

LG attends historic Jhiri Mela; pays obeisance to Baba Jitto

Highlights Yuva Vani initiative providing opportunity to youth to lead from front in agri, allied sector

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday attended historic Jhiri Mela and paid obeisance to Baba Jitto at his Samadhi in Jhiri Village.

The Lt Governor congratulated the devotees and all stakeholders for the successful conduct of the Jhiri Mela.

He said the annual fair organized in the revered memory of Baba Jitto and Bua Kodi brings devotees from various states together to share eternal values of truth, compassion and respect to farmers for their priceless contribution to the society.

"The simplicity of Baba Jitto, his vision as an enlightened soul, his life's work as a farmer is an integral part of our spiritual-cultural ethos. His sacrifice for social justice and equality has been so profound that it has influenced many generations across the country," the Lt Governor said.



Lt Governor Manoj Sinha paying obeisance to Baba Jitto at his Samadhi in Jhiri Village.

He called upon the Youth to recognize and internalize the values espoused by Baba Jitto and contribute in building an egalitarian society, free from the exploitation and discrimination.

It will be a real tribute to Baba Jitto that we dedicate ourselves to build an ideal and developed society, he said.

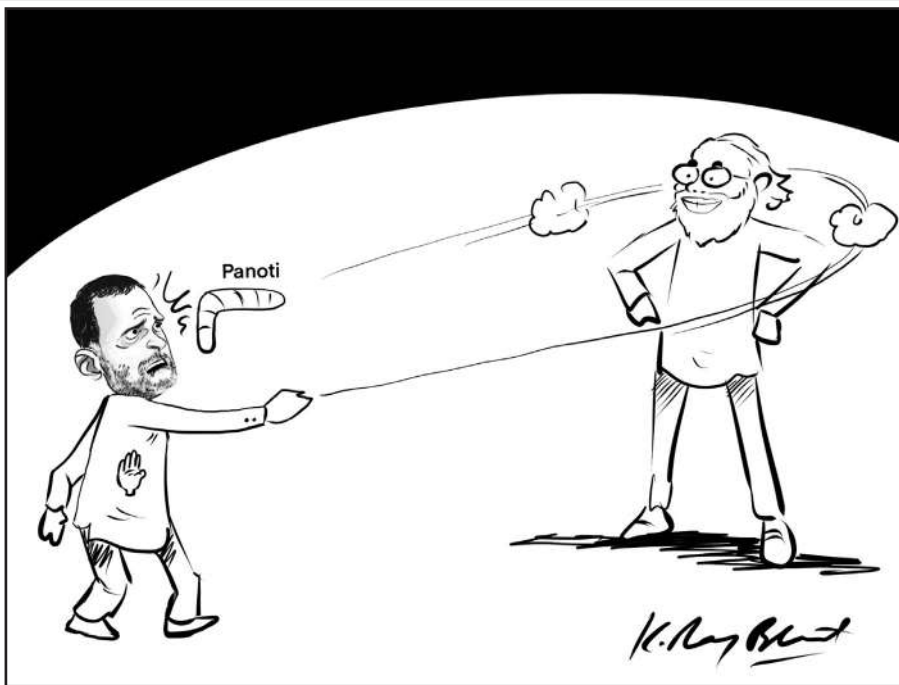
Reiterating the resolve of UT

Administration towards the socio-economic empowerment of farming community, the Lt Governor said the Holistic Agriculture Development Program and other farmer-centric reforms introduced by the administration are dedicated to the virtuous ideals of Baba Jitto. Yuva Vani initiative of J&K Administration provides opportunity to youth

to lead from the front in agriculture and allied sector. Young agri-preneurs with the hard work, commitment, skilling and financial support would be the architects of a glorious future of J&K UT, he said. The Lt Governor also impressed on the PRI representatives, social organizations and various stakeholders to actively participate in govern-

ment's endeavours for extension of the benefits of schemes and programmes to build a strong support system for the entire farming community.

On the occasion, the Lt Governor felicitated progressive farmers, agri-preneurs and officials engaged in the conduct of Jhiri Mela. He also inaugurated a Farmer Produces Organization - 'The Nari Shakti' from Teshil Mandal, Satwari. Artists presented enthralling performances showcasing the rich art and culture of the region. Bharat Bhushan, Chairman District Development Council Jammu; Yasha Mudgul, Commissioner/Secretary to the Government, Cooperatives Department; Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Shakti Pathak, DIG, JSK Range; Sukhmandan Choudhary, former Minister, PRI members, and people from all walks of life were present.



