

RNU, Akashvani Jammu celebrates its 55th Foundation Day

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Regional News Unit (RNU), Akashvani Jammu, celebrated its 55th Foundation Day on Saturday.

In commemoration of this historic day, Akashvani mounted special features and conducted interviews of former office bearers and news readers. On the occasion, congratulatory messages to the media unit from renowned personalities of the region were also broadcast. A special ceremony was held to felicitate staff members in various categories for their meritorious and outstanding services during 2024-25, aimed at boosting morale and professional excellence.

The programme commenced with a brief introduction of the event by senior News Reader and Translator Jagmohan Sharma, followed by the National Anthem presented by News Readers Abhilasha Sharma, and Shruti Khajuria with all participants joining in.

Guests were felicitated by RNU Head N. Gulshan Raina, Deputy Director General (Engineering), Akashvani Jammu, J. Ravikantha Babu,



Officials of RNU, Akashvani Jammu during the event on Saturday.

was the chief guest on the occasion; Deputy Director (Engineering) Sunil Chakku as Guest of Honour; Former RNU Head R.K. Raina as special guest, AD, Programme Bachan Bhagat, presented awards to the winners. Former NRT Dogri, Narendra Bhasin attended the event as a special guest. Speaking on the occasion, DDG Ravikantha Babu congratulated the RNU Jammu team on completing 55 years. He highlighted the unit's legacy of authenticity and credibility, urging the team to continue working with zeal and uphold the trust earned over

five decades. RNU Head N. Gulshan Raina congratulated everyone including staff, on RNU's foundation day, stating that RNU plays a key role in the public information system, amplifying government communications to the wider public interest. Raina also congratulated all awardees for their meritorious services and called upon the staff members to work with more zeal and dedication. Cultural performances marked the celebrations, with songs by Tarsem Kumar (MTS), and poetry recitation by Jagmohan Sharma, showcasing the talent and creativity of the RNU staff.

For the first time, a prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award was conferred to recognize individuals whose enduring contributions have significantly shaped the growth and identity of the unit. The award was presented to Narendra Bhasin, the founder News Reader and Translator (Dogri) with Akashvani Jammu, who was felicitated during the ceremony. He addressed the gathering, on the occasion and shared his insights and experiences.

Among the awardees, Abhilasha Sharma was adjudged as the best news editor for the year; and Vijay

Sharma bagged the best News Reader-cum-Translator in Dogri language, Naresh Sharma was conferred with best News Reader-cum-Translator in Dogri language (Casual).

Bagh Ali Tahir was awarded as the best News Reader Cum Translator (Gojri). In best District Correspondent category, Achin Dubey from Udhampur got the award, and Nusrat Bano was adjudged as best general staff category. Furthermore, Alam Khan (Copy Editor) and Rakesh Sharma (Driver) were conferred with awards of appreciation.

JKPYC joins JKAS aspirants' agitation, demands age relaxation and postponement of exam

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JAMMU: The J&K Pradesh Youth Congress (JKPYC) has formally extended its support to JKAS aspirants demanding age relaxation and the postponement of the Jammu & Kashmir Public Service Commission (JKPSC) Combined Competitive Examination (JKAS/CCE). With hunger strikes underway and growing uncertainty among candidates, JKPYC's support has added significant momentum to the ongoing agitation. JKPYC State General Secretary Anirudh Sawhney facilitated a telephonic interaction between the aspirants and Indian Youth Congress President Uday Bhanu Chib, who assured that the issue would be taken up urgently with the Lieutenant Governor and the government.

Youth Congress leaders, including Dr. Suhaib

Manhas, Navjot Singh, Faizan Malik, Showkat Malik, Danish Iqbal, Prince, Umar and others, emphasized that the aspirants' demands are justified and rooted in fairness. They expressed concern that thousands of candidates feel abandoned and have been forced into hunger strikes due to the lack of clarity from authorities.

