

LBA takes out peaceful rally against alleged forceful conversion in Ladakh

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

LEH: Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA) took out a peaceful rally in Leh on Wednesday against the recent alleged conversion case in Zanskar and accused the district administration of Kargil and the administration of the Union Territory of Ladakh for failing to restore the girl to her community and parents.

The rally that took out from Chowkhang Vihara culminated on historic Pologround where LBA leaders addressed a mammoth gathering.

People from villages from Alchi to Shara participated in large numbers.

At the end of the rally, the LBA submitted a memorandum to Home Minister Amit Shah through Advisor to the Lt Governor of the Union Territory of Ladakh requesting for ending alleged discriminatory attitude towards the Buddhist Community in Ladakh.

The LBA also raised the



LBA activists taking out rally.

Central Institute of Buddhists Studies issue and the refurbishment of historic Chowkhang Vihara along with many issues concerning language, culture and heritage.

The memorandum reads, "The Buddhists always demanded separation from Kashmir for the safeguard of our faith, language, culture and our way of life. We did all these because of our trust and faith in the Indian democracy and the hope that the constitution of the land will protect the interests of the miniscule minorities like ours. The Parliament of

India amended the article 370 and abrogated 35-A to confer UT status to Ladakh liberating from years of slavery, discrimination, misrule, victimization and mental agony. We madly celebrated the conferment of UT status as our joy knew no bounds. But, alas! Our happiness proved to be short lived and a mirage. We were very soon made to realize that we had in fact lost what we had under the most ruthless and cruel regimes of the Abdullas and the Muftis. We, then, could play the minority card to extract some concessions and considerations from the

cruel regimes that, sometimes, yielded to our demands thinking that we were being taken care of by the central government."

It also noted that the LAHDC Act 1995 had empowered Ladakhis in respect of protection of land, job, culture and economic development to some extent. "Ladakh, especially Leh District, has been made to suffer from neglect and administrative apathy ever since it was carved out into a Union Territory. It is difficult to understand the reasons but it is obvious that the apathy is deliberate and the ill treatment is calculated. The UT administration has even curtailed the authority of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council and has disempowered it significantly. It exists in name now with wings clipped. Ladakh has no popular system of governance and the insensitive bureaucrats have made our lives miserable through

arrogance and irresponsibility," it added. LBA further alleged in its memorandum that the incident of conversion in Zanskar could have been handled sensibly after the girl was recovered but the UT government allowed things to take an ugly turn by its biased attitude and gross mishandling of the case at the possible cost of vitiating the tranquil atmosphere of Ladakh.

LBA, therefore, requested the Government of India to enact a proper anti-conversion law for Ladakh for protection of the miniscule Buddhist Community. "Needless to mention, we, the buddhists of Ladakh, had clearly expressed our desire to remain a part of India even before the accession treaty was signed by the Maharaja of J&K in 1947," the memorandum reminded.

Similar peaceful rallies were also reportedly held at Nyoma, Tangtse, Khalsi, Padum Zaskar and Mulbeg Kargil.

Expert spreads awareness on 'Cyber Security, Privacy Awareness' at GDC Kunjwani

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: An expert from the IT Branch of Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India on Wednesday spread awareness on 'Cyber Security, Privacy and Awareness' programme organized by the Government Degree College, Kunjwani here.

An official communiqué issued said that the awareness programme on the topic "Cyber Security, Privacy and Awareness" was organized on the directions of the Principal of the college, Prof Hans Raj wherein Satish Sharma, Field Officer at IT Branch of Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India was the key speaker.

Sharma in a threadbare discussion made the audience aware of types of cyber crimes and also

unveiled aspects of security data including software and data security.

Further, he discussed different virus attacks, damages caused by them and the procedures to cure and prevent them and talked about the measures taken to minimize the threats to personal privacy posted by computers and the internet.

Prof. Hans Raj in his address emphasized on the need of cyber awareness in the present era and paid gratitude to the resource person for enlightening the participants.

The technical support for the programme was provided by Dr Ashaq Hussain and Dr Manjeet Singh. Dr Neeru Sharma moderated the programme whereas Dr Rohini Jamwal presented the vote of thanks.

