

Railway Tickets via QR Code on employees' jackets during Maha Kumbh

■ SHAHZAD AKHTAR

PRAYAGRAJ: The Uttar Pradesh government is working towards making Maha Kumbh 2025 a digital and eco-friendly Maha Kumbh. In this direction, the Indian Railways is going to take a unique initiative in this direction. Prayagraj Railway Division will provide the facility of making digital rail tickets from the jackets of railway employees for the first time in Maha Kumbh.

Due to this initiative, Indian Railways has made a unique and wonderful beginning which is worthy of praise because due to this initiative, the devotees coming to Maha Kumbh will not have to stand in long queues for tickets. Also, the railway administration will also get some relief in the process of making tickets. Apart from this, Indian Railways has already made meaningful efforts to make the digital



Maha Kumbh a success by releasing a toll free number, website and

Maha Kumbh Mela app. Keeping in mind Maha Kumbh 2025, North Central Railway has made special arrangements for the convenience of the devotees coming to Prayagraj. Prayagraj Division of North Central Railway has started an innovative initiative to make the ticketing process simple and easy using digital technology. Talking about this, Senior PRO of Prayagraj Railway Division, Amit Malviya said that during the Maha Kumbh, the employees of the commercial department of the railways will be deployed on special duty wearing green jackets at Prayagraj Junction. A QR code will be imprinted on the back of these jackets, which devotees can scan from their mobile and download the UTS mobile app directly. This app will provide passengers the facility to book unreserved tickets without standing in line.

With this initiative of Prayagraj Railway Division, devotees will be able to get tickets easily while avoiding long lines at the railway station. This process of ticket booking through digital payment will not only save time but will also keep lakhs of devotees coming to Maha Kumbh away from the problem of ticket line.

According to railway official, railway personnel will be stationed at various important places in the railway premises wearing jackets with QR codes, so that devotees can easily book tickets. Also, through QR code, passengers will be able to avail ticket booking as well as other facilities. This initiative of North Central Railway is an important step towards Digital India and Digital Mahakumbh, which will also provide a unique and pleasant experience to the devotees coming to Mahakumbh 2025.

LG & CM urged to clear GPF, Gratuity, Commutation Bills of pensioners, employees

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The All J&K +2 Lecturers Forum has expressed deep concern over the delayed disbursement of crucial financial benefits to pensioners and employees, urging the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, and Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, to intervene.

The forum, led by President Pardeep Singh Rakwal, Chairman Ghar Singh, General Secretary Gh Nabi Malik, and other senior leaders, has called for immediate release of funds to district treasuries to clear the long-pending dues, including GPF (General Provident Fund), Gratuities, Commutation, and Leave Encashments.

The forum leaders have voiced their resentment over the persistent delay, stating that pensioners and employees are facing unnecessary hardships, having to wait for almost a year to receive their hard-earned savings. The delay is not only depriving them of interest on their money but also causing undue stress, especially for those facing urgent financial needs like marriage expenses, surgeries, or home repairs.

The forum further highlighted that many pensioners have approached them for assistance, as they are burdened with large financial obligations and are left empty-handed due to the non-availability of funds at the treasuries. The situation

has become untenable, with senior citizens enduring prolonged suffering.

Additionally, the forum president for Kishtwar District, Pardeep Koul, has urged the government to release the 3% Dearness Allowance (DA) installment due from July 2024. He expressed dissatisfaction over the delay, particularly as the central government is preparing to release another DA installment from January 2025, while J&K employees remain unpaid for the previous installment.

The forum has appealed for the urgent intervention of the Lieutenant Governor and Chief Minister to resolve these issues and bring relief to pensioners and employees.

Randhawa discusses effective roadmap for BJP's unprecedented victory in Delhi Polls

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Senior BJP leader and MLA Bahu Constituency, Jammu, Vikram Randhawa on Friday addressed a crucial strategy meeting held in New Delhi to deliberate on preparations for the upcoming Assembly elections.

The meeting, attended by senior BJP leaders and party workers, focused on chalking out an effective roadmap to ensure the party's robust performance in the forthcoming polls. Discussions revolved around grassroots engagement, and addressing public grievances to consolidate the BJP's position across constituencies.

