

Bhalla seeks special relief package for Shiv Market

**Shadow Correspondent
Jammu Oct 26**

Former Minister and Working President of the Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC), Raman Bhalla, on Monday demanded a comprehensive compensation and rehabilitation package for shopkeepers and traders who suffered massive losses in the devastating fire that engulfed Shiv Market near Jammu Railway Station on Sunday evening.

Bhalla, accompanied by senior Congress leaders, visited the fire-ravaged market and interacted with the affected shopkeepers and traders to assess the extent of the damage and hear their concerns. Expressing solidarity with the victims, he said the government must take immediate and concrete measures to help them overcome the financial losses and restore their sources of livelihood. Describing the incident as a major setback for the trading community, Bhalla said property and merchandise worth crores of rupees had been reduced to ashes in the devastating



blaze. He pointed out that many shopkeepers had invested their life savings in their businesses and depended entirely on their establishments to support their families.

He urged the government to announce a special compensation package for all affected traders and shopkeepers, stressing that the assistance should be adequate to help them recover from their losses and resume their business activities at the earliest. Bhalla also called for financial assistance from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund and the Chief Minister's Relief Fund, stating that the affected families and business

owners needed urgent support during this difficult period. He emphasised that the government should adopt a sympathetic and practical approach while assessing the losses and disbursing compensation, ensuring that no affected shopkeeper was left out of the relief process.

The senior Congress leader further demanded a comprehensive rehabilitation plan for the affected business establishments, saying that restoring livelihoods should be the government's immediate priority. He urged the authorities concerned to facilitate the reconstruction of the damaged shops and ensure that ad-

ministrative formalities did not become an obstacle to the early revival of commercial activities in the market.

Bhalla specifically called upon the Jammu Development Authority (JDA) to immediately renew the leases of the affected shopkeepers so that they could rebuild their establishments without facing unnecessary delays or uncertainty over their commercial premises. He stressed that bureaucratic hurdles should not be allowed to compound the suffering of traders who had already incurred enormous losses due to the fire.

During their interaction with Bhalla, the affected

shopkeepers expressed anguish over the destruction caused by the blaze. They claimed that more than 30 shops and business establishments had been completely gutted, leaving several traders facing an uncertain future.

The shopkeepers also raised concerns over the alleged delay in the arrival of adequate firefighting equipment. According to them, the deployment of smaller fire tenders hampered efforts to bring the blaze under control, contributing to the extensive damage suffered by the market.

The affected traders urged the administration to conduct a proper assessment of the losses, provide immediate financial assistance and ensure that the reconstruction process began without delay. Reiterating his demand for urgent government intervention, Bhalla said the affected shopkeepers needed more than assurances and called for a time-bound relief and rehabilitation mechanism to help them rebuild their businesses and regain their livelihoods.

J&K BJP holds strong protest against Kharge's remarks, demands immediate public apology



**Shadow Correspondent
Jammu Oct 26**

J&K BJP held a strong protest at Dogra Chowk, Jammu, against the derogatory remarks made by Congress National President Mallikarjun Kharge concerning the late father of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, slamming the Congress leadership for stooping to a new low in political discourse and insulting the dignity of Indian politics.

BJP demanded an immediate and unconditional public apology from Kharge, condemning the Congress party for attempting to defend the unfortunate remarks instead of expressing regret.

The protest was led by BJYM led by its President Arun Prabhat and Mahila Morcha led by its President Neha Mahajan, in presence of BJYM National Vice-President & MLA Kishtwar Shagun Parihar, joined by OBC Morcha led by its President Brahmjyot Satti, SC Morcha led by its President Dhar-

minder Kumar, Kissan Morcha led by its President Rakesh Pant, and party's cells led by All Cells Incharge Ved Sharma. The protesters carried placards and raised forceful slogans against Kharge and the Congress party, denouncing what they described as the growing culture of personal attacks and indecent political conduct within the Congress leadership.

