

Sakeena emphasises importance of fostering creativity, innovative mindset among students

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
SRINAGAR: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, on Tuesday emphasised the critical importance of nurturing creativity and innovative mind-set among the students in order to aspire for a economically developed Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister made these comments while addressing School Education department's (SED) 'PRA-GAASH - Nurturing Innovation Ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir' event at Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC) here.

The event was organised by SED in collaboration with NITI AYOJ, UNICEF and Pi-Jam Foundation with an objective of fostering a thriving innovation culture and creating a conducive ecosystem for students and tech enthusiasts in Jammu and Kashmir.

Addressing the large gathering of Principals, Chief Education officers, Lecturers, Chief Masters, Teachers and young minds, Sakeena Itoo stressed on



Health Minister Sakeena Itoo lighting ceremonial lamp.

the critical importance of nurturing creativity and mind-set of young school going children in order to bring about transformative change in Jammu and Kashmir's socio-economic fabric. "The system of education is changing and days of gaining knowledge behind closed doors are gone. Young, bright school going children are now more interested in innovations and practicals apart from regular classroom activities", she said.

The Minister added that the standard of education in government schools is changing now and is at par with any private school these days. "The statistics

are evident that the government schools have produced a good number of students who have displayed their innovative products at national arena", Sakeena said.

While commending the students of J&K for innovative products on display during Pragaash, the Minister said that these creations of young minds are related to different spheres of our society like agriculture, horticulture, health care and we need to nurture them so that they can be turned into reality. She called upon the school education department, mentors and other stakeholders to handhold and guide these

young minds for replicating their products into successful commodities for public use.

The Minister also stressed on the education department and other concerned stakeholders to organise such programmes on regular basis so that the spark of innovation in our young minds is continuously lit up.

Speaking on the occasion, Principal Secretary, SED, Suresh Kumar Gupta, said that the department is dedicated to provide such platforms to school children in order to hone their talent and showcase their hidden abilities.

Addressing the gathering, Mission Director, Atal Innovation Mission, Chintan Vaishnav said that J&K is leading the Nation with innovations. He informed the gathering that against the national average of 3.18%, 36.33 % eligible schools participated in ATL marathon.

In his address, Director School Education Kashmir, Dr. G.N Itoo outlined various initiatives of the depart-

ment to boost innovation ecosystem from the school level.

Shoaib Dar, CEO, Pi Jam Foundation said, "When students forget about what time it is in an innovation lab, or when students from schools without labs use whatever materials they can find to turn their ideas into prototypes-it shows the creative potential we are nurturing."

"We are really excited about what lies ahead for the innovation ecosystem in Kashmir next year. This is just the beginning of something extraordinary," he said During the event, the Minister also felicitated students for having performed remarkably in different aspects of the event. She also felicitated the teachers and other stakeholders.

Earlier, the Minister visited the stalls displaying innovative products of more than 100 schools of Jammu and Kashmir. She interacted with the students and assured them assistance for replicating their products into successful commodities.

SKUAST-TAJ, NTEA-J call on Chief Secretary, discuss salary issue

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A joint delegation of Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology-Teaching Association Jammu (SKUAST-TAJ) and Non Teaching Employees Association Jammu (NTEA-J) under the chairmanship of Dr Vikas Sharma called on Chief Secretary of J&K Atal Dullo at Civil Secretariat, here on Tuesday.

President SKUAST-TAJ Dr Vikas Sharma informed the CS that the salary disbursement system has been disrupted in SKUAST-Jammu as the teaching and non teaching employees of SKUAST-Jammu are not getting their salaries on time from the last 1.5 years due to which they are facing financial difficulties in the very beginning of every month, even till date, the employees have not yet received their salaries for the month of November; 2024 and due to delay in release of salaries, the employees are not able to clear their dues well in time like monthly instalment of housing loan, insurance premium, school fee of children, medical treatment etc. and they have to pay more interest in



President SKUAST-TAJ Dr Vikas Sharma calling on CS J&K, Atal Dullo.

addition to their normal rate of interest.

Moreover, low paid employees are more sufferers being total dependency on salary, he said. Therefore, proper mechanism should be developed for the disbursement of salaries of SKUAST-J employees on 1st of every month to save the teaching and non-teaching staff of the university from the extra burden of interest, he added.

The joint action committee requested for additional funds to overcome salary deficit of KVK establishment as the funds on account of travel allowance, medical allowance, children allowance for the employees of KVK establishment of SKUAST-Jammu has been stopped recently by the ICAR (liable to provide only

basic salary +DA+HRA to the host Institute), which has directly impacted the payment of salaries of KVK employees. The Joint Action Committee of SKUAST-Jammu also stressed for abolition of review system for enhancing retirement age from 62 to 65 years of the Professors of erstwhile State Universities as the process has created a sycophancy / biased pick and choose resulting in humiliation and anguish amongst the teaching fraternity.

