Former Chamber President Y V Sharma joins BJP

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Former President of Jammu Chamber of Commerce & Industries and senior Congress leader Y.V Sharma, along with supporters, joined Bharatiya Janata Party at party headquarter, Trikuta Nagar, here on Wednesday.

Joining was done in the presence of J&K BJP President Ravinder Raina, MP (Lok Sabha) Jugal Kishore Sharma, Mayor JMC Chander Mohan Gupta, BJP Vice-President Yudhvir Sethi, Vice-President Sham Lal Sharma, General Secretaries Adv. Vibodh Gupta & Dr. Devinder Kumar Manyal, BJP NEM & headquarter Incharge Priya Sethi, District President Vinay Gupta and other senior leaders of the party.

Office Secretary Tilak Raj Gupta, Media Secretary Dr. Pardeep Mahotra, Add. Publicity Secretary Ayodhya Gupta, Library Incharge Kulbhushan Mohtra and others were also present on the occasion.

BJP J&K Chief Ravinder Raina and other leaders welcoming Y.V Sharma into party fold.

Ravinder Raina, while welcoming the new entrants, said that BJP is the best platform to serve the Nation and society with selfless efforts.

He praised YV Sharma for his untainted efforts in raising the issues of Jammu especially his role in Central University of Jammu.

He said that BJP is of the firm view that YV Sharma will give his best efforts for the development in the region without any prejudice, while he will work for the extension of the party activities in the region. He also said that BJP is grateful to the residents of J&K for the love and affection shown to the party and stated that the party firmly believes that in the upcoming Assembly elections, BJP will form government in J&K on its own.

Raina said that earlier, J&K BJP ensured the rights to buy and sell agricultural land to Mahajans, Khatris and Sikhs by taking up the issue at every administrative level right from LG administration to the Union government level. He also assured the residents of Apsara Road, Gandhi Nagar that no injustice will be allowed to be done to them. Jugal Kishore Sharma said that due to strong leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other Central leadership, today everybody is keen to join the BJP. He said that BJP welcomes all with the open arms into the family.

YV Sharma assured the senior party leadership that he will work in accordance with the party principles and especially for the business community of the region.

Prominent businessmen TR Gupta, Onkar Nath Sharma, Yash Paul Gupta, Reen, Dinesh Koul, Subhash and others from business community were also present on the occasion. Yudhvir Sethi conducted the programme proceedings.

Rahul Sahai re-elected as Chairman PHDCCI Jammu

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Rahul Sahai has been re-appointed as Chairman of the PHD Chamber of Commerce & Industry (PHD CCI) Jammu region for the year 2021-22.

Vikrant Kuthiala, former Chair of PHDCCI has been nominated as special invitee to Managing Committee of PHD-CCI-New Delhi, Kuldeep Gupta and Sanjay Aggarwal have been re-appointed as Co-Chairs of Jammu region.

The incumbents were selected after 116th Annual Session of PHDCCI at New Delhi.

Rahul Sahai thanked PHDCCI leadership in Delhi and said that our focus this year would be on policy advocacy, competitiveness of MSME facilitating Investments in J&K, infrastructure, entrepreneurship, start up and Skill Development.

Rahul is 2nd Generation CMD of Sahai Group of Companies and son of a veteran business leader late Ram Sahai having more than 25 years of experience in Policy advocacy and People Management and is also heading the Transport Nagar Association of Jammu.

He has been closely associated with PHDCCI for almost 30 years. He has also been the Chairman of CII J&K Council and has led several organisations in J&K. Vikrant Kuthiala former Chair of PHDCCI and noted businessman of Jammu from Jodhamal group has been nominated as special invitee to Managing Committee of PHD-CCI- New Delhi .

Kuldeep Gupta said, "I extend my heartfelt thanks to the leadership of PHDCCI for granting the honour of extending my tenure as Co-Chair of Jammu region. I would work with all the stakeholders-industry, government, academic, civil society and the PHDCCI employees to leverage the unfolding opportunities for J&K."

Kuldeep Gupta is 2nd generation Entrepreneur from Jammu heading the Manufacturing Units under the group name of Shankar Timber and Ply Boards.

