

BJP Government's decisions broke backbone of J&K's economy: Bhalla

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: LG Manoj Sinha Administration needs to urgently adopt measures to protect the J&K's poorest and most vulnerable people if COVID-19 containment and relief measures prove inadequate. Previous lockdowns have already disproportionately hurt marginalized communities due to loss of livelihood and lack of food, shelter, health, and other basic needs. The government does have a responsibility to protect the health and well-being of the population by protecting their livelihood.

This was stated by JKPCC Working President Raman Bhalla after meeting people from different areas facing



JKPCC Working President Raman Bhalla interacting with people.

economic hardships and reacting over Govt's decision to impose lockdown initially from Friday afternoon and then extending it to 9 PM on Friday to Monday morning in a hasty manner said that though lockdown is inevitable to save precious lives but its

impact will fall disproportionately on the most vulnerable, people living in poverty, the working poor; women and children, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups.

He noted that the pandemic has laid bare challenges such

as structural inequalities, inadequate healthcare, and the lack of universal social protection and the heavy price societies are paying as a result.

Economic recovery plans should prioritize at-risk workers, such as those in the informal sector; protect micro, small and medium enterprises, including those owned by women; and involve an expansion of universal social protection, said Bhalla.

He said authorities should recognize that malnourishment and untreated illness will exacerbate problems and should ensure that the most marginalized don't bear an unfair burden from lack of essential supplies.

Bhalla demanded central government to announce a relief package to provide free food and cash transfers to the poor and vulnerable populations, and health insurance for healthcare workers, among other things.

The government should ensure that those at heightened risk, including sanitation workers (safai karamcharis), community health staff (ASHA workers), early childhood caregivers (anganwadi workers), and people such as midday meal workers - often poorly paid public service officials - who are at the front lines during this crisis, are provided protective equipment, medical benefits, and timely wages.



Div Com, ADGP visit M A Stadium to finalise Republic Day arrangements

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Dr Raghav Langer alongwith Additional Director General of Police, Mukesh Singh on Friday visited Mulana Azad (M A) Stadium to inspect and finalize the arrangements for Republic Day celebration 2022.

Among others Deputy Commissioner Jammu, Anshul Garg, Commissioner JMC, SSP Jammu, SSP Security Jammu, besides senior officers of Police, Army, CRPF, BSF, SSB, Traffic Jal Shakti, JPDC, PWD, JMC, Health Services, Information, Education, Cultural Academy, Youth Services and Sports, Hospitality and Protocol, JKRTC and other concerned departments were also present.

The Div Com discussed in detail all the arrangements being put in place by the concerned departments for smooth conduct of the National event. He stressed on close synergy among the concerned departments while making arrange-



Div Com Jammu, Dr Raghav Langer inspecting arrangements for Republic Day celebrations at MA Stadium.

ments. The concerned departments were directed to put in place requisite arrangements well in advance.

It was informed that a total of 12 contingents will participate in the Parade, the cultural programme will feature 6 items, while Yoga and gymnastic items will also be performed during the celebration.

The Divisional Commissioner exhorted upon all the concerned officers to ensure that all necessary arrangements are put in place well in time for smooth and successful celebration of

the Republic Day.

The Div Com directed the concerned officers to ensure that all the participants are vaccinated and no below 15 year student was allowed to participate in cultural programme in view of the prevailing covid situation.

Dr Langer also directed for making arrangements of water proof tentage at the venue.

Traffic department was directed to frame a traffic management plan, finalise parking spaces and notify the diversions on time for the convenience of the general public.

American actress-singer Mary Millben marks exodus of KPs

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

WASHINGTON: Marking the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from the Valley in 1990 due to threats and killings by Pakistan-sponsored terrorists, American actress and singer Mary Millben has said that her prayers are with the community as many continue to mourn the loss of their loved ones, homes and cultural presence.

Every year, displaced Kashmiri Pandits hold several events in different parts of the world to commemorate the exodus of the community from the Kashmir Valley, recognising the resilience and noble spirit of the community.

In India on Wednesday, they observed January 19 as the 'Holocaust Day' to mark the exodus of their community members from the Valley in 1990 due to threats and killings by Pakistan-sponsored terrorists.

American actress and singer Millben, 39, in a statement posted on Twitter, said that, marked the Exodus Day and said that her prayers are with the community.

Religious persecution continues to escalate across the world. Today we remember the horror of Exodus Day - the exile of Kashmiri Pandits due to genocide and ethnic cleansing from Kashmir at the hands of Islamist terrorists. My prayers are with the Kashmiri Pandit community as many continue to mourn the loss of loved ones, homes and cultural presence, Millben said.

As a global citizen and woman of faith, my voice and platform will always stand for you, religious freedom and global policy that protects and preserves the exercising of faith. The persecution of Christians, the rise of antisemitism and hate towards Jews, genocide against Hindus and others continues today. I challenge Americans and global citizens to not grow complacent on these evils, she said.

Over the past couple of years, Millben has become highly popular in India and among Indian-Americans after she sang India's National Anthem and devotional song Om Jai Jagdish Hare'.

