

CEO, FSSAI reviews food testing facilities in J&K; assessed infrastructure

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, AUG 17

Chief Executive Officer, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), Rajit Punhani, today visited Food Laboratory, Kashmir during his visit to Srinagar, to have on spot assessment about it's functioning.

During the visit, the CEO FSSAI took round of various sections, including Microbiological Section, Chemical Section and HEE Sections and interacted with the technical staff of the Laboratory.

Subsequently, the CEO FSSAI chaired a meeting which among others was attended by State Drug Controller J&K, Joint Commissioner Food Safety, Deputy Commissioner Food Safety Kashmir, Accounts Officer FDA and Food Analyst Food Testing Laboratory Srinagar and Jammu.

Commissioner, Food & Drugs Administration, J&K, made a detailed presentation outlining the laboratory's analytical capabilities, testing performance, NABL accreditation, infrastructure, manpower position and the roadmap for strengthening food testing facilities across the Union Territory. It was informed that the Food Laboratory, Kashmir is an FSSAI-notified and NABL-accredited facility equipped with advanced instruments, including GC-MS/MS, LC-MS/MS and ICP-MS. The laboratory presently has a NABL scope covering 354 parameters, comprising 77 quality and 277 safety parameters.

The presentation highlighted the testing work-



load handled during the last three financial years. The laboratory analyzed 11,479 samples in 2023-24, 9,938 in 2024-25 and 6,722 in 2025-26, out of which, 440, 266 and 381 samples respectively, were found to be non-conforming.

The meeting was informed that the steps have been initiated to expand the scope of Laboratory to 3500 parameters by end of 31st March, 2027 covering key commodities including milk and milk products, fruits and vegetables, cereal and cereal products, oils and fats and Indian sweets and achieve wider coverage of 5,000 parameters in the long run.

The Commissioner brought to the notice of the CEO, FSSAI the key constraints affecting the laboratory's functioning, including inadequate infrastructure, shortage of technical manpower. He also sought his intervention in approval of the pro-

posal for hiring of Technical Manpower, Chemicals, CRMs Consumables etc. He requested the CEO, FSSAI for providing financial and technical assistance for construction of new laboratory building at Srinagar and Jammu and upgrading the facility to improve quantity and volume of testing.

The Food Laboratory, Kashmir is presently housed in an old, shared Drug & Food Laboratory complex, with limited space for modern equipment and dedicated instrument sections.

As part of the long-term strategy, the Department proposed developing an integrated Food Testing Laboratory network across Jammu and Kashmir by leveraging the existing facilities in government institutions, including SKUAST and IUUST, with suitable technical and manpower support. The initiative is intended to expand the overall testing capacity and fa-

cilitate timely analysis of samples received from different parts of the Union Territory.

The Commissioner, Food & Drugs Administration, J&K, expressed gratitude to Rajit Punhani, CEO, FSSAI, for visiting the Food Laboratory, Kashmir and for taking a keen interest in its functioning, analytical capabilities and capacity-building requirements.

The CEO, FSSAI expressed satisfaction on the working of laboratory and called upon the J&K FDA officials to continue their efforts for strengthening it further.

The visit and review are expected to provide further impetus to the department's efforts towards modernization of food testing facilities, expansion of NABL-accredited analytical capacity and establishment of a robust, integrated and scientifically strengthened food laboratory network across Jammu and Kashmir.

NC Office Shifted from Sher-e-Kashmir Bhavan to Gandhi Nagar

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Senior National Conference leader and Provincial President Jammu, Rattan Lal Gupta, today accused the BJP-led Union Government of adopting a step-motherly attitude towards governments that have been elected with a popular mandate but do not belong to the BJP.

Gupta was interacted with party functionaries and workers at the new Provincial Office of Jammu and Kashmir National Conference which shifted from Sher-e- Kashmir Bhavan to Gandhi Nagar, Jammu in the presence of Ajay Kumar Sadhotra former minister and Additional General Secretary Jammu, Sheikh Bashir Ahmad Provincial Secretary Jammu, Ayub Malik Provincial Secretary Jammu, Babu Rampal former minister and Central Zone President, Qazi Jalal Ud Din former MLA, Bimla Luthra former MLA, Vijay Lochan Chairman SC Cell, Abdul Gani Teli Chairman OBC Cell, Rajni Devi Working President Women Wing, Dr. Shamshad Shanj former Chairperson DDC Ramban, Chander Mohan Sharma District President Jammu Urban, Naresh Bittu District President Jammu Rural B, Rakesh Singh Raka Vice President Central Zone.