NSS unit of GCET Jammu starts three-day Special Winter Camp



NSS volunteers along with faculty members during a camp at GCET.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The NSS unit of Govt. College of Engineering & Technology (GCET), Jammu kick started a three-day Special Winter Camp today under Clean India Campaign, an initiative of Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports to commemorate Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav- Celebration of India's 75 years of Independence. The camp started under the patronage of worthy principal of the college Dr. Sameru Sharma. The activities to be organised in this camp are signature campaign for awareness about COVID appropriate behaviour; cleanliness drive, awareness about non communicable diseases in

the adopted villages and visit to the nearest water bodies to clean its surrounding. On day one signature campaign created for awareness about various COVID SOPs and clean India programme. The signature campaign was started by the principal followed by the staff of college with NSS volunteers. While addressing the students she stressed upon different COVID appropriate behaviours like maintain distance, greet without physical contact, wear mask, avoid crowded places and unnecessary travel, discourage crowd & encourage safety etc.

Under clean India campaign the volunteers cleaned the grounds parking areas by pick-

ing up plastic items like wrappers, plastic bottles, poly bags etc. The camp was organized by NSS volunteers Mandeep Singh, Paras Gupta, Sakshi Bhat, Vijay Rathore, Pratham Choudhary, Mohd Sami, Jaanvi Sharma, under the guidance of NSS Programme officer Dr. Raman Gupta.

He applauded and congratulated all the NSS volunteers for their excellent work. He also asked them all to carry on the cleanliness Campaign throughout the campus and surrounding. The principal of the college also congratulated the team NSS for their sincere efforts to raise the awareness of various programmes among common people.

Scientists develop molecule that blocks COVID infection

■ AGENCY

LONDON: Scientists have developed a new molecule that attaches to the surface of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and prevents it from entering human cells and spreading the COVID-19 infection.

The researchers at Aarhus University in Denmark noted that the molecule is cheaper and easier to manufacture than the antibodies currently used to treat COVID-19, and to detect viral infection using rapid antigen tests.

The molecule, described in the journal PNAS on Tuesday, belongs to a class of compounds known as RNA aptamers and is based on the same type of building blocks that are used for mRNA vaccines.

An aptamer is a piece of

genetic material DNA or RNA that folds into a three dimensional (3D) structure that can recognise a specific target molecule of interest.

By attaching itself to the virus surface, the RNA aptamer prevents the spike protein from serving as a key that allows the virus to enter a cell, the researchers said. The RNA aptamer is not a new type of vaccine but a compound that can potentially stop the virus from spreading in the body once someone is exposed to the virus, they said. The efficient binding to SARS-CoV-2 virus also means that the aptamer can be used to test for COVID-19 infection, according to the researchers.

"We have started testing the new aptamer in rapid tests and we expect to be able to detect

very low concentrations of the virus," said study lead author Jorgen Kjems, a professor at Aarhus University.

Studies in cell culture show that the aptamer works against the previous variants of coronavirus that the researchers tested.

"Since we submitted the article for peer review, we have continued our studies and been able to show that it also recognises the Delta variant," Kjems noted.

"Now we are waiting for samples of the newly identified variant, Omicron, so we can test whether the aptamer also recognises that," he said.

Due to its small size and chemical stability, the newly developed aptamer holds potential as an alternative to antibodies and nanobodies targeting spike protein, the researchers added.

Varinderjeet deputed to campaign in Punjab for BJP

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Jammu & Kashmir Vice-President Varinderjeet Singh has been deputed to campaign for party candidates in Taran Taaran District of Punjab State in the forthcoming elections.

Another senior Sikh leader of the party from Jammu and Kashmir Kulwant Singh Bhatti has also been given the similar task. Taran Taaran District of our neighbour state has four assembly seats and both these leaders have returned to Jammu after spending three days in the district for getting themselves familiar with the local leaders and activists besides the party's organizational setup.

Varinderjeet Singh told that the election dates are expected to be announced soon for Punjab with other four states of the country and the party at the national level has directed

its state units to identify the experienced and senior leaders to campaign in their neighbour states for the victory of the candidates. Varinderjeet Singh further said that the ground situation is in favour of BJP and the contesting candidates will surely register their victories with huge margins. The BJP will get majority in the assembly polls and we will have our government in Punjab, he said and added that the good works done by the BJP government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi has received appreciation from the Sikh Community.

He said that opening of Kartarpur Corridor and facility of rope way for Hemkund Sahib Yatra are among the list of many such works of the Union Government, which are highly appreciated among the Sikh community in Punjab.