J&K BJP Secretary Reema Padha, Media Incharge Dr. Pardeep Mahotra, Spokesperson Zorawar Singh Jamwal, District South President Naresh Singh, Ayodhya Gupta, Parduman Singh, Dr. Akshay, Suneet Raina, Anil Angral, Kushant Prajapati, Adarsh Jathiar, Narinder Singh, Deepak Gupta, Amit Manhas, Urvasi Gupta, Ranjit Singh, Dheeraj Arora and other senior leaders participated in the protest.

Shagun Parihar strongly condemned Kharge's remarks, stating that political differences must never be-

come an excuse to attack the dignity of a family. She said that the Congress leadership, instead of engaging in constructive political debate, was increasingly resorting to personal attacks out of frustration with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership and popularity. She demanded that Kharge immediately apologise publicly for his unacceptable remarks.

Arun Prabhat said that the Congress party's political frustration had reached such a level that its highest leadership had abandoned basic standards of political decency. He asserted that personal insults could neither weaken Prime Minister Modi's resolve nor diminish his commitment to serving the nation.

Neha Mahajan said that disrespectful remarks concerning a family member of the Prime Minister were deeply objectionable and reflected poorly on the Congress leadership. She demanded that Kharge apologise to the nation rather than allowing the controversy to be defended by the Congress party.

Ved Sharma said that the Congress's defence of the remarks exposed its ideological bankruptcy and declining political standards. He asserted that criticism of the government was a democratic right, but personal insults could never be justified as political opposition.

ZSWO Reasi organises outreach programme at Sujandhar

**Shadow Correspondent
Reasi Oct 26**

The Zila Sainik Welfare Office (ZSWO) Reasi organised an outreach programme at Sujandhar village in the Bhomag area, bringing welfare, employment and healthcare services closer to residents of this far-flung area of the district.

The ZSWO conducted the programme in coordination with the Medical, AYUSH and Employment departments of Reasi. ZSWO representatives briefed ex-servicemen on various welfare and rehabilitation schemes, while Employment Department officials apprised participants of employment and self-employment opportunities under Mission YUVA. The participants showed keen interest in the schemes and initiatives. A medical camp organised as part of the

programme provided medical consultations and medicines to villagers. A portable X-ray machine and an ECG machine were used under the supervision of a physician. The Eye Department provided eye consultations, prescription glasses and medicines for various eye ailments, while the AYUSH Department offered traditional remedies and treatment for common health conditions.

The programme benefited both ex-servicemen and local residents of Sujandhar by providing access to essential welfare services, employment information and healthcare facilities at their doorstep. The camp received an encouraging response from the local population, underlining the importance of such initiatives in extending public services to remote areas of the district.

Livasa Hospital gives new lease of life to two patients from Kashmir through complex spine surgeries

**Shadow Correspondent
Srinagar, OCT 26:**

Two patients from Srinagar and Anantnag have regained mobility and improved their quality of life following the successful treatment of complex spinal conditions at Livasa Hospital, Mohali.

Addressing a press conference in Srinagar on Monday, Dr. Ajay Singh, Brain and Spine Specialist at Livasa Hospital, Mohali, shared details of the two challenging cases, highlighting the importance of specialised surgical expertise, individualised treatment planning and timely medical intervention in managing complex spinal disorders.

The first case involved a patient from Srinagar who developed a severe spinal infection complicated by sepsis following an earlier surgery. His condition deteriorated significantly, leaving him unable to sit, stand or even turn in bed. With his mobility severely compromised, he was brought to Livasa Hospital, Mohali, on a stretcher for further treatment.

After a detailed evaluation, Dr. Ajay Singh performed revision spine surgery to address the complex infection and manage the associated spinal complications. The procedure required meticulous surgical planning, followed by close postoperative monitoring to support the patient's recovery.

The patient showed encouraging improvement, regaining mobility by the second day after surgery. He is now doing well and remains under medical observation, with regular outpatient follow-up to monitor his continued recovery.

The second case involved a 21-year-old woman from Anantnag who was diagnosed with Grade III-IV dysplastic spondylolisthesis, a severe spinal condition that significantly affected her ability to sit and stand comfortably. Given that her father is a farmer, the cost of treatment was also an important consideration for the family.

