

CM inspects last year's flood breach site at Shalina, inspects restoration works undertaken

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, MAY 01

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today visited Shalina near Lasjan to inspect the site that had developed a breach during the floods in September last year.

The Chief Minister was accompanied by his Advisor Nasir Aslam Wani, MLA Pampore Justice (Retd.) Hasnain Masoodi, Additional Chief Secretary, Jal Shakti, Shaleen Kabra, and other concerned officers.

During the visit, the Chief Minister reviewed the ongoing repair and flood mitigation works at



the breach site.

He directed the concerned departments to ensure strengthening of embankments to prevent recurrence of such incidents.

Emphasizing the need for durable and long-term solutions, the Chief Minister instructed officials to expedite the process and ensure that permanent restoration works are

completed at the earliest.

He also stressed the importance of adopting robust flood management measures to safeguard vulnerable areas and protect public infrastructure.

Labour Day celebration: Dy CM reaffirms govt's commitment to workers' welfare, social security

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JAMMU, MAY 01

Commemorating the Labour Day observance, Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today described the working class as the backbone of the economy. He reiterated the government's firm commitment to ensure their economic welfare and social security across Jammu and Kashmir.

In his message, the Deputy Chief Minister emphasized that workers are the driving force behind development and progress.

The government remains steadfast in safeguarding their rights through effective implementation of labour laws and welfare schemes.

"Our workers are the foundation of economic growth. The government is committed towards ensuring safe working conditions, fair wages, social security and dignity of labour for every worker across the Union Territory," he said.

Highlighting the key labour reforms, the Deputy Chief Minister referred to the introduction of reforms as comprehensive frame-

works covering wages, industrial relations, occupational safety and social security.

Describing these as landmark reforms, he said, "The new Labour Codes simplify the compliance while strengthening the protection and welfare of workers. They aim to ensure universal minimum wages, improved workplace safety, enhanced social security and robust mechanisms for dispute resolution."

"The Labour Department is actively working towards effective implementation of

these reforms in Jammu and Kashmir to build a fair, transparent and worker-friendly labour ecosystem," he added.

Stressing the importance of awareness and outreach, the Deputy Chief Minister called for extensive campaigns to ensure registration of all eligible workers so they can benefit from various Central and UT-level welfare schemes.

"Maximum outreach of labour welfare schemes is essential to strengthen the economic security and improve the living standards of workers," he said.

Bhalla seeks high-level probe into bridge collapse, calls for accountability

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, MAY 01

Raman Bhalla, Working President of the Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee, today expressed profound shock and anguish over the tragic collapse of a portion of a bridge in the Bantalab area on the outskirts of Jammu, which left several labourers trapped under debris and resulted in loss of precious lives.

Terming the incident as deeply disturbing and unacceptable, Bhalla said that such tragedies reflect serious lapses in planning, supervision, and safety compliance at work sites. He extended his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured, while standing in solidarity with all those affected.

Expressing particular concern over the timing of the incident, Bhalla questioned why labourers were

engaged in hazardous work on International Labour Day—a day dedicated to honouring the dignity, rights, and welfare of workers. He stated that instead of ensuring their safety and welfare, workers were exposed to life-threatening conditions, which raises serious questions about the enforcement of labour laws and safety regulations.

Calling for a high-level, time-bound enquiry, Bhalla demanded that responsibility be fixed at all levels—be it contractors, executing agencies, or supervising authorities. He emphasized that mere inquiries are not enough unless they lead to strict action against those found negligent. "Accountability must not end on paper. Those responsible for compromising worker safety must face legal consequences," he asserted.

Highlighting the critical role played by labourers in nation-building and infrastructure development, Bhalla said their lives can-

not be treated as expendable. He stressed the urgent need for systemic reforms to ensure that such incidents do not recur. He called for mandatory structural safety audits before undertaking repair works, strict adherence to engineering protocols, and deployment of trained personnel at all high-risk sites.

Bhalla further urged the government to enforce compulsory safety measures, including the provision of protective gear, on-site supervision by qualified engineers, and real-time monitoring of construction activities. He also advocated for the creation of a robust emergency response mechanism at all major project sites to ensure immediate rescue and medical assistance in case of accidents.

Demanding justice for the victims, Bhalla called for "handsome and immediate compensation" to the next of kin (NoKs) of those who lost their lives, so that their families can sustain

themselves with dignity. He also sought long-term rehabilitation measures, including government jobs for eligible family members, financial security packages, and educational support for the children of the deceased.

In addition, he appealed for the establishment of a dedicated labour welfare oversight mechanism to regularly inspect construction sites and ensure compliance with safety norms. He stressed that lessons must be drawn from this tragedy and translated into concrete policy action.

Bhalla reiterated that the sacrifice of these workers on a day meant to celebrate their contribution should serve as a powerful reminder for authorities to prioritize human lives over procedural negligence. He urged the administration to expedite rescue operations and provide all necessary assistance to those affected, while ensuring that such a tragedy is never repeated in the future.

Vande Bharat Express to begin regular Jammu-Srinagar service from May 2

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, MAY 01

May 2 is set to mark a historic milestone for Jammu and Kashmir as the much-awaited Vande Bharat Express begins its regular commercial service between Jammu and Srinagar. Following its inauguration by Union Minister for Railways, Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, the country's most modern train will now provide high-speed connectivity between the Jammu region and the Kashmir Valley, significantly transforming the travel experience.

A wave of excitement has gripped passengers and the general public ahead of the train's first official journey. Reports indicate an unprecedented surge in ticket bookings as soon as reser-

vations opened for the inaugural run. Many passengers have expressed their eagerness to be part of this historic moment. Local residents have widely welcomed the initiative, stating that the long wait for seamless rail connectivity between Jammu and Srinagar has finally ended. They noted that the journey will now not only be shorter but also far more comfortable, owing to the world-class amenities offered by the Vande Bharat Express.