Sanjay Aggarwal, while extending his gratitude to PHD leadership for extending his term as Co-Chair added that PHDCCI's focus in J&K will be on enhancing MSME's competitiveness, creating Jammu as manufacturing hub, ensuring sustainable development and achieving inclusivity through skill development.

Sanjay Aggarwal is Managing Director of Jammu Motors with over 35 years of experience in the Automobile, Steel sector.

Rana joins Chhath Pooja; prays for peace, universal brotherhood

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: BJP leader and former legislator Devender Singh Rana on Tuesday joined hundreds of devotees in Chhath Pooja at Tawi Ghat, also known as Suryaputri, greeted them on the auspicious festival and hoped that while invoking blessing of Suriya Devta they will pray for universal peace and brotherhood in true spirit of Vasudeva Kutumbakam, the essence of Sanatan Dharma.

"Though mostly observed in the states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand, the people of Jammu are now well versant with the historic festival because of the presence of a large number of people, especially construction workers, in this part of the country", Rana said, adding that this makes the City of Temples a miniature India.

He said the Jammu outskirts portray a beautiful and blissful scenario with women, children, elders and young celebrating the festival, spread over a couple of days, with gaiety and traditional fervour. This is the beauty of this great country which reflects unity in diversity in great measure with the people joining each other's joys in a big way. Such occasions further foster brotherhood and promote national integration, he added.

BJP leader and former legislator Devender Singh Rana joining devotees in Chhath Pooja at Jammu.

Rana met the devotees, greeted and interacted with them and also took the Prasad from devotees, who celebrate the holy occasion by offering prayers, performing religious rituals including fasting and bathing in the water bodies. This reminds us of the great Indian ethos, which is needed to be bequeathed to the posterity for sustaining and promoting the traditions, he added.

The BJP leader prayed for peace, tranquility and amity across the country with people leading a blissful life. He lauded the contribution of the skilled and unskilled migrant workers for their huge contribution in development and progress of the other states and cities, including Jammu.

Those accompanying Rana to join the festivities included Pt. Rameshwar Dutt, Kuldeep Kumar (Sukha), Mohammad Sadiq and others.

The celebrations committee greeted Rana on the auspicious occasion.

J&K LA official suspended

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The government on Friday order suspension of official of J&K Legislative Assembly.

"Subash Chander, W&W Man of the J&K Legislative Assembly has been placed under suspension with immediate effect, in terms of Rule 31 of Jammu & Kashmir Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules, 1956 owing to non-compliance of Government Order No. 1051-JK(GAD) of 2021 dated October 6, 2021," reads an order issued by Manoj Kumar Dwivedi, Commissioner Secretary, General Administration Department. Its further stated "During the period of suspension, the official shall remain attached in the Civil Aviation Department".

Valley students appearing in class 12th exams amid COVID, cold wave

■ SHAKEELA ANDRABI

SRINAGAR: The annual examinations for class 12th, conducted by J&K Board of School Education, started in Kashmir on Tuesday amid strict observance of COVID-19 SoPs, in which approximately 74,000 students are appearing.

As a steep decline in night temperature has been observed at most of the places in J&K, it can cause various hardships to students, if sufficient heating arrangements are not made in time. According to MET, temperature is expected to drop further by several degrees in coming days. Further, with 1.6 degrees Celsius, Srinagar city witnessed the season's coldest night on Monday.

Students at various examination centers in Srinagar and other districts were observed adhering to COVID SoPs like wearing masks, sanitising hands and maintaining social distancing. The conduct of exams through offline mode amid COVID-19 is really a major school related activity taking place since outbreak of pandemic. Last year also, JK Board conducted regular examination of class 10th and 12th through offline mode amid strict compliance of SoPs.

In view of prevailing COVID-19 pandemic, from last year, the number of exam centers has been almost doubled. An official from J&K Board said that various preventive measures have been put in place to minimise spread of infection. Notably, the students who had come to appear in exams, were seen jubilant, saying that it was an opportunity for them to meet their group after a gap of one year. "I am excited because after a long time, I will meet friends here. We went through a tough time during last two years due to closure of schools but we worked hard at home and are now ready to appear in exams," said Syed Bazarqah Qadri, a student, hailing administration and JK Board for providing them 30 percent relaxation in syllabus.

