

## !! Continuations from Page 1 !! Today's India confident...

the shelter of Baba Kedarnath.

Prime Minister said that new facilities like shelters, facilitation centres will ease the lives of priests and devotees and allow them to fully immerse in the divine experience of the pilgrimage. Recalling the Kedarnath floods in 2013, the Prime Minister noted that damage caused by the floods years ago was unimaginable. He said "people who used to come here used to think that will this our Kedar Dham stand up again? But my inner voice was saying that it will stand with more pride than ever before." The Prime Minister said due to the grace of Lord Kedar and inspiration of Adi Shankaracharya and his experience of managing the aftermath of the Bhuj Earthquake, he could be of help in those difficult times. He struck a personal note and said that it is a blessing that he could serve the place which nurtured him earlier in his life. He thanked all the workers, priests, Rawal families of the priests, officials and the Chief Minister for relentlessly pursuing the development works at the Dham. I said he kept monitoring the work through drones and other technologies. He said that "this combination of modernity with the eternal on this ancient land, these development works are the result of the natural grace of Lord Shankar."

Talking about Adi Shankaracharya, Modi said that the meaning of Shankar in Sanskrit is - 'शं करोति यः शंकरः'. That is, the one who does welfare is Shankar. This grammar was directly proven by Acharya Shankar. His life was as extraordinary as it was devoted to the welfare of the common man, he said. The Prime Minister recalled there was a time when spirituality and religion started getting linked with stereotypes and outdated practices. Whereas, Indian philosophy talks about human welfare and looks at life in a holistic way. Adi Shankaracharya did the work of making the society aware of this truth, he said.

Prime Minister emphasized that today, our cultural heritage centers of faith are being viewed with deserved and valid pride, as they should be viewed. "A grand temple of Lord Shri Ram is coming up in Ayodhya. Ayodhya is getting its glory back. Just two days ago, the whole world saw the grand celebration of Deepotsav in Ayodhya. Today we can imagine how the ancient cultural form of India must have been", Modi said. Prime Minister said that today's India is confident about its heritage. "Today, India sets tough goals and deadlines for itself. Today, it is not acceptable for India to be timid about deadlines and goals", Prime Minister said. Talking about the contribution of heroes of the Freedom Struggle, the Prime Minister asked the countrymen to visit the places related to the glorious freedom struggle of India and pious places of pilgrimage and get acquainted with the spirit of India.

Prime Minister said that the third decade of the 21st century belongs to Uttarakhand. He informed that work is going on at a fast pace on the Chardham road project, connecting with the Chardham highways. In future, the work has started so that devotees can come here to Kedarnath ji through cable car. There is also the holy Hemkund Sahib Ji nearby. Work is going on to build a ropeway to make the darshan in Hemkund Sahib ji easy. "Keeping in mind the immense potential and full faith in the capabilities of the people of Uttarakhand, the State government is involved in the 'mahayagya' of Uttarakhand's development", he said.

Prime Minister lauded the discipline shown by Uttarakhand in the fight against Corona. Overcoming the geographical difficulties, today Uttarakhand and its people have achieved the target of 100 % single dose vaccination. This is the strength and power of Uttarakhand, he said. "Uttarakhand is situated at a very high elevation. My Uttarakhand will scale even greater heights than its own elevation", Prime Minister concluded.

Shri Adi Shankaracharya Samadhi has been reconstructed after the destruction in the 2013 floods. The entire reconstruction work has been undertaken under the guidance of the Prime Minister, who has constantly reviewed and monitored the progress of the project. Today also, the Prime Minister reviewed and inspected the executed and ongoing works along the Saraswati Aasthaph. Key infrastructure projects which have been completed, including Saraswati Retaining Wall Aasthaph and Ghats, Mandakini Retaining Wall Aasthaph, Tirth Purohit Houses and Garud Chatti bridge on river Mandakini. The projects have been completed at a cost of over Rs. 130 crore. He also laid the foundation stone for multiple projects worth over Rs 180 crore, including the Redevelopment of Sangam Ghat, First Aid and Tourist Facilitation Centre, Admin Office and Hospital, two Guest Houses, Police Station, Command & Control Centre, Mandakini Aasthaph Queue Management and Rainshelter and Saraswati Civic Amenity Building.

