

Pre-Budget deliberations: CCI submits memorandum to Financial Commissioner Atal Dulloo

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: With high expectations from the upcoming Budget, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) today submitted a memorandum of demand pertaining to trading community to Atal Duloo, Financial Commissioner (Additional Chief Secretary), Finance Department, J&K, as a part of pre-Budget deliberations.

During the meeting, Chamber of Commerce & Industry Jammu headed by its President Arun Gupta said that as we already aware of the hardships faced by Jammu and Kashmir UT since March 2020 due to the Covid pandemic, especially the business community. We suggest the following immediate steps be taken into consideration before the Announcement of the Final Budget:

Arun Gupta said that the demolition drives in Jammu city in the name of Smart City have been multiplying hardships for the traders of Jammu City in particular and people in general. If government wants to develop Jammu as a Smart City it should create new infrastructure beyond the City limits as the Old City is already highly congested leaving less scope for spa-



CCI President Arun Gupta interacting with Financial Commissioner, Atal Dulloo.

rious upgradation of the City. It's a request to your good self to initiate requisite measures to create a new Jammu City under Smart City project so that the people of Old Jammu city do not suffer due to execution of the project under which the JMC claims to demarcate with yellow lines even areas of shutters of shopkeepers besides causing unnecessary hardships and loss to traders in the garb of Smart City Project. It is request to the government to emulate the new Rajpur

Project that provided for the creation of new city without disturbing the already existing city in Chattisgarh. During the meeting, Jammu Chamber suggested various measures including policy for rehabilitation, creation of Commercial / Residential Sites; examine and find some modality to review the Excise Policy to accommodate the old licensees; execution of lease deeds; ownership rights for Industry/ Warehouse; revival of The Citizens Cooperative Bank Ltd.

Jammu; VAT Amnesty Scheme; Power Amnesty Scheme; no negative list for Industrial State, give last one chance to the Industrial Units for filling of GST returns who could not file the same during the lockdown period of Covid-19, preference to Locals in New Industrial Policy, GST Reimbursement, enhancing limit of e-way Bill, give benefit of power bills to Hotel Tourism at par with Industries; incentives to old units, give one chance to the industrial units to claim SGST incentives who had not applied it, special incentives to Transport Sector; implementation of Polythene Bags order in real sense, etc.

Arun Gupta said that the tourism industry is considered to be the backbone of J&K UT economy. But since the outbreak of Covid-19, this industry has been badly hit. The tourism industry has suffered a loss of about crores of rupees during this period. The traders of Jammu region have been facing severe hardships. However, the tourism businessmen have pinned their hopes high on the government for the special announcements in regard to the Tourist circuit development, he added.



Hike in prices of essentials imposes Sec-144 in household kitchens: Bhalla

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AKHNOOR: JKPC Vice President, Raman Bhalla and Chief Spokesman, Ravinder Sharma led a protest march from Hanuman Chowk in Akhnoor as part of the ongoing 'Jan Jagran Abhiyan' against ruling BJP Government on Thursday. Prominent among those who were present on the occasion included Kuldip Sharma, Naib Sarpanch Ramesh, Naib Sarpanch Parveen, Panch Kala Jatt, Panch Rinku Kumar, Panch Lal Chand, Mohan Lal, Rajesh Sharma, Atul Sharma, Rajan Bhagat and Ramesh Chander Dabu.

Speaking on the occasion, Bhalla accused BJP Government of trying to divert the country's attention from real problems like price rise faced by common people to 'non-issues and claimed that reality of 'Achehey Din', the BJP's poll slogan, is being continuously 'exposed'. "Increase in GST by 140 percent, the expose of 'Achehey Din' continues," he said. He also criticised the government



JKPC Vice President, Raman Bhalla and Chief Spokesman, Ravinder Sharma leading protest march.