Speaking on the occasion, Randhawa emphasized the significance of inclusive development and the need to connect with every section of



MLA Bahu Constituency, Vikram Randhawa addressing meeting at New Delhi.

society to address their concerns. "The BJP remains committed to delivering on its promise of good governance, transparency, and equitable development for all. Our agenda will be people-centric, focusing on progress and prosperity for every citizen," he said.

Randhawa reiterated the transformational changes ushered in under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, particularly in Jammu & Kashmir, post the abrogation of Article

370. He asserted that these reforms have laid the groundwork for peace, stability, and growth in the region, which will be a cornerstone of the party's campaign.

The senior BJP leader further underscored the importance of maintaining a direct connect with the people, saying, "Our strength lies in our grassroots cadre and our unwavering commitment to the aspirations of the common man. The upcoming elections will be another

opportunity to reinforce our vision of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas'."

Randhawa expressed confidence in the BJP's ability to secure a decisive mandate in the upcoming polls, highlighting the achievements of the party at both the Central and State levels. He also urged party workers to remain united, proactive, and dedicated to strengthening the BJP's outreach and ensuring maximum voter engagement.

Congress had least respect for Dr. B.R. Ambedkar: Balbir

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: BJP spokesperson and former vice chairperson, Balbir Ram Rattan, while discussing the splendid contribution of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in framing the Constitution of India, alleged that Congress did not show any respect, always sidelined him and undermined his towering personality.

Balbir Ram Rattan said that the nation is going to celebrate 75th Constitution Day this year, and the total neglect and disrespect to Dr. Ambedkar by the Congress need to be highlighted. The people of marginalized classes should take a pledge to defeat Congress at every level and in every field as it was the political party, which ruled the country for decades together after independence but did not deem it necessary to hon-



BJP spokesperson, Balbir Ram Rattan speaking in a meeting.

our Dr. Ambedkar, while it gave Bharat Ratna to own people like Jawahar Lal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi.

He was talking to a group of SC community members about the milestones achieved by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar during his struggle for life.

He said that the principal architect of the Indian Constitution, visualized a framework that safeguards the rights of marginalized communities, including Scheduled Castes (SCs),

Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs). Today crores of members of these communities are leading dignified life due to the efforts of Dr. Ambedkar only.

Balbir said that the Indian Constitution is a living testament to Dr. Ambedkar's relentless efforts to eradicate caste-based discrimination and promote equality. He got included few Articles in the Constitution to prohibit discrimination based on

caste and emphasized the need for special measures to uplift disadvantaged groups. The abolition of untouchability marked a revolutionary step toward social justice and equality.

Balbir pointed out that recognizing the historical injustices faced by SCs, STs, and OBCs, the Constitution has provision for reservation in education, employment, and political representation. These measures have been instrumental in bridging the socio-economic gap and fostering inclusivity. One of Ambedkar's greatest accomplishments was his role in drafting the Indian Constitution. As the Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee, he ensured that the Constitution enshrined principles of equality, liberty, and social justice, he said.

Congress to go whole hog in coming ULB elections: Karra



JKPCC Chief Tariq Hameed Karra with ex-corporators and contested candidates.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: JKPCC Chief Tariq Hameed Karra has asked the Ex-Corporators and last contested candidates of the party of Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC), to defend the basic idea of India.

Addressing the Ex-corporators and contested candidate of Jammu Municipal Corporation here today, JKPCC chief said that the Congress philosophy is based on the basic idea of India and the Constitution, which believes in unity in diversity.

PCC president took the feedback about the organizational affairs and party structure at the grass root level. He listened to the views of Ex-corporators/contested candidates and asked them to strengthen Congress Party

in their respective wards. He advised them to listen to the problems of people and bring these problems to the notice of senior leadership of the party and the administration for redressal.

He said that it is the prime duty of Congress Party and its workers in every nook and corner of the country to counter the fake & false propaganda against basic idea of India and against secular ideology always promoted by our leadership.

He said that the Congress philosophy is based on the basic idea of India which believes in unity in diversity as propounded by our great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Moulana Azad & Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar.

He asked the party leaders and workers to get ready for intensifying our struggle for restoration of statehood, which is the right of people of J&K.

