

District BJP Udhampur hails VB G-RAM-G Act as historic rural reform

STATE TIMES NEWS
UDHAMPUR: The District BJP Udhampur on Sunday hailed the newly enacted VB G-RAM-G Act as a historic and transformative step towards genuine rural empowerment and sustainable development.

Addressing a press conference, Deputy Leader of Opposition Pawan Kumar Gupta, along with MLA Chenani Balwant Singh Mankotia, MLA Udhampur East Ranbir Singh Pathania, MLA Ramnagar Sunil Bhardwaj and District BJP President Arun Gupta, termed the Act a decisive improvement over the existing MGNREGA framework. The leaders stated that although MGNREGA promised 100 days of employment, the ground reality remained far from satisfactory, with workers receiving barely 45 to 50 days of



BJP leaders addressing the media on VB G-RAM-G Act in Udhampur.

work.

They alleged that the scheme suffered from chronic payment delays, fake muster rolls and contractor-driven execution, which diluted its original intent.

In contrast, they said, the VB G-RAM-G Act replaces this "paper guarantee" with a legally enforceable assurance of 125 days of employ-

ment, supported by strict accountability, transparency and time-bound implementation.

Highlighting the key provisions of the Act, the BJP leaders said it restores the supremacy of Gram Sabhas in planning, execution and monitoring of works, ensuring genuine decentralisation of power. Wage payments,

they added, will be made within a fixed timeframe, with automatic compensation in case of delays. Measures such as social audits, geo-tagging of works and digital monitoring have been incorporated to eliminate corruption and leakages.

They further said that the Act expands the scope of

employment from only unskilled labour to include semi-skilled and skilled work, thereby creating dignified livelihood opportunities, particularly for rural youth and women. Emphasis has also been laid on the creation of durable and productive rural assets, including water conservation structures, irrigation facilities, rural roads and community infrastructure.

Such assets, the leaders said, would strengthen village economies, boost agricultural productivity and help curb distress migration from rural areas. Rejecting allegations that the legislation is anti-poor; they clarified that the Act is not an abolition of MGNREGA but a comprehensive reform and upgrade aimed at ending exploitation, eliminating middlemen and ensuring optimal utilisation of public funds.

Vibrant Lohri celebrations enthrall GCW Udhampur



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UDHAMPUR: The Cultural Committee in collaboration with the Department of Music, Government College for Women (GCW), Udhampur, jointly organized the celebration of Lohri Festival in the college campus with great enthusiasm and traditional fervour under the aegis of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC). The programme commenced with the lighting of the sacred bonfire. The Principal of the college, Dr. Nalini Pathania, along with senior faculty members, teaching and non-teaching staff and students, offered Aarg to the holy fire, seeking prosperity, peace and well-being.

The celebration was marked by vibrant cultural performances by the students, who enthralled the audience with energetic folk dances on the rhythmic beats of the dhol. The lively performances created an atmosphere of joy, unity and cultural pride among the participants.

Dr. Nalini Pathania highlighted the cultural

and agricultural significance of Lohri, describing it as a festival symbolizing gratitude to nature and the spirit of unity and sharing. She emphasized that such celebrations play a vital role in preserving India's rich cultural heritage and in fostering harmony, social bonding and respect for traditional values among students. She appreciated the efforts of the Cultural Committee and the Department of Music for organizing such a vibrant programme. The entire programme was efficiently coordinated by Dr. Shivani Suri Verma, Associate Professor and Convener, Cultural Committee, Yash Kumar, Assistant Professor, Department of Music and Sunil Magotra Assistant Professor, Department of Hindi. Among others present on the occasion were Dr. Monika Gupta, Prof. Lekh Raj, Dr. Anita Gupta, Dr. Geetanjli Rajput, Prof. Rewa Lakhotra, Dr. Mool Raj, Prof. Swarna Devi, Dr. Preeti Dubey, other faculty members, non-teaching staff, and a large number of students.

GDC Thannamandi celebrates National Youth Day

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THANNAMANDI: The Red Ribbon Club in collaboration with NCC Unit and Department of Zoology of Government Degree College (GDC) Thannamandi celebrated National Youth Day with fervor and enthusiasm as part of Viksit Bharat @2047 Abhiyan here today.

On this occasion a symposium cum quiz activities organized under the patronage of College Principal Prof. (Dr.) Shamim Ahmed Azad. Dr. Shiraz Ahmed, Nodal Officer, Red Ribbon Club in the college co-ordinated the event wherein Dr. Ashaq Malik, was the Resource person.

Prof. Shamim Ahmed Azad, the main inspiration behind the Youth Day celebration, emphasized upon the development of qualities displayed by Swami Vivekananda within youth for a stronger and healthier nation and the world. He appreciated the entire organizing team for paying tribute to Swami Vivekananda by organizing varieties of activities and spreading message of inspiration, unity and confidence building among the youth.