IIM Jammu Inaugurates Executive Education Programme on Logistics and Supply Chain Management in Healthcare

**Shadow Correspondent
Jammu, OCT 26:**

26 th Oct 2026, Jammu: The Indian Institute of Management Jammu inaugurated the programme, "Logistics & Supply Chain Management in Healthcare: Efficiency, Quality & Resilience," on 26 October 2026, at the Yoga 266, Vedanta MDP Centre, Academic Block, IIM Jammu. The programme aims to facilitate knowledge exchange and peer learning among healthcare professionals, focusing on strengthening supply chain efficiency, improving quality, and building resilience in healthcare delivery systems. The inaugural ceremony was presided over by Prof. Prashant Mishra, Chairperson, Executive Education and Consultancy IIM Jammu and

graced by programme directors, Prof. (Dr.) Shakti Kumar Gupta and Lt Gen (Dr.) Sunil Kant, (Retd.), Programme Director, IIM Jammu.

The inaugural ceremony commenced with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp, followed by a welcome address by Prof. (Dr.) Shakti Kumar Gupta, Programme Director, who shared insights from his experience in healthcare management, including the challenges encountered during floods and the importance of institutional preparedness and effective coordination. He emphasized that the programme would be an opportunity for participants to learn from real-world experiences and exchange practical insights rather than limit themselves to con-

ventional classroom learning. He also drew attention to the significant additional expenditure involved in establishing and operationalizing healthcare facilities, underlining the importance of efficient planning and resource management.

Prof. Prashant Mishra, Chairperson, Executive Education and Consultancy IIM Jammu, provided an overview of the Institute's executive education initiatives and their role in bridging the gap between academic knowledge and industry practice. He spoke about the importance of stronger industry participation, the contribution of experienced professionals to management education, and the value of learning from practical experiences.

**Shadow Correspondent
KISHTWAR, OCT 26:**

Vigilance Awareness Week 2026 commenced today across district Kishtwar with a pledge ceremony at the Conference Hall, New DC Office Complex, Mini Secretariat Kishtwar.

Deputy Commissioner Pankaj Kumar Sharma presided over the ceremony and administered the Integrity Pledge to officers and officials of the line departments, who reaffirmed their commitment to integrity, transparency, accountability and ethical conduct in public service.

Vigilance Awareness Week is observed annually to commemorate the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. It aims to strengthen the culture of integrity, promote preventive vigilance, enhance transparency in public administration and foster public trust in governance through active citizen participation.

This year, the week is being observed from October 26 to November 1, 2026, under the theme (Probity for Prosperity).

During the ceremony, the Deputy Commissioner outlined the activities and guidelines issued by the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC)

Sheetal Nanda Inaugurates 3-Day Art Fest at Kala Kendra

**Shadow Correspondent
Jammu, OCT 26:**

Sheetal Nanda, Commissioner Secretary, Department of Forests, Ecology and Environment, today inaugurated HOPE, a three-day art and music festival jointly organised by Kala Kendra Jammu and Sanjhi Kala. The festival will continue until October 28 at the Master Sansar Chand Gallery, Kala Kendra Jammu.

Welcoming the guests, Dr. Javaid Rahi, Secretary, Kala Kendra Jammu, said that the primary objective of the festival is to attract people towards art and promote greater appreciation of artistic expression. He informed that around 60 artworks are



for the week-long observance. In accordance with these guidelines, all government offices in the district will focus on five key preventive vigilance parameters: disposal of pending complaints, disposal of pending cases, capacity-building programmes, digital initiatives and contract management systems.

Administering the pledge, the DC called upon all officers and officials to uphold the highest standards of honesty, impartiality and accountability in discharging their official duties. He emphasised the importance of translating the principles of integrity into everyday administrative practice and ensuring that public service delivery remains transparent, efficient and citizen-centric.

