPT, Atomic Energy, Space, Dr Jitendra Singh, Members of Parliament Sat Paul Sharma and Ghulam Ali Khatana, several MLAs, along with senior officials from the Government of India, Northern Railways and the Jammu and Kashmir administration.

Addressing the gathering prior to the flag-off ceremony, the Chief Minister described the occasion as "a day long awaited by the people of Jammu and Kashmir," emphasizing that the extension of the Vande Bharat Express to Jammu marks not just improved connectivity, but the beginning of a transformative phase in the region's development.

Congratulating the Union Government and the Rail-



way Ministry, the Chief Minister recalled the inauguration of key infrastructure projects, including the iconic Chenab Railway Bridge and Anji Khad Bridge, nearly ten months ago. He noted that what was once seen as a major engineering feat has now evolved into a highly popular and widely utilized mode of transport.

Highlighting the overwhelming response to the rail service, he said the demand has grown so significantly that the train's capacity has been expanded from 8 coaches to 20 coaches, increasing passenger capacity from around 500 to nearly 1,400 in a single journey. With two such trains operating, nearly 2,800 passengers will now be able to travel daily between Jammu and Srinagar, significantly easing travel and

enhancing convenience. "The success of this railway is not merely in passenger travel," the Chief Minister remarked, underlining its growing role in freight movement. He pointed out that the rail network has already begun facilitating the transportation of goods, including cement, food supplies and vehicles, into the Valley. Notably, automobiles are now being transported directly to Srinagar by rail, marking a significant logistical breakthrough.

Equally important, he added, is the outbound movement of goods from Jammu and Kashmir. "Our fruits, milk and dairy products are now reaching markets outside J&K efficiently through this rail network," he said, stressing that this enhanced connectivity will strengthen local industries

and open new economic avenues for farmers and producers.

In a forward-looking appeal, the Chief Minister urged the Railway Minister to consider establishing an inland dry port in Jammu and Kashmir. He said such a facility would enable customs clearance and streamline export processes within the region, eliminating the need to route goods through other cities. "This will not only benefit our businesses but also contribute to the country's overall economic growth," he asserted.

Calling the day historic, the Chief Minister said that for the first time, people of Jammu and Kashmir can seamlessly travel between Jammu and Srinagar by train, reducing dependence on road transport and significantly improving accessibility.

## Over 950 patients screened, 215 surgeries conducted

LEH, APRIL 30: The Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena, attended the closing ceremony of the Mega Eye Camp- Operation Netra 1.0, organised by the Fire & Fury Corps under Operation Sadbhavana for veterans and civilians at the Army General Hospital in Leh in collaboration with Army Hospital (Research & Referral), New Delhi. The four-day mega initiative, held from April 27 to April 30, covered patients from multiple remote locations, including Tangtse, Nyoma, Chushul, Nubra and Kargil.

The camp also witnessed advanced medical interventions by a highly specialised surgical team from Army Hospital (R&R), which screened around 950 patients and performed 214 specialised procedures, including 197 complex cataract surgeries, 10 vitreo-retinal procedures, and other advanced ophthalmic treatments such as Glued Intraocular Lens implantation, Minimally Invasive Glaucoma Surgery (MIGS), vitrectomy, Pterygium Excision and IOL Repositioning. Notably, vision was restored for around 15 patients, including those who were previously completely blind.

This large-scale initiative



stands as a remarkable example of civil-military collaboration, bringing together the Indian Army, civilian healthcare professionals, and administrative agencies to deliver critical healthcare services to underserved populations in Ladakh's most inaccessible areas.

Addressing the gathering, the Lieutenant Governor congratulated the Indian Army, particularly the Fire & Fury Corps, for the successful execution of the initiative. He described Operation Netra as a transformative effort that has brought new hope and light into the lives of hundreds of people, noting that for many beneficiaries, the

surgeries have restored not just vision but also dignity, confidence and independence.

He emphasised that Ladakh's challenging terrain and vast distances have historically limited access to specialised healthcare, but initiatives like Operation Netra are effectively bridging these gaps through coordinated outreach and service delivery.

The Lieutenant Governor lauded the collaborative efforts of Army Hospital (R&R), 153 General Hospital, SNM Hospital, the Health Department, and administrative teams, terming it a model of professional excellence and synergy. He also high-

lighted the Indian Army's broader role as a force for humanity and community welfare, especially in remote regions like Ladakh.

