

Prayagraj will set Benchmark in cleanliness & hospitality : CM Yogi

■ SHAHZAD AKHTAR

KUMBHINAGAR: After the review meeting of Mahakumbh in Prayagraj on Tuesday, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath once again appealed to the people of Prayagraj for hospitality and cleanliness.

Talking to the reporters he said that Prayagraj will once again set an example of hospitality as it did in the 2019 Kumbh. This time too Prayagraj will set an excellent example of cleanliness along with hospitality.

CM Yogi interacted with media persons after the review meeting of Prayagraj Mela Authority. On this occasion, he said that the transformation of Prayagraj City is almost complete. These have been made from single to double lane, double lane to four lane, four lane to six lane. Out of 14 flyovers, 13 have been completed and one is moving towards the final stage. He said that the Mela Authority has also identified and activated parking spaces



at a distance of 2 to 5 km from Sangam on the routes connecting Prayagraj in an area of about 5000 acres.

He said that for the first time in 2019, the number of pontoon bridges was increased to 22, which has been increased to 30 this time in view of the Maha Kumbh. Out of these, 28 have been completed and two will be ready within the next three-four days. A temporary Ghat of 12 km is being prepared here and all are almost ready. Similarly, a 450 km pipeline has been laid for pure drinking water.

Yogi said that the Mela has

almost taken its shape. More than 7000 organizations have arrived so far. More than one and a half lakh tents have been arranged by the Mela Authority. The country and the world are eager to come to Prayagraj Kumbh.

CM Yogi said that the first bath of Paus Purnima will be held here on January 13. The second bath will be on Makar Sankranti i.e. January 14, which will also be Amrit Snan. On January 29, there will be the bath of Mauni Amavasya, which is one of the main baths, in which the maximum crowd will come. We estimate that 6 to 8 crore devotees will come here on this day and participate in that Amrit Snan. This will also be a very holy time.

February 3 is Basant Panchami, then February 12 and February 26, including these two additional baths, there are a total of six baths here. There will be no protocol on the day of the main bath.

Install statue of Gen Zorawar Singh at Pangong Tso Lake: SSP

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Col SS Pathania, Chief Convener and President Sainik Samaj Party (SSP) J&K UT, expressed his happiness for installation of statue of Chatrapati Shivaji at Pangong Tso lake as a tribute to a great king and warrior.

However, he said he was baffled, dismayed and disappointed with the decision makers as the local legend and great warrior General Zorawar Singh also known as Napoleon of India was ignored along with the history. Gen Zorawar Singh extended the frontiers of Dogra empire and conquered Ladakh, Baltistan, Skardu and Tibet, thereby making J&K biggest state in India, he said adding that in a mountainous terrain with icy winds, treacherous routes and a small self contained horse backed Dogra army displayed unparalleled courage and bravery under the dynamic leadership of bravest of the brave,



General Zorawar. Pathania urged the UT government and Central Government to recognize the achievements and bravery of gallant Dogra soldiers led by General Zorawar and install a statue alongside the statue of Chatrapati Shivaji at Pangong Tso lake, as a tribute to legendary General Zorawar Singh.

Statue of both great warriors at the backdrop of beautiful Pangong Tso Lake will surely continue inspiring our present and coming generations, he said.

Ambedkar's vision on education is significant: Balbir

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Education is a transformative force, which enables individuals to bring out their potential, develop critical thinking, and contribute meaningfully to the country and the society. It is not just a tool to gain knowledge but an effective path to progress and prosperity, for dignified life.

Balbir Ram Rattan, BJP senior leader & former vice chairperson, said this while discussing the importance of education with a group of prominent persons of the society, stressing upon them to go through vision of Dr. B.R.Ambedkar on different subjects, particularly related to importance of education in one's life.

Quoting Dr. Ambedkar famous views that "Education is the milk of the tigress; whoever drinks it will roar", Balbir Ram Rattan said that such lines and words are enough to make one understand the strength of education. The



BJP senior leader, Balbir Ram Rattan discussing importance of education with group of prominent persons.

role of education in taking people forward to progress and prosper is undoubtedly most important, he said.

Balbir further said that investing in education leads to economic growth also, which reduces poverty, and improves one's social status as well. Gaining education and reaching at reputed position also brings respect not only to an individual but also to the entire family.

"Acquiring quality education is an essential and basic requirement to seek a job, establish business, etc, to pave way for a

brighter, more prosperous future for generations to come", Balbir said, adding that education is the foundation of empowerment and societal progress and each one of us should acknowledge this fact.