The JKPYC leadership said they joined the protest to stand in solidarity with aspirants facing anxiety and uncertainty. They noted that years of preparation and aspirations cannot be jeopardized by abrupt policy changes or unclear communication. Leaders pointed out that until 2021, a five-year age relaxation for open merit candidates was consistent policy, and its sudden withdrawal without proper notice has unfairly excluded many above 32 years of age. Highlighting ongoing

hunger strikes since December 4, JKPYC leaders said the distress among candidates reflects administrative failure in providing timely clarity. They added that expecting aspirants to sit for the exam under such conditions is insensitive and unjust.

The Youth Congress stated that their involvement is not political but a responsibility to amplify the voices of youth who feel unheard. They also noted that although the government reportedly approved a one-time age relaxation, the absence of a formal notification has created widespread confusion.

Calling the situation mentally distressing for candidates, JKPYC urged JKPS to postpone the December 7 examination until an official and clear decision is released. They stressed that transparency must guide the recruitment process to ensure fairness for all deserving aspirants.

Dr. Parneesh lauds Modi Govt's action on airfare hike

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Senior BJP leader Dr. Parneesh Mahajan on Saturday hailed the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) and Prime Minister Narendra Modi for taking "timely and decisive action" after airfares skyrocketed across major routes following IndiGo's cancellation of over 1,600 flights this week due to crew-rostering mismanagement.

Calling the fare caps a "people-centric intervention", Dr. Mahajan said the government's move has brought immediate relief to thousands of passengers, especially senior citizens, students, and medical travellers who were facing unprecedented financial burden due to abrupt fare spikes.

"The Honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi has once again demonstrated that the welfare of citi-



zens is the top priority. The Aviation Ministry's swift action reflects a sensitive, responsible and accountable government working round the clock to protect public interest," Dr. Mahajan said.

The Ministry earlier took "serious note" of opportunistic pricing after disruption hit the aviation sector, directing airlines to ensure "fair and reasonable" fares. Real-time monitoring has been initiated, with the government warning that any deviation from

norms will attract immediate corrective measures.

Dr. Mahajan said the fare caps, imposed across affected routes until the situation stabilises, showcase the Centre's commitment to transparency and discipline in the aviation sector. "It is a strong message that passenger exploitation will not be tolerated," he added.

Airfares had surged to historic highs, Delhi-Mumbai touching Rs 93,000, Bengaluru Rs 92,000, Kolkata Rs 94,000 and Chennai Rs 80,000 far above the usual range of Rs 20,000-25,000 for round trips.

Dr. Mahajan commended the ministry for stepping in at a critical moment. "This government believes in action, not announcements. The intervention reinforces public trust and ensures that no citizen suffers during such disruptions," he said.

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JAMMU: The Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL), under its weekly theatre series Saptahik Rangdhara, staged the gripping and emotionally charged play "Zakhmi Khwahish" at Abhinav Theatre, Jammu. Written by acclaimed playwright Kulwant Manhas and performed by the Himalayan Folk Theatre and Musical Group, the production captivated the audience with its intense narrative, powerful performances, and profound social message. Following the performance, the theatre group was felicitated with a memento presented by Dr. Javid Rahi, Divisional Head, JKAACL Jammu, along with Assistant Cultural Officer Anil Tickoo, acknowledging their commendable artistic contribution.

"Zakhmi Khwahish" revolves around Aslam, whose life is shattered when a tragic accident on his wedding night leaves him paral-



Dignitaries along with artists during the programme.

ysed. His young bride, Tabassum, finds herself torn between marital responsibility and her unfulfilled emotional and physical desires. Out of goodwill, Aslam urges her to interact freely with Saleem, but human vulnerability leads Tabassum and Saleem into an emotional involvement that intensifies the family's anguish. Meanwhile, Kouser, the devoted maid who has long harboured feelings for Aslam, finally accepts his marriage proposal-only to

lose him moments later to fate. The play confronts a poignant social dilemma: Should a woman remain bound to a marriage that offers no emotional or physical fulfillment, or is she justified in seeking a new beginning?

