

# Conserve ecology, protect humanity, bio-diversity: Rana

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Making a fervent appeal to the people to grow more trees, prominent BJP leader Devender Singh Rana today appreciated the endeavours of the citizenry in general and the organizations engaged in environmental conservation in particular for contributing towards conservation of ecology to protect the earth.

"Conservation of ecology is imperative for protecting the human race, as said bio-diversity", Devender Rana said while addressing a day-long conference on "Together we can grow more forests on wasteland to serve the life on land", organized by Paryavaran and Wasteland Development Co-operative Society, Nagrota at K.L Sehgal Hall here this afternoon.

Rana observed, "While we must take pledge to grow trees wherever possible including at the wastelands, the preservation of the existing trees should not lose our attention."

He re-emphasized the importance of the green cover for human life and biodiversity, saying plantation has assumed more significance in the prevailing pollution filled atmosphere to clean air and refresh the environment, as forests help in absorbing toxic gases like carbon. They help to prevent soil erosion and uphold the fertility of the soil. Forests help to establish oxygen and carbon balance



Prominent BJP leader Devender Singh Rana lighting ceremonial lamp.

in nature, imperative for maintaining an ecological balance, he added.

Devender Rana supported the constitution of J&K Wasteland Development Board for synergizing the efforts in afforestation and preserving ecological balance.

Surinder Choudhary, former Member Legislative Council also shared his views among the participants during the conference.

Welcoming the participants, comprising political leaders, environmentalist from all over the Jammu region, Gandharav Singh Thakur, Chairman Paryavaran and Wasteland Development Co-operative Society, Nagrota, gave an overview on wasteland available in the country and the importance of converting the wasteland into green zones.

He emphasized on the importance

of the role of civil society, especially organizations in transforming wasteland into full fledged forests. He said an initiative was taken by people at the bank of river Tawi at village Chak Rakhwalan, Nagrota where over 40,000 saplings were planted in 1990. Over the years, the enclave was converted into a manmade forest supporting a strong biodiversity in the region and offering tangible and intangible benefits to locals of Jammu.

He urged the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha to constitute J&K Wasteland Development Board to transform wasteland into green zones.

The Conference adopted a resolution for dedicating Chak Rakhwalan forest after former Prime Minister Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Participating in the Conference, the various other speakers observed that forests were under grave stress across the country as elsewhere in the world, thus resulting in climate change, biodiversity loss, increasing population pressure and illegal forest cutting.

The speakers said the forests are essential for achieving many of the sustainable development goals, especially on the environmental and climatic fronts.

"With their rich ecosystem services, forests provide livelihoods, food and energy, store carbon and host more than 80 percent of terrestrial biodiversity", the key note presented during the conference stated, adding that the current and future generations need to learn about and understand forests and its benefits in order to ensure that they are in a position to manage these precious resources.

Earlier the programme commenced with a lamp lighting ceremony by the dignitaries followed by an oath ceremony by the Board of Directors.

The vote of thanks was presented by Madan Lal Abrol, Managing Director Paryavaran and Wasteland Development Co-operative Society, Nagrota.

Others who spoke on the occasion included Rameshwar Dutt, Joginder Singh, Sakshi Magotra and Paras Sawhney.



## Delimitation Draft Report aimed to delay assembly elections: Congress



Senior Congress leaders during a party workers meeting at Udhampur.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

UDHAMPUR: J&K Pardesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) on Thursday organized membership drive in Udhampur under the leadership of JKPCC President GA Mir and JKPCC Working President Raman Bhalla organized by District Congress Committee Udhampur under Ex MLA and District President Krishan Chand Bhagat besides General Secretary Yogesh Sawhney, Ex. MLA Dina Nath Bhagat, Rajnesh Sharma, Sewadal Chairman Vijay Sharma Babbi, Minority Department Chairman Gurdarshan Singh, Transport

Department Chairmen Gagan Singh, OBC Department Chairmen Suresh Dogra.

Prominent among those present on the occasion include Madