

# LG pays tributes to Mahatma Gandhi on his Punyatithi

## STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday paid tributes to the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi on his Punyatithi.

He attended the solemn event organised by the Gandhi Global Family, J&K and honoured the family members of freedom fighters, martyrs, social activists and NGOs for their exemplary contribution in nation building.

"Mahatma Gandhi's principles are shaping a new Jammu Kashmir, which has been a victim of violence and terrorism for more than three decades. Following the ideals of Bapu, the UT of J&K is today creating its new identity as a land of peace, harmony and brotherhood," the Lt Governor said.

He said the hymns of Mahatma Gandhi, his message of truth, non-violence, simplicity and equality of all human beings are creating a new con-



Lt Governor Manoj Sinha honouring family members of freedom fighters, martyrs and social activists for exemplary contribution in nation building.

sciousness among the people. The annual Shanti Yatra dedicated to spread Bapu's ideals across Union Territory is inspiring and guiding people towards peace and unity, he observed.

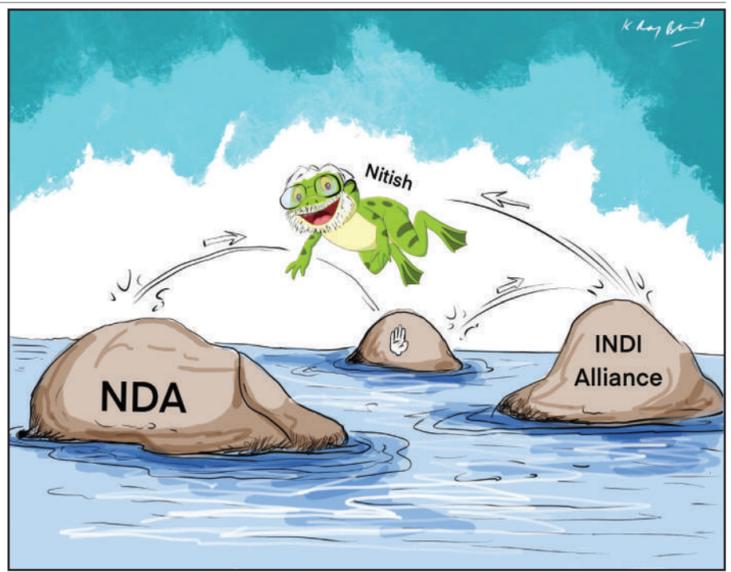
The Lt Governor said, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is fulfilling Bapu's dream of self-reliant villages and empowered rural India.

"He has ensured empowerment of youth, women, farmers and margin-

alised section of society," the Lt Governor observed.

The Lt Governor appreciated the endeavours of the Gandhi Global Family J&K, all the organizations and individuals who are working towards promoting the Gandhian values and spreading the noble message of Truth and Non-Violence.

Padma Shri Dr SP Varma, President Gandhi Global Family J&K; B.R Sharma, Election Commissioner J&K; senior officials; ex-Servicemen; family members of the martyrs and freedom fighters, prominent citizens, social workers and youth were present. Earlier, a two-minute silence was observed at Civil Secretariat as a mark of respect to the Father of the Nation and the martyrs who made supreme sacrifice in the struggle for India's freedom.



## Excise Department J&K cracks down on Illicit Liquor Production Seizes, destroys 14,000 kg of Lahan, 60 Litres of Illicit Liquor on State Land



Excise sleuths destroying Lahan at Jammu.

## STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: On the directions of the Excise Commissioner, Pankaj Kumar Sharma, and under supervision of Deputy Excise Commissioner

(Executive), Jammu Kusum Sharma, a team of Excise Range South under ETO Ankit Gupta and comprising of Inspectors Dheeraj Kumar and Sanjeev Kumar,

Sub Inspectors Sanjeev Lalhotra and Ajay Kumar, Excise guard Kamal Kumar, Hitesh Kumar and Excise official Romesh Thakur raided, Marola Kotha, Jouian, Chak Majra, Kalyana, Devangarh, Khanachak, Jabwal adjoining areas of Bishnah and R S Pura Sub Ranges to arrest the menace of illicit distillation of liquor.

As a result of this operation, 14000 kilograms of Lahan, a key ingredient in the production of illicit liquor, 60 litres of illicit liquor and one working still were seized and subsequently destroyed on the state land.

## No political personality is ready to sail in 'sinking boat' Congress: BJP

## STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: The Congress is a non-performing asset, a liability and a sinking boat, a senior BJP leader alleged on Tuesday and said no political party will associate itself with it.

