

JAMMU & KASHMIR

Rana listens to grievances of Poonch residents; asks for quality healthcare services to last mile

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, MAY 17

Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, today interacted with scores of delegations from different areas of Mendhar to hear their grievances, demands and developmental concerns.

The locals raised a wide range of issues including settlement of Forest Rights Act claims, deployment of mobile teachers in local schools, macadamisation of roads and installation of street lights in the area. The residents urged the Minister to expedite resolution of long-pending Forest Rights Act cases and ensure that tribal and forest-dwelling communities receive their entitled rights without further delay. They also demanded deployment of mobile teachers to address the shortage of teaching staff and called for improvement in road infrastructure and street lighting across the area.

The Minister assured the residents that their demands would be taken up with the concerned departments on priority. He directed the officers to ensure immediate redressal of grievances, with a time-bound follow-up mechanism in place so that no concern raised goes unad-



ressed. The Minister also reviewed the progress on ongoing development works in Mendhar and adjoining areas, taking stock of the pace and quality of execution across various departments.

He directed the concerned officers to ensure that all ongoing works are completed within stipulated timelines and that there is absolutely no compromise on quality at any stage of execution. He stressed that public money must translate into durable, tangible outcomes for the people.

Rana also reviewed the functioning of Mobile Medical Units (MMUs), which have been designed to deliver comprehensive diagnostic and primary healthcare services directly to the

doorsteps of tribal communities and residents of remote areas with limited access to conventional healthcare infrastructure. He stressed that tribal communities and nomadic populations living in far-flung areas should be provided all essential medical facilities and quality healthcare services without any inconvenience.

He added that the MMU initiative reflects the government's commitment to inclusive healthcare and its focused approach towards strengthening the healthcare services in geographically challenging and socio-economically disadvantaged regions.

Interacting with the locals, the Minister reaffirmed that the government is focused on strengthening

the public service delivery and ensuring that the benefits of welfare and developmental schemes reach every deserving household across Jammu and Kashmir.

"The resolve of present administration is to ensure that development reaches every household, no matter how remote. Our focus is on improving the everyday lives of people by ensuring reliable drinking water, better irrigation facilities, enhanced connectivity and all other essential services required for holistic development of far-flung areas," the Minister said.

Senior officers of the concerned departments, local public representatives and a large number of residents from Mendhar and adjoining areas attended the programme.

LG Saxena launches Self-Enumeration Portal for Census 2027 in Ladakh

LEH, MAY 17: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena, on Sunday launched the Self-Enumeration Portal for Census 2027 in the Union Territory, marking the commencement of the Census process in Ladakh. On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor also filled his self-enumeration form, signalling the formal beginning of the exercise in the UT.

Appealing to the people of Ladakh to actively participate in the nationwide exercise, the Lieutenant Governor said that the Census plays a vital role in shaping policies, planning resources and driving the development of the nation. He stated that active public participation would ensure that Ladakh's unique identity, aspirations and developmental needs are accurately reflected in this important national exercise.

L-G Vinai Kumar Saxena highlighted that Census 2027 would be a significant opportunity for Ladakh to generate accurate and comprehensive data for the re-



gion, enabling targeted development initiatives and informed policy interventions. Census 2027 will be the first Census exercise conducted in the Union Territory of Ladakh after its creation in 2019. It will also be India's first fully digital Census, leveraging advanced technology for efficient, transparent and secure data collection. The exercise marks the 16th

Census since its inception and the 8th after Independence, with a strong focus on digital integration and enhanced data security.

The Census process will be conducted in two phases. The first phase, House Listing Operations, will be carried out from June 1 to June 30, 2026. Prior to this, a 15-day self-enumeration period will be conducted from May 17 to May 31, 2026,

during which citizens can fill in their details through the dedicated Self-Enumeration Portal at "se.census.gov.in".