"It was nice that administration realised the situation due to COVID and announced relaxation in syllabus. It was a much needed relief for students," said Shaista, another class 12th student.

Parents, accompanying children, highlighted the tough time which they had to witness during past two years due to closure of schools and coaching centres.

As per official figures, around 74,000 students have registered for the examination for which JK Board has set-up 739 examination centres in various Government and private schools. An exam centre for specially-abled students has also been set up in Burn Hall School Srinagar as well.

The State Executive Committee of the Department of Disaster Management J&K has already ordered that students appearing in class 10th and 12th annual examination should carry parents' consent along on each day of their examinations. But, Srinagar is again becoming a hotspot for COVID-19 due to surge in positive cases. More than 8 localities have been declared Red-Zones and tight restrictions have been imposed by authorities.

CS reviews Tawi Riverfront Dev project, internet connectivity under Bharatnet

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta on Wednesday reviewed the progress of projects related to the Tawi River Front Development and implementation of the Bharat Net scheme in Jammu and Kashmir.

Administrative Secretaries of departments of Rural Development, Housing & Urban Development, Planning Monitoring & Development, Jal Shakti, and Information Technology, besides Commissioner, Jammu Municipal Corporation, and concerned sectoral heads participated in the meeting.

Giving details of the Tawi River Front project, Administrative Secretary, U&DD informed that under phase I of the Tawi River Front Development Project, the 1st 2.7 km stretch from the Bhagwati Nagar Bridge to the Bikram Chowk Bridge, including the central island and riverfronts on both sides of river Tawi will be developed while the 4.3 km stretch beyond the Bikram Chowk Bridge will be taken up under phase II later.

Stating that the project has the potential to give a major facelift to the Jammu city, the Chief Secretary directed the department to speed up the execution of the project so that artificial pondage in River Tawi is created by April 2022.

Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta chairing a meeting.

It was informed that DPR for the phase I project at a cost of Rs. 194 crore has been finalized and the tender is expected to be floated within days.

It was further informed that the project may take one to one and a half year for completion.

Dr Mehta advised the department to explore the possibility of raising the height of the barrage piers to create an artificial pondage in river Tawi up to the Gujjar Nagar Bridge.

Stating that the different works in the project should be done in parallel rather than in the sequential manner, the Chief Secretary advised the department that the impounding of water between Bhagwati Nagar bridge and Gujjar Nagar bridge can be done even as execution of other works like construction of diaphragm wall, retaining wall etc. goes on in parallel.

Dr Mehta asked the department to follow 'Build and Use' model wherein as it builds facilities/amenities on River Tawi Front into future, it should try and throw open the facilities it has already built for public use without waiting for the entire project to be completed.

"The department should open the amenities/facilities it builds for public use and should not wait for the whole project to finish before doing so," he observed. Laying down the timelines for completion of various activities under the project, the Chief Secretary directed the department to complete the process of allotment of contract by December, 2021 and finish the construction of promenades, including the planned commercial/recreational assets on the River Front within 1-1.5 years. He asked them to secure early approvals for change in land use and under other regulations like Development Control Regulation Act so that the execution of recreational and commercial projects in the reclaimed area around the riverfronts is not delayed.

While reviewing the implementation of the Bharat Broadband Scheme in Jammu and Kashmir in rural areas, it was informed that 408 Gram Panchayats and 14 Block Headquarters have been provided with reliable internet connection through optical fiber cable while 658 Gram Panchayats have been VSAT enabled for internet connectivity. It was further informed that 3195 additional Gram Panchayats will be provided with internet connectivity in phase II of the project.

Underscoring the importance of digital inclusion in rural areas, Dr. Mehta impressed upon the Rural Development Department to ensure that net enabled Gram Panchayats function properly, so that they could be used as hubs to connect youth clubs, anganwadi centres and other important public sector installations for awareness/IEC campaigns and for promoting government schemes and programmes.

