

Inaugurates ‘Jashn-e-Sangam’ J&K’s rich cultural diversity binds people together: LG

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SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday inaugurated ‘Jashn-e-Sangam’, at Tagore Hall Srinagar.

In his address, the Lt Governor appreciated the efforts of J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages and Wadies Hindi Shiksha Samiti for organizing the 3-day Literary fest dedicated to promote art, culture and language.

Jammu & Kashmir has rich cultural diversity in the form of art, literature, music, folk and traditions, which bind the people together. The events like ‘Jashn-e-Sangam’ also bring people from different regions, languages and cultures on common platform to celebrate unity and shared cultural roots with the spirit of Ek Bharat Shreshthta Bharat, the Lt Governor said. The Lt Governor lauded the significant contribution of writers, poets, literary personalities of Kashmir in promotion of Hindi. "Non-Hindi speaking people have contributed immensely to promote Hindi language," he said. The Lt Governor said the promotion of



LG Manoj Sinha felicitating winner during an event at Srinagar on Tuesday.

Hindi and other languages among students in non-Hindi-speaking regions is recognized as a vital initiative. Hindi cinema has its outreach all over the world and has contributed immensely in promotion of Hindi language. Similarly, regional languages have made immense contribution in literature, culture and nation building. Also, the NEP 2020 has emphasised on promotion of mother tongue, local and regional language as medium of instruction in schools. Such efforts reinforce the values of unity, cultural pride, and shared expression, he added.

The Lt Governor also high-

lighted the vital steps taken under the guidance of PM Narendra Modi, in the last few years for the promotion of languages in J&K including Hindi, Kashmiri, Dogri, Urdu, Gojri, Pahari, Punjabi, Shina.

On the occasion, the Lt Governor felicitated the students from Kashmir Division who have excelled in Hindi Subject in their 10th standard examination.

He called upon the youth to take inspiration from the lives of Lalleshwari, Sheikh-ul-Alam, Sant Kabir Das, and other prominent personalities and work towards promotion of literature and languages.

Suresh Kumar Gupta, Principal Secretary, Culture Department; Vijay Kumar Bidhuri, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; Baldev Prakash, Managing Director and CEO J&K Bank; Harvinder Kour, Secretary, JKAACL; Kumar Manoj, Patron, Wadies Hindi Shiksha Samiti; Nasreen Ali "Nidhi," National President and other members of Wadies Hindi Shiksha Samiti, and prominent literary personalities were present.



Two-Day National Seminar on Exploring Life & Legacy of Maharaja Pratap Singh held

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JAMMU: The Department of History, University of Jammu, in collaboration with the Maharaja Gulab Singh Research Centre, Jammu, inaugurated a prestigious two-day national seminar focusing on the life and legacy of Maharaja Pratap Singh. The event took place in the Seminar Hall of the MCA Department at the University of Jammu.

The inaugural session commenced with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp by esteemed guests, including Dr. Karan Singh, Former Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha, Prof Umesh Rai, Vice Chancellor, University of Jammu, Ashutosh Bhatnagar, Director, JKSC, New Delhi, Professor Suman Janwal, Head of Department, History, University of Jammu, and Prof Shyam Narayan Lal, Seminar Director. The solemn atmosphere was enhanced by the chanting of mantras by students from the Department of Sanskrit, University of Jammu. The other prominent presence included the members of the royal family namely M.K. Ajatshatru Singh, Kunwarani Ritu Singh, Rajkumari Dr. Jyotsana, Shri Ranvijay Singh, etc. Speaking on the occasion, Chief guest Dr. Karan Singh shredded light on the remarkable legacy of the Dogra rulers, particularly Maharaja Pratap Singh, whose contributions to the socio-economic transformation of Jammu and Kashmir were both significant and far-reaching. He enriched the discussion by unveiling lesser-known and fascinating aspects of Dogra history; offering a more nuanced understanding of their governance, vision, and impact on the region. Dr. Singh also underscored the importance of integrating the Dogra narrative into mainstream historiography, advocating for a broader dissemination of informed and balanced knowledge about the history of Jammu and Kashmir. In an exciting announcement, Dr. Singh revealed plans to organize a national seminar next year focusing on Raja



MP Rajya Sabha, Dr Karan Singh, former and VC JU Prof Umesh Rai lighting the ceremonial lamp in Jammu on Tuesday.

Amar Singh, furthering the initiative to explore and celebrate the rich history of the Dogra rulers.