Reaffirming his commitment to strengthening healthcare access, the Lieutenant Governor expressed confidence that the momentum generated by Operation Netra would continue, ensuring that quality medical services reach every corner of Ladakh.

During the ceremony, the Lieutenant Governor felicitated the medical team led by Brigadier (Dr) Sanjay Kumar Mishra, Head of Ophthalmology at Army Hospital (R&R), and distributed eye care kits among the beneficiaries.

## SMVDNSH holds 72nd Governing Body Meet

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS  
JAMMU, APR 30

The 72nd Governing Body (GB) meeting of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Narayana Superspecialty Hospital (SMVDNSH) was convened at the hospital premises, Kakryal under the chairmanship of Dr. KK Talwar, Member, SMVDSB.

The meeting was attended by Dr. Ashok Bhan, Member, SMVDSB; Sh. Sachin Kumar Vaishya, CEO; Sh. Alok Kumar Maurya, Addl. CEO; Sh. Pawan Sharma, FA/CAO, SMVDSB; Dr. Yashpal Sharma, Executive Director / CAO, SMVDIME; Sh. Sunil Narayan, Sr. VP; Dr. M.M. Mathavan, Facility Director, NH along with other senior functionaries of the Shrine Board and Narayana Health.

During the meeting, several significant decisions were taken aimed at ensuring the future growth of the Hospital, strengthening its operational capabilities and further enhancing patient care standards in consonance with global healthcare benchmarks. The deliberations also emphasized fostering a patient-centric healthcare culture and integrating advanced



digital solutions to improve efficiency, accessibility and overall service delivery.

Focus was laid on recognizing and encouraging dedicated and high-performing consultants for their significant contribution towards delivering quality healthcare services. Emphasis was also placed on fostering a supportive, collaborative and professionally enriching work environment among consultants, nurses, technicians and other healthcare personnel so as to further strengthen coordinated patient care and uphold the highest standards of medical services.

With an aim to further augment the Hospital's clinical capabilities and diagnostic infrastructure, the Governing Body approved the procurement of advanced biomedical and di-

agnostic equipment. The proposed upgradation is expected to significantly improve diagnostic precision, treatment efficiency and overall patient care services, particularly in the Departments of Neurology, Cardiology, Nephrology and Bio/Histo Laboratories.

The Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB, underscored the critical importance of integrating advanced Information Technology solutions into the Hospital's healthcare ecosystem, particularly through dedicated patient care applications aimed at facilitating easier patient access to medical services. He also emphasized the implementation of user-friendly healthcare management software to enhance operational efficiency, streamline service delivery, and further

strengthen the Hospital's patient-centric healthcare framework.

Broad discussions were held regarding increasing patient footfall and stabilizing revenue. The Board also reviewed strategies for the recovery of credit claims from various government schemes to maintain financial equilibrium.

The Chairman advised the hospital leadership to create a robust purchase model with meticulous planning. This includes ensuring maximum utilization of high-cost diagnostic equipment through Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contracts (CAMC).

The meeting concluded with a commitment to maintaining the highest quality of service in all aspects of hospital management while ensuring the economy of operations.

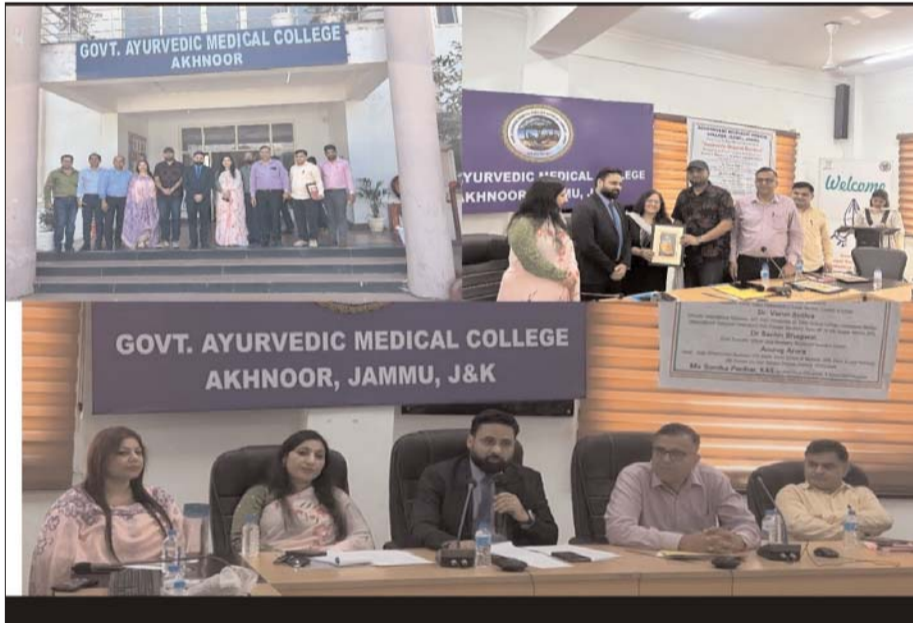
## International Seminar on 'Ayurveda Beyond Borders' held at GAMC Akhnoor