Rattan said that education is not confined to a person, region, gender, faith or caste but anyone can study and excel in life. The best example of how education brings changes in one's life, and takes a person to heights, earns respect for him, is life and legacy of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

NSS unit of SKUAST-J organizes awareness on social evils



NSS volunteers and faculty of SKUAST-J during an awareness programme.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Under the guidance of Vice Chancellor SKUAST-Jammu, Prof. B.N. Tripathi, and Dean of Student Welfare, Prof. Sudhakar Dwivedi, NSS

students from the Faculty of Agriculture, SKUAST-Jammu, organized an outreach program at the villages of Chatha Farm, Chatha Pind, and Khandwal.

The initiative aimed to raise awareness about several social issues, including drug abuse, cleanliness, girl education, and global warming. As part of the program, students conducted a

rally in these villages, holding placards with impactful messages related to the mentioned causes.

The villagers listened attentively, interacted with the students, and shared their concerns. The outreach was part of a series of activities under the National Service Scheme (NSS) and was carried out under the supervision of Dr. Veena Sharma and Dr. Rakesh Kumar, NSS Programme Officers. Avtar Singh, the former Sarpanch of Chatha Panchayat, joined the students in spreading awareness and praised the initiative.

The event was coordinated by Dr. Subhash C. Kashyap, NSS Programme Coordinator. This program is part of the regular NSS activities of SKUAST-Jammu, focused on community engagement and addressing important social issues.

JYBT president donates 22-seater vehicle for devotees

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

HARIDWAR/JAMMU: It was a matter of great pride to inform the members of the Trust, as well as the people of Jammu, that for the convenience of the Yatris/devotees of Ganga Maiya visiting Haridwar to take a holy dip in the Ganga or to perform "Karam Kand" and other religious rituals, Pawan Kumar Shastri, President of the Jammu Yatri Bhawan Trust (Jammu/Haridwar), has generously donated a 22-seater Eicher Passenger Air-conditioned vehicle.

This vehicle, named "Mata Pita Ji Ka Rath", was inaugurated amidst the chanting of Vedic Mantras and religious rituals conducted by the Pandits of the Trust at Haridwar.

The donation was made in memory of his late parents, Taro Devi and Shree Shree

1008 Mahant Baldev Dass.

The auspicious inauguration of the vehicle was carried out by Dr. Suresh Chavhanke, Senior Journalist, CMD, and Editor-in-Chief of Sudarshan National News Channel, who graced the event with his presence.

The occasion was attended by several distinguished personalities, including Finance Minister, Uttarakhand Govt, Prem Chand Aggarwal, Uttarakhand Province Sangh Pracharak, Dr. Shalinder Singh, Sugarcane Development Minister, Shyam Veer Saini, Parshuram Akhara Pardhan, Pandit Adhir Kaushik.

From the Jammu Yatri Bhawan Trust, Pawan Kumar Shastri (President), Gurdas Sharma (General Secretary/Trustee), and Raj

Kumar Gupta Ji (Trustee), Des Raj from Baba Shivo Ji Mandir, Goran, Samba were also present.

All present expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the visiting dignitaries, especially Suresh from Sudarshan Channel and his family, for attending and participating in the event.

It is noteworthy that the devotees and yatris present at Jammu Yatri Bhawan in Haridwar on the eve of Somavati Amavasya (30th December 2024) overwhelmingly appreciated Pawan Kumar Shastri for donating this new bus service, which will greatly benefit the pilgrims.

Many blessings were showered upon him, and prayers were offered for the success of this noble cause.

Pawan Kumar Shastri, while speaking on the occa-

sion, mentioned that the launch of Sudarshan Channel from Jammu Yatri Bhawan itself has progressed significantly and has now become a prominent national channel under the leadership of Suresh.

He also expressed his thanks to all the visiting dignitaries for their participation in the event, making it a memorable occasion.

He further acknowledged that Suresh is a renowned figure not only in India but also internationally, especially for raising his voice in favor of Sanatan Dharma.

The stage was managed by Gurdas Sharma, General Secretary/Treasurer of Jammu Yatri Bhawan, who also conveyed his thanks to the visiting dignitaries and the press representatives for covering this significant event.