In his presidential remarks, Prof Umesh Rai, Vice Chancellor of the University of Jammu, commended the organizers for hosting such a significant event, while extending a warm welcome to Dr. Karan Singh and the esteemed members of the royal family. He emphasized the importance of revisiting history to reclaim the cultural heritage and identity of the Jammu region. Prof Rai also stressed the need to restructure the academic curriculum to reflect this renewed focus. Prof Suman Janwal, Head of the History Department, delivered the opening address, warmly welcoming the distinguished guests. In her speech, she highlighted how the life and contributions of Maharaja Pratap Singh have been historically overlooked and marginalized. She also addressed the negative portrayal of Maharaja Pratap Singh in Western historiography, calling for a re-evaluation of his legacy. Seminar Director, Prof Shyam Narayan Lal, underscored the importance of scholarly discourse in re-evaluating Maharaja Pratap Singh's legacy within the broader framework of India's national history.

He called for a critical re-examination of the Maharaja's reign, highlighting the need to recognize his pivotal contributions to the socio-economic, political, and cultural transformation of Jammu and Kashmir. In his keynote address, Ashutosh Bhatnagar urged the need to challenge entrenched colonial narratives and restore a more balanced historical perspective, emphasizing the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir's rightful place in Indian history. He elaborated on the significant contributions of the Dogra dynasty in shaping the nation, stressing that their role has often been overlooked or misrepresented.

A key highlight of the event was the release of the book Life and Legacy of Maharaja Ranbir Singh, co-edited by Prof. Suman Janwal, Prof. Shyam Narayan Lal, and Dr. Sushma Janwal. The book was officially unveiled by Dr. Karan Singh, alongside members of the royal family and the editors. A formal vote of thanks was delivered by Dr. Madhulika Singh, Senior Assistant Prof, Department of History, University of Jammu, expressing gratitude to the distinguished delegates and participants. The first session, chaired by

Rajkumari Dr. Jyotsana, included presentations by prominent scholars. Padma Shri Prof. K.N. Pandita, Brigadier (Retd.) Dr. Vijay Sagar Dheman, and Mr. Harbans Sambyal each contributed insights into various facets of the historical narrative. The second session, chaired by Retd. Major General Goverdhan Singh Jamwal, offered a series of diverse papers. Dr. Younus Rashid, Assistant Professor at the University of Jammu, discussed socio-religious reforms in Kashmir with a focus on the Nusrat-ul-Islam movement (1889-1930). Ms. Nidhi Bahuguna provided an in-depth analysis of Maharaja Pratap Singh's geopolitical legacy, while Dr. Madhulika Singh, Senior Assistant Professor at the University of Jammu, explored mechanisms of cultural transformation in Kashmir during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The third session, chaired by Padma Shri Prof. K.N. Pandita, further expanded on these themes. Professor Daljit Ahluwalia from Punjabi University, Patiala, presented a paper on the life and legacy of Maharaja Pratap Singh. Dr. Siraz Ahmad, Assistant Professor at the University of Kashmir, examined the sericulture and silk industry in Kashmir from 1885 to 1925. Alaknanda Mahajan, a research scholar from the University of Jammu, discussed the influence of the Great Game on the frontiers of the state during Maharaja Pratap Singh's reign. Puneet Sharma, a research scholar from Sant Baba Bhag Singh University, Jalandhar, elaborated on the modernization and progress seen in Jammu and Kashmir during the Maharaja's rule. The sessions collectively offered fresh perspectives and scholarly depth, promising to continue the vibrant exploration of Maharaja Pratap Singh's enduring contributions to the region's history.

NC should study delimitation history, statistics properly: Arun Gupta

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JAMMU: BJP Spokesperson Arun Gupta on Tuesday said that delimitation was done in an unfair manner decades ago when the constituencies for Constituent Assembly in Jammu and Kashmir were created in 1951.

"This had resulted into far more seats being created in Kashmir as compared to Jammu", Arun Gupta said while responding to Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's comments regarding the delimitation that happened in 2022.

The CM had insinuated that the delimitation was done in a manner to allot more seats to Jammu than Kashmir. This had been done to disempower the National Conference (NC), he had hinted. Similar thoughts have been articulated by several other Kashmiri politicians, he said.

The facts were contrary to the narratives sought to be created by the CM, Mr Gupta said. The 37 assembly segments in the Jammu region were divided unequally between the two Lok Sabha seats in the region. The Jammu Lok Sabha seat had 20 assembly segments and over 20 lakh voters in 2019 Lok Sabha elections. The Udhampur Lok Sabha seat had 17 assembly segments and over 16.50 lakh voters in 2019 Lok Sabha elections, he pointed out.