### Darbar Move: Govt...

at Jammu. "Consequent upon the order issued by the General Administration Department vide Government order No. 1133-JK(GAD) of 2021 dated October 25, 2021, 1156 & 1157-JK(GAD) of 2021 dated October 28, 2021, sanction is accorded to the partial modification of Government Order No. 113-Est of 2021 dated June 29, 2021 and restoration of government accommodation at Jammu in favour of all these government employees which were earlier allotted to them by the Estates Department on temporary basis for a period of six months or till the services of the concerned employee is required by the department, whichever is earlier, on payment of rent/license fee as prescribed under rules," reads an order issued by Principal Secretary, Estate Department.

It added that the allottee(s) shall execute the necessary fresh license deed with the Deputy Director Estates, Jammu in this behalf and also complete all the formalities as required under rules.

"The allottee(s) shall also furnish an undertaking before the Deputy Director Estates, Jammu to the effect that neither they nor their spouse/family member(s) occupied any government residential accommodation or their own house in Jammu city," the order stated and added, "The Deputy Director Estates, Jammu shall hand-over the possession of the restored accommodation only after verifying the genuineness/authenticity of the allottee(s) from the concerned DDO and furnish a report to the Director Estates within a weeks time positively."

### Cop killed in...

Shafqat Hussain Bhat confirmed the death of a policemsn and said that a case has been registered and further investigation taken up.

### Petrol price further...

in the range of Rs 5.7 to Rs 6.35 per litre across the country and diesel rates by Rs 11.16 to Rs 12.88.

Since states charge local sales tax or VAT not just on the base price but also on the excise duty levied by the Centre, the total incidence of price reduction was higher than Rs 5 a litre cut in excise duty on petrol and Rs 10 per litre cut in diesel. The reduction was larger in states with higher VAT.

In Delhi, the reduction in petrol price was Rs 6.07 per litre, and that on diesel was Rs 11.75, according to the price chart.

After duty changes, the costliest petrol is sold in Rajasthan at Rs 111.10 per litre (Jaipur), followed by Mumbai (Rs 109.98) and Andhra Pradesh (Rs 109.05). The fuel is below Rs 100-a-litre-mark in most BJP ruled states baring Karnataka (Rs 100.58), Bihar (Rs 105.90), Madhya Pradesh (Rs 107.23) and Ladakh (Rs 102.99).

Similarly, the costliest diesel is now sold in Rajasthan at Rs 95.71 a litre (Jaipur), followed by Andhra Pradesh (Rs 95.18) and Mumbai (Rs 94.14).

The cheapest diesel is in Mizoram at Rs 79.55 a litre.

Petrol costs Rs 103.97 per litre in Delhi, and diesel is sold for Rs 86.67 per litre. VAT rates differ from state to state, leading to differential rates of fuel.

The excise duty cut announced on Wednesday night was the highest-ever reduction in excise duty. It rolls back a part of the Rs 13 and Rs 16 per litre increase in taxes on petrol and diesel effected between March 2020 and May 2020 to avoid passing on to consumers the sharp fall in international oil prices at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

That hike in excise duty had taken central taxes on petrol to their highest level of Rs 32.9 per litre and that on diesel to Rs 31.8 a litre.

The tax cut follows an unrelenting hike in international oil prices, pushing pump rates across the country to their highest-ever levels. While petrol soared to above Rs 100-a-litre-mark in all major cities, diesel had crossed that level in more than one-and-a-half dozen states.

The total increase in petrol price since the May 5, 2020, decision of the government to raise excise duty to record levels had totalled Rs 38.78 per litre. Diesel rates have, during this period, gone up by Rs 29.03 per litre.

The relentless increase in fuel prices had been severely criticised by the Opposition parties, particularly Congress, which had demanded that the government reduce its excise duty.

Based on April to October consumption numbers, the loss of revenue to the government due to the excise duty cut will be Rs 8,700 crore per month. This totals to an annual impact of over Rs 1 lakh crore, industry sources said. For the remainder of the current fiscal, the impact would be Rs 43,500 crore.

Data available from the Controller General of Accounts (CGA) in the Union Ministry of

Finance showed excise duty collections during April-September 2021 surged to over Rs 1.71 lakh crore, from Rs 1.28 lakh crore mop-up in the same period of the previous fiscal.

For the full 2020-21 fiscal, excise collections were Rs 3.89 lakh crore and Rs 2.39 lakh crore in 2019-20, the CGA data showed.

After the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime, excise duty is levied only on petrol, diesel, ATF and natural gas. All other goods and services are under the GST regime.

Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas Rameswar Teli had in July told Parliament that the Union government's tax collections on petrol and diesel jumped by 88 per cent to Rs 3.35 lakh crore in the year to March 31, 2021 (2020-21 fiscal) from Rs 1.78 lakh crore a year back.

Excise collection in the pre-pandemic 2018-19 was Rs 2.13 lakh crore.

### J&K reports over...

Keeping in view the upsurge of cases, 155 beds have been dedicated for patients at GMC Jammu and all district hospitals, the officials said.

### Revenue record of...

this seems to be a well planned strategy as Latha/ Massavi/ RoR are always prepared in two sets- with one complete set kept in safe custody in General Record Room and the other set is held by Halqa Patwari.

Sources said that the Divisional Commissioner has few days back directed Sub Divisional Magistrate Jammu South, under whose jurisdiction the above mentioned documents have been found missing, to immediately lodge FIR under the relevant provisions of IPC and other regulations so that an investigation can be immediately initiated and the accused can be booked under law villages Sunjwan, Chowadhi.

It is pertinent to mention that as per official procedures, a proper charge report is made whenever public documents are handed/taken over between the transferee and his reliever and as such the trail can be clearly established.

It has also been learnt that the Divisional head of the Revenue Administration is specially irked at the fact as to why a First Information Report was not yet lodged vis-à-vis this serious matter of missing of vital revenue records and as to how the concerned Revenue offices were functioning till date in the absence of such documents.

### ACB presents charge-sheet...

2021. The official further said that investigations revealed that accused public servant, during his posting at Toll Post, Lower Munda, Qazigund, has made huge cash deposits in name of his wife and himself, to the tune of more than Rs 30 lakh during year 2010-2011, which were found highly disproportionate to his known source of income and later, the money was later transferred to the accounts of his father-in-law and brother-in-law for concealing it from being detected.

### 2 killed, 2...

on spot," said officials.

They further added that two injured have been shifted to the local hospital where they are under treatment.

Deceased have been identified as Sabar Chowdhary and Arif Chowdhary while two injured are identified as Babar Chowdhary and Parveen Kumar.

Injured Babar is elder brother of deceased Sabar Chowdhary.

The deceased got killed in firing with an assault rifle which was the service weapon of one of the alleged accused among two who are police personnel" official sources told.

"The alleged accused are police personnel of the Reserve battalion of police and one of the alleged accused was carrying his service weapon," said police officials.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Jammu Chandan Kohli said that a special investigation team has been constituted into the matter which will be headed by SP HQ Jammu, Rammish Gupta.

He added that prima facie it seems that dispute over land and cash is reason behind the incident. Police has launched a manhunt to trace the accused.

### Over 110 High...

high courts is 1098 and as on November 1, they were working with 692 judges - a shortfall of 406.

Between August 8 and September 1, the apex court collegium had processed over 100 names recommended by various high courts and had finally sent 68 names to the government for appointment as judges to 12 high courts.

Later, some more names were recommended by the collegium.

The sources also pointed out that besides high court judges, nine Supreme Court judges were recently appointed on a single day which is a record.

The nine judges, including three women, were on August 26 appointed to the Supreme Court. With a sanctioned strength of 34 judges, the top court now has only one vacancy.

### Earlier Govts deliberately...

Industrial Research (CSIR) and Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences & Technology (SKUAST'), the Minster said, this is for the first time in the last few years that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, concerted and technology based effort has been made to promote the agriculture sector for young StartUps in the region.

Whereas, in the past, he said, the farmers and the agriculturists would largely depend upon the mood of climate and vagaries of nature for cultivation, in the last few years, new areas like, for example, Lavender cultivation have been explored at a large scale both in the Kashmir valley in the areas around Gulmarg etc. as well as in the Jammu region in districts Doda and Reasi.

The Minister said that no government in any country of the world can ensure 100% salaried government jobs to every youth, but a responsible government always plans to promote means of livelihood and this is precisely what the Modi government is trying to seek.

He said, a sustained awareness campaign needs to be launched among the youth and their parents to educate them that there are much more lucrative emoluments available through these self-livelihood and new Start-Ups options and, therefore, they should not be led to waste their time and energy in protesting for government salaried jobs.

Reiterating that the farming of today is no longer the farming of yesterday, Dr Jitendra said, the farmer today is actually an agricultural technocrat or an agricultural Startup who has the option of making handsome profits using the new technology and provisions introduced in the agricultural sector by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

He said, the Government of India through CSIR is providing all the relevant financial and technical support for new modes of cultivation, multiple integrated farming and also hybrid farming which have the capacity to double farmers' income by 2022, as envisaged by the Prime Minister.