Agriculture Department Kashmir celebrates World Soil Day 2023 Awareness programs on Soil Health should be organised among farmers: Dir Agriculture

■ MASROOR AHMAD
SRINAGAR: Agriculture Department Kashmir on Thursday celebrated World Soil Health Day 2023 across the Kashmir division. The main function was held at Agriculture Complex Lalmandi Srinagar which was inaugurated by Director Agriculture Kashmir Chowdhury Mohammad Iqbal.

While addressing the main function Director Agriculture said that organising soil day provides us with an opportunity to pay attention and address the issues and challenged confronting this finite resource (Soil).

Maintaining the standard of soil and ensuring that the quality of soil is healthy is every one's responsibility. Industrialization and poor land management system have degraded the quality of soil in many places, further leading to soil erosion, drop in fertility and loss of organic matter, he said.

Director Agriculture Highlighted the importance of soil for human survival. He said the world Soil Health Day 2023 is celebrated every year to ensure that people are informed about the significance of maintaining the quality of soil and how important it is in our life and food system.

Director Agriculture said,



that farmers should be made sensitive towards the improper soil management practices. He said the health of the soil has direct impact on our own health therefore all possible efforts should be put in place, so that this most important natural resource could be preserved for generation to come.

Director urged the concerned Chief Agriculture Officers to conduct awareness programme regarding Soil Health Management. He directed the concerned officers to regularly monitor the progress on the "Soil Health Card Scheme" and ensure that farmers are managing their cultural practices as per the recommendation of Soil Health card. He said the best possible way to celebrate this day is to generate awareness about the soil health among the farmers at grass root level for sustainability of agriculture production.

Pertinently world soil Day is celebrated annually on December 05 and every year this day is celebrated as a

crucial reminder of the importance of soil health and the need for concerted efforts to protect and manage this vital resources sustainably. It highlights the often overlooked role of soil in supporting life on Earth and emphasizes our responsibility for future generations to preserve this essential asset.

Joint Director Agriculture Extension G.M Dhobi, Joint Director Agriculture Inputs Tabassum Naz, Chief Agriculture Officer Srinagar Manohorlal Sharma, District Agriculture Officer Srinagar Gulzar Ahmad Shah, Nodal Officer Zero Budget Natural Farming Sheikh Imran, Assistant Bio-Chemist Srinagar, Asifa Nabi also expressed their views on the occasion. A Large gathering of Farmers were also present in the function.

Beside Holding functions at District level World Soil Day 2023 was celebrated at Sub-Division and zonal levels across the Kashmir Division.

Lecturers' Forum calls on Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary Pitches for regularisation, ACP, end to Inchargeism

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: A delegation of All J&K +2 Lecturers' Forum led by President, Pardeep Singh Rakwal and under the guidance and patronage of RS Salathia (Chairman of All J&K +2 Lecturers' Forum) called on Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary J&K, at Civil Secretariat here on Tuesday.

The delegation comprised of Ghar Singh (General Secretary), Gh Nabi Malik (Legal Advisor), Kamal Lal (Chief Organizer), Ramesh Padroo (senior leader of the Forum), Bal Krishan Tickoo (Sr leader) and others.

The delegation gave ceremonial welcome to the Chief Secretary who is the proud son of the soil, by presenting a bouquet on behalf of All J&K +2 Lecturers' Forum.

The delegation besides presenting memorandum, had a detailed discussion with Dulloo on variety of issues being confronted by the officers of +2 cadre.

The issues that were raised by the Rakwal-led delegation include Regularisation of all



All J&K +2 Lecturers' Forum delegation calling on Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary J&K.

incharge lecturers in one go by granting one-time exemption in permission, Grant of ACP, end to Inchargeism culture once for all, provision of Non-vocational status to Principals, Putting an end to harassment to lecturers by transferring them during Academic Session and keeping Transfer Window open for the full academic session, Provision of Interaction & Orientation Programmes for lecturers outside UT for an effective implementation of NEP 2020, Restoration of JKPBOSE & SCERT Quota, etc.