The second phase involving Population Enumeration in the entire UT of Ladakh will be completed in September 2026 along with other notified snow-bound areas in Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

BDSA Calls for Multi-Pronged Strategy to Tackle Drug Menace in J&K

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, MAY 17

At a time when concerns over substance abuse among youth continue to mount across Jammu and Kashmir, the Bhartiya Dalit Sahitya Akademi (BDSA) convened a focused discussion at its Roopnagar premises, signalling a renewed push for community-led intervention alongside government action. The meeting, chaired by B.R. Kundal (Retd. IAS) and President of BDSA, brought together senior members and intellectuals to deliberate on the growing crisis of drug addiction and its far-reaching social implications.

The deliberations reflected both urgency and introspection. Participants underscored that while recent government initiatives to spread awareness about drug abuse are commendable, they remain insufficient in addressing the deeper structural causes driving the crisis. Speakers underscored that though awareness campaigns are necessary, they must be complemented with sustained curative and rehabilitative measures. It was pointed out that increasing unemployment and social isolation increase the vulnerability of youth, pushing them toward substance abuse. The major concern was the easy accessibility of drugs that drew the sharpest concern. Speakers noted that without curbing supply chains and strengthening enforcement mechanisms, efforts to discourage demand would yield limited results. Mr. Kundal, who led the discussion, stressed that drug abuse is not merely an individual failing but a soci-



etal challenge with cascading consequences. "It imposes a heavy physical and financial burden on affected individuals and their families," he observed, calling for a broader understanding of addiction as a public health and socio-economic issue. His remarks framed the discussion in terms of both prevention and recovery, urging stakeholders to move beyond surface-level interventions.

Participants also expressed concern over the inadequate availability of quality de-addiction centres in the Union Territory. The lack of accessible and well-equipped rehabilitation facilities, they noted, leaves many affected individuals without meaningful avenues for recovery. In this context, the meeting called for significant investment in healthcare infrastructure dedicated to addiction treatment, alongside trained personnel capable of providing long-term support.

The discussion further highlighted the need to channel youthful energy into constructive pursuits. Encouraging participation in sports, cultural activities, and community engagement was seen as a vital pre-

ventive strategy. Members argued that such initiatives not only occupy time productively but also foster a sense of belonging and purpose—factors often missing in the lives of those drawn toward substance abuse.

In a set of concrete suggestions, Mr. Kundal proposed the establishment of a high-level commission to examine the root causes of drug abuse in the region. He advocated for an integrated approach involving key departments such as social welfare, anti-narcotics agencies, police, and educational institutions. Such a body, he said, could formulate targeted interventions and ensure coordinated implementation.

Equally significant was his emphasis on skill development and employment generation.

Enhancing the employability of youth through government-backed programmes, he argued, would address one of the primary drivers of addiction. In addition, he suggested that affordable educational loans be made widely available to enable young people to pursue education and vocational training of their choice. "Empowering youth economically is central to

preventing their drift toward destructive habits," he noted.

The role of civil society organisations also came into focus during the meeting. Members resolved to initiate awareness programmes from the BDSA premises itself, aiming to sensitise communities about the dangers of drug abuse and the importance of early intervention. Mr. Kundal reiterated that BDSA stands ready to collaborate with government agencies in all possible ways to combat the menace.

The proceedings were conducted by R.L. Bhagat, a retired Joint Director from the Agriculture Department and a senior member of the Akademi, who facilitated a structured exchange of ideas among participants. The meeting concluded with a shared resolve to translate discussion into action, with follow-up initiatives expected in the coming weeks.

Others present on the occasion were Sh. Nagarmal, P. L. Bhushan, Rajesh Angural, Mohan Thappa, Sevadass Digra, S. D. Thappa, Mohan Lal Hans, Harbans Lal, Vijay Bhagat, Dr. Rakesh Kumar Atri besides others.

Dy CM reviews PWD works across Jammu region; quality parameters

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JAMMU, MAY 17

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary today chaired a high-level review meeting to assess the progress of Public Works Department (PWD) projects across the districts of Jammu division.