Katra Shutdown: CCI Jammu urges administration to initiate dialogue with all stakeholders

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A meeting of the office bearers of the Chamber of Commerce & Industry (CCI) Jammu was held on Tuesday at Chamber House, under the Presidentship of Arun Gupta, to discuss the situation arising from the call given by the Sangrash Samiti for a complete shutdown against the proposed ropeway project and the extension of the Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway beyond Katra. The office bearers expressed concern over the hardships faced by thousands of pilgrims visiting the holy shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi since December 25, as well as the negative impact this ongoing agitation is having

across the country.

In light of the situation, the Chamber urged the administration to initiate an unconditional and meaningful dialogue with all stakeholders to find an amicable solution.

The aim should be to address the concerns and sentiments of the people of Katra while considering the future development of the Mata Vaishno Devi pilgrimage, especially given the involvement of women and children in the ongoing protests.

The meeting was attended by Anil Gupta, Senior Vice President, Rajeev Gupta, Junior Vice President, Rajesh Gupta, Secretary, and Rajesh Gupta, Treasurer.

DB stays selection on one post of Process Server in Distt Court Reasi

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Division Bench (DB) of High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, comprising Justice Sanjeev Kumar and Justice Puneet Gupta has stayed the selection of one of the posts of Process Server in the District Court Reasi.

The direction came in a writ petition filed against High Court of J&K & Ladakh by one Vardhan Sharma through Senior Advocate Raghu Mehta challenging the selection and appointment for the post of Process Server in the District Court Reasi.

The Division Bench observed that the short affidavit filed on behalf of the Registrar General indicates that the selection process for the posts impugned in the petition has been made 100% by way of interview/Viva-Voce

only. "It is the trite law that any selection made on the basis of Viva-Voce only is not permissible and has the tendency of converting merit into demerit", the DB further observed and passed on directions that the selection and appointment of Respondent No. 4 namely Bakhtawar Iqbal, son of Mohd Iqbal, resident of Thuroo Tehsil Thuroo district Reasi is stayed. However, selection of Respondent No. 3 Saifullah, son of Abdul Qayoom, resident of Thuroo Tehsil Thuroo shall remain subject to the outcome of the instant petition, the court added.

The Court also held that the it would like to take a larger view in the matter after a detailed reply affidavit is filed by the respondents and listed the case for next hearing on February 7, 2025.

DB closes PIL regarding non-recruitment to posts of gazetted cadre in UT of Ladakh on Govt Assurance

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In the social media a letter addressed to the Chief Justice of this Court has surfaced seeking intervention of this Court qua the issues regarding non-recruitment to the posts of gazetted cadre in the UT of Ladakh during the last five years, thereby causing distress and uncertainty among the educated youth of Ladakh who are eagerly waiting for the opportunities to contribute to the governance and development of the region. In the said letter it is stated that failure to carry out the recruitment against the gazetted cadre posts amounts to violation of the principles of natural justice and is in direct contravention of Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution of India.

A Division Bench of Jammu & Kashmir and

Ladakh High Court Srinagar Wing comprising Chief Justice Tashi Rabstan and Justice MA Chowdhary closed PIL as the Government assured that recruitment to the Gazetted Cadre posts in the Union Territory of Ladakh would commence promptly.

When the PIL came-up for hearing, DB observed that in the present PIL, the petitioners have sought intervention of this Court concerning the non-recruitment to the posts of Gazetted Cadre in the Union Territory of Ladakh over the past five years, which has led to significant distress and uncertainty among the educated youth of Ladakh.

Kachroo Manzoor Ali Khan, petitioner No. 2, has submitted that during a high-powered committee, chaired by the Union Minister and attended by

eight representatives each from the Leh and Kargil regions, who are members of the Leh Apex Body and Kargil Democratic alliance, the Government assured that recruitment to the Gazetted Cadre posts in the Union Territory of Ladakh would commence promptly.

DB after hearing both the sides and observed that in light of the above, it is clear that the authorities are actively addressing the grievances raised by the petitioners in this PIL.

DB observed that this Court finds it appropriate to dispose of this PIL at this stage, as the authorities have acknowledged and are taking steps to resolve the grievances of the petitioners. However, the petitioners are granted liberty to seek revival of this PIL if their grievances remain unresolved.

Shoddy, compromised investigation in criminal case is wedded from inception to checkmates at every stage: HC

HC quashes, refers matter to CBI for investigation

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Justice Rahul Bharti of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court, while hearing petitions seeking quashment of FIRs, observed that a shoddy and compromised investigation of and in a criminal case is wedded from inception to checkmates at every stage of trial and fated to be failure be it at its very inception or at the end.