The CS assured the delegation that their issues will be considered and in future the employees of SKUAST-J will get their salary on time. Dr. Vikas Sharma was accompanied by K. D. Singh - President NTEA-J, Dheeraj Rajwal and Seema Bhatt.

Dashmesh Bhartiya Vidya Mandir celebrates Children's Day



Dashmesh Bhartiya Vidya Mandir, Dashmesh Nagar students and faculty visiting Gurudwara.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Dashmesh Bhartiya Vidya Mandir, Dashmesh Nagar, Jammu, celebrated Children's Day with great devotion, honoring the supreme sacrifice of Guru Gobind Singh's four Sahibzadas.

The event aimed to inspire students by showcasing the heroic contributions and

enduring significance of these martyrs.

The celebration began with a Nagar Kirtan, where students actively participated, spreading messages of faith and devotion. They also visited Gurudwara Sahib to seek blessings and pay homage to Guru Granth Sahib Ji. The primary goal was to raise awareness

about the school's rich cultural and spiritual heritage while instilling values of bravery, sacrifice, and righteousness in students. By honoring the Sahibzadas' legacy, the school encouraged children to embody these virtues and respect their faith, fostering a sense of unity and moral integrity in the community.

NHRSJCI, Jammu Chapter catalogues awareness program on drug addiction

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: National Human Rights Social Justice Council of India headed by its DG Advocate Zargar Patnavi organized an awareness program at Jammu in which hundreds of people and some prominent personalities participated. The main motto of the program was to provide awareness among the people and our duty to bridle this menace. The event featured several prominent speakers, who in one voice emphasized the urgent need to address the drug menace. The program aimed to educate students and the community about the devastating impact of drug abuse.

These initiatives are vital for raising awareness and providing support to those affected by addiction.

The drug addiction awareness program in Jammu was a comprehensive event aimed at tackling the growing issue of substance abuse in the region



DG Advocate Zargar Patnavi and others at a meeting.

The program included interactive session where experts discussed the psychological and social aspects of addiction. These sessions provided valuable information on how to recognize the signs of addiction and the steps to take for prevention and recovery.

This event seems powerful and inspiring, offering hope and encouragement to those currently struggling with addiction.

DG NHRSJC, Advocate Patnavi during his speech emphasized the importance of community involvement in combating drug addiction. He has been always a vocal about

the pressing issue of drug addiction, he said that local organizations, schools and volunteers can play a significant role in combating the issue.

All the speakers emphasized that counseling centers, rehabilitation facilities, and helplines can prove beneficial in controlling this issue.

Advocate Patnavi being the Visionary leader is in consultation with some well wishers for organizing this type of event where featured panel discussions with healthcare professionals, law enforcement officers, social workers, educationists and students can give suggestions for multifaceted

Deepika inaugurates Dogri Conference

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Secretary in Culture Department, Deepika Sharma, on Tuesday inaugurated a day long Dogri conference to mark "Dogri Manta Divas" at K.L. Saigal Hall, Jammu, in presence of artists and writers from across Jammu and Kashmir.

The event was organised by the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL)

The inaugural session was presided over by Padma Shri Mohan Singh. Others present on the occasion were Darshan Darshi, renowned Dogri poet, Dr. Om Goswami, eminent writer, Dr. Javaid Rahi, Divisional Head JKAACL Jammu and Reeta Khadyal, Editor Dogri.

Addressing the gathering, Deepika Sharma emphasized the government's commitment towards promoting the Dogri language and culture. She stated that 32 new schemes have been approved to advance art, culture and languages in Jammu and Kashmir. She asked JKAACL to organize a week-long



Secretary Culture Department, Deepika Sharma speaking at a programme.

Dogri Theatre Festival to engage younger audiences and instil pride in their cultural roots.

D.K. Vaid, who was guest of honour on the occasion, underscored the importance of preserving Dogri literature and culture for future generations and called for collaborative efforts to sustain its legacy. Padma Shri Mohan Singh highlighted the cultural richness of Dogri language and stressed the need for greater efforts to establish Dogri's rightful place in educational and cultural institutions. He encouraged initiatives that actively involve the youth in preserving the language. The inaugural session

concluded with vote of thanks by Reeta Khadyal.

The event presented a vibrant poetry session, which was presided over by Dr. Jitender Udhamपुरi. Others present included Prakash Premi, Om Prakash Sharma "Vidyaarthi," and Inderjeet Kesar.

Renowned poets including Vijay Verma, Balwan Singh Jamorhia, Usha Kiran Sharma and others presented their works, enriching the session with their literary contributions. A musical evening was followed, featuring mesmerising Dogri performances. Highlights included a Dogri song by Ravi Raghuvanshi, a Dogri

Suhag by Reeta Khadval and a Dogri folk song by Asha Kesar; among others. The ultimate highlight was a Dogri folk song mashup by Kusha Sharma and Chinmay Sharma, which captivated the audience.

