

Ladakh board bins report on protected area boundaries

LG Ladakh directs settlement of claims of locals in 2 months

LEH, SEP12: In a major development, the Ladakh State Board for Wildlife has rejected a sub-committee report on settling boundaries within protected areas, citing discrepancies, as LG Vinai Kumar Saxena directed authorities to resolve the rights and claims of local communities in these areas within two months.

The protected areas are: Hemis National Park, High Altitude Cold Desert (Changthang) Wildlife Sanctuary and Karakoram (Nubra-Shyok) Wildlife Sanctuary.

The LG asked the officials to settle claims of local communities in these areas within two months, saying this would pave the way for a lawful and participatory process for finalising their boundaries, particularly in the newly created districts.

The direction was issued during the 16th Meeting of the newly constituted State Board for Wildlife (SBWL), UT Ladakh, chaired by the LG. One of the key agenda items of the board meeting was the consideration of the sub-committee report on finalisation of the boundaries of these three protected wildlife areas.

The decision is expected to bring long-awaited clarity and certainty to local communities, who have been seeking clarity regarding the boundaries of the protected areas and recognition of their longstanding settlements, habitations and traditional rights.

It has been the demand of the local people that settlements and human habitations have existed for a very long time in these areas, which clearly fall outside the purview of the wildlife sanctuary. However, the earlier formed sub-committee included all these areas.



The erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir government had issued a preliminary notification of the boundaries of these sanctuaries in 1987. However, the board, while deliberating threadbare on the final notification of the three protected areas, noted that the notification issued by the erstwhile J&K government had not correctly mapped the boundaries of the protected areas on the ground.

Saxena, during the board meeting, said the statutory process prescribed under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, for settlement of rights of individuals and communities residing in the proposed protected areas, had not been undertaken by the committee.

He noted that this process was not initiated and that the delineation of boundaries was carried out through a table-top exercise, without adherence to the legal framework. This rendered the exercise inconsistent with the provisions of the Act, inequitable to affected communities, and susceptible to legal challenges.

The board observed that several of the areas included

in the sub-committee report were of strategic importance and relate to national security, and the mandatory defence considerations were not duly factored into the report of the sub-committee.

Saxena also said the international boundaries, as depicted in the Survey of India maps, had not been taken as a reference point, which was essential while determining the limits of any protected area.

Accordingly, taking a serious note of the discrepancies, the LG directed that the report of the sub-committee be set aside.

The board also directed the designated DCs/Settlement Officers to resume the process of public hearings and to complete the proceedings within a period of two months.

Saxena urged the people to come forth with their claims and titles of land and traditional rights, including those on pasture lands, to enable the administration to arrive at a fair decision on the boundaries of these protected areas.

The board noted that an early completion of the settlement process would be of

great significance to local communities, as it would bring greater clarity, certainty and recognition to their bona fide rights in these protected areas. At the same time, it would also provide a clearer framework for wildlife conservation and development activities within these landscapes.

The board, in its meeting, also ratified 23 important projects and sent them to the Standing Committee of the National Board of Wildlife, Government of India, for clearance. These included proposals relating to power transmission infrastructure in strategically important border areas, defence infrastructure and other essential projects in the Karakoram and Changthang areas.

Among others, the meeting was attended by chief secretary Ashish Kundra, additional principal chief conservator of forests and chief wildlife warden SRajesh, members of the State Board for Wildlife, senior officers of the UT administration and officers of the Department of Forest, Wildlife, Ecology and Environment.

Chief Justice, Executive Chairman inaugurate 3rd National Lok Adalat at Srinagar

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
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Continuing its endeavor to promote access to justice through swift, cost-effective and amicable resolution of disputes, the J&K Legal Services Authority, under the patronage of Dr. Justice Pushpendra Singh Bhati, Chief Justice, High Court of J&K and Ladakh and Patron-in-Chief, J&K Legal Services Authority and under the dynamic leadership of Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Executive Chairman, J&K Legal Services Authority and with the guidance of Justice Sanjay Dhar, Chairperson, High Court Legal Services Committee, organised the 3rd National Lok Adalat of the year 2026 across the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.

The Lok Adalat covered a wide range of matters, including MACT claims, matrimonial disputes, cheque dishonour cases under the Negotiable Instruments Act, money recovery matters, commercial disputes and compoundable criminal offences.

AT SRINAGAR, Dr. Justice Pushpendra Singh Bhati, Chief Justice, High Court of J&K and Ladakh, along with Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Executive Chairman, J&K Legal Services Authority, jointly inaugurated the 3rd National Lok Adalat at the District Court Complex, Srinagar.