In his comprehensive lecture, Dr. Ashaq Malik deliberated upon the life history, works and contribution of Swami Vivekananda in promoting universal brotherhood and toler-

ance among all sections of society. The 1893 historic speech of Swami ji at World Parliament of Religions at Chicago that started with "sisters and brothers of America" and other stories of confidence, self-realization, tolerance, spiritualism, unity and patriotism, and his contribution to take Vedanta and Yoga to western world were part of presentation. Dr. Nizakat Hussain co-ordinator IQAC also highlighted the contribution of swami-Vivekananda in the field of teaching and its relevance in the present-day life. In the symposium, students participated enthusiastically and focused upon the importance of self confidence and how to ignite the self to impact the world.

Earlier, Dr. Shiraz Ahmed introduced the audience about the programme. Dr. Nagina Kouser and Prof. Rizwana Kouser conducted the proceedings of the programme whereas Prof. Romy Dar presented formal vote of thanks.

Prominent among other present on the occasion were Dr. Naseem Ahmed, Dr. Goher Iqbal, Prof. Altaf Hussain, Prof. Gulshan Rashid Bhat, Dr. Mohd Ashraf, Dr. Mohd Atteq, Dr. Meenakshi Sharma, Dr. Shazia Poswal and Dr. Yasmeena Kouser, Dr. Shahid Mehmood, Dr. Athar Aziz Raina and others.

Col Mahan leads Swami Vivekananda Jayanti programme at Mahanpur

STATE TIMES NEWS

MAHANPUR: A vibrant and inspiring programme to mark the 163rd birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda Ji Maharaj was held at Mahanpur Tehsil in Kathua district, with Col Mahan Singh (Retd), Chairman, District Development Council (DDC) Kathua, taking a leading role in the celebrations.

The event featured a floral tribute and an interactive goshti highlighting the life, philosophy, and contributions of Swami Vivekananda. The programme was attended by Col Mahan Singh, noted social activist and Sang Chalak Billawar Hari Singh, Rajinder Jaswal, BJP District General Secretary (Pahari Zila Basohli), Sulekha Sharma, BNP District Vice President, along with Sham Singh Bhadwal, Ajay Singh, promi-



Col Mahan Singh (Retd) and others paying floral tribute to Swami Vivekananda on his birth anniversary at Mahanpur, Kathua.

nent citizens, and a large number of youth.

Addressing the gathering, Col Mahan Singh praised Swami Vivekananda as a great patriot and visionary who united society through the ideals of Indian civilisation, nationalism, tolerance, and brotherhood. He urged the youth to adopt Swami Vivekananda's philosophy in their lives by setting clear

goals, serving society, and developing strong moral and human values. He stressed that the teachings of Swami Vivekananda are highly relevant even today in building a disciplined, united, and progressive nation.

Hari Singh also spoke on the occasion and highlighted the lasting impact of Swami Vivekananda's thoughts on Indian society. He said that

despite living a short life, Vivekananda awakened the world and spread the message of "Vasudev Kutumbakam", the idea that the whole world is one family. The programme concluded with the distribution of books and literature on Swami Vivekananda among the youth, along with an appeal to spread his teachings and ideals across socie-

ty. Later, Col Mahan Singh, along with other BJP leaders of Pahari Zila, addressed a press conference to explain the objectives and spirit of the newly passed VB-G-RAM-G Act by the NDA Government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, highlighting its importance for grassroots development and good governance.

SPPND GDC Samba organises Run for Unity March on National Youth Day



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SAMBA: Shri Pandit Prem Nath Dogra Government Degree College (SPPND GDC), Samba, in collaboration with the District Administration, Samba, organised a vibrant Run for Unity March to mark National Youth Day, commemorating the birth anniversary of the great spir-

itual leader Swami Vivekananda. The event was jointly organised by the NCC and NSS units of the college. The march witnessed enthusiastic participation of around 50 NCC cadets and NSS volunteers, along with faculty members. The Run for Unity March was flagged off by the Principal, Prof. Dr. Nirlape Kour, from the col-

lege campus, passed through Samba Fort, and culminated at the Rani Sugheta Singh Stadium, symbolising unity, discipline and national integration. Participants carried banners and placards highlighting the ideals and teachings of Swami Vivekananda, spreading messages of youth empowerment, patriotism

and social harmony among the public.

On the occasion, Prof. Dr. Nirlape Kour appreciated the coordinated efforts of NCC ANOs Dr. Mamta Devi and Dr. Nidhi, and NSS Programme Officer Prof. Kamlesh Bala, and acknowledged the valuable support extended by the District Administration, Samba. She urged the youth to imbibe Swami Vivekananda's ideals of strength, character and selfless service in their lives.

The event concluded with a collective pledge by the participants to uphold unity and actively contribute towards nation-building, reflecting the true spirit of National Youth Day.

Residents of Magnar hold protest against PMGSY and Jal Shakti Dept

STATE TIMES NEWS

POONCH: The residents of Magnar village on Saturday staged a protest against the Poonch administration, PMGSY and the Jal Shakti Department, expressing strong resentment over poor road connectivity and acute water scarcity in the area. Raising slogans against the government, the villagers highlighted what they termed as official apathy towards their long-pending demands.