On regularisation, "the forum said that the department of School Education has unnecessarily raised the issue of permission from Administrative Department. The forum said that Permission Granting Powers have been delegated to Directors and even CEOs & ZEOs by Administrative Department itself from time to time. They added that I/C officers have been regularised till recently having permission of Directors. They further said that the elevated lecturers are supposed to be regularised

within 6 months of their elevation but the department just repeatedly asks for formalities and then goes into deep slumber. The HRM section keeps on updating seniority lists and then no DPC is convened. The forum in the memorandum said that this is actually a ploy being adopted by the officers and officials of the Administrative Department SED for years together to stall the regularisation process under a deep conspiracy. I/C lecturers have retired and many left for heavenly abode without getting confirmed and their families are running from pillar to post to seek justice." Who is responsible for this", asked the forum. "What is the HRM Section in SED doing? What is the Nodal Officer of HRM section doing? Instead of working for convening DPC to order regularisation, they are contemplating & conspiring to delay the process of regularisation. That is why the department has asked for Vigilance Clearance, APRs, Work Conduct and Integrity Certificate, five times in last

three years" said the delegation.

The forum strongly advocated for grant of Assured Career Progression in favour of officers of +2 cadre to deliver justice to this class of officers.

The memorandum has also urged Chief Secretary to fill up all vacant posts of lecturers, Principals and CEOs.

Dulloo heard the delegation patiently and thanked the delegation for congratulating & welcoming him on his taking over as Chief Secretary of the UT. He went through the memorandum presented by the delegation of All J&K +2 Lecturers' Forum keenly and assured the visiting delegation that he would look into the issues raised by the forum for their speedy disposal within shortest time frame. He himself put a note for Principal Secretary SED, Alok Kumar for taking appropriate action on the points raised by the Forum in the memorandum.

The meeting ended on a good note and the delegation requested for another meet with Dulloo as a follow up.

Apni Party dedicated to ensuring peace, prosperity in J&K: Bukhari



JKAP President, S.M.A Bukhari welcoming newly joined members.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
SRINAGAR: Apni Party President, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari, on Tuesday, said that the Apni Party is dedicated to working for peace, prosperity, and development in Jammu and Kashmir. He made these remarks during his address at a joining programme held at the party headquarters in

Srinagar. The occasion marked the inclusion of Ashiq Hussain Bhat, a prominent political hailing from Chanapora constituency, and a former corporator from Hyderpora.

Bhat, along with his supporters joined the Apni Party at this event. While extending a warm welcome to the new entrants, Bukhari stat-

ed, "We are committed to working for peace, prosperity, and development in Jammu and Kashmir-our primary agenda. I assure you that this party will prove to be a reliable platform for you to advance this agenda and serve the people in your respective areas."

He appealed to like-minded individuals to join hands with the Apni Party to further strengthen it, enabling the implementation of its people-friendly agenda. He stated, "Anyone who wants to join us in helping implement our mission for peace, prosperity, and development in Jammu and Kashmir is welcome. Our doors are open to all, and I am confident that together, we will succeed in our mission."

J&K Bank commissions ATMs in Doda, Ganderbal

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Going ahead with its ease-of-banking mission, J&K Bank has commissioned two Automated Teller Machines (ATM), one each at Bhaderwah in district Doda and Manasbal in district Ganderbal. The two machines will cater to the cash needs of the locals besides public at large.

Deputy Commissioner (Doda) Harvinder Singh inaugurated the ATM at Seri, Bhaderwah in the presence of Zonal Head (Doda) Fayaz Ahmad Bhat, while as, in Manasbal Deputy Commissioner (Ganderbal) Shyambir cut the ribbons in presence of the Zonal Head (Budgam) Saadut Hussain. The inaugural functions were attended by a gathering of large number of people that included elected public representatives, valuable customers, senior citizens and residents of both the areas besides officials of the Bank.



DC Doda Harvinder Singh inaugurating J&K Bank ATM at Seri and DC Ganderbal Shyambir at Manasbal.

While lauding the contribution of J&K Bank in rendering the world class services to the people of J&K that includes installation of the ATM at Seri, Deputy Commissioner (Doda) said that the facility of ATM will definitely help the people in withdrawing the cash beyond the banking hours and even on holidays. He advised the people to avail the banking

facility as per their own convenience.

Reaffirming the bank's commitments, Zonal Head Fayaz Ahmad said that the J&K bank is on its mission to provide world class banking facilities and services to the people of J&K, irrespective of their location and status, thereby connecting them to the world of banking.

While inaugurating the ATM, the DC Ganderbal emphasized the importance of easy access to banking services for the overall development and welfare of the area. The DC also commended J&K Bank for its efforts in expanding its network to reach out to remote areas of the district.