The cast delivered compelling performances, elevating the depth of the narrative. Dazy Bazaz, as Begum, embodied the moral strength and cultural conflict within the household. Anil Koul portrayed Aslam with remark-

able sensitivity, capturing both his suffering and quiet dignity. Diya Parihar brought emotional complexity to the role of Tabassum, reflecting her inner turmoil. Mansi Rajput's portrayal of Kouser was deeply moving, highlighting her selfless love, while Arun Sharma skillfully depicted Saleem's emotional vulnerability.

The play was written by K. Manhas and co-directed by Manhas and Jatinder Jotshi. Music by Sunil Sharma enriched the dramatic atmos-

phere, with set design by Rahul Pandita and team. Costume designers Shoki Lidhoo and Kusum Koul, along with makeup artist Sunidhi Badyal, enhanced the visual appeal. Production leads Susheel Bhat and Ranjan Koul ensured smooth execution, supported by lighting experts Ramesh Pandit and Vishal Raina. Hall management was overseen by Aditya Tickoo and Dr. Ramesh Razvan, with overall coordination by Dazy Bazaz.

Balwant Thakur meets Chairman, Sangeet Natak Akademi; Seeks J&K-specific support

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NEW DELHI: Eminent theatre director and former Cultural Diplomat of India to South Africa and Mauritius, Balwant Thakur, today met Mrs. Sandhya Purecha, Chairman of the Sangeet Natak Akademi (National Academy of Music, Dance and Drama), at Rabindra Bhawan, New Delhi. In a detailed interaction, Thakur urged the Akademi to initiate a dedicated, region-specific intervention for the preservation, documentation and promotion of the performing arts heritage of Jammu & Kashmir, a region known for its extraordinary diversity yet facing an alarming decline in its traditional art forms.

Thakur expressed deep concern over the rapidly fading indigenous performance traditions of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. He highlighted that several folk, classical and ritualistic art forms once vibrant carriers of community identity are today struggling for survival due to lack of systematic



support, generational discontinuity and socio-economic pressures. Many practices, he stressed, are already on the verge of extinction, and a few have disappeared entirely.

Calling this a "critical moment for cultural rescue," Thakur appealed to the Sangeet Natak Akademi to play a proactive role in reversing this decline. He recommended targeted programmes such as field research, artist fellowships, major revival projects, training programmes and workshops for young practitioners, scholarships for apprentices, and

inclusion of J&K's unique forms in national festivals and cultural exchanges. "The cultural heritage of Jammu & Kashmir is one of the richest in the country, and it deserves urgent national attention before irreplaceable traditions are lost forever," he noted.

Balwant Thakur's request carries special weight given his four decades long contribution to the performing arts of Jammu and Kashmir and India as a whole. Widely regarded as one of the most impactful cultural figures of India from the region, Thakur has dedicated his career to preserving and promoting J&K's folk and theatrical traditions.

Through his landmark productions such as Ghumayee, Bawa Jitto, Mata Ki Kahani and numerous multilingual folk presentations, he brought the region's cultural identity to national and international platforms. His work has not only revived interest in traditional forms but also provided livelihood opportunities to count-

less folk artists from remote regions. Beyond Jammu & Kashmir, Thakur's contributions as a cultural diplomat expanded India's artistic footprint across continents. His initiatives in South Africa and Mauritius strengthened cultural cooperation, showcased India's performing arts globally, and built enduring cultural institutions abroad. He continues to be a strong voice advocating for the dignity, visibility and sustainability of traditional artists.

Sandhya Purecha appreciated Thakur's concerns and acknowledged the importance of safeguarding J&K's cultural heritage. She assured that the Akademi remains committed to supporting diverse artistic traditions and will explore structured collaborations to uplift the performing communities of the region.