Those who attended the meeting include Kanta Bhan, Bhanu Mahajan, Satish Sharma, Narinder Gupta, Dwarka Choudhary, Kamal Singh Jamwal, Rajinder Singh Jamwal, Rajesh Sharma, Pritam Singh, Kulbushan Sharma, Dewan Chand, Rashpal Bhardwaj, Surinder Singh Dutta, Som Raj, Hoshiyar Singh, Sunil Kumar, Rajesh Paul, Shashi Kumar, Paramjeet Singh and others.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) regarding difficulties of deaf and dumb population of Paralkote village in Poonch, A Division Bench of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court comprising Chief Justice Tashi Rabstan and Justice Rajesh Sekhri while disposing of the PIL, directed additional steps are required to be taken, which are deemed necessary in the present case Establish Primary Health Centres (PHCs) in the village with facilities for early screening of hearing disorders.

Implement screening programs for newborns to detect congenital hearing loss. Provide cochlear implants and hearing aids for affected children and adults. Conduct regular health camps and establish permanent centers for rehabilitation and speech therapy. Collaborate with Central Government schemes to provide cochlear implants for children from low-income families. Raise awareness on integrating ear and hearing care into PHCs and train health-care workers accordingly. DB further expressed the respondents to implement these

measures in a time bound manner, not only for the residents of Paralkot Village but also for identifying and addressing similar issues in other areas of the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

While disposing of the PIL, DB observed that the State Government (now U.T.), through the Commissioner/Secretary to Government, Health and Medical Education Department, School Education Department; Deputy Commissioner Poonch; Block Development Officer Mandi, Poonch; and District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Poonch, was made party respondents in the PIL. They were directed to physically inspect Village Paralkot and submit a detailed report regarding the accuracy of the claims made in the report along with the measures undertaken to alleviate the difficulties of the affected residents. Subsequent to this Court's directions, a report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer (CEO), Poonch, and Zonal Education Officer (ZEO), Mandi, following their visit to Paralkot

Village on December 8, 2018. The report revealed that out of 16 differently-abled individuals in the village, only 3 were of school-going age.

These children, though hard of hearing, were provided hearing aids. A trained teacher specializing in Braille and sign language was posted in the school to assist these children. However, the report failed to specify the names of the school(s) and the teacher(s).

The Chairman, DLSA Poonch, submitted a report dated December 3, 2018 to the Member Secretary, J&K Legal Services Authority. The report detailed that the Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Poonch, conducted immunization and other medical programs in the area. Efforts were made towards identifying the root cause of the hearing and speech impairments, providing hearing aids, and organizing medical camps. Disability certificates and pensions of Rs 1,000 per month were also sanctioned for the affected individuals. The report acknowledged the absence of road connectivity to the hamlet and clarified that Paralkot is not a standalone village but a hamlet of Village Sawjian, comprising 139 residents.

The Director Health

Services, Jammu, in a report dated December 27, 2018, stated that significant action had been undertaken on the directions of this Court.

The Advisor to the Governor of J&K directed the involvement of a team of ENT specialists, an audiologist, and a genetic expert from Government Medical College, Jammu to examine the cases. Blood samples of 22 individuals were collected and analyzed at the Human Genetic Research and Counseling Centre, University of Jammu, in collaboration with the School of Biotechnology, SMVDU, Katra.

The findings suggested potential genetic factors contributing to the impairments. Hearing aids were distributed, and water samples were collected for toxicology studies.

Following the Court's directions, the Advisor to the Governor, accompanied by officials, visited SDH Mandi on December 9, 2018. Directions were issued to the Health Department and Medical College to conduct detailed research on the causes of the impairments and to implement preventive and rehabilitation measures, including speech therapy and skill development training. The Social Welfare Department, in a status

report dated December 11, 2020, proposed vocational skill development courses for rehabilitation. A revised proposal dated July 16, 2021, with an estimated cost of Rs 19.50 lakh, was submitted to the Finance Department for approval. The department, in coordination with the local Panchayat, identified two trained girls to provide training in the affected areas.

By March 30, 2022, 22 individuals had been covered under the Integrated Social Security Scheme, receiving Rs 1,000 per month in financial assistance. Vocational training programs such as carpentry, tailoring, and mushroom cultivation were initiated, with Rs 9.75 lakh sanctioned for implementation.