Zonal Head Saadut Hussain said that the newly inaugurated ATM will provide convenient banking services to the people of Manasbal besides the visiting tourists. It will enable residents to withdraw cash, check their account balance and perform various other transactions without having to travel to distant bank branches.

Those present on both the places thanked and expressed their gratitude towards the Bank management for providing efficient and reliable banking services to the people, which they said, will definitely enhance the bonding of the people with the J&K Bank.

Secretary Tourism holds interactive session with Maharashtra Tour Organisers Association, Tourism stakeholders

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
KATRA: Dr. Syed Abid Rasheed, Secretary Tourism, conducted an interactive session with participants from the Maharashtra Tour Organisers Association in Katra, who were on their FAM tour.

The four-day Familiarization Tour spanned Bhaderwah, Jai Valley, Guldanda, Patnitop, and Katra, concluding in Katra. The tour was flagged off from the Directorate of Tourism Jammu on 1st December.

The event was graced by the Officers including Director Tourism Vivekanand Rai, DC Reasi Vishesh Pal Mahajan, Joint Director Tourism, Sumaina Sharma Mehta, CEO KDA, Gopal Sharma, AD Tourism Katra, Mohd. Arif Lone (JKAS).

Secretary Tourism, Abid

Rasheed, highlighted the pivotal role of stakeholders.

With a tourism influx exceeding 1.97 crore until November 2023, primarily from Katra, he emphasized the need to give opportunities to pilgrims for exploring other tourist destinations around Jammu.

Stressing the importance of homestays, he advocated for democratizing the tourism sector, promoting adventure tourism, and addressed the Prasad scheme for making Katra a Model Town. He appreciated the Directorate of Tourism Jammu for their efforts in identifying new adventure activities and stretches/areas, along with other commendable initiatives in the tourism sector.

Director Tourism highlighted the indispensable role of tourism stakeholders, calling



Dr. Syed Abid Rasheed, Secretary Tourism interacting with participants from the Maharashtra Tour Organisers Association in Katra, who were on their FAM tour.

for a symbiotic relationship and a holistic approach. He encouraged coordination with stakeholders from the film industry for tourism promotion and invited active participation in the New Year to boost tourism in the region.

Deputy Commissioner Reasi discussed transformative changes, emphasizing collabo-

rative efforts, showcasing the Chenab Railway Bridge's engineering marvel and promoting rafting activities. He expressed gratitude for adventure activities introduced by the Department and urged MTOA to collaborate for further promotion.

During her address, Sumaina Sharma Mehta emphasized the

department's unyielding dedication to diversify tourism experiences. In addition, She shared specific recommendations for running water rafting stretches across various regions. These include thrilling routes such as Prem Nagar to Suspension Bridge in Doda, Shiv Mandir to Kundal in Kishtwar; Baradari Bridge to

Dera Baba Banda in Reasi, Balfiaz town to Poonch in Poonch, and Tawi from Rajouri to Hidayat Pura in Rajouri (depending upon water levels). These additions are poised to elevate the adventure tourism landscape, offering enthusiasts exciting opportunities to explore and experience the untamed beauty of these

stretches. In this vibrant exchange, the Maharashtra Tour Organisers Association's FAM tour marked a significant chapter in the promotion and exploration of Jammu's rich tourist offerings. Expressing gratitude, Vishwajeet Patil, President of Maharashtra Tour Organisers Association, extended heartfelt thanks to the Tourism Department for the enlightening FAM trip. He shared invaluable experiences, insights, and offered constructive suggestions, contributing to a mutually enriching exchange. During the event, Rakesh Wazir, President Hotel and Restaurant Association Katra conveyed sincere appreciation to the Secretary of Tourism for the impactful measures initiated by the Tourism Department. He also expressed gratitude for the

enriching interaction, recognizing the department's commendable efforts in advancing the tourism sector. Also in attendance were prominent figures including Sham Lal Kesar, Senior Vice President of Hotel and Restaurant Association Katra; Virender Qesar, Senior Vice President; Shiv Kumar Sharma, Senior Vice President; Kaushal Magotra, President of Patnitop Hotel Association; Arun Sharma, President of SMVD Press Club; Vishwajeet Patil, President of Maharashtra Tour Organisers Association; Udhay Kadam, Vice President; and Rajan Parekh, General Secretary, Shabir Zargar, President Bhaderwah Tour and Travel Association, Ali Jaffrey, Manager Skyview by Empyrean, Patnitop.