

DSRS, JU organize two days' international conference on "India and Central Asia: Renewing Historical Relationships"

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: The Department of Strategic and Regional Studies (DSRS), University of Jammu, in collaboration with the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS), Kolkata, is hosting two days International Conference on "India and Central Asia: Renewing Historical Relationships" on October 24-25, 2024. This conference aims to foster dialogue and renew the centuries-old historical, cultural, and strategic ties between India and Central Asia. The inaugural session was held at the Environmental Sciences Auditorium of the University of Jammu. Prof. Virender Koundal, Director of the DSRS, University of Jammu, delivered the welcome address. He emphasized the importance of India's relations with Central Asia, in the historical, cultural and strategic contexts. While introducing the theme and objectives of the conference, Dr. Mohd. Monir Alam, Organizing Secretary of the Conference and a faculty member of the DSRS, University of Jammu, highlighted the evolving geopolitical landscape and the renewed focus on India-Central Asia cooperation in areas like trade, security, and cultural exchange. A message from Manoj Sinha, Lt. Governor of Jammu and



Dignitaries during launch of international conference at Jammu University.

Kashmir and Chancellor of the University of Jammu, expressing his support for the conference and highlighting the significance of India's ties Central Asia, was read out by Dr. Surinder Mohan, Assistant Professor of the DSRS. After that Dr. Sarup Prasad Ghosh, Director, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS), Kolkata stressed on promoting the collaborative research and policy-oriented dialogue to deepen mutual understanding and cooperation between India and Central Asia. The keynote address of the conference was delivered by Padma Shree Prof. K.N. Pandita, a renowned scholar, who spoke on the historical connections between India and Central Asia, opined that in the ancient period, India was not connected with Central Asia only through its trade and economic activities, but also, through its linguistic, cultural and religious interactions and cooperation. The impact of India's civilization on Central Asia can be seen on languages of these countries as their vocabulary is influenced by the India's Sanskrit language, symbols, artefacts and monuments. He, further, opined that after 1947, India's connectivity and cooperation comparatively declined. However, now in the present times, efforts are being made to reinvigorate these ties with India joining the SCO and India organising international Buddhist conference to remind the India's Buddhist connections with the Central Asian countries. Prof. Pandita also suggested that how these relationships can be further leveraged in the current global context. The Guest of Honour of the event Ashutosh Bhatnagar, Director, Jammu Kashmir Study Centre, New Delhi talked about the contemporary economic, strategic and security imperatives prevailing at regional and global level which necessitate closer collaboration between India and Central Asia. While presiding over the inaugural session of the conference Prof. Umesh Rai, Vice Chancellor, University of Jammu shared his thoughts on the importance of academic engagements in promoting regional diplomacy and mutual understanding between India and Central Asia. Prof. Rai also urged the University faculty for initiating the interdisciplinary empirical research on the different dimensions of India's international engagements with different countries. Dr. Suneel Kumar from the Department of Strategic and Regional Studies, University of Jammu, concluded the inaugural session with a vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to all dignitaries, participants, and organizing teams for their contributions to the conference. This two-days' conference is being organised in the hybrid mode in which various scholars from different Indian academic institutions and Central Asian countries especially from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan will participate in the different academic sessions, panel discussions, and paper presentations to explore the historical and contemporary aspects of India-Central Asia relations. Eminent academicians, research scholars and students of Jammu University including Prof. Jasbir Singh, Prof. Suman Jamwal, Prof. Pawan Kumar, Prof. Prakash Chand, Prof. Vinay Chauhan, Prof. Sumita Sharma, Prof. Anil Gupta, Prof. Priyanka Sharma, Dr. Madhulika Singh, Dr. Suman, Dr. Tarseen Lal, Dr. Jivan Jyoti, Dr. Sava Priya, Dr. Vikram Sahi, Dr. Tarseen Singh, Dr. Tilak Sharma, Dr. Ganesh Malhotra, Dr. Ranjan Sharma, Dr. Anu Mankotia, Dr. Anju Bala also attended the inaugural session of the conference. Apart from this, Brig. S. S. Katoch and Col. Manish Sharma, 16 Corps, Indian Army, Nagrota also attended the conference and extended their best wishes to the DSRS for organising such productive academic event having huge relevance for India's national strategic and security interests.