In a report dated May 23, 2023, it was revealed that further genetic studies indicated the potential role of two specific genes in the impairments due to geographical isolation and inbreeding. A proposal for Rs 7.50 lakh was submitted to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, GOI to extend the research.

Based on the reports so far submitted, this Court observed that several measures have been undertaken to mitigate the challenges faced by the residents of Paralkot Village.

KPC hails Amit Shah's recognition of Kashmir's Ancient Vedic Legacy

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Kashmiri Pandit Conference (KPC) has lauded Union Home Minister Amit Shah for his recognition of Kashmir's ancient Vedic heritage during the inauguration of "Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh Through Ages," a historic work authored by Ragendra Tanwar.

Shah's acknowledgment of Kashmir's spiritual connection with Sage Kashyap and its deep-rooted Hindu-Buddhist legacy marks a significant step in restoring the region's rich cultural and civilizational heritage, which has long been overshadowed.

KPC President Kundan Kashmiri, along with other prominent leaders, including M.K. Raina, Dr. H.L. Saraf, Tej Pandita, Susheel Bhat, and R.K. Raina, expressed deep appreciation for Tanwar's monumental work.

His extensive research has

shed light on the invaluable contributions of Kashmiri Hindus, Buddhists, saints, scholars, and vibrant trade practices, offering a much-needed corrective to historical distortions. This work restores the rightful place of Kashmir in India's cultural narrative, highlighting the region's influence on Hindu and Buddhist thought and its significant role in shaping the intellectual and spiritual legacy of Bharat.

The KPC commended Amit Shah for linking Kashmir's identity to Kashyap and its ancient Vedic origins. This acknowledgment not only celebrates the region's historical significance but also calls for the protection of its unique cultural identity.

The KPC emphasized that this recognition is an urgent reminder of the need to safeguard the heritage of Kashmiri Pandits—the rightful inheritors of this her-

itage. On this historic occasion, the KPC reaffirmed its longstanding demand for the creation of a separate 'Kashyap Bhoomi' within the Kashmir Valley.

This demand seeks the safe return of displaced Kashmiri Pandits to their ancestral land, where they can live in harmony, preserving their traditions, cultural values, and spiritual ethos.

A Kashyap Bhoomi would ensure the protection of their identity and the revival of their temples and shrines.

The KPC called upon Amit Shah and Prime Minister Narendra Modi to take immediate action in acknowledging this demand and ensuring the dignified rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits in their ancestral homeland, with full constitutional safeguards to guarantee their security, empowerment, and representation.

IGNOU makes mandatory for students seeking fresh admission to create DEB ID

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) has released the guidelines for creating a DEB (Distance Education Bureau) ID. DEB ID is a mandatory step for students who wish to enrol in an ODL/Online programme at the university. The university notified that DEB ID shall be created by all learners as per the UGC guidelines. The DEB ID is a unique number which will be provided by the University to each student seeking admission in the University for ODL as well as Online programmes. The admission portal of IGNOU is already open till January 31, 2025 and can be accessed on <https://ignouadmission.samarth.edu.in/>.

The UGC mandates every student enrolling into online and distance education courses

to register for DEB ID. Students who are planning to apply for any of the IGNOU programmes are now required to create a DEB ID at the time of admission. DEB ID is helpful when students plan to change their university and transfer their accumulated credits to the new university. Students who have dropped out of their course can continue from where they left off within 7 years of their dropout year, if they have a valid DEB ID. Students first need to register for the Academic Bank of Credit (ABC ID), then use it to create their DEB ID. This is an initiative of the Ministry of Education, Govt. of India, with a sole purpose of creating a digital medium for students for their academic credits. This system is beneficial for those students who need to change their college after one or two years, or even those

who drop-out of college and decide to take re-admission after some time. The Academic Bank of Credit system is a digital credit storage system where with every semester, candidates can store their earned credit and use this later on, if required. It is worth noting that the ABC system is not only useful for storing credit, but it also works as a mode of student verification, maintaining an authentic and confidential way to manage student credits.

"The purpose of the DEB ID is to ensure that students are taking admission in the Open and Distance Learning/Online programmes of the Higher Educational Institutes which are recognized by the UGC", said Dr. Sandeep Gupta, Regional Director, Regional Centre Jammu.