The occasion assumed special significance as it marked the first National Lok Adalat after Dr. Justice Pushpendra Singh Bhati assumed office as Chief Justice of the High Court of J&K and Ladakh. Upon their arrival, the dignitaries were received by Haq Nawaz Zargar, Principal District & Sessions Judge (Chairperson, DLSA Srinagar) and Shazia Tabasum, Member Secretary, J&K Legal Services Authority and other Judicial Officers of the District Judiciary.



A ceremonial Guard of Honour was also accorded to the Chief Justice. Thereafter, the Chief Justice and Executive Chairman visited different Lok Adalat Benches and interacted with the Presiding Officers, members of the Benches, Advocates and litigants.

They appreciated the arrangements made for the smooth conduct of the Lok Adalat and witnessed the settlement of cases at the Benches. MACT compensation cheques were also distributed among eligible claimants on the occasion, extending timely relief to the beneficiaries.

As per the information received from various Legal Services Institutions across the UT of J&K, a total of 32908 cases were taken up by 163 Benches during the day-long National Lok Adalat, out of which 23213 cases were amicably settled and disposed of, involving a total settlement/compensation amount of Rs. 176,22,29,397.

The settled matters included Motor Accident Claims, civil and criminal matters, labour disputes, electricity and water bill disputes, land acquisition matters, family disputes, cheque dishonour cases and bank recovery matters, among others.

Dr. Justice Pushpendra Singh Bhati, while interacting with media persons, expressed his gratitude and appreciated the efforts of the Judicial Officers, Secretaries of DLSAs, Advocates, Para Legal Volunteers, staff of the District and Tehsil Courts and the litigants for their wholehearted participation in the 3rd National Lok Adalat of the year 2026.

Justice Sanjeev Kumar while welcoming the Chief Justice, High Court of J&K and Ladakh emphasized the significance of Lok Adalats and observed that they provide an effective mechanism for speedy, amicable and final resolution of disputes without the burden of prolonged litigation.

J&K Filmmakers shine at IFFJK 2026, Bag three of nine awards

SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 12: In a significant recognition of the creative talent emerging from Jammu and Kashmir, three filmmakers from Jammu and Kashmir have secured three prestigious awards out of the nine presented at the First International Film Festival of Jammu & Kashmir (IFFJK) 2026.

The achievement marks a proud moment for the region's growing filmmaking community, with Kashmiri filmmakers making their presence felt on a platform that brought together acclaimed filmmakers, artists, technicians, industry professionals and cinema enthusiasts from across India and around the world.

Baba Tasaduq Hussain won the Best Cinematography Award for the documentary Naqsh-e-Daur (The Story of Ghulam Nabi Dhar), earning appreciation for its visual storytelling and cinematic treatment.

The Best Emerging Filmmaker Award was conferred on Askini: The Guiding Darkness, directed by Ajit Singh Bhasin, recognising the film's distinctive cinematic voice and promising creative approach.

Adding another major honour to the region's tally, filmmaker Kapil Matto's Tasruddar – The Jinns of Kashmir won the Best Film from Jammu & Kashmir Select category, celebrating a work that draws upon the region's distinctive cultural and storytelling traditions.

The three awards, spanning cinematography, emerging filmmaking and the best film from J&K, underline the diversity and depth of cinematic talent present in the region.

During the festival, the selected films by local filmmakers like "Batt Koch (The Lost Lane)", directed by Siddharth Koul and Ankit Wali; "Tasruddar (Djinns of Kashmir)", directed by Kapil Mattoo; and "Naqsh-

e-Daur (The Story of Ghulam Nabi Dhar)", directed by Baba Tasaduq Hussain received wider appreciation from the audiences. Batt Koch, was screened as closing film of the festival received much appreciation from renowned filmmaker Ramesh Sippy and audiences. "Love in Vietnam" a movie by Rahat Shah Kazmi a jammu and kashmir based filmmaker was also screened during the festival and was widely appreciated.

The recognition is particularly significant as the inaugural IFFJK has provided filmmakers from Jammu and Kashmir with an international platform to present their work alongside films from different parts of country and the world. The success of the three films demonstrates the festival's role in creating meaningful opportunities for local storytellers to connect with wider audiences, industry professionals and the global cinematic

community. The strong showing of J&K filmmakers also reflects the evolving creative landscape of the Union Territory, where filmmakers are increasingly exploring local histories, folklore, landscapes, contemporary realities and cultural narratives through diverse cinematic forms.

The achievement is expected to further encourage young filmmakers and emerging artists from the region to pursue their creative ambitions and tell stories rooted in the unique experiences, heritage and cultural identity of Jammu and Kashmir.