Randhawa chairs meeting to expedite development, road projects in Bahu Constituency

Asks PWD officials to ensure all blacktopping works be completed before winters



MLA Vikram Randhawa chairing a meeting on Thursday.

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Vikram Randhawa, MLA Bahu Constituency on Thursday chaired a meeting with officials of the Public Works Department (PWD), Gandhi Nagar Division, to review the progress of ongoing development projects in the constituency. Notably, 90 percent of the Bahu constituency falls under the jurisdiction of this division, making it vital for ensuring efficient infrastructure development. The meeting was attended by Executive Engineers, Assistant Executive Engineers (AEE), Junior Engineers (JE) of PWD, Bharat Bhushan, Vice-Chairman Cantonment Board Jammu, and former Councillor Neeraj Puri. During the meeting, Vikram Randhawa took stock of the ongoing projects, with a special focus on road development works. He expressed serious concern over the deteriorating condition of roads across the constituency and emphasized the urgent need for immediate repairs and blacktopping. He highlighted that the residents of Bahu constituency should not be inconvenienced due to poor road conditions, especially during the upcoming winter season. "The improvement of road infrastructure must be prioritized," he said, asking PWD officials to intensify efforts and ensure that all blacktopping works are completed before the onset of the hard winter season. This is essential to avoid any disruption to residents' daily commute and to ensure better connectivity across the constituency, he added. The senior BJP leader maintained that the remaining road and development projects will be included in the State Plan. He reiterated his commitment to address the concerns of the people and assured them that all pending projects will be completed in a timely manner. Randhawa also urged PWD officials to adopt a proactive approach and expedite the completion of ongoing projects to enhance the overall infrastructure of Bahu Constituency. He assured the residents that continuous efforts would be made to improve public facilities and address their grievances. "Our commitment is to ensure that Bahu becomes a model constituency with top-notch infrastructure and public services. We will not rest until this goal is achieved," he added.

Dr. Karan Singh pays obeisance at Ranbireswar Temple; prays for peace & prosperity of J&K



Dr. Karan Singh, Chairman Trustee J&K Dharmarth Trust, paying obeisance at Ranbireswar Temple on Thursday.

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Dr. Karan Singh, Chairman Trustee of the J&K Dharmarth Trust, paid obeisance at the ancient Shree Ranbireswar Temple, praying for the peace, progress, and prosperity of the Union Territory. Upon his arrival, he was warmly welcomed by Brig. R.S. Langleh (Retd), President of the Trust, and Ashok Kumar Sharma (IPS Retd), Secretary, by presenting him a bouquet. Dr. Karan Singh expressed his happiness over the installation of the new Nandi ji and took a tour of the temple complex to inquire about the facilities provided to devotees. He voiced his satisfaction with the existing amenities and issued necessary instructions on-site to enhance the experience for visitors. He appreciated the efforts of the Trust and encouraged senior functionaries to work with greater zeal and dedication, emphasizing the importance of providing adequate facilities for visiting pilgrims.

JKPCC Treasurer calls on Farooq, congratulates him over India Alliance victory in Assembly elections

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: JKPCC Vice President and Treasurer Rajnish Sharma Mian along with Vinay Gupta DCC Jammu Urban Vice President today met Dr Farooq Abdullah and congratulated National Conference President Dr Farooq Abdullah and Vice President Omar Abdullah on India Alliance's landslide victory in the recent J&K Assembly elections. They expressed hope that the Alliance will honour its commitments regarding the full restoration of statehood to Jammu & Kashmir, as well as the reinstatement of whatever snatched from J&K by BJP Govt. "The people of Jammu & Kashmir have delivered a decisive verdict in favour of India Alliance and have their expectations for the fulfillment of promises outlined in the party's election manifesto," they said, adding that the people have given an "absolute majority" to Alliance based on these commitments. In his congratulatory message,