As part of the public outreach and participatory initiatives planned for the week, district and sectoral heads of the line departments concerned will organise awareness campaigns, seminars

and interactive workshops focussing on the five parameters.

These activities aim to sensitise officials and the public to the importance of ethical governance, encourage transparency in administrative processes and promote collective responsibility in preventing corruption.

The observance will reinforce the district administration's commitment to probity, accountability and good governance, and strengthen public confidence in the administration through sustained vigilance and transparent practices.

Among those present were Assistant Commissioner (Revenue) Mohammad Idrees Lone, Assistant Commissioner (Development) Manoj Kumar, Assistant Commissioner (Panchayat) Neeraj Sharma, Chief Medical Officer Dr Sanjay Bhat, Chief Education Officer Sanjay Dogra and Tehsildar Nirbhay Sharma, besides other officers and officials.



on display at the exhibition.

Speaking on the occasion, artists Monia Kapoor and Nidhi Jain announced that the entire proceeds from the sale of their exhibited artworks would be utilised for the welfare of cancer patients.

They said that the mission of Sanjhi Kala is to make art more than an expression of creativity by transforming it into a meaningful medium for social welfare and humanitarian service.

In her address, Sheetal Nanda appreciated the artistic talent of Monia Kapoor and Nidhi Jain, particularly acknowledging their finesse in Thanjavur painting, a traditional art form associated with the classical artistic heritage of South India. She observed that the artists' commitment to promoting traditional and contemporary art while dedicating the proceeds to cancer patients was an inspiring example of art serving society.

She also emphasised the important role of cultural institutions such as Kala Kendra Jammu in providing platforms for artists, nurturing creative expression and safeguarding the region's rich cultural heritage. She appreciated the initiative for

bringing together artistic excellence, cultural preservation and social responsibility.

Padma Shri Balwant Thakur, Dean Medical Dr. Ashutosh, DIG Police Shalinder Singh, Head of Department Dr. Sanjeev K. Digra, Dr. Dushant Chowdhary of Rotary Club, and Dr. Som Nath were among the dignitaries present on the occasion. The dignitaries appreciated the exhibition for its emphasis on indigenous artistic traditions and called for sustained efforts to preserve, promote and elevate the region's artistic heritage.

Nidhi Jain, who hails from Kota, Rajasthan, has developed a distinctive artistic style that has received recognition from prestigious institutions, including the Lalit Kala Akademi and Soroop. Her work reflects a deep understanding of visual art and its diverse forms of expression.

Monia Kapoor showcased her expertise in Thanjavur painting, an art form renowned for its intricate detailing, rich colours and traditional aesthetic. Her works reflected the enduring appeal of this centuries-old tradition, enriched by her individual artistic interpretation.

**Shadow Correspondent
Jammu, OCT 26:**

Senior Congress leader and former DDC from Suchetgarh has strongly criticised the Fire and Emergency Services Department over the devastating fire at Shiv Market near Jammu Railway Station, alleging serious lapses in the emergency response that may have contributed to the extensive destruction.

Questioning the department's preparedness and response time, the Congress leader said it was deeply disturbing that a major fire broke out barely a short distance from the railway station, yet, according to allegations by traders and eyewitnesses, the fire brigade took nearly one-and-a-half hours to reach the affected market. He said the reported delay raises serious questions about the department's functioning, accountability and readiness to deal with emergencies.

"Remove the word 'Emergency' from the Fire Department if it cannot reach the spot in time. Book all erring officials and fix responsibility for this alleged negligence. People cannot be left at the mercy of a system that fails to respond when every second matters," the Congress leader said.

He further alleged that the first fire tender reportedly reached the site without an adequate water supply, while subsequent assistance also arrived too late to prevent the fire from spreading. He demanded a time-bound inquiry into the deployment of fire tenders, the availability of water, the response time of the control room and the conduct of the officials responsible for the operation.

The leader emphasised that these allegations must be investigated impartially and that any official found guilty of negligence or dereliction of duty should face strict departmental and legal action. He called for examination of emergency call records, dispatch logs, vehicle movement records and the operational readiness of the fire tenders deployed that night.