After the delimitation of 2022, all the five Lok Sabha seats in the Union Territory (UT) have 18 assembly segments each. This could become possible only by increasing the number of assembly segments to 90 and



distributing them evenly under each Lok Sabha seat, Mr Gupta added.

In the assembly elections a month ago, the Srinagar district had a total of 7,74,462 voters. It had a total of eight assembly segments and the average voter per segment comes to 96,808 voters. The Eidgarh assembly segment was the smallest, voter-wise, and had only 61,885 voters.

In Jammu district, there were a total of 12,00,977 voters and it has 11 assembly segments. The average voter per assembly segment in Jammu is 109,180. The smallest assembly constituency in Jammu district is Marh which has 93,598 voters.

The Jammu district thus had 1,09,180-96,808, 12,372 voters more than the average for a Srinagar constituency. Since Jammu had 11 assembly segments, the total additional voters in the district, as compared to Srinagar district, thus come to 1,36,092 voters. Two assembly constituencies like Eidgarh thus need to be created in the Jammu district alone, he said.

If Jammu and Srinagar district are treated fair and square, equally and equitably, far more assembly segments will have to be created in the entire Jammu region, Mr

Gupta added.

In fact, other nine districts of the Kashmir valley too deserved more assembly seats than they have presently. The data about all the districts pertaining to the assembly segments was released in the public domain during the elections. According to this data, in Baramullah district, there were 7,22,923 voters in all. With seven assembly segments, the average voter per constituency comes to 1,03,275. This is more than 96,808 voters per constituency for Srinagar district, which is much more developed.

In Kulgam district, there were a total of 3,28,740 voters and there were three constituencies. The average per assembly segment thus comes to 1,09,580. In Shopian district, there were a total of 2,09,039 voters and two assembly segments of Zainapora and Shopian. The average per assembly constituency in Shopian is thus 1,04,520 voters.

The NC founder, Sheikh Abdullah, had created assembly segments in such a manner that they were very small in its own strongholds, the central Kashmir. The south Kashmir areas as also the north Kashmir areas, were treated unfairly in allocation of assembly seats, Mr Gupta argued.

In the next delimitation exercise, the distribution of voters across the assembly and Lok Sabha segments across Jammu & Kashmir will hopefully be able to remove these angularities. A more equal and equitable distribution of voters will then be able to address the anomalies, he concluded.

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JAMMU: A joint meeting of the Executive Committee and Advisory Council of Bharatiya Dalit Sahitya Academy (BDSA), J&K (UT) was held under the chairmanship of Working President, B.R. Kundal (IAS, Retd.) in the BDSA premises,

Roopnagar, Jammu. Besides others, the Conveners and Co-conveners of all the sub-committees framed under the Advisory Council of BDSA were also present. The main agenda of the meeting was the assignment of responsibilities for the conveners



and co-conveners of various committees, deemed essential to ensure a more structured and efficient execution of the academy's functions and events. During the meeting, a thorough discussion was held concerning the roles and

responsibilities of the sub-committees. B.R. Kundal provided a clear outline of the mandate of various committees and duties of the Conveners and Co-conveners. Besides, legal advice was sought from the members on the necessity of safeguarding the academy premises from unauthorized access and trespassing.

Rajesh Angural, co-convenor of the literary committee submitted a memorandum proposing the publication of a book on Shri Mahasha Nahar Singh. This proposal was met with

enthusiasm, as it aligned with the academy's mission to promote and document significant cultural and historical figures. The committee in principle agreed to support this project as and when funds are available with the academy. Furthermore, to increase the participation of women and students in the BDSA activities, all members were requested to suggest suitable women and student candidates.

Towards the end, members deliberated on the conduct of next program to pay respect to Late Amar Nath

Bhagat, A great Dalit icon of the region. In this regard, Dr. Rakesh Kumar Atri, Secretary was tasked to propose a suitable date and submit a list of speakers to the Working President. Members present in the meeting were P.L. Bhushan, Ruplal Bharati, Hem Raj Phonsa, Nagarnal, Vijay Bhagat, R.L. Bhagat, Desraj, Dr. Rakesh Kumar Atri, Lokinder Singh Ravi, Laj Ram, Interjeet Shavotra, Janak Raj Thappa, Dr. Parshotam Kumar, Dr. Ashwani Kalsi and Sh. Sudesh Kumar.