Dr Mehta directed the Planning Development and Monitoring Department to verify the functionality and efficiency of the internet facilities already established in 1081 Gram Panchayats by holding interactions with the officers either through video conferences or google meet.

Dr Mehta also advised the department to task DSEOs of the concerned districts to physically verify the functionality of internet facilities provided in 1081 GPs.

The Chief Secretary directed the Information & Technology Department to organize public scrutiny of Revenue records under 'Aap ki Zameen Aap ki Nigrani' initiative across all digitally connected Gram Panchayats.

Dr. Mehta also laid emphasis on the proper maintenance of digital equipment and machinery and provision of suitable power backup in the Gram Panchayats for hassle free digital connectivity under the Bharat Net.

Congress will expose wrongdoings of BJP Govt during Jan Jagran Abhiyan from Nov 14: Bhalla

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: JKPCC Vice President and former Cabinet Minister Raman Bhalla on Wednesday took serious note of poor condition of bridge and roads and observed that there is a need of repairing damaged Bridge on Balol Nallah crossing through Ward No 1 and 2 Bhour Camp at Bhour Pind along with a approaching road to it which was damaged and is in dilapidated condition due to floods in August 2020.

It is not in a state condition to be used for vehicles yet it is used by locals at their own risk of life and property as it has not been closed by the concerned department till date.

This was observed by Bhalla while interacting with people of Bhour Camp Ward-73.

Prominent among those present on the occasion include Block President Refugee Cell Congress Vice Chairmen Amrit Bali, Pawan Bhagat, Ravinder Singh Sarpanch , Gurmeet Kaur, Raj Kumar Panch, Parshotam Lal, Inderjit Singh, Sudesh Kumar Panch, Rajinder Singh, S.Shanty, Teja Singh, Assa Singh, Som Raj, Baldev Singh, Jagmohan Shrama, Santosh Shrama, Gurbachan Kour, Tarsem Lal, Dr Babu Ram and Chandan Sharma.

JKPCC Vice President Raman Bhalla addressing a gathering.

Bhalla drew the attention of authorities concerned for repairing of damaged portion of bridge and approach road to avoid any untoward incident at the earliest besides making it safe, secure and functional for conveyance of general public. The negligence of Public Works (Road and Building) Department can be gauged from fact that a vital bridge at Ward No. 2 of Bhour Camp Chatha, which connects several villages, has been lying damaged for years and the concerned department has never got it repaired putting the locals in great distress and five persons have already lost their lives.

Bhalla further said that there is a Government School, Panchayat Ghar on the other side of the bridge but due to the damaged bridge, the vehicles cannot cross it to reach the other side.

"Around 3-4 villages get connected with this bridge but the damaged bridge has restricted vehicular movement and due to which people had to take long routes to get to the other side," he said.He alleged that number of representations were given to the concerned department for this issue, but nothing was done to mitigate their problems," he said.

Bhalla slammed BJP Govt for its surrender for the sake of power, resulting into innumerable sufferings on account of providing adequate supply of drinking water, power, repairing of roads, construction of lanes and drains and most importantly in controlling inflation making the life of common man miserable and making it difficult for them to lead a dignified life due to soaring prices of all the essential commodities.

Bhalla said that BJP which claims to be the champion of Jammu people has betrayed the mandate of the people by taking U-turn on all vital commitments made with the people of the State, especially Jammu region during elections.

"The Government is not performing according to the aspirations of people. The farmers, business community, traders, students are totally fed up with this non-performing Government, which has failed on all fronts whether it is providing basic facilities to the people or paying timely wages to the daily wagers working in various departments of the State or checking price hike of essential commodities," he said.

Speaking on the occasion, Bhalla said that Congress is conducting a nationwide mass awareness programme, titled Jan Jagran Abhiyan between November 14 to November 29 to highlight the 'anti-poor' policies of the Centre.

Bhalla slammed LG Administration for keeping Rs 25 ticket charges for individual to enter Flower Garden at Bhour Camp in Jammu, inaugurated by the then Chief Minister, Ghulam Nabi Azad and former MLA Gandhi Nagar constituency Raman Bhalla, on March 31, 2008, with the hope that it would become a major tourist destination of region, but BJP Govt failed to take care of it.