The massive fire broke out at Shiv Market on Sunday night, October 25, and caused extensive damage to shops dealing in dry fruits, garments, blankets and other goods. Media reports on Monday estimated that approximately 35-40 shops had been gutted, with losses expected to run into crores of rupees. The fire continued for several hours before being brought under control. The exact ex-

tent of the losses remains under assessment.

The Congress leader said the incident had destroyed the hard-earned savings, merchandise and livelihoods of traders who had invested years of effort in building their businesses. He stressed that the administration must not allow affected families and shopkeepers to face the consequences alone.

He urged the Jammu and Kashmir Government to immediately conduct a comprehensive damage assessment and provide adequate compensation and relief to every affected shopkeeper. He also called for temporary financial assistance to help traders restart their businesses and support the families and workers whose livelihoods depended on the damaged establishments.

Demanding a permanent solution, he said the Jammu Development Authority (JDA) should be directed to prepare a reconstruction and restructuring plan for the affected shops in consultation with the shopkeepers. The plan should prioritise safe construction, improved access for emergency vehicles, adequate fire-safety arrangements and proper infrastructure to prevent similar tragedies in the future.

The Congress leader also called for a review of the Fire and Emergency Services Department's preparedness across Jammu, particularly in crowded commercial areas, markets and locations near major public facilities. He said emergency vehicles must remain operational, adequately equipped with water and firefighting equipment, and capable of reaching incident sites without avoidable delays.

"This is not merely a case of shops being gutted by fire; it is a serious question of public accountability. If the alleged delay and equipment failures are established, those responsible must be held accountable. The government must ensure justice for the affected traders, provide meaningful compensation and rebuild the damaged market with proper safety measures," he asserted.

Reiterating his demand for strict action, the Congress leader said an independent and transparent inquiry was essential to establish whether the response of the Fire and Emergency Services Department met the required standards. He urged the government to act decisively against any officials found responsible and ensure that such alleged failures are not repeated.

Congress pays rich tributes to Brig Rajinder Singh

**Shadow Correspondent
Jammu Oct 26**

JKPCC has paid rich tributes to Brig Rajinder Singh Ji, MVC, the savior of Kashmir, who sacrificed his life, fighting a strong force of over 5000 Pakistani invaders, with an odd 100 soldiers, checking the advance of enemy for over four days, till the instrument of Accession of J&K was signed by Maharaja Hari Singh Ji, on this day in 1947 and the landing of Indian forces in Kashmir on the morning of 27th Oct.

In a statement JKPCC remembered the supreme sacrifice of Brig Rajinder Singh Ji, who bravely fought to defend his territory, till last breath and set an exemplary record of bravery and martyrdom in the history.

The party also remembered the contribution of the last Dogra ruler Maharaja

Hari Singh Ji, who acceded to India making the entire Jammu and Kashmir an integral part of our country. Today is an historic day, when Jammu and Kashmir became an integral part of this great Country India.

This is the day to recall the contributions of all those great stalwarts and people of this state, who opposed and rejected the two nation theory of Jinnah and stood for the accession of J&K the only Muslim majority state, bordering Pakistan, thus defeating the nefarious designs of Pakistan.

The role played by Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, Sardar Patel and Sheikh Mohd Abdullah during the crucial period is laudable, alongwith all thousands of those who sacrificed their lives fighting and facing the atrocities of Pakistan raiders, especially in

Muzaffrabad, Poonch and Mirpur.

The countless sacrifices of civilians and armed forces during the period need to be remembered and saluted, on this day.

It is unfortunate that the BJP Govt. divided and downgraded the historic Dogra state causing insult to Maharaj Hari Singh ji and abolishing the identity of Dogra state besides the protections granted to the people of J&K by the Maharaja to safeguard their rights to land, jobs and the natural resources.

The party renews its pledge on this day to continue to fight for the restoration of full statehood alongwith the guarantees to land, jobs and natural resources introduced by Maharaja Hari Sng h ji as nothing could be the best tribute to him than this, it added.