Speaking to media persons, the protesters said that a road project from Hayatpura to Kalsa, sanctioned in 2022, has remained confined to official records. Despite repeated assurances from the authorities, no groundwork has been initiated, leaving the village virtually cut off, especially during the rainy season and extreme weather conditions.

The villagers said Magnar has a population of around 1,200 people who face



Residents of Magnar village protesting against poor road connectivity and water scarcity in Poonch.

immense hardship due to the absence of a proper road. The lack of connectivity has severely affected access to healthcare, with residents forced to carry patients on their shoulders for long distances to reach the nearest hospital.

Besides road issues, the villagers also complained of severe drinking water scarcity. They alleged that the Jal Shakti Department has failed to provide a regu-

lar and reliable water supply, forcing women and children to walk long distances to fetch water.

The protesters urged the District Administration Poonch, particularly the Deputy Commissioner, to personally intervene and ensure early execution of the road project and resolution of the water crisis, warning of intensified protests if their demands remain unmet.

BGSBU celebrates National Youth Day



Registrar Abhishek Sharma with NCC cadets and faculty during National Youth Day celebrations at BGSBU, Rajouri.

STATE TIMES NEWS

RAJOURI: Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University (BGSBU), Rajouri, celebrated National Youth Day with great enthusiasm and reverence to commemorate

the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, the great philosopher, thinker, and youth icon of India. The event was organized by the NCC Unit of the University.

Registrar BGSBU, Abhishek Sharma, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest and paid rich tributes to Swami Vivekananda, recalling his timeless teachings on youth empowerment, character building, and nation-building. He emphasized that Swami Vivekananda's vision continues to guide the youth of the nation in the present era of rapid technological and social change.

While addressing the

gathering, the Registrar highlighted the decisive role of youth in shaping the destiny of the nation and urged students and NCC cadets to imbibe the values of discipline, self-confidence, dedication, and service to society as advocated by Swami Vivekananda. He encouraged them to combine knowledge with strong moral values to become responsible citizens and future leaders.

Earlier, Dr. Parvez Alam, Chief Proctor, BGSBU, delivered the welcome address. Dr. Shreekar Pant also spoke on the occasion. Faculty members, officers of the NCC Unit, staff, NCC cadets, and students participated in the programme.

Heightened vigilance after suspicious drone activity; Republic Day in focus

STATE TIMES NEWS

POONCH: Security has been tightened across Poonch district following reports of suspicious drone activity from across the border during the intervening night. As part of enhanced precautions, police on Monday set up a special security naka (checkpoint) at Idgah Chowk, where vehicles and pedestrians were subjected to thorough checking.

The heightened alert comes ahead of the Republic Day celebrations on January 26, with authorities determined to prevent any untoward incident. Police personnel closely monitored movement in the area, while similar checking drives were launched at other strategic locations, including entry and exit points, markets, and other sensitive zones.

Official sources said the naka was established as a precautionary measure to further strengthen the security grid and ensure public safety. Patrolling has also been intensified to maintain law and order in the district.

Police have urged the public to cooperate during checking, carry valid identification documents, and promptly report any suspicious activity to the nearest police station. Authorities reiterated that all necessary steps are being taken to ensure a peaceful and incident-free Republic Day in Poonch.



Media workshop on Bal Vivah Mukti Bharat campaign held

STATE TIMES NEWS

KISHTWAR: Under the directions of the Deputy Commissioner Pankaj Kumar Sharma, a Media Sensitisation Workshop on Bal Vivah Mukti Bharat campaign was on Monday held at Dak Bungalow Kishtwar.

The workshop was organised to sensitise media persons to their crucial role in preventing child marriage and spreading awareness among the masses.

The programme commenced with a welcome address and an introductory address on child marriage by Protection Officer (NIC) -DCPU Touseef Iqbal Butt.

The Chairperson Child Welfare Committee Sheetal Nain Sharma briefed the participants about the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA)-2006, the role of the Child Welfare Committee in preventing child marriage cases and the role the media can play in reporting such cases to relevant departments.

Senior Journalist Asif



Media sensitisation workshop on Bal Vivah Mukti Bharat campaign at Dak Bungalow, Kishtwar.

Iqbal Naik emphasised parental responsibility and said that parents must ensure proper care and protection of their children.

"The Bal Vivah Mukti Bharat campaign should be extended to the far-flung and outlying areas of the district to ensure that no child is left vulnerable to early marriage. Awareness programmes must reach remote villages where access to information remains limited,"

insisted Senior Journalist Rajesh Chander.

The media representatives actively participated in the session and assured their full cooperation in supporting the Bal Vivah Mukti Bharat campaign.

The District Child Protection Officer administered a pledge to all participants to stand united against child marriage. The programme concluded on a positive note with a resolve to build a child marriage-free district.

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