The meeting concluded with optimism that renewed national attention and institutional support will help rejuvenate the artistic landscape of Jammu & Kashmir.

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JAMMU: The Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) concluded its 71st National Conference in Dehradun, following three days of extensive deliberations on education reforms, demographic challenges, social transformation and the growing concern over Bangladeshi infiltration.

Held at the Parade Grounds, the conference witnessed the participation of 1,211 delegates from across the country, including representatives from Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, the North-East and a 21-member delegation from Jammu & Kashmir.

The discussions centred on organisational expansion, educational policies, campus culture and a range of social and cultural issues, culminating in the



ABVP State Secretary Sannak Shrivats briefing media.

adoption of five major resolutions.

Speaking at the conclusion of the event, ABVP State Secretary Sannak Shrivats informed the media that four comprehensive resolutions were approved after incorporating suggestions from all states. These included the need for placing all educational institutions under a structured regulatory framework with adequate financial support; addressing the national security implications of Bangladeshi infiltration that threatens demographic stability and the democratic order; stressing societal responsibility in mitigating natural disasters caused by human activities; and building an organised civil response to counter divisive forces within the nation. He further added that a separate resolution titled "Youth as Catalysts of Social Transformation" was cleared by the National Executive Council on 27 November.

Shrivats shared that delegates were updated on ABVP's nationwide activities, membership drives and ongoing agitations. The organisation's membership strength has now crossed 76 lakh, indicating its growing influence among

students across India. Raising serious concerns about Bangladeshi infiltration, the conference unanimously resolved that immediate measures are needed to curb disruptions caused by illegal entry across the border and emphasised the urgent completion of barbed-wire fencing along unfenced stretches. Recent security assessments and national debates have also highlighted demographic shifts in border regions, reinforcing the gravity of the issue.

ABVP leaders, including NEC Member Akriti Chib and Jammu Mahanagar Joint Secretary Fasal Malik, were present at the press briefing.

The conference also announced a nationwide hostel survey campaign to assess facilities across various student hostels.

To commemorate the 500th birth anniversary of Rani Abbakka, exhibitions and cultural events will be organised on campuses nationwide. Special programmes will also mark the 150th birth anniversary of Birsu Munda, while the birth centenary of Professor Yashwant Rao Kelkar will be observed through workers' orientation sessions and remembrance activities.

63rd Annual Raising Day of Homeguards, Civil Defence celebrated at Jammu

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JAMMU: The 63rd Annual Raising Day of Homeguards and Civil Defence was celebrated on Saturday at SDRF 2nd Battalion Headquarters, Gulshan Ground.

DGP/Commandant General HG/CD & SDRF Jammu & Kashmir Abdul Ghani Mir, who was the Chief Guest, congratulated the personnel and highlighted the duties and responsibilities of Homeguards and Civil Defence volunteers as first responders during any disaster. He appreciated the role and assistance extended by the officers and volunteers of Civil Defence and Homeguards during the past year. The Chief Guest also stressed the importance of preparedness for future challenges and readiness of stakeholders to respond to



DGP/Commandant General HG/CD & SDRF J&K Abdul Ghani Mir along with others during th programme.

any eventuality.

During the event, greeting messages from the President of India, Union Home Minister, Lieutenant Governor, UT J&K, the Chief Minister, UT J&K, and senior dignitaries of the

Government of India and the Union Territory Administration were read out.

DIG HG/CD & SDRF Jammu and Director Homeguards Jammu Mohammad Arshad also

addressed the gathering.

On this occasion, Civil Defence and Homeguard volunteers of Jammu Province, who demonstrated dedication and commitment during the past year, were honoured with mementos

and commendation certificates by the chief guest.

Cash rewards amounting to Rs. 10,000 each were given to 7 civilians and 1 Civil Defence Warden, Rs. 5,000 each to 4 Civil Defence Wardens and 1