Gupta said that such an approach is not only politically unfortunate but also amounts to dishonouring the mandate of the people and weakening the democratic and federal spirit of the Constitution. He said the Centre must respect the verdict of the electorate irrespective of which political party forms the government. Referring particularly to Jammu and Kashmir, Gupta said that the people had participated in the Assembly elections and elected their representatives, yet the long-pending promise of restoration of full statehood remains unfulfilled. Recent reports indicate that the demand for restoration of statehood continues to be raised by the J&K Government and political parties, with the Centre's earlier assurances still under scrutiny. "Denying statehood to Jammu and Kashmir is, in effect, denying the people the full constitutional and democratic framework of a State. The people of J&K



should not be treated differently from citizens of other States," Gupta said.

He maintained that the elected government must be given adequate constitutional space and authority to discharge its responsibilities towards the people. "Democracy does not mean merely holding elections; it also means respecting the mandate that emerges from those elections," he added.

Gupta urged the Union Government to honour its commitment and restore full statehood to Jammu and Kashmir without any further delay. He said that after the Assembly elections, there is an even stronger democratic basis for returning J&K to full statehood, and continued delay is creating unnecessary political uncertainty.

He further appealed to the Centre to rise above party politics and strengthen the federal structure of the country by ensuring equal treatment to all elected gov-

ernments.

"The Constitution belongs equally to every citizen and every State. The Centre cannot selectively respect democratic mandates. Jammu and Kashmir deserves dignity, democracy, statehood and full constitutional empowerment." Gupta asserted.

Among others who were present on this occasion: Laxmi Datta Senior leader, Rita Gupta, Dilshad Malik Vice Presidents Central Zone, Sharshad Natnoo former BDC Chairman, Sardar Gurnam Singh District Secretary Jammu Urban, Jaseen Malik District President Samba YNC, Amit Kumar District President Jammu Rural B YNC, Sukhdev Block President Bhalwal, S. Parvinder Singh Block President Gandhi Nagar, Pooja Jaggi, Ch. Rafi, Anyatullah, Kuldeep Sharma, Sumita Bhan, Jatinder Singh Lucky, Gimmy and others.

Shri Baba Budha Amarnath Ji Yatra

First batch of 2041 pilgrims accorded warm reception by District admin Rajouri

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With devotion in their hearts and the sacred spirit of pilgrimage guiding their journey, the first batch of 2041 pilgrims of Shri Baba Budha Amarnath Ji Yatra was warmly received today at Yatra Ground in Rajouri, marking the commencement of the annual pilgrimage to the revered shrine.

The first batch comprised 1013 males, 1000 females, 26 children and 2 Sadhus. The pilgrims arrived in a fleet of 50 vehicles, including 42 buses, a MMV and seven LMVs. The pilgrims were received at Base Camp Rajouri by Deputy Commissioner Abhishek Sharma.

Attal Peethadeshwar Shri Shri 1008 Swami Vishwatma Nand Saraswati Ji Maharaj was also present on the occasion. He blessed the pilgrims, adding a deep spiritual and auspicious touch to the welcome ceremony.

Earlier, the Deputy Commissioner took stock of the arrangements and facilities put in place for the brief stay of the pilgrims at the Yatra Station, including drinking water, power



supply, toilet facilities, langar, sanitation, medical care and security arrangements. He directed the concerned officers to ensure all necessary facilities are available through the yatra period and that pilgrims have a convenient and memorable experience during their sacred journey.

The district administration extended a warm welcome to the devotees and reiterated its commitment to ensuring a safe, smooth, comfortable and spiritually fulfilling pilgrimage of the abode of Shri Baba Budha Amarnath Ji.

SSP, Gaurav Sikarwar

ADDC, Malik Zada Sheraz UI Haq; ADC Ravi Kumar Sihag; ACR, Mohd Jahangir Khan; ACD, Auqil Nuvaidd; CAO, Rajesh Verma; Executive Engineer Jal Shakti, Zulfikar Ali; Tehsildar Varinder Sharma and other concerned officers were present on the occasion.

3-day training for Census-2027 Phase-II concludes at Doda

DODA, AUGUST 17: The three-day district-level training programme organised to train Field Trainers for Population Enumeration (PE) under Phase-II of Census-2027 concluded today at the VC Room, DC Office Complex Doda. The training focused on strengthening preparedness for Census operations in snow-bound and difficult-to-access areas of the district. The training programme was organised under the overall supervision and guidance of Deputy Commissioner Krishan Lal, who is also the Principal Census Officer of the district. Additional Deputy Commissioner Anil Kumar Thakur also participated in the training programme.