The First International Film Festival of Jammu & Kashmir, organised by the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), has thus emerged as an important platform not only for celebrating global cinema but also for placing the creative voices of J&K before a wider national and international audience.

Javid Dar inaugurates Fashion Designing Centre at GDC Hadipora;

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, SEP 12

Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar, today inaugurated a Fashion Designing Centre for cutting, tailoring and sozni work at Government Degree College Hadipora, Rafiabab, here.

The initiative marks a significant step towards strengthening the skill-based education and creating avenues for vocational training, self-employment and livelihood generation among students and local youth.

The newly established centre will provide practical

training in cutting, tailoring, fashion designing and traditional Sozni embroidery, enabling participants to acquire market-oriented skills and explore opportunities in entrepreneurship and income generation.

The initiative is expected to particularly benefit young women by equipping them with employable skills, fostering self-reliance and encouraging their participation in economic activities.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister emphasized the importance of skill-based education in enhancing employability and creating sustainable livelihood opportunities for the younger generation. He said that educational

institutions have a crucial role in preparing students not only for academic pursuits but also for the changing demands of the employment and entrepreneurial landscape.

The Minister stressed the need to promote vocational training alongside formal education so that students can develop practical expertise, build confidence and pursue self-employment opportunities.

Highlighting the importance of traditional crafts, Javid Dar said that initiatives promoting Sozni embroidery can help preserve the region's rich cultural heritage while creating new avenues of livelihood for skilled artisans and aspiring entrepreneurs. He appreciated the college ad-

ministration for establishing the centre and encouraged the students and local youth to make the best use of the facilities being provided.

The Minister underscored the importance of continued efforts towards strengthening skill development infrastructure in educational institutions, with a focus on empowering youth, promoting entrepreneurship and facilitating sustainable income generation.

The Fashion Designing Centre is expected to serve as a platform for skill enhancement, creativity and vocational development, contributing towards the socio-economic empowerment of youth in the region.

JCMS hands over ambulance to Govt Ayurvedic Medical College Akhnoor to strengthens patient care facility

Jammu

JCMS hands over ambulance to Govt. Ayurvedic Medical College and Hospital Akhnoor to strengthens patient care facility.

In a significant initiative aimed at strengthening healthcare facilities and serving the larger interest of society, Jammu Central Mahajan Sabha (JCMS) handed over a 407 Ambulance to Govt. Ayurvedic Medical College and Hospital, Akhnoor.

The ambulance was formally handed over by JCMS President Sh. Romesh Chander Gupta in the presence of senior office bearers and members of the Sabha and the Ambulance received by Dr. Ashutosh

Gupta (Principal GAMC Akhnoor) in presence of Dr. Sanjeev Gupta, Prof. and Head Department of Orthopedic, GMC Jammu, Dr. Narinder Sharma, Dr. Aman Gupta, Dr. Anil Gupta, Dr. Shailej Gupta, Dr. Sandeep Charak, Sh. Vipan Verma, Sh. Rahul Sharma, Sh. Shubam ji.

The vehicle was handed over after completion of all necessary formalities with the Regional Transport Office (RTO), Jammu.

Romesh Chander Gupta, on this occasion, said that Jammu Central Mahajan Sabha has always remained committed to the welfare of society and has consistently undertaken initiatives aimed at helping people in need.

He said that while the Sabha works for the welfare of the Ma-



hajan community, with special emphasis on providing assistance to widows, economically weaker families and other

needy sections, it has also extended its services to society at large whenever required.

Recalling the Sabha's hu-

manitarian initiatives during the Covid-19 pandemic, Gupta said that JCMS had come forward to extend assistance to

poor and needy people during that difficult period. He said that service to humanity has always remained an important objective of the organisation.

Senior Vice President Shiv Pratap Gupta also spoke on the occasion and highlighted various social welfare activities and achievements of the Sabha. He said that the organisation would continue to contribute towards initiatives that directly benefit people and strengthen community welfare.

The Principal expressed gratitude to Jammu Central Mahajan Sabha for providing the ambulance and termed it a much-needed facility for the institution.

He said that the college had been lacking a dedicated ambulance facility, which often cre-

ated difficulties in shifting patients whenever required.

"With the availability of this ambulance, an important requirement of our institution has been fulfilled. It will greatly facilitate the safe and timely transportation of patients and help address a genuine need of the hospital," he said while thanking JCMS for its valuable contribution.

The proceedings of the programme were conducted by JCMS General Secretary Sanjay Mahajan.

Prominent personalities present on the occasion included Ram Sarup Gupta, (Sr Vice President) Subash Gupta, Atul Gupta (Vice Presidents), Arun Gupta (Office Secretary) and other office bearers, members of the Sabha and staff of the institution.