The performances were complemented by Rakesh Anand on flute, Vijay Anand on dholak, and music composed by Ravi Sharma.

Earlier, Dr. Javaid Rahi outlined the objectives of the event followed by a keynote address by Dr. Om Goswami, who presented an insightful paper on the historical significance and evolution of the Dogri language.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In a significant cultural event, Chairman of Team Jammu, Zorawar Singh Jamwal, officially released the devotional album "Daati Tere Dar Pe Jo Bhi Aaya", a compilation of bhajans rendered by renowned vocalist Poonam Sharma. The album release function took place at Bishma, Jammu, in the presence of an esteemed gathering of music industry professionals and local dignitaries. The album is a collaborative effort between producer Avinash Sharma and Arun Sharma, with music production handled by Ravi Raghuvanshi at T.L. Music Studio. The lyrical composition for the album was provided by Jagdish Chander; while the overall album direction was managed by K.K. Films (Production). During the launch event, Zorawar Singh Jamwal extended his heartfelt congratulations to the entire production team, emphasizing the album's potential to create a substantial impact in the devotional music sector. He expressed confidence that the album would garner wide-



Chairman Team Jammu, Zorawar Singh Jamwal and others releasing album "Daati Tere Dar Pe Jo Bhi Aaya".

spread acclaim among listeners, particularly among digital audiences, and would contribute significantly to the evolution of the regional music industry. Zorawar Singh Jamwal further endorsed for the Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory's government to actively promote the integration of the music and film industries, urging for the establishment of more structured platforms to support emerging artists. He highlighted the necessity of creating avenues for the youth to engage in artistic and cultural expressions that contribute to both personal growth and societal well-being. Poonam Sharma expresses heartfelt gratitude to her family, particularly her husband, Avinash

Sharma, whose constant support and encouragement have been a source of immense strength throughout her journey. She acknowledges that this album would not have come to fruition without the dedication and creative contributions of the entire team. The

album, she believes, resonates deeply with listeners, helping them connect more profoundly with the divine.

Team Jammu Chief underscored the positive social impact of spiritual and devotional music, particularly in encouraging youth engagement in meaningful activities that foster mental wellness and reduce the likelihood of anti-social behavior. He also reiterated the importance of preserving Jammu and Kashmir's rich cultural heritage, stressing the role of communal harmony in maintaining the region's cultural integrity and collective identity.

40 vehicles challaned, 4 driving Licenses suspended for violations



MVD team during a drive.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: On the directions from Transport Commissioner J&K Vishesh Pal Mahajan and under the guidance of RTO Jammu, Pankaj Bhagotra, the Motor Vehicles Department on Tuesday conducted a comprehensive enforcement drive in Raipur Satwari and surrounding areas. More than 165 vehicles were checked during the enforcement drive out of which 40 were challaned, 01 was impounded for masking the registration number plate and 04 driving licenses were suspended under the Motor Vehicles Act and Rules. The anticipated revenue from e-challanes is INR 206,200.

The operation targeted unfit vehicles, passenger/goods vehicle overloading, mobile phone use while driving, without helmet, two-wheeler riders, altered/tampered registration plates, vehicles without documents, reckless/dangerous driving, triple riding on two wheelers and driving under the influence of alcohol. The drive was supervised by ARTO Flying Squad Bipen Singh Charak. The team consisted of Jagandeep Singh MVI and MVTA Tarunot Singh.

Driver, conductor, and vehicle owners were educated on road safety measures, preventative vehicle maintenance, and adherence to traffic regulations to promote road safety.

Randhawa, Com JMC inspect progress on development of water bodies

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Vikram Randhawa, accompanied by Commissioner, Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC), Dr. Devansh Yadav on Tuesday conducted an extensive tour of Chhanni Himmat in Jammu South to inspect water bodies being developed under Jammu Smart City Limited project and other ongoing works under the jurisdiction of JMC.

Highlighting the issue of the depleting water table, Randhawa emphasized the importance of preserving



MLA Vikram Randhawa and JMC Commissioner, Dr. Devansh Yadav inspecting works.

rainwater to aid in the replenishment of the water table. He said that coordinated efforts are needed

for effective water conservation.

The MLA emphasized that the revival of such

water bodies would significantly contribute to recharging the water table and provides recreational

spaces for the local community. He issued on-the-spot directions to the concerned authorities to initiate necessary works at these water bodies.

The Commissioner stated that the water body is being revived through water treatment, with the project being executed at an estimated cost of Rs. 2.5 crore under Jammu Smart City Limited. He highlighted the important role water bodies play in replenishing the water table and added that the government is focused on their rejuvenation, maintenance, and sanitation

under the AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation) Scheme.

Responding the demands of locals including construction of protection walls, installation of High Mast light, benches and construction of drains along the water bodies, the Commissioner said that the work would be taken up on priority.

Among others, Deputy Commissioner (South) Lal Chand, Executive Engineer, Lokesh Gupta, and other senior officers accompanied them during the tour.