On the occasion, Dr Jitendra also distributed Farming Kits to agriculturists drawn from all the ten districts of Kashmir valley. An MoU of collaboration was also signed between CSIR and SKUAST.

Director General CSIR Dr Shekhar Mande, Vice Chancellor SKUAST Professor J P Sharma and Director IIIM Dr Reddy also joined the Minister during the interactive session with the farmers.

### Snowfall in higher...

for traffic, the officials said.

Some areas in the plains of the valley received light rainfall.

The MeT Department has forecast light rains or snowfall at isolated to scattered places in the valley on Friday.

The weather is likely to stay mainly dry for a few days from Saturday.

### Localised lockdown likely...

have recovered and been discharged from various hospitals including 08from Jammu Division and 71 from Kashmir Division.

According to the daily Media Bulletin, out of 332760 positive cases, 1009 are Active Positive (123 in Jammu Division and 886 in Kashmir Division), 327311 have recovered and 4440 have died; 2177 in Jammu division and 2263in Kashmir division.

The Bulletin further said that out of 16390061 test results available, 332760 samples have tested positive and 16057301 samples have been tested as negative till date. Besides, 39,187 COVID tests have been conducted in last 24 hours.

Till date 3894447 persons have been enlisted for observation which included 6101 persons in home quarantine including facilities operated by government, 1009 in isolation and 445646 in home surveillance. Besides, 3437251 persons have completed their surveillance period.

Ladakh recorded 10 fresh COVID-19 cases, taking the infection tally to 21,005 and active cases to 98, officials said on Friday.

The Union territory has registered 208 COVID-related deaths -- 150 in Leh and 58 in Kargil -- since the outbreak of the pandemic last year.

Three people were cured and discharged from hospital from Leh.

The total number of cured patients is 20,698, they said.

All the 10 fresh cases were reported in Leh, they said.

A total of 242 sample reports in Ladakh were found negative, they said.

There was no death reported due to Covid in Ladakh on Thursday.

With this, the total number of COVID-19 active cases in Ladakh has gone up to 98, including 93 in Leh and 5 in Kargil district.

### 97 water testing...

year for bacteriological parameters.

To empower the local community on water quality surveillance in J&K, Jal Shakti Department has embarked on a mission to identify and train 5 persons especially women in each village from the local community, viz. ASHA workers, health workers, VWSC/ Pani Samiti members, teachers, SHG members, etc., to conduct water quality tests using FTKs/ bacteriological vials at the village level, schools and Anganwadi centres.

According to a JJM Official, the laboratories at Sub-divisional/ block lab will test 100% water sources under its jurisdiction; once for chemical parameters and twice for bacteriological parameters (pre and post-monsoon) in a year, covering all sources of a block at least for 13 basic water quality parameters. The positively tested samples will be referred to the district laboratory immediately.

Similarly, he informed that district labs will test 250 water sources/ samples per month (i.e. 3,000 in a year as per the target of roster available on Department/ National Mission IMIS) covering all sources randomly spread geographically including the positively tested samples referred by the subdivision/ block laboratory/ mobile laboratory on at least for 13 basic water quality parameters. The district lab will also refer the positively tested samples to the State laboratory immediately, he said, "The other parameters may be tested as per local contamination at the district level."

### Terrorists manage to...

terrorists and security forces at SKIMS Hospital, Bemina. Terrorists managed to escape taking advantage of civilian presence," Srinagar Police wrote on its Twitter handle.

#### PM Modi visits soldiers in Nowshera sector on Diwali

##### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NOWSHERA: Continues tradition of meeting soldiers in border regions on Diwali, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday met soldiers at Nowshera sector in the border district of Rajouri in Jammu and Kashmir on the occasion of Diwali.

Since taking over as prime minister, Modi has made it a point to meet troops in a border region on Diwali, starting from a visit to Siachen in 2014.

Official sources shared photographs of him at an Army post in Nowshera.

Army chief General M M Naravane had carried out an aerial reconnaissance of forward areas, including Rajouri, on Wednesday and he was briefed about the prevailing security situation along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Jammu region.

An Army operation against terrorists has been going on through the forest belt in the Poonch-Rajouri area. This has been the longest such operation in the recent past and it entered the 26th day on Thursday.