"The Congress had made attempts to create the INDIA alliance, but the Congress party has become a NPA (non-performing asset) in the country and has become a liability," former BJP MLC and party's in-charge for Srinagar parliamentary constituency Surinder Anbarbar said.

Justifying his assertion, Anbarbar said West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC chief Mamata Banerjee earlier decided to contest the Lok Sabha elections alone and then Bihar Chief Minister



MP G.A. Khatana speaking at a programme in Srinagar.

Nitish Kumar left the INDIA bloc and returned to the NDA.

"Congress is a sinking boat and no political personality is ready to sail in it," the BJP leader told reporters after inaugurating the party's election office in Srinagar Lok Sabha constituency. The office was inaugurated by MP

Ghulam Ali Khatana. Speaking on the occasion,

Khatana asserted that parties like PDP, NC, and Congress have unfortunately created a history of bloodshed in Kashmir.

On the contrary, he emphasized that incidents of violence and bloodshed have come

down significantly under the BJP government, which has promoted a peaceful atmosphere in the region.

On Tuesday, the BJP inaugurated its election offices in all five constituencies in Jammu and Kashmir.

"We have created 38 departments for the elections and made 38 convenors and 38 co-convenors. Those 38 departments vary from election office to social media to strategic aspects and will touch all aspects of the election," Anbarbar added.

The former MLC said the BJP is looking to win at least 330 seats on its own in the upcoming general elections.

"For the NDA, the score will be over 400 and Prime Minister Narendra Modi will score a hat-trick," he added.

Meanwhile, the Party's General Secretary (organisation) for Jammu and Kashmir; Ashok Koul, said the INDIA bloc has broken away and many partners have left it.

"As far as Kashmir is concerned, we do not see that any political party will enter into an alliance with it," Koul said.

"There was a Gupkar alliance and now we do not see that as well. All of them will contest. The BJP will contest all the six seats, including Ladakh, and will try to win all of them," he added. Koul further said the assembly elections will also take place in Jammu and Kashmir.

"We will see to it that the assembly elections take place after the parliamentary polls," he added.

## 'Udhampur most developed constituency in 10 years' India to become third largest economy in Modi's third term: Dr Jitendra

## STATE TIMES NEWS

UDHAMPUR: India will emerge as the world's third largest economy in Narendra Modi's third term as Prime Minister, Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh said on Tuesday.

The country has great stakes in the return of a BJP led Government headed by PM Modi in order to continue the upward trend in Bharat's growth story, he said.

Dr Jitendra was speaking at the launch of the BJP Election Office for the upcoming Lok Sabha Elections. "In 2014, when PM Modi took over, India stood as the world's tenth economy. In less than ten years, we jumped to 5th position after overtaking the United Kingdom, which had ruled over us for nearly two centuries. Hopefully this year it will emerge as the 4th largest economy and during PM Modi's 3rd term, India will be the world's 3rd largest economy, marching on to become the No.1 economy by 2047," he said. Dr Jitendra Singh said, within a short span of just about four years, the number of Space StartUps has gone up from a mere single digit to over 150. Besides, there are more than 6,300 BioTech Startups and over 3,000 Agritech Startups in the Lavender sector of Jammu &



Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh addressing a BJP workers' meeting at Udhampur.

Kashmir itself. "About 4,000 people are engaged with Lavender cultivation and earning lakhs of rupees, quite a few of them do not have high qualifications, but are very innovative," he said. Dr Jitendra said, in the Global Innovation Index we ranked 81 in 2014, we have jumped 41 places, today we are No. 40 in the world.

"India of 2024 is ready to take a giant leap, backed by its scientific acumen and technological prowess," he said.

Referring to Udhampur-Kathua-Doda as among the most developed Lok Sabha constituencies in the last 10 years since 2014, Dr Jitendra said, today this constituency is being cited as a role model.

He said, not only several national and first-of-its-kind projects were brought in in the last 10 years, but even those projects which had been abandoned by the earlier governments were revived.

Very recently, Dr Jitendra said, Bhaderwah town of his constituency made national news when its Lavender Farms were displayed in the Republic Day Parade at Kartavya Path, New Delhi and the constituency is now known as the birthplace of "Purple Revolution", which has given the world a new genre of Agri-StartUps.

This is the only Lok Sabha Constituency, said Dr Jitendra Singh, which got three centrally funded Medical Colleges, two Passport offices, world's highest Railway Bridge, Asia's longest Road Tunnel from Chenani to Nashri called Syama Prasad Mookerjee Tunnel, North India's first Industrial Biotech Park, North India's first Cable Free Bridge Atal Setu at Basohli, nearly 4 to 5 Hydro power projects in Kishtwar making it India's power hub, Shalpur-Kandi National Irrigation project, longest Express Corridor from Katra

to Delhi, two instead of one Vande Bharat Express Trains on the same route of Katra to Delhi, nearly 200 bridges and small bridges, while District Udhampur has been declared as India's top three districts in PMGSY Roads.