‘National Learning Week’ at PMO

Dr Jitendra urges optimal AI use in government working

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NEW DELHI: Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Earth Sciences, MoS PMO, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr. Jitendra Singh has urged optimal use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in government working to enhance efficiency and productivity.

Speaking at a special session on AI organised for the staff of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) at South Block here, Dr. Jitendra Singh highlighted the critical role AI can play in revolutionising governance, streamlining operations, and improving decision-making processes across various government departments. The session, which saw participation from officers across all levels from Section Officers to the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister to the Union Minister-was a unique demon-

stration of breaking hierarchical barriers within the PMO, with officials learning the same advanced concepts alongside each other.

Addressing the session, which included senior officials like Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister-Dr P.K. Mishra and Advisors to the PM, Amit Khare, Tarun Kapoor and other senior officers, Dr. Jitendra Singh underscored that AI has the power to automate routine tasks, freeing up government officials to focus on more strategic areas of governance. He highlighted how AI could transform key sectors like healthcare, agriculture, and public service delivery, ensuring that government departments become more efficient and public services more responsive to citizen needs.

The session was part of the ongoing "National Learning Week" under Mission Karmayogi, an ambitious capacity-building initiative spearheaded by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, aimed at



Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh addressing a special 'National Learning Week' session at PMO, South Block, New Delhi on Tuesday. Also seen are Principal Secretary to PM P.K. Misra and Advisors to PM Amit Khare and Tarun Kapoor.

empowering government employees with the knowledge and skills required to navigate the complexities of modern governance. The initiative focuses on creating a more agile, transparent, and effective bureaucracy, and today's session on AI was a step in that direction.

Dr. Jitendra Singh praised the Prime Minister's vision for Mission Karmayogi, stating that it not only enhances the skills of individual officers but also promotes a collaborative and inclusive learning environment, where traditional hierar-

chies are dissolved in favour of collective learning and growth.

Dr. Jitendra Singh also emphasised the importance of deploying AI responsibly, stressing the need to safeguard data privacy, particularly in sensitive areas of government functioning. "While AI holds immense potential for enhancing productivity, it must be implemented with caution to ensure confidentiality and data security," the Minister said, adding that strong security measures are necessary to protect AI systems from cyber

threats and unauthorised access. He also called attention to the ethical considerations in the use of AI, urging that fairness and transparency be maintained while avoiding biases in decision-making.

Participants at the session discussed AI's role in advancing India's national infrastructure, security, and economic growth. The collective learning atmosphere encouraged open dialogue on how AI can be leveraged to strengthen India's digital backbone, improve public service delivery, and support the

country's long-term vision for sustainable growth. The session also marked the beginning of India's first practical AI data bank, designed to accelerate technological growth over the next decade.

One of the key discussions at the session was on the role of AI in building smart physical and digital infrastructure, essential for India's long-term growth. Experts at the session highlighted that AI will reshape national security and public infrastructure, calling for more innovation in front-end technologies-a crucial area where India is seeking to enhance its capabilities. AI's potential to drive industrial transformation, improve the quality of education, and generate employment was also explored. Participants underscored the importance of scaling successful AI use cases, particularly in manufacturing and healthcare, to ensure that the benefits of AI reach a broader population. significant highlight of the session was the call for the development of

India's first practical AI data bank. This initiative is expected to unlock AI's potential for accelerated growth over the next decade, positioning India as a leader in practical AI applications. The roadmap for AI's growth focused on a balanced model of development that ensures human-centricity, environmental sustainability, and resilience.

The session also touched upon AI's role in addressing geopolitical challenges, noting how AI technologies are influencing global power dynamics. The participants emphasised that India must develop an AI framework that responds to these evolving dynamics, ensuring that the country remains competitive on the global stage.

The event concluded with a vision for India in 2035 and beyond to 2047, emphasising the importance of citizen empowerment through AI. The focus was on creating an inclusive AI ecosystem that supports growth, transforms governance, and ensures equitable

development for all sectors of society.

As per the Prime Minister's call, the National Learning Week will focus on learning through various forms of engagement by individual participants, as well as Ministries, Departments, and Organizations. During this week, each Karmayogi will commit to completing at least 4 hours of competency-based learning.

In concluding his address, Dr. Jitendra Singh reiterated the government's commitment to harnessing AI for nation-building, assuring that all efforts would be made to integrate AI responsibly into various government functions. He encouraged every government official to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by Mission Karmayogi, as the initiative continues to redefine governance by breaking down barriers, fostering inclusivity, and equipping India's bureaucracy with the tools of tomorrow.