Investigation of/in a criminal case is not meant to be customized as per noted script of an FIR so as to compulsively come up with a final police report following and fitting the FIR script because that scenario would only mean by cutting and editing of facts, a final police report under Section 173 of the Code of Criminal Procedure gets generated by an Investigating Officer without probing all the

facts in terms of all its leads and linkages be those, stated or silent ones.

Justice Rahul Bharti made this observation in the context of a tangled web of allegations, counter-allegations, and compromised police work that unfolded in three interconnected criminal cases, shedding light on the critical role of meticulous investigation in the pursuit of justice.

Three petitions came to be filed under Section 482 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, challenging police investigations and subsequent legal proceedings arising from FIRs lodged by the involved parties. In the instant case Ajay Kumar Sareen, a probationary public prosecutor and Civil Judge designate accused Rohit Krishan Bhat of an assault, and, conversely, allegations of harassment,

stalking, and assault leveled against Sareen by Ragini Rajput, the wife of Bhat.

The first FIR, lodged on January 23, 2024, accused Rohit Bhat of attacking Sareen with an iron object, resulting in injuries. Days later, a counter-FIR was filed by Rajput, alleging Sareen's persistent harassment and assault.

Amid these conflicting narratives, glaring flaws in the police investigations came to light, prompting judicial scrutiny as Justice Bharti highlighted the procedural discrepancies and factual inconsistencies that marred the integrity of the investigations.

Commenting on the compromised investigation and procedural lapses that came to fore on the scrutiny of the record Justice Bharti emphasized that a compromised investigation fails to serve justice and

remarked, "A final police report, known in popular practice & parlance as challan, under section 173 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973... if presented bearing lame and loose-end facts based narrative... renders itself self-exposed to suffer a reality check... be it before the very criminal court before which it gets presented and filed or even when same happens to come under scanner of this court's inherent jurisdiction."

Observing that the present cases exemplified abuse of legal processes, with the protagonists resorting to fabricated narratives the court stated, "The present three cases are live exhibit of an abuse of process of law with relish by resort to unabashed fabrication of and flirtation with facts... equally nursed and prompted by dereliction of

investigative approach by the Police Station Janipur, Jammu, acting and conducting as if investigation of a criminal case is an exercise in theatrics with superficiality."

Criticising the lack of coherence in evidence collection and case preparation as noted in the case at hand the court observed, "that the investigation of a criminal case is not meant to be exercise in theatrics with superficiality involving set standard compilation of papers by stitching of bunch of so called examinational statement/s of person/s to be cited as prosecution witness/es, seizure memo/s, arrest memo/s etc., least mindful and bothered as to whether purported fact/s, as stated in a final police report... is/are leading and connecting, immediately and/or intermediately, with relevant fact/s."

Noting the delay in filing complaints and presenting evidence, which weakened the credibility of both parties the court said that the purported exercise at the end of Ragini Rajput that FIR No. 0024 of 2024 got registered against Ajay Kumar Sareen seems to be a made-up narrative holding no persuasive effect to have any taker for that and all seems to be an after-thought to get the FIR registered in the matter.

Highlighting the police's failure to consolidate investigations of interconnected FIRs, Justice Rahul Bharti remarked, "...for the same very day's incident of January 23, 2024 with respect to two versions relatable to three actors... two simultaneous but opposite side looking investigations by different investigating officers got into effect, first FIR followed by second, least

bothering the SHO Police Station Janipur to spare his consideration to the fact that the investigation relatable to two allegedly reported incidents in terms of FIR No. 0020 of 2024 and FIR No. 0024 of 2024, involving a serving prosecution officer/a prospective civil judge junior division and a woman complaining of wrong to her person at the hands of said prosecution officer, ought to have been taken either by himself under his own investigation"

Underlining that justice cannot be served through compromised investigations, the court emphasized that the role of the police is to generate factual and unbiased reports that provide a clear basis for prosecution or defense. In the absence of such diligence, the accused and the victims alike are left at the mercy of a flawed system, which

neither upholds justice nor serves the larger public interest, High Court reasoned.

After examining the deficiencies in the investigations, the Court quashed the police reports in both FIRs. It ordered a fresh investigation into FIR No. 20 of 2024 to be conducted by Police Station Pacea Danga within two months. FIR No. 24 of 2024 was transferred to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) with instructions to complete the probe within 90 days.

Justice Rahul Bharti further directed that any delay in completing the investigations must be justified by the investigating authorities through a formal application for an extension. To ensure transparency, the Police Station Janipur was instructed to transfer all case records to the CBI.