

NC, Congress deliberately betrayed ST, SC communities: Abhijeet

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Political parties like National Conference (NC) and Congress have deliberately betrayed ST and SC communities of J&K in past. It was alleged by Abhijeet Jasrotia, J&K BJP Spokesperson, while addressing a presser here on Tuesday. J&K BJP SC Morcha President Prof Gharu Ram, BJP ST Morcha President Haroon Choudhary, BJP Policy



J&K BJP Spokesperson, Abhijeet Jasrotia talking to reporters.

Research Department members Dr Makson Tickoo and

Jasmeet Kour Pandey were also present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Abhijeet exposed NC & Congress about apathy which was conspired against ST & SC communities through a

state autonomy report in 1997. He said that it was a deliberate attempt to harm members of both the communities and leaders like Farooq Abdullah, who framed the committee, was hand in glove

with Congress in hatching conspiracy against these communities. "Such leaders played politics only for their vested interests. I won't hesitate in saying that these two parties were greatest sorrows for erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir State," he added.

Gharu Ram and Haroon Choudhary said that they will bring the injustice in knowledge of both communities. "After this big expose, SC community has lost faith in NC & Congress and is thankful to the BJP Government for the historic day of August 5, 2019," they said.

HC directs Govt to initiate process for conducting elections to Gurdwara Prabandhak Committees

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In a petition filed by Satinder Singh and Joginder Singh challenging the order of Revenue Secretary whereby Revenue Secretary ordered that tenure of existing Gurdwara Prabandhak Committees is extended by three months in view of COVID-19 pandemic, Justice Sindhu Sharma of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court directed the Government to initiate process of conducting elections to the Gurdwara Prabandhak Committees of Gurdwaras of Union Territory, in accordance with the provisions of the Act of 1973 expeditiously.

In the petition, the petitioners sought quashing of notification dated July 13, 2020 issued by respondents regarding term extension of Gurdwara Prabandhak Committees for a period of three months. They also sought directions to the respondents to initiate process of election for electing members of different Gurdwara Prabandhak Committees at the earliest to manage affairs of Gurdwaras in UT.

Justice Sindhu Sharma after hearing both the sides observed that Sr. AAG submitted that due to outbreak of 2nd wave of COVID-19 pandemic and unprecedented situation, the respondents failed to conduct elections which was deferred and any other arrangements, according to him, will be made only after review of the same in consultation with Divisional Administration.

Justice Sindhu Sharma further observed that the respondents could not have extended term of the District Gurdwara Prabandhak Committees of various Districts beyond two years in terms of SO-218 as the same is not as per the mandate of Rule-63C. In any case, this notification has otherwise also outlived its life as it was only for a period of three months or till elections are held, whichever earlier. Since it was not practicable to hold elections, as such, the respondents had to proceed in terms of Rule-63C and nominate members of the Committee in accordance with provisions of Act and the Rules after recording its satisfaction for reasons to be recorded in writing. The elections to the District Gurdwara Prabandhak Committees have been delayed for more than one and half year and the only reason is COVID-19 pandemic as life and working in Union Territory has come to a halt, therefore, Government did not find reasonably practicable time to hold the elections for any of the committees. It appeared that till date, there were neither any validly elected nor nominated Gurdwara Prabandhak Committees in the Districts of J&K. Though the situation has considerably improved now, and elections to Gurdwara Prabandhak outside J&K were being held, but respondents did not deem it fit to conduct elections to these committees.

The Court after hearing both the sides observed that in view of aforesaid discussion, Gurdwara Prabandhak Committees which are presently looking after affairs of the Gurdwara are continuing un-authorizedly in office and cannot be allowed further to continue in such a manner and further directed that keeping in view administration, superintendence and management of Sikh Gurdwaras and its properties, constitution of District Gurdwara Prabandhak Committees is imperative. "To run day to day administration of Sikh Gurdwaras, the Government shall come up with an appropriate notification in terms of Rule-63C of Rules for constituting/nominating suitable members to District Gurdwara Prabandhak Committees. The Government shall ensure that none of the members of the erstwhile Committee, whose term has expired, are nominated as members and the Committee be constituted of independent persons of high integrity and social standing within a period of three weeks. The Government may also initiate process of conducting elections to the Gurdwara Prabandhak Committees of Gurdwaras of the Union Territory, in accordance with the provisions of the Act of 1973 expeditiously," the Court directed.

Iranian Apple emerging as major threat to Valley's fruit industry

■ SHAKEELA ANDRAI

SRINAGAR: The apple industry is crucial to Kashmir's economy as valley contributes about 75 per cent of country's overall apple production. Horticulture is a source of livelihood for around 33 lakh people in Jammu and Kashmir and about 7 lakh families are directly or indirectly dependent on it. According to officials, Kashmir exports around 20 lakh metric tons of apples annually.