While Manser lake has been included in the Government of India's Swarajya Plan, Mantalai which was left in ruins by the earlier Congress government has been revived as State-of-the-art Wellness Centre.

Dr Jitendra said, all that we need to do is to make the people aware of all this for their benefit and for the benefit of their children. He emphasised the need to effectively convey to the common masses, particularly youth and women, the enormous development that has taken place in this constituency in the last 10 years under the patronage of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

## PIL on traffic management; DB grants 3 weeks to file requisite affidavit

## STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In a Public Interest Litigation (PIL), seeking direction upon the Traffic Police of the Union Territory of J&K to provide modern gadgets such as breath analyzer, Night Vision Speed Guns to Traffic Police and install speed governance and traffic cameras so as to control the traffic, a Division Bench of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court, comprising Chief Justice N Kotishwar Singh and Justice MA Chowdhary granted three weeks' time to S.S.

Nanda, Sr. AAG for filing requisite affidavit in terms of order dated November 8, 2023.

It is worthwhile to mention here that on November 8, 2023, Division Bench after gone through the affidavit filed by respondent no. 3 in which it has been mentioned that certain steps have been taken for proper management of traffic and also to prevent accidents.

However, in the affidavit filed by respondent no.1, who is in a better position to apprise this Court about the various steps taken, these details

are lacking, and, there is reference to purchase of certain equipments under Road Safety Measures during the financial year 2018-19.

DB further observed that since we are on the verge of the completion of year 2023, we would like to have an additional affidavit from respondent no.1-Commissioner/Secretary, Transport Department as to the various steps taken and also purchase and use of the equipments to deal with the traffic accidents and other violations which lead to fatal accident.

## HC quashes detention of alleged anti-national

## STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Justice Rahul Bharti of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court on Tuesday quashed the detention under PSA of Shahbaz Ahmed, alleged antinational.

According to said dossier, the petitioner came to be introduced as a person instrumental in instigating the masses to create law and order problem in the area by being active in anti-national activities and maintaining effective contacts with some anti-national elements/PAK handlers through social media apps.

The petitioner came to be alleged to be in close contact with OGWs of the area and engaged in providing mobile numbers of the families of the killed terrorists

and missing youth of the area to the PAK handlers so as to revive militancy/terrorist activity in the area of district Reasi.

The petitioner's cousin, namely, Mohd. Rafiq and Nazir Ahmed are said to have joined LET outfit in the year 1998 and one of whom came to be eliminated by the security forces and other having surrendered.

With respect to the alleged activities of the petitioner, the Police Station Mahore, Police Post Dewal and Operation Camp Sarh are said to have generated Daily Diary Reports No. 14 dated February 3, 2023, 04 dated February 8, 2023 and 13 dated February 12, 2023.

Justice Rahul Bharti

after hearing both the sides observed that personal liberty of a citizen of India, notwithstanding any alleged desperate characterization and profiling of him by law and enforcement authority/agency, cannot be fiddled with without adopting due course of law that too in letter and spirit.

The respondents in their counter affidavit have least bothered to explain as to how come the petitioner was already in the catch and custody of the Police Station Mahore a day before the execution of the detention warrant to be simply handed over at the asking of the Executing Officer Inspector Arun Singh PID No. EXJ-046179 of DPL Reasi.

In view of this serious

lacuna with respect to the very detainment of the petitioner in purported reference to the execution of the detention warrant, the detainment of the petitioner under the preventive detention jurisdiction is held to be illegal and deserves to be quashed, court said.

For the reasons mentioned above, Court allowed the petition and ordered that preventive detention order No. 02-PSA of 2023 dated February 20, 2023 whereby the petitioner has been subjected to preventive detention is hereby quashed as a consequence whereof the petitioner is ordered to be restored to its personal liberty by the respondent no. 4-Superintendent, District Jail, Ambphalla, Jammu.

# Some J&K areas with large exploitable Commercial & Pilgrim Tourism potential 'cry' for due CARE even in 2024

## DAYA SAGAR

Most of the backward and difficult areas of UT of J&K lie outside Kashmir valley. These areas do have good pockets / spots worth development as tourist resorts/for developing as regular tourist destinations for summer / winter tourist too although the visitors may enroute face a little rough climate during summers in comparison to Kashmir valley but instead this region is blessed with more of pilgrimage places near to worth exploitation through adequate development as potential tourist destinations. This way there exist multi dimensional scope for carrying the visitors / likely tourists/pilgrims in and around areas of Jammu region where a good number of adventure sports as well as cable car projects too could be promoted worth boosting the economy of local areas since inspite of there being some rough areas still a high order pilgrim as well as commercial tourism could be promoted. But that did not happen even after 1990.