Assistant Commissioner Revenue Ashraf Pervez; District Statistics & Evaluation Officer (DESO) Vijay Kumar; Charge Officers, Census officials, Field Trainers and other officers

and officials associated with Census-2027 attended the programme.

District Master Trainer Census (Assistant Professor GDC Bhaderwah) Dr. Akhter Hussain conducted the training sessions and imparted detailed technical and operational guidance on various aspects of Population Enumeration.

The participants were sensitised to the creation and verification of Enumeration Blocks, enumeration procedures, use of Census Schedules, recording and validation of data, field-level protocols, supervisory arrangements, reporting mechanisms and coordination among different teams.

Special emphasis was laid on challenges associated with snow-bound areas, including difficult terrain, adverse weather conditions and accessibility issues. Participants were ad-

vised to start advance planning, ensure effective coordination and achieve comprehensive coverage of all households and eligible population while maintaining the highest standards of accuracy and reliability in data collection.

The training also focused on maintaining confidentiality, transparency, accuracy and quality of Census data, besides ensuring strict adherence to the prescribed guidelines, timelines and operational protocols issued by the Census authorities.

The Field Trainers were further oriented about their responsibility to effectively disseminate the training among Charge Officers, Census Clerks, Enumerators and other field-level functionaries to ensure uniform understanding and implementation of Census procedures at the grassroots level.

Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign concludes with patriotic fervour in Doda

DODA, AUGUST 17:

Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign, organised by the District Administration Doda, concluded today with a grand closing ceremony held at DC Office Complex. Deputy Commissioner Krishan Lal, along with officers, officials and from line departments attended the valedictory function.

The programme commenced with a soulful and inspiring rendition of the National Song "Vande Mataram" and the National Anthem, creating an atmosphere of pride, unity and devotion towards the nation.

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner highlighted the significance of the Har Ghar Tiranga initiative in strengthening the spirit of patriotism, national unity and collective responsibility among citizens. He appreciated the active participation of government departments, educational institutions, civic bodies, youth, students and the general public in making the campaign a meaningful success across the district.

The DC emphasised that



the Tiranga is not merely a national symbol but represents the sacrifices of the freedom fighters, the unity and diversity of India and the aspirations of a progressive and prosperous nation. He called upon everyone to carry the values symbolised by the National Flag beyond the campaign and reflect them through responsible citizenship, mutual respect and dedicated service to the nation.

The Har Ghar Tiranga campaign was celebrated

with great fervour, enthusiasm and patriotic passion across District Doda. People from across the social spectrum actively participated in flag-hoisting programmes, Tiranga rallies, awareness activities, cultural programmes and other patriotic initiatives. Government offices, educational institutions and public places witnessed a vibrant display of the Tricolour, creating a strong sense of national pride and togetherness. The closing ceremony concluded on a

positive and patriotic note, with participants reaffirming their commitment to uphold the honour of the Tricolour and contribute towards building a strong, united, peaceful and prosperous India.

The District Administration expressed gratitude to all departments, institutions, officials, volunteers and citizens whose active participation contributed to the successful conduct of the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign throughout District Doda.

2-week Student Induction Programme for B.Tech/ B.Arch Batch-2026 commences at GCET Jammu

JAMMU, AUGUST 17: The Government College of Engineering & Technology (GCET), Jammu today started a two-week Student Induction Programme for the first-year students of B.Tech and B.Arch Batch-2026.

The programme is being organized under the patronage of the Principal Prof. (Dr.) Sameru Sharma.

The inaugural ceremony commenced with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp by Prof. (Dr.) Sameru Sharma, in the presence of the Coordinator, Heads of Departments and

faculty members.

Addressing the newly admitted students, Prof. (Dr.) Sameru Sharma urged them to make the most of every academic, technical, research and co-curricular opportunity. She emphasized that engineering education is not merely about earning a degree, but about developing competence, character and the confidence to innovate and solve real-world challenges. She encouraged students to dream big, stay curious and disciplined, and strive to become skilled professionals and responsible citi-

zens who bring pride to the institution and contribute meaningfully to society. Coordinator of the Student Induction Programme Prof. Simmi Dutta outlined the objectives of the programme, emphasizing holistic development, intellectual growth, communication, creativity, leadership, teamwork and problem-solving skills. She stated that interactions with academicians, professionals, entrepreneurs and subject experts would provide students with diverse perspectives and encourage innovative and analytical thinking.