## Recent drop in fuel prices orchestrated move to counter Congress' victory: Sawhney

##### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: After victory of Congress party in bye-elections to various seats, senior Congress leader and former Minister J&K Yogesh Sawhney commented that recent drop in fuel and oil prices and other such moves have neither came out of goodness of hearts of BJP leaders nor out of sympathy for common man, but in fact, it has came out of their desperation to win losing support of people of India. "Victory of Congress has come as a big jolt to the BJP which did not expect such results. Performance of Congress in Himachal Pradesh is only one proof among many other changing trends in the country. After two years, people have now realized the truth and identified real faces of BJP leaders. Positive result for Congress in HP bye-elections is evidence that people are giving their stamp-of-approval to Congress and a goodbye to BJP," Sawhney said.



Pertinent to mention here that Congress retained all three assembly seats and one Lok Sabha seat in Himachal Pradesh. "Congress has also scored a clear win in Rajasthan by-polls. It also snatched Hangal Assembly constituency from the ruling party in Karnataka. After seeing such a positive performance of Congress, BJP, in fear and out of an urge to regain support of people, lowered excise duty on petrol and diesel. Not only Centre but many BJP ruled states also lowered their VAT. If this step is taken to reduce financial burden on people of country, then why did BJP

take so long and what was it waiting for," asked Sawhney.

"Political gimmicks are what BJP leaders are best at and it is one example of just how they would like to twist narrative and mould public opinion back in their favour. Change in heart came from change in winds in the political scenario of the country. People are now aggravated with false promises and hollow boasts of the country's ruling party which was reflected in the bye-poll results. This led to Centre government taking a decisive step to lower excise duties on petrol and diesel. It was not a Diwali gift but in reality it was a Diwali gimmick," Sawhney asserted.

Speaking further, the former Minister said that if this is what it takes to get the government to care about people of the country, then it is shameful. "The more Assembly and Parliamentary seats they lose, the more drop we will

see in fuel prices. Prices of fuel affect all people, either directly or indirectly, no matter they own vehicles or not. So using fuel as leverage is to play with people's lives in the worst of times. The season of festivity was overshadowed by financial troubles for common man because of crooked policies of the Centre. Their corporate-centred policies are driving nation towards poverty and unemployment due to which rich-poor divide is widening. All of these and more has led to failure of BJP in the various bye-polls across nation. Since it is hard for them to digest failure, they will use many gimmicks to win back the support of the people but they must realise that people of the country are not foolish," stated Sawhney, adding that people must stand against policies of the government like they did in bye-elections for bringing-out a positive change across nation.

## Sidhu withdraws resignation as Punjab Cong Chief, but won't report for work just yet

##### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

CHANDIGARH: Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu on Friday said he has withdrawn his resignation as the party's Punjab chief but declared that he will not re-assume charge till the state's new advocate general is removed.

Even while announcing that he is taking back his resignation as Punjab Pradesh Congress president, Sidhu continued to target the new Charanjit Singh Channi-led Congress government in the state.

Sidhu had resigned from the post on September 28, triggering a fresh crisis in the party's Punjab unit as it prepares for the next assembly polls.

But days later, Congress leaders indicated he would continue with the responsibility that was given to him amid his power tussle with the then CM Amarinder Singh.

At the start, I want to say that Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi's soldier

has taken back his resignation," Sidhu told a press conference.

I have taken back my resignation. And I categorically state that the day a new Advocate General is appointed, I will assume charge, he said.

He also said he will assume charge of the party post the day the panel for the appointment of the new Director General of Police is appointed.

Sidhu has opposed the appointment of state Advocate General A P S Deol and Director General of Police Iqbal Preet Singh Sahota, considered as Channi's choices. He had earlier indicated that these two appointments were part of the reason he quit. Sahota had headed the SIT formed by the previous SAD-BJP government to probe incidents of desecration of the Guru Granth Sahib in 2015.

And as a lawyer, Deol had represented former DGP Sumedh Singh Saini, who

headed the state police six years ago during the incidents of sacrilege and a police firing on protesters.

It is not any personal ego, Sidhu said, arguing that the offices of the AG and the DGP are crucial to take the Bargari sacrilege and drug trafficking cases to their logical conclusions.

Firing a salvo against his own government, Sidhu said all he was asking was what the Channi government has done in the past 50 days on the sacrilege case and on making a special task force report on drug cases public.

I say if you don't have the guts to make the STF report public, give it to the party and I will make it public. I have the guts, he said.

After three special investigation teams, seven FIRs, two commissions of inquiry and six years after the sacrilege case, were these the only officers the state government could find, Sidhu taunted.