Governments of Maharajas of J&K of pre 1947 times with limited financial

resources in hand and primitive technologies available could still lay / construct many difficult links like (a) The Banihal Cart road (BC Road - the Banihal Tunnel has been added in last six decades by India ) , (b) Jehlum Valley Road (132 miles connecting Srinagar with Kohala) , (c) link with Rawapindi via Uri ( then in Muzaffarabad ) , (d) Poonch was well linked with Uri/ Baramullah/ Valley. (e)Route to Ladakh via Kishtwar-Paddar- Zanskar ( route followed by General Zorawar Singh in 1936/ 1941 , ( f ) Bhadarwah was linked with Chamba in Himachal by road and g) One bridge road connecting Srinagar with Leh via Yojila pass and a paeca road to Gilgit, ( h ) Bandipur- Galgit road was running over Burzila pass and was 193 miles long ( it was a bridge road in 1941 and state maintained 165 miles and rest was maintained by the British India government ) . August 1948 Pakistanis had occupied most of the northern part of J&K State including part of Ladakh and Burzila & Yojila passes. General Thimayya planned an

offensive and light tanks were carried to Srinagar and from there to Yojila pass at a height of 11000 ft on the road tracks laid by the erstwhile Maharaja of J&K and Indian troops could take complete control of Yojila pass. Where as in the Independent India the neglect of the farflung rural areas over last over 55 years was exposed ( Feb 2005) when even the minimum communication infrastructure was found badly missing during February 2005 snow carnage in Doda/ Rajouri areas ( the real ground situations of some areas were known to the district administration after more than a month ) .

Rajouri, Poonch, Doda, Kishtwar, Bhaderwah, Udhampur-Reasi, Kathua districts of Jammu region have many exploitable cool and pleasant along routes spots but even nearly 7 decades of independence there are no meaningful / workable road infrastructure & facilities for recreation of tourist



A Look through the Mist

, joymaking , adventure , health tourism and holidaying there. Noappreciable / notable attention worth making good the shortfall has to be still paid to these .The status even in 2024 of proposed Basoli <Bani> Bhaderwah road project ( under execution ) and the high potential summer / winter tourism sites along the alignment that have potential for commercial as well pilgrim potential speaks well about the fate of such areas.

A good infrastructure would have been developed with just around s.1000-1500 Crs had the areas been duly cared after independence /during earlier times but now in 2024 competitive tourism infrastructure & environment is to be created / developed in areas outside Kashmir valley , there may be utmost need to pump in around min of Rs 20000 Crsto 25000 Crs out of the state exchequer in addition to private sector investments in next 4 to 5 years to catch on the lost pace. The locals of such area may have lost over Rs.25000 - 35000 crores that they

would have earned through direct / indirect means over the last 7 decades had the business in that area been promoted with improved tourist flow as well better surface communication. Where as,so far no real benefit has come to the common people of such areas proportionate to thousands of crores of financial assistance extended over the years by Government of India to J&K.Surely only governments of the past like that of Mufti Mohd Sayeed and the Congress- NC Governemnt that followed in 2008 can not be solely blamed for all this.

New Delhi could argue that planning for local infrastructure is the responsibility of State Government . But New Delhi can not deny that the superior civil servants in J&K are from GOI/ Central Government Services who hold the superior and decisive positions as regards planning and implementation of programmes. So some short fall as regards assessment of priorities has to be debited to the account of New Delhi as well.

Leads need be taken from the Government of Himachal Pradesh and fellow himachal citizens by the people outside Kashmir Valley as wellas the J&K Government to make good the losses suffered.

The local civil society that also has many retired bureaucrats and technocrats too needs to work out and push inand follow proposals for implementation by the government.

How serious and concerned are people of Himachal Pradesh could be seen from the way they handle huge tourist traffic in so narrow lanes and hilly roads in tourist destinations like Maledganj, Dalhousie, Dharamsala. The lack of concern on the part of local governments so far could be well gauged from the fact that every second day leaders' talk of Basoli Bani > Bhaderwah track and people have been receiving only statements and no meaningful progress on this 'road' ( of less than 100 km ) atleast not even in last two decades.

(The writer is a Sr Journalist and Social Activist).