The industry is facing a huge threat as dumping of Iranian apple into Indian markets have eaten market share of Kashmiri fruit leading to losses for farmers, from past few days. Sopore-based fruit growers and traders also staged protests in Sopore area of North Kashmir's Baramulla district seeking an immediate ban on Iranian apples in India. The protesting traders, while raising slogans against authorities, said that duty-free Iranian apple has devastated indigenous Kashmiri apple trade.

While holding placards with slogans 'Ban Iranian Apple', 'Save Fruit Industry', the protesters stated that import of Iranian apple to India has completely downgraded fruit industry of Kashmir. "It has badly affected our local fruit industry as Valley apples are fetching lesser price in comparison to last year due to influx of Iranian apple into markets, thereby leaving all fruit traders of Kashmir worried," said President, Fruit Growers and Dealers Association, Fruit Mandi Sopore. It is important to mention here that for past three years, the apple industry has been facing losses worth crores of rupees. The political circumstances after revocation of J&K's special status also badly affected apple growers of Valley. Due to shutdown, the transportation industry and procurement markets got disrupted, making it difficult for stakeholders to harvest and store the fruit. The communication shutdown also resulted in lack of contact between apple growers, transporters and traders, thereby disrupting demand-supply chain. Though after that, the Centre Government took the initiative to procure apples in Kashmir, through cooperative National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation (NAFED) but most growers stayed away. "There was too much delay in release of payment and only people with contacts were able to sell their harvest through NAFED," alleged many fruit growers from Kulgam and Shopian. Earlier in 2014, floods caused a loss of approximately Rs 1,000 crore to apple crop in Kashmir, threatening collapse of entire horticulture industry, according to a report released by Associated Chambers of Commerce & Industries. "Tax-free apple from Iran is an immense threat to apple from Kashmir. Let Indian Government intervene in the matter; otherwise, J&K will face huge economic threat," said Mubashir Ahmad, a fruit merchant from Achabal, Sopore.



DGP sanctions over Rs 2.5 cr as Special Welfare Relief for NoKs of martyrs

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Continuing with its endeavour to provide financial assistance to the families of the police personnel/SPOs who have passed away while in service, the Director-General of Police (DGP) Dilbag Singh has sanctioned over Rs 2.52 crore as Special Welfare Relief for NOKs of martyrs/deceased police personnel/ SPOs.

The special welfare relief of Rs 22 lakh each out of Contributory Welfare Fund has been sanctioned in favour of dependents/legal heirs of deceased police personnel Insp: (M) Mohammad Ayoub, ASI Romesh Giri, Narsingdev Singh, Tirath Singh, HC Sham Lal, Ct. Showkat Ahmad and Ct. Shafiq Ahmad who expired due to illness/natural death while in service.

While Rs 20 lakh each has been sanctioned as special welfare relief in favour of dependents/legal heirs of NOKs of HC Mohammad Arif, Hamidullah Sheikh and Sg.Ct. Ravi Bhushan who also expired due to illness/natural death while in service. To assist the family martyrs, the DGP sanctioned Rs 22 lakh as special welfare relief in favour of dependents/legal heirs of martyrs constable Tawseef Ahmad who was injured in a terrorist attack at Batamaloo and later succumbed to his injuries. DGP also sanctioned Rs 6 lakh as Special Welfare Relief in favour of NOKs of deceased SPO Nazir Ahmad Ganie and Rs 5 lakh each in favour of deceased SPOs Kalam Din and Nek Raj who expired during the course of their engagement in the department.



PUNJAB....
on the fast track of progress



Laying of Foundation Stone

of

Mukerian - Talwara New Broad Gauge Rail Line



SALIENT FEATURES

- Mukerian and Talwara will now appear on the map of Indian Railways
- Residents of every section of Punjab, farmers, students, entrepreneurs, commercial & industrial units will benefit from this new rail line
- Better rail accessibility to major religious and cultural destinations of Punjab like Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib (Anandpur Sahib), Maa Sri Chintpurni, Mata Jawala Ji, Naina Devi and
- An alternate route between Ambala and Punjab will be available benefitting a large section of the population
- Beside Punjab, it will also benefit people from Himachal Pradesh and border areas of Jammu Kashmir
- Estimated cost of 27.70 Km Mukerian-Talwara Rail Line is Rs. 411 Crore

by

Narendra Modi

Prime Minister

in the august presence of

Banwarilal Purohit
Governor, Punjab & Administrator,
UT of Chandigarh

Charanjit Singh Channi
Chief Minister, Punjab

Hardeep Singh Puri
Union Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas,
Housing and Urban Affairs

Ashwini Vaishnaw
Union Minister of Railways, Communications,
Electronics and Information Technology

Manohar Lal
Chief Minister, Haryana

Jai Ram Thakur
Chief Minister, Himachal Pradesh

Manoj Sinha
Lt. Governor, Jammu & Kashmir

TIME: 12:30 PM • DATE: Wednesday, 5th January, 2022 • VENUE: Near Circuit House, Ludhiana Road, Firozpur City

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