Millben, who is also known as America's National Anthem Singer , has performed the National Anthem and patriotic music for three consecutive US presidents - George W Bush, Barack Obama and Donald Trump, international royalty and world leaders.

She shares a deep love for and very intimate relationship with India, the Indian-American community and Indian communities across the world.

India was first introduced to her artistry during the 2020 celebration of India's 74th Independence Day a virtual performance of India's National Anthem broadcast in the US, India and across global TV and digital platforms. This performance, now viewed by millions across the world, catapulted Millben's friendship with India, according to a statement.

Shrine Board undertakes plantation works to green Trikuta Hills, beautify tracks

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KATRA: Focussing on continuously enlarging and improving facilities for the visiting pilgrims, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) has been devoting high attention to conserve the environment and ecology and carry out the greening of Trikuta Hills and the spaces along the tracks leading to the Shrine.

In this context, a meeting was held on Friday under the chairmanship of Ramesh Kumar, Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB to review plantation activities and various fruit plants of seedling origin supplied by the Horticulture Department of J&K to Shrine Board with



CEO Shrine Board, Ramesh Kumar chairing a meeting.

the aim to explore the possibilities for planting more such plants in the vicinity of Shrine Forest area in the coming years.

Ram Savak, Director Horticulture, Jammu; Brij Vallabh Gupta, Chief Horticulture Officer, Reasi

and Vinay Khajuria, ACF SMVDSB attended the meeting.

While taking stock of the fruit plants received from the Horticulture Department, CEO was informed that fruit bearing species are being planted in Serli Forest area of

Shrine Board, whereas, CEO proposed to identify species of fruit bearing plants seedlings to be planted in Bhairon, Sanjichhat, and Natali areas during the winter.

The Director Horticulture assures to provide more such high yielding seedlings like Mango, Guava, Lichi, Peach, Orange etc. during the ongoing winter plantation and also assures to provide more high density seedlings during ensuing summers.

CEO was also informed about the creation of the Mother Plant area in Kunia Nursery to be created for fruit bearing species like Mango, Lichi (Muzaffarpur), Guava etc. in about 02 hectare area in Phase-II of

Nursery.

Further, the Director Horticulture also assures to provide plantation techniques of Horticulture species to Shrine Board Forest Wing Staff at Kunia Nursery.

The CEO laid emphasis on planting high density varieties of plants which gives fruits of good quality and is compatible with the local climatic conditions. He underscored the need for planting fruit bearing plants to minimize the monkey menace.

He asked for carrying out timely execution of the plantation activities during the ensuing months and side by side taking all requisite steps to increase the green cover of the Trikuta Hills.

JKPEECC seeks redressal of issues as per agreement; fixes 15-day deadline

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Power employees & engineers under the banner of JKPEECC- an amalgam comprising of various Unions of PDD led by Sachin Tickoo, General Secretary JKEEGA and Convener PEECC Jammu; Jaipal Sharma, Chairman JKPEECC & President DEA; Ashok Dubey Vice President JKEEGA, Sanjay Sharma DEA, Anil Slathia Linemen & Workers Union, Kulbir Singh EEU, H D Singh TEF, Tarun Gupta PDDEU, Balbir Singh Draftsman Association, Jasbir Singh ITI Employees, Akhil Kumar President PDL/TDL Workers, Gurmeet Singh, Purshottam Kumar CNGEU among others held a press conference in Jammu on Friday to highlight issue of



General Secretary JKEEGA, Sachin Tickoo talking to reporters at Jammu.

non-fulfillment of commitments as assured in midnight agreement made between J&K UT Government representatives and JKPEECC on December 21, 2021 despite passage of more than a month.

While addressing media, the coordination committee leaders strongly resented the fact that all files pertaining to

placements/regularization / transfers of employees of PDD are getting stuck in General Administration Department and office of the Chief Secretary. "Certain objections/ remarks are being raked up on proposals which are beyond comprehension and completely undermine wisdom of administrative department. Proposals duly

vetted by the administrative department are entangled in various objections due to biased approach in GAD towards PDD. The same is reflected in all cases as placements/ regularization/ transfers pertaining to other sister engineering departments sail through expeditiously while PDD, where placements on hundreds of vacant posts from AE to SE have been turned down on one pretext or another after weeks of shuffling in e-office within GAD and office of the Chief Secretary .It is astonishing that AEEs, who had been promoted in Jan 2021 have not been adjusted against hundreds of vacant posts till date," they added. The leaders further said that 20,000 employees of PDD, presently

on deputation to these carved out corporations, are feeling dejected that Government is not serious to resolve their issues and are running out of patience. "JKPEECC, in consultation with all constituent unions, has decided to give a 15-day notice to the Government to issue regularization orders/ clearing pending DPC / placement/ promotion/ adjustment orders of Engineering/ Executive/ Ministerial staff, whose proposals already stand submitted by the administrative department for approvals," they maintained, adding that JKPEECC shall review the progress on February 5, if any made during these fifteen days and accordingly shall announce date of agitational programme.

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