Mian expressed optimism about the future governance of the region, while also raising crucial issues that have been of significant concern to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Mian emphasized the importance of restoring J&K's statehood, a long-standing demand since the region's reorganization and downgrading to Union Territory status in 2019. He underscored that statehood is vital for ensuring political dignity

and greater autonomy for the region, allowing the people to have a stronger voice in their governance. "The reorganization of Jammu and Kashmir had led to widespread calls for the reinstatement of statehood, with political and civil society groups from across the spectrum advocating for it," Mian said. Mian believed that restoring statehood would be a critical step toward addressing these concerns and restoring the democratic fabric of the region. In addition to advocating for statehood, Mian also called for the reinstatement of the traditional Darbar Move practice. "The Darbar Move, which was a biannual shifting of the administrative capital between Srinagar and Jammu, had been a hallmark of governance in the region for over a century until its abolition in 2021," he said. Mian argued that the restoration of this practice is essential for maintaining regional balance, ensuring equitable attention to the needs and concerns of both the Jammu and Kashmir regions. He stressed that the Darbar Move had served as a symbol of unity, facilitating better administration and fostering a sense of inclusivity across the diverse regions of J&K. Mian urged the new government to prioritize these issues in their agenda, reaffirming the party's commitment to advocating for the rights and aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Mian expressed hope that the new government would work toward addressing these longstanding demands, ensuring that the region progresses with a focus on justice, equity, and balanced development for all its citizens. Mian said people have voted in favour of the secular parties (NC-Congress) alliance. The people have rejected the policies of BJP. The false propaganda of the BJP has been totally exposed before the countrymen," he said.

Kavya Kochhar shines again with Gold in 43rd North Zone Shooting Championship

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JAMMU: Kavya Kochhar has once again made J&K proud with her stellar performance in the 50m Pistol Women event at the North Zone Shooting Championship 2024. Competing under the banner of J&K Police Club and coached by Rajesh Virdhy (former coach), Madhupal Singh, Vijay Kumar, and Sh. Pardeep Kumar (Chandigarh), Kavya's relentless dedication has resulted in multiple medals at national events, further cementing her status as



Kavya Kochhar after winning gold.

one of the region's finest shooters. Congratulating her for this outstanding achievement, Sh. Dilbag Singh, Patron-in-Chief and Chairman of the J&K Rifle Association (JKRA), extended his heartfelt wishes to both Kavya and her coaches along with Sh. S.S. Sodhi, President of JKRA. Commending not only Kavya's dedication but also the resilience and commitment of all shooters from J&K, S.S. Sodhi said "Despite the immense challenges our shooters face, from the lack of proper firing ranges to the absence of adequate firearms, their passion and discipline shine through. Kavya's achievements reflect the spirit of J&K's shooters, and we are immensely proud of her. The coaches too deserve special recognition for their tireless efforts, often going beyond the call of duty to ensure these shooters excel on the national stage." Sharat Chander Singh also echoed these sentiments, highlighting the

self-reliance and perseverance demonstrated by the shooters and their coaches. He said that despite limited resources, our shooters continue to excel, bringing laurels to J&K through their sheer determination and skill. Kavya Kochhar's success stands as an inspiration, not just for her fellow shooters but also for all athletes facing obstacles. Her journey showcases the indomitable spirit of J&K's sports community, which continues to thrive against all odds. Army officials along with locals after the meeting.

Army organises introductory meeting in Patrada villagers



STATE TIMES NEWS
SUNDERBANI: An introductory meeting of the representatives of four Panchayats was held in Patrada Panchayat

'Mission Mausam' by Modi Govt 3.0 to meet global standards: Dr Jitendra

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI: In a significant move to enhance agricultural productivity, 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 on Thursday addressed the launch and training workshop on weather forecast initiative aimed at Gram Panchayats across India. Addressing a training workshop, he emphasized the importance of providing timely and localized weather information to nearly 2.6 lakh panchayats, thereby directly supporting the nation's farmers. This initiative, part of the Government of India's broader commitment to strengthen the rural economy, utilizes the innovative Mausamgram platform. Developed by the Ministry of Earth Sciences,



Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh speaking during launch of Weather Forecast Facility for Gram Panchayats across India, at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on Thursday.