Women's contribution in development can never be overlooked: Kavinder

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Senior Bharatiya Janata Party leader and former Deputy Chief Minister Kavinder Gupta chaired a review meeting of Party's Mahila Moreha at Party headquarters, Trikuta Nagar here on Wednesday.

During the meeting, Sanjita Dogra President J&K Mahila Moreha presided over while Munish Sharma Incharge All Morehas; Anuradha Charak Parbhari; Venu Khanna Seh Parbhari; Urvashi Gupta General Secretary were also present.

While addressing the meeting, Kavinder Gupta appreciated the efforts of Women Wing in strengthening the party bases across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. He said that the



Former Dy CM Kavinder Gupta and others during a meeting.

Women Wing of the Party will continue to play a significant role in transformation of the Union Territory in future also.

The former Dy Chief Minister asserted that the Party has granted due representation to the women cadre in every sector including politics, Legislatures (Parliament and Assembly) and in the previous regime in J&K.

Moreover, several schemes have been launched both by

J&K UT as well as Central Government aimed at empowering women and ensuring their a dignified life, he added.

Kavinder Gupta emphasized that history stands witness to the brilliance of women in politics, journalism, medicine, social work, warfare, art, culture, engineering, sports, home-making, belt forces rather in every field. He said women's contribution in the development of the nation can never be overlooked but the time has come to ensure their due participation in various law making bodies so that they could do justice to their fellow citizens. He appealed to the women of Jammu and Kashmir to come forward and participate in politics enthusiastically and work

cate further.

Prof. J.P. Sharma, Vice Chancellor directed the officers to prepare the DPR as per the suggestions proposed in the meeting to discuss further with the higher authorities for its successful implementation for the benefit of farming community of rainfed areas of Jammu region.

Other scientists and officers of the line departments who were present in the meeting included Dr. Vijay Bharti, Senior Scientist, WMRC; Dr. Sushmita Dadhih, Assistant Prof., Ag. Engg.; Arvind Baru, Chief Agriculture Officer, Jammu; Kuldeep Singh, SCA, CAD; Parveen Nagar, Project Officer, SWM, CAD; Mukesh Khajuria, Project Officer, CAD; Chander Shekhar, Ag. Asstt. CAD; Pradeep K. Sharma, SMS; Narinder Singh, SCA CAD and Sh. Vivek Mahajan, SCA CAD. Dr. Mahital Jamwal, Deputy Director Research and meeting Rapporteur presented vote of thanks.

VC SKUAST chairs meeting for Soil & Water Conservation in Rainfed areas of Jammu

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-J, Prof. J.P. Sharma on Wednesday chaired a meeting to discuss the roadmap for 'Soil and water conservation in rainfed areas of Jammu region' at Chatha, here on Wednesday involving directors and officers of the line departments and concerned scientists of the university.

Dr. Pardeep Wali, Director Research welcomed and introduced all the participants.

Dr. R.K. Srivastava, Associate Professor made a power point presentation of his work done on the Water Conservation Technologies in kandi areas of Jammu region under his DST-seed project.

Ram Savak, Director Horticulture, appreciated the work done by the scientists and success obtained by the farmers for enhancing their farming income besides recharging of ponds and enriching the soil moisture through such technologies.

Rajinder Singh, Director



VC, SKUAST-J, Prof. J.P. Sharma chairing a meeting.

Command Area Development, desired to visit the project sites along officers and the concerned scientists of the project to have an on-farm experience of the technologies implemented for their further replication.

Chief Horticulture Officer, Jammu Sarabjit Singh informed that the existing rate of subsidies to the farmers under Government Schemes are very low and needs revision for their proper implementation.

Prof. J.P. Sharma asked the officers and scientists for mapping of the suitable regions and crops for implementation of the technologies

and to prepare a DPR for popularization of the same through convergence mode by involving Agriculture, Horticulture, Rural Development and other concerned departments.

Dr. Sushil Sharma, Prof. & Head, Agricultural Engineering proposed community as well as individual water harvesting tanks depending upon the requirements and topography of the region and land holding of the farmers.

Ram Savak proposed that each department may take the development in 50 hectares area initially through convergence mode and repli-

Theatre workshop begins at Natrang Studio



Theatre Director, Aarushi Thakur Rana lighting ceremonial lamp.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: International production oriented theatre workshop inaugurated here on Wednesday at Natrang Studio Theatre, Jammu with the lighting of ceremonial lamp by the senior functionaries of Natrang Suresh Kumar and Neeraj Kant.