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS  
JAMMU, APR 30

A One-Day International Seminar on "Ayurveda Beyond Borders" was successfully organized at the Government Ayurveda Medical College Jammu under the aegis and patronage of Dr. Ashutosh Gupta, Principal/Dean, Government Medical College Jammu and Government Ayurvedic College, Akhnoor.

The seminar brought together eminent national and international experts to deliberate on the expanding global footprint of Ayurveda. The distinguished keynote speakers included Dr. Varun Suthra, Director - International Relations at KIIT University & KISS University; Nik Gugger, Member of Parliament, Switzerland; Dr. Sachin Bhagwat, Chief Scientific Officer at Wockhardt; and Anurag Arora from VFS Global. The event was graced by the Chief Guest Sonika Parihar, Administrative Officer, Government Medical College Jammu.

In his keynote address, Dr. Varun Suthra emphasized the need to position



Ayurveda within a global framework by integrating traditional knowledge with modern research, innovation, and policy support. He highlighted the growing international acceptance of Ayurveda and stressed the importance of evidence-based approaches and global collaborations. Dr. Nik Gugger spoke about the increasing recognition of Ayurveda in Europe and emphasized cross-cultural healthcare dialogue. Dr. Sachin Bhagwat elaborated on scientific vali-

dation and advancements in research, while Anurag Arora shared insights on global mobility and international platforms facilitating Ayurveda's outreach.

In her address, Chief Guest Ms. Sonika Parihar appreciated the initiative and remarked that such academic engagements play a vital role in strengthening the integration of traditional systems with modern healthcare frameworks.

The seminar served as a dynamic platform for

knowledge exchange, reinforcing the vision of taking Ayurveda beyond geographical boundaries.

Eminent dignitaries and distinguished participants present on the occasion included: Dr Narinder Sharma Professor and HOD, Dr Aman Gupta Vice Principal, Dr Twinkle Gupta Associate professor and Dr Shailej Gupta Associate professor (Both from organising committee). Beside these all faculty members were present in the event.

## Craft Teacher accorded warm send off on retirement

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS  
JAMMU, APR 30

The Tehsil Social Welfare Office Baderwah today accorded a warm farewell to Craft Teacher Gulnaz Begum on her retirement, honoring her illustrious career of over 40 years of dedicated service.

The function witnessed the presence of officers, officials and staff members of the department along with family members of the retiring teacher.

Colleagues fondly recalled her supportive nature and tireless efforts, describing her as a guiding force within the department.



HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS  
JAMMU, APR 30

A warm and heartfelt farewell was accorded today to Joint Director Agriculture (Inputs) Jammu Dr. Ashwani Sharma on his retirement from government service after rendering 40 years of dedicated and exemplary service.

The farewell function was organized at the Directorate of Agriculture, Krishi Bhawan, Talab Tillo, Jammu, in recognition of his dedicated and distinguished service to the Agri-



culture Department. The function was attended by Director Agriculture Jammu, Anil Gupta; Joint Director Agriculture (SLUB/Farms), Aman Jyoti Sharma; sectoral heads, senior officers and staff members of the department, along with the family members of the retiree, who

gathered to extend their best wishes on the occasion. Director Agriculture Jammu, Anil Gupta lauded the invaluable contributions of Dr. Ashwani Sharma during his long and illustrious career spanning more than four decades. He wished him good health, happiness and a fulfilling

post-retirement life.

Joint Director Agriculture (SLUB/Farms), Aman Jyoti Sharma also appreciated the dedicated services rendered by Dr. Ashwani Sharma.

In his address, Dr. Ashwani Sharma expressed heartfelt gratitude to the department, colleagues and staff for their continuous support and cooperation throughout his long service tenure.

As a mark of respect and appreciation, a memento was presented to Dr. Ashwani Sharma by the department.