over price rise and said all things have become expensive, from wheat flour, mobile data, life insurance to clothes, shoes, vegetables and pulses and living life has become expensive. "Under Modi's rule, there is nothing left that hasn't been made expensive. Those who gave the slogan 'Bahut Hui Mehngai Ki Maar' are now attacking the public everyday with price rise and inflation," he said, alleging that prices of commodities of daily use are sky-rocketing due to which masses are suffering. "It appears as if there is Section 144 in kitchen that you cannot keep more than four tomatoes or onions," he

said, referring to the hike in prices. Chief Spokesman JKPC Ravinder Sharma castigated BJP for 'hoodwinking public opinion' by generating euphoria over the issue of Chief Minister from Jammu. "J&K administration is finding one way or other to harass the business community. First, they sold mines to outsiders in the name of reforms, while the condition of wine traders and bar owners are in public domain," he said, adding that investment of thousand cores has gone to vain due to these anti-Jammu policies which also enhanced unemployment.

BJP to form next Govt in J&K: Ravinder

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KUPWARA: Addressing a huge public gathering in Tangadar in Kupwara District of Kashmir, J&K Bharatiya Janata Party President Ravinder Raina said that the next government in Jammu and Kashmir will be of the Bharatiya Janata Party.

Ravinder Raina, while addressing the rally, said that National Conference (NC), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Congress failed miserably to address the genuine issues of common masses for decades together.

And while they utterly failed in doing so, they were busy amassing their own wealth on the cost of the needy common masses, he



BJP J&K President Ravinder Raina addressing a public rally at Tangadar in Kupwara.

said and added that people have out-rightly rejected these corrupt parties and even their senior leaders are now abandoning these family based parties in search of better platforms to serve the masses sincerely. Raina said that prominent persons from political and social background from

Jammu as well as Kashmir region are daily joining the BJP which speaks enormously of the success of the party in winning the hearts of people. Ravinder added that the common people from all the regions and communities have built up strong belief that BJP with its strong

and dedicated leadership will address their all unattended issues.

He said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi government has worked hard to ensure benefits to every needy person irrespective of region or religion without any prejudice. He also said that going by the principle of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikaas and Sabka Vishwaas", Modi government has ensured unprecedented development in Jammu & Kashmir. "Now the people of Jammu & Kashmir have decided to support Bharatiya Janata Party in the next election and thus contribute in helping us to form next government", he added.

CTF Jammu calls on Atal Dulloo, submits pre-Budget representation

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JAMMU: A delegation of Chamber of Traders Federation (CTF) Jammu, led by its President Neeraj Anand called on the Financial Commissioner, Atal Dulloo in Jammu on Thursday as a part of Pre-Budget meet and highlighted a number of issues faced by traders. Seeking early resolution of the same, the delegation also presented a representation highlighted a number of demands and some suggestions, for overall welfare of the traders.

Major demands and issues highlighted in the representation included providing matching GST incentives to units, turnover or employment based incentives to export units, setting-up of at least one mega manufacturing unit like metro / rail coach factory etc, setting up of



CTF President Neeraj Anand interacting with Financial Commissioner, Atal Dulloo.

defense production units through private participation under Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, mandatory purchase by Central/State Government & Undertakings including Defence procurement of locally manufactured Goods and Services from J&K, simplification of land laws and framing a policy for grant of permission for change of land-use, boosting investments in

Healthcare sector, speedy completion of ongoing AIIMS project & setting-up trauma centres in all accident prone & hilly districts on priority, establishing more oxygen generation plants in J&K especially Jammu, framing user-friendly and system driven policies for better work culture, extension in time period for all those who failed to deposit agreed amount under VAT amnesty scheme, abolishment of

bank charges or reducing the same, retaining GST to 5 per cent on Footwear & Textiles, formulating principle of 'handholding' as guiding force for banks and other financial institutes at least till COVID continues, clearing ambiguity in land laws regarding 'Gair Mumkin Khad' nomenclature, focused attention on tourism dependent trade stakeholders, revamping existing power infrastructure, regulating online shopping platforms etc.

Assuring full support to the Government on behalf of traders, the delegation urged that all schemes related to trade and industry especially start-ups should be shared with trade bodies so that intended beneficiaries are updated and more and more entrepreneurs can avail benefits of Government's initiatives to boost trade & economy.