The introduction of this high-speed train is expected to redefine connectivity in the region by drastically reducing travel time between Jammu and Srinagar. It is also anticipated to provide a major impetus to the tourism sector. Local traders and Shikara operators in Srinagar have hailed

the move, expressing optimism that the service will facilitate easier and safer movement of tourists, thereby boosting economic activity.

In a related development, the Additional Member (Traffic & Commercial) of the Railway Board visited Jammu Railway Station on May 1 to review key railway projects and passenger amenities. The inspection was attended by Shri Uchit Singhal, Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Jammu. During the visit, a detailed assessment of catering installations and base kitchens was carried out to ensure the quality of food and beverage services. Directions were issued to maintain high standards of hygiene and provide nutritious meals to passengers.

The official also reviewed the progress of ongoing redevelopment works at Jammu and Chandigarh railway stations under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme. Emphasis was laid on completing the projects within stipulated timelines while enhancing overall passenger experience. Preparations for the smooth operation of the Vande Bharat Express were also examined, with discussions focusing on operational readiness, coach maintenance, and availability of passenger amenities.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Uchit Singhal stated that the train will now operate with 20 coaches. Earlier, the 8-coach configuration had a seating capacity of around 530 passengers.

Anti-Drug Rally Held at Banihal Under "Nasha Mukti Abhiyan"

BANIHAL, MAY 01: A rally under the theme "Nasha Mukti Abhiyan" (Drug-Free Society Campaign) was successfully organized by the 16 IR Battalion at Banihal in Ramban district under the direct supervision of Director General of Police J&K, Shri Nalin Prabhat (IPS), and Additional Director General of Police (Armed) J&K, Shri Anand Jain (IPS).

The main function was held at Helipad Ground, Gund Banihal, witnessing enthusiastic participation from school children, local residents, and battalion personnel. The programme began with an address by DySP Kirpal Singh, who emphasized the importance of spreading awareness against drug abuse and highlighted the collective responsibility of society, particularly in



safeguarding the youth.

A large number of students participated in the event, adding vibrancy while promoting the message of a drug-free lifestyle. The programme concluded with an oath-taking ceremony led by SSP/Commandant Sukhdev Raj

(JKPS), reaffirming commitment to eradicating drug abuse from society.

Following the formal proceedings, a massive rally was taken out through Banihal town, culminating at Chareel. Participants raised slogans and carried placards advocating "Say

No to Drugs." Refreshments were distributed at the end of the rally. The event reflected strong community participation and reinforced the commitment of both police and civil society towards achieving a drug-free society.

DC Shopian commends unified efforts in Minor's Rescue Operation

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, MAY 01

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta, extended heartfelt appreciation and deep gratitude to all agencies and individuals involved in the extensive rescue operation that led to the recovery of the body of minor, Mohammad Hanzala from the Rambiara Stream.

He acknowledged the relentless and coordinated efforts of the J&K Police, State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), and the Indian Army. He also expressed special gratitude to the general public and volunteers from various NGOs who stood shoulder to shoulder with the administration in these efforts. Their dedication and support were instrumental throughout the operation.

Further, the Deputy



Commissioner, on behalf of the District Administration, expressed his deepest

condolences and stands in solidarity with the bereaved family of Moham-

mad Hanzala, praying for patience to endure this profound loss.

ALC Srinagar Celebrates International Labour Day with Focus on Healthy Work Environment

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, MAY 01

On the occasion of International Labour Day, the Office of the Assistant Labour Commissioner, Srinagar, today organized a programme at JK Cements Saifco, highlighting the significance of a healthy and supportive workplace environment.

The event was held in line with this year's theme, "Ensuring a Healthy Psychosocial Working Environment." Workers, employers, and representatives from various industrial units participated enthusiastically, reflecting a collective commitment towards improving workplace conditions.

The programme underscored the importance of creating a safe, inclusive, and dignified work environment, with special emphasis on mental well-being and strengthening



employer-employee relations. During the event, awareness sessions were conducted on labour laws, new labour codes, workers' rights, and the importance of social security measures. Participants were also sensitized about

maintaining a drug-free workplace under the Nasha Mukti Bharat initiative. A pledge was administered on the occasion, reaffirming commitment towards respecting workers, safeguarding their rights, and

promoting their overall well-being. The programme reiterated that labour forms the backbone of dignity, progress, and prosperity, and that a nation grows stronger when its workforce is valued and protected.

KP Community celebrates Ganesh Chaturthi

KUPWARA, MAY 01: Kashmiri Pandit community celebrated Ganesh Chaturthi in Sogam, Lolab Valley, after more than 35 years marking a significant step in the restoration of religious and cultural practices in the region.

The programme was organized by Sanatan Sabha Sogam with active support from the District Administration, Kupwara and Kupwara Police. Several hundred devotees visited temple complex Sogam and performed puja with deep devotion and sanctity, creating a spiritually



charged and festive atmosphere. Sub-divisional Administration headed by SDM Lolab ensured adequate arrangements for Ganesh

Chaturthi. Local residents supported the event by assisting in arrangements, reflecting a renewed sense of communal harmony.

Deputy Commissioner Kupwara termed the revival of the Ganesh Chaturthi Mela an important step. He visited Sogam Temple and interacted with the community. Necessary steps being taken by administration to improve sanitation and renovation of temple area. Members of the Pandit community described the occasion as emotional and symbolic of reconnecting with their ancestral roots and expressed appreciation for support given by Administration and police for smooth conduct of Ganesh Chaturthi Mela.