The Deputy Chief Minister stressed the need for accelerating execution of all ongoing developmental projects and ensuring robust infrastructure development across the Jammu districts. He directed the officers to maintain efficiency in project implementation while ensuring timely completion of works.

During the meeting, the Deputy Chief Minister reviewed the status of works under R&B, PMGSY, SASCI and other sectors. He instructed the concerned officers to expedite the ongoing



tendering processes and ensure prompt allotment of works so that projects are completed within stipulated timelines. Emphasising quality and accountability, the Deputy Chief Minister cautioned the officers and contractors against the use of substandard material in developmental works. He asserted that strict action would be taken against the

officials and contractors found compromising on quality standards or causing unnecessary delay in project execution.

"We have adopted a zero-tolerance policy against quality violations and delays in completion of projects," maintained the Deputy Chief Minister.

He further reiterated the government's commitment

towards transparent, efficient and people-centric development, aimed at strengthening the infrastructure and improving public service delivery across the region.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Engineer, Executive Engineers of concerned engineering wings and other senior officers of other concerned departments.

Adbi Kunj releases poetry Book



JAMMU, MAY 17: "An Urdu poetry book 'Rehan-E-Kargil B' penned by Haji Mohammad Waqar Sabha was released by Adbi Kunj at the JKAACL Jammu. Dr. Javed Rahi Regional Officer of Kala Kendra of JKAACL, eminent writer and scholar was the Chief Guest on the occasion, where as the programme was presided over

by Capt. Lalit Sharma (IFS) former APCCF and known dogri poet and writer. Arsh Om Dalmotra President Adbi Kunj and Chairman, Pyaasa Anjum also Chaired the dias. The proceedings were conducted by Arsh Dalmotra himself.

At the very outset the dignitaries were welcomed with floral bouquets and the

author Mr. Sabha was honoured by dignitaries of Adbi Kunj. Thereafter, Dr AC Bhagat a literary figure of Adbi Kunj read a detail paper on the book which was appreciated by one and all.

The author while speaking on the occasion shared his experiences about writing the book. The author is Vice President of Adbi Kunj

branch of Ladakh UT and this is his second book of Urdu poetry which comprises 99 poems and Qawalies, mostly focussed on spiritualism. The book was formally released jointly by the dignitaries and the Adbi Kunj functionaries.

Dr Javed Rahi elaborately spoke on the cultural dimensions of Ladakh with special reference to Kargil, highlighting the cultural and linguistic affinities with the culture of adjoining regions. Dr Javed has worked on his doctorate thesis in Ladakh. Capt Lalit Sharma described the book a welcome addition in the Urdu literature. He said cultural diversity is our strength. He lauded the literary endeavours of Mr Sabha in propagating the Purghee language in Kargil.

NMC urges Issuance of DA installment

JAMMU MAY 17: Expressing his grave concern over inordinate delay in releasing of DA formal order, President of the National Mazdoor Conference (NMC) Subash Shastri on Sunday appealed to Chief Minister to issue formal order for release of 2 percent DA due from January last, which was approved in the cabinet meeting was held on the last day of closing Darbaar Move at Jammu added that the appealed will draw attention of the JKUT administration in Issuance the order

at the earliest, so that employees and pensioners would get sigh of relief to counter the inflation and price rise. Addressing a NMC workers meet here, shastri strongly urged the chief Minister to enhance the monthly medical allowance to Rs.300/-to Rs 1000/-and decision in this regard would be taken in the upcoming cabinet meeting, Shastri said that this genuine demand is based on the steep rise in the cost of medicine's and medical expenses over the last two

decades. Shastri has further cited that UT of Ladakh has already implemented a Rs 1000/- per month medical allowance to its pensioners, w.e.f April 1st 2020.

Shastri pointed out that all the union territories expect JKUT have providing one thousand medical allowance to their pensioners, but in JKUT are providing only three hundred per month, hoping that this genuine demands of the pensioners will be sort out at the earliest.