Being organized by Natrang for the benefit of theatre enthusiasts of Jammu and Kashmir; the workshop is being conducted by Aarushi Thakur Rana who is an England based Theatre Director, Writer and Actor.

Speaking at the occasion, Secretary Natrang Neeraj Kant informed that Natrang has chalked-out a series of training/orientation programmes for the youth and children to provide them a platform to explore and express their creativity.

This endeavour of Natrang also aims at filling the gap of the hindered training and practice opportunities because of corona crisis. He complemented the expert directors/trainers who have come forward to enlighten the theatre aspirants with their vast experience.

The workshop director Aarushi Thakur Rana is a professional Theatre Director, Writer and Actor based in the United Kingdom.

Those who are attending the workshop include Brijesh Avtar Sharma, Meenakshi Bhagat, Palshin Dutta, Diksha Pandita, Sushant Singh Charak, Gautam Sharma, Mohit Kaul, Asma Gul, Sonali Dub, Vasudha Sawhny, Vikram Dharia, Raghav Singh, Abhinav Singh Rajput and Sanket Bhagat. The workshop is being coordinated by Mohd. Yaseen.

DB disposes of PIL seeking safe, clean drinking water to people

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by two practicing advocates Adv Aditya Sharma and Adv Rameshwar Padha to Government to provide clean and safe drinking tap water to people, a Division Bench of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court comprising Chief Justice Pankaj Mithal and Justice Javed Iqbal Wani disposed of Public Interest Litigation as Advocate General informed that a comprehensive project for providing clean drinking water is under consideration and will soon be implemented in a phased manner.

In the PIL, it has been submitted that Government is duty bound to provide clean and safe tap water but it had miserably failed to do so which is a violation of the right to live life with dignity of people of Jammu and further submitted that a survey was conducted by BIS

(Bureau of Indian Standards) whereby samples were collected from across Jammu city and as per the reports, tap water of Jammu city came out to be of worst level and stood at rank two among worst quality tap waters as samples failed against parameters laid down by BIS.

In PIL, it has been further submitted that there are various findings by Supreme Court whereby time and again specific directions have been issued to the authorities to ensure provision of clean water and further held that it is duty of authorities to protect water sources from pollution and encroachment.

Court was also apprised of the fact that after Delhi, Jammu is the second worst city in providing safe drinking tap water and is an alarming situation as is the main reason for causing diseases like cancer, heart attacks that too in younger generation.

JUNTEA executive body dissolved, Rakesh Chib sacked from President's post

Organising Secretary to make arrangements for elections

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A meeting of Working Committee of Jammu University Non-Teaching Employees Association (JUNTEA) was called by Organizing-cum-Publicity Secretary which was attended by a number of office bearers and executive members. In absence of Rakesh Chib President JUNTEA, Gurmeet Singh, Vice-President presided over the meeting.

While addressing the meeting, General Secretary JUNTEA, Amit Gupta said that it has been observed that there is no co-ordination and mutual trust between members of

Working Committee and President JUNTEA due to which employees are suffering badly as their genuine issues and demands are not being addressed in time. "To maintain the sanctity of Union so that no further damage is done to general cause of Non-teaching employees," General Secretary has proposed that executive body of JUNTEA 2021-23 should be dissolved with immediate effect in pursuance of Rule 17 (i) of Constitution of Union and as per Section 27 of Indian Trade Union Act, 1926," he asserted and sought votes of the members in this regard. After voting, eight execu-

tive body members out of total strength of twelve supported the proposal moved by General Secretary as the President JUNTEA has not been following democratic way of proceedings and used to utilize Union office for various works without taking members into confidence. As such, it was resolved that Non-teaching Employees Union (2021-23) should be dissolved. The motion of dissolution of Union was also presented before the General Body and accordingly a notice was issued as per which, no incumbent earlier holding any position of Working Committee of JUNTEA will

continue to hold the office of Union except Organizing-cum-Publicity Secretary, who has to look after arrangements for holding next elections as per the Constitution. It was further directed that Organizing-cum-Publicity Secretary will take charge from Cashier till new executive body assumes the office.

Prominent office bearers and executive members present during the meeting included Gurmeet Singh, Gursharan Singh, Joginder Singh, Organizing-cum-Publicity Secretary, Kewal Kumar, Rakesh Kumar, Swarn Deep and Deepak Anand.