Mausamgram delivers precise weather forecasts, offering hourly updates for the next 36 hours and comprehensive 10-day forecasts. These updates cover critical parameters such as temperature, rainfall, humidity, wind, and cloud conditions-essential data that farmers need for informed decision-making regarding sowing, harvesting, and irrigation. Dr. Jitendra Singh highlighted that this technology will enable weather forecasts to be accessible anytime and anywhere at the panchayat level, significantly improving the lives of farmers and rural citizens. "This initiative will ensure that farmers and common citizens receive timely updates, helping them make informed decisions to improve both productivity and safety," he stated. The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), which has been serving farmers since 1945, has consistently enhanced its services, introducing notable initiatives such as Agro Advisory Services (AAS) and Gramin Krishi Mausam Sewa (GKMS). The AAS currently provides crop-

specific advisories to over 28 million farmers, accessible through various platforms like the Meghdoot app and WhatsApp groups. The Mausam Gram platform further builds on this foundation, allowing forecasts based on pincode or Gram Panchayat names. Moreover, Dr. Jitendra Singh praised the IMD's technological advancements, noting a remarkable 40% improvement in forecast accuracy over the past decade. The lead time for severe weather warnings has also increased to seven days, drastically reducing the risks associated with extreme weather events like cyclones and heatwaves. According to the Minister, 'Mission Mausam' recently launched by the Modi Govt 3.0 will meet global standards. The government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has launched Mission Mausam, with a budget of ₹2,000 crore. This ambitious initiative aims to enhance observational systems, expand radar networks, and improve public outreach-strengthening India's capacity to respond to climate-related challenges. According to the Minister, 'Mission Mausam' launched by Modi Govt 3.0 to meet global standards. The event also underscored India's role in global climate resilience. The IMD is acting as a peer advisor for five developing nations as part of the United Nations' Early Warning for All initiative, reflecting India's commitment to enhancing global early warning systems. In closing, Dr. Jitendra Singh commended the collaborative efforts of the IMD, Ministry of Earth Sciences, and the Ministry of Panchayati Raj in launching this groundbreaking initiative, which promises to benefit millions of farmers and rural communities across the nation. As weather forecasts become more accessible, this innovative step is poised to transform agricultural practices, ensuring that India's farmers are equipped with the information they need to thrive.

Lower Grade Employees Union highlights pending issues, pins hope on new Govt

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Lower Grade Employees Union Civil Secretariat holds meeting under the chairmanship of its President and expressed gratitude to Advisor to Chief Minister on assuming his office. The Union while welcoming the popular Government, is expecting streamlining and resolving of all the pending issues of the Employees by the present regime. During the meeting, it was resolved to bring into the notice of Chief Minister, a deep concern, i.e delay in disbursement of payment on account of the GP Fund of the Employees and piling of the such cases since August, 2024. Besides, the payment on account of gratuity/leave salary of retired employees is also pending since long and accord immediate attention owing to the fact that the Employees/retired employ-

ees are badly suffering by virtue of unnecessary delays in payments resulted in hardships on account of solemnizing marriages of their wards, facilitating admissions for professional courses and especially medical treatment cases. Besides, approval to the enhancement of Children Allowance/HRA is also pending without any cogent reasons and need to be released immediately. The Union also urged for early release of 3 per cent DA before the festival of Diwali. The Union unanimously decided to appeal to the Hon'ble Chief Minister J&K, for his kind intervention in the matter for early and prompt disbursement of payment on account of the G.P Fund and liquidation of all pending cases and also approval to the enhancement of Children Allowance/HRA and release of 3% D.A before the festival of Diwali. of Sunderbani on behalf of the Army's Rastriya Rifle Battalion. The meeting was held under the chairmanship of a Major level officer of the Army in which many important issues were discussed. The public representatives, while praising the cooperation of the Army in building a fear free society, said that the Army soldiers give their services as warriors in building a terror and fear free society, praising whom would be like showing a lamp to the sun. The contribution of the Indian Army is the biggest in dealing with the evils and chaotic elements spread in the society. During this, representatives of various Panchayats including Sarpanch Thandapani Sarpanch Magai Sarpanch Nala participated and a framework was prepared to work on the strategy made to curb suspicious activities. During this, Principal of Modern High School Patrada Vijay Sharma, social workers Ramswaroop Sharma Sarpanch Prem Sharma along with former Havildar Satpal Sharma Ram Lal Ramesh Chandra Ajay Sharma also raised the demand to train the youth willing to join the army to make them physically capable and to run awareness campaigns from time to time to save the youth from drug addiction.