Court awards 12-yr RI, fine of Rs 2 lakh in NDPS case

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Principal Sessions Judge Udhampur Y P Bournay awarded 12 years rigorous imprisonment and imposed a fine Rs 2 lakh to one Majid Khan in a heroin smuggling case. According to prosecution, accused Majid Khan had stood trial on the charge of having been caught red-handed while transporting illegal contraband narcotic drug heroine in commercial quantity weighing 10.860 Kg on March 25, 2013, while he was travelling in public transport vehicle from Srinagar to Jammu. Principal Sessions Judge Udhampur Y P Bournay after hearing APP Himanshu Parkash for prosecution whereas Advocates N A Ronga and Naveen Gaur for accused observed that prosecution has succeeded in proving charges against the accused and as such he is convicted for commission of offence under sections 8/22 (c) NDPS Act and awarded 12 years RI and imposed a fine Rs 2 lakh.

Srinagar-Sharjah flight witnessing healthy response among locals

SHAKEELA ANDRABI

SRINAGAR: Srinagar-Sharjah direct flight, which has completed one month of operation on November 23, is receiving a healthy response as the flight is currently witnessing around 90 per cent passenger occupancy.

Sharjah -Srinagar flight was flagged-off by Union Home Minister Amit Shah on October 23 but after few days Pakistan denied usage of its airspace for the flight, forcing the flight to adopt a bit longer route, but still it has gained much popularity among Kashmiri travelers.

According to officials, as many as 5,000 passengers have travelled through Srinagar-Sharjah flight during last one month. "We have been operating 4 flights per

week with almost 170 passenger occupancy in each flight. This direct flight, at present, is witnessing almost 90 per cent passenger occupancy and if all goes well, we expect that passenger footfalls will increase," said an official.

Prior to Srinagar-Sharjah flight, the first international flight from Srinagar Airport to Dubai was started on February 14, 2009 by Air India Express, but the one-a-week service was discontinued due to a low demand. It may be mentioned that the central government on October 6, 2021 declared Srinagar International Airport as 'major airport'.

This move had come just weeks after the Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated Srinagar-Sharjah

international flight.

Pertinently, Srinagar airport witnesses operations of almost 40 to 45 commercial flights every day. As per AAI data, the annual footfall of passengers at Srinagar is expected to increase from current 3 million to 5.2 million per annum. Similarly, a sharp increase has also been witnessed in air traffic at Airport. This year, during last seven months, as many as 13,351 flights operated to and from Airport in comparison to 5,130 flights, which operated from Airport during same period last year.

According to officials, the steps taken by J&K government to sharply bring down Value Added Taxes and Sales Tax on Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) for airlines operating in J&K

region to 1 per cent have contributed a lot in increasing the number of passengers. These decisions were part of several measures taken by Government recently to promote air traffic to J&K besides boosting tourism and economic activities in the region.

It may be mentioned that Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, during his recent visit to Kashmir, had announced that two new airport terminals would be setup in Jammu and Srinagar. With expected boost from arrival of tourists this winter, air traffic to Srinagar International Airport is expected to rise significantly and touch the highest mark, in comparison to number recorded during last several years.

Why observe J&K Accession Day only & not of other Princely States that acceded to India Dominion?

The Maharaja of the then princely state of J&K had not taken any decision before 15th August 1947 for accession and it was done only on 26th October 1947 after Pakistan openly in the guise of 'Tribals' had already attacked the princely state of J&K where the State forces were too little to stand against the aggression. Maharaja Hari Singh did explain the reasons for delay in acceding to either / India Dominion in his letter dated 26th Oct 1947 (the day he also signed the Instrument of Accession) addressed to Lord Mountbatten Governor General of India and the said letter is in public domain. The subject of J&K's accession is still discussed even in 2021 where as the accession of other princely states is not discussed is often asked by some.

There have been some myths about J&K which have been and or still keeping the expressions / opinions / narrations in debates/ discussions / under questions that had got cultivated over the years since the notes and expressions made by some 'people' from within and outside projecting very conservative geographical boundaries of J&K, identities of people of J&K and opinions / aspirations projecting the same as of 'only' Valley of Kashmir have all these years after 1947 not been seriously responded neither by the local leader-

ships / National leaderships nor by the governments even in the center/. So people in J&K (even outside J&K) have been made to live with a number of untested myths (expressions like J&K having 'own/separate constitution'; Indian state of J&K having own Flag parallel to Indian national flag; Article-370 - a Bridge between India & J&K, J&K having a Special status in constitution of India, 'people' J&K had been given an assurance for constitutional Autonomy in return for Muslim majority Kashmiries having agreed for acceding to India dominion and like) particularly related to 1947 Accession of J&K with India Dominion floated / carried by what to talk of 'enemy' country like Pakistan, the separatist groups / elements but even by the leadership that has been accepted as main stream by National parties like Congress (2002) and BJP (2015).

Some of the prime indicators that could be used for fixing the reasons for the unending socio-political turmoil in J&K (Valley in particular), the inter-regional & inter religious instability and the administrative as well as economic confusions in what the people of J&K have been living even after October 1947 accession of J&K with indepen-

ent democratic Indian republic possibly could be :-:

1. With partition of India being on communal lines, the J&K princely state being a Muslim majority state, the Maharaja of J&K having delayed decision regarding accession for reasons of his having under consideration multiple options as have also been spelled by him in his letter of 26th Oct 1947 addressed to Lord Mountbatten Governor General of India; political activity for independence (from the British & the Local Ruler) being comparatively more live in Kashmir region for democratic rights in the princely state of J&K as compared to other Princely States; Pakistan having attacked the then Princely State of J&K openly on 22nd October 1947 from the side of Kashmir valley only (Muzaffrabad side) surely considering that there more 95 % population was Muslim and the forces of Maharaja being very small and depleted too it would be a simple walk away mission but still Pakistan failing to get support of the Muslim population of Kashmir Valley the J&K National conference cadres did have reasons / opportunity for coming to more line light worth claiming honours for playing a 'vital role' in saving Kashmir Valley / 'State' from the

- J&K Accession Day (Adhimilan Divas) is observed to undo otherwise myths about J&K being 'total' India
- It was the right of the Prince of a Princely State only and not the 'subjects' the to Decide Accession
- 'Koyi Bhi Duniyaan Ka Aadmi Nahin Hai Jo Jammu Kashmir ko Kashmir State Ke Naam Se Nahin Janta': Azad
- 'Valley leaders' were not checked for projecting Art 35A & Art 370 as distancing symbol
- Government of India (GOI) must atleast now drawn clear line between Separatist & Mainstream ideologies
- Those who have been cultivating myth of no merger have taken advantage of the term Vilay for Accession
- Ladakh region not even reflected from the name of the erstwhile State of J&K.
- Once the myths are washed away there will be no need to observe J&K Accession day

Pakistani aggressors (although some areas were lost) and 'making claims' of comparatively preserving the local socio-communal environment. With the local environment in Kashmir valley having comparatively remained 'nearly' free from communal riots in 1947 the local

Kashmiri leadership and the Muslim community did to earn appreciations from the all India leadership.

Otherwise also J&K was often addressed as 'Kashmir state' during the times earlier to 1947. Most of the time issues pertaining to State

were being addressed as issues pertaining to 'Kashmir' even when they related to Ladakh Region, even Maharaja of J&K State during pre 1948 times addressed his self as Maharaja of Kashmir and like.

And all these years for expressing the lands & people of India 'we' have been often using the verse 'Kashmir to Kanayakumari' that made 'outsiders' to take every word that was said by a Kashmir Valley person of any class / community for or against India / India government was taken as the word / feeling / aspiration/ opinion of subjects from all the regions of J&K State (Kashmir valley, Ladakh region, Jammu region).

So whatever negative notes used to be made by some Kashmir Valley leaders or any outsider in relation to J&K were taken by the world community as related to whole J&K including the LOC/IB issues and hence most of the people were getting wrongly conducted about J&K, particularly accession related issues.

To be continued... (Daya Sagar (Sr Journalist , Analyst J&K Affairs) is Patron of Jammu Kashmir & Ladakh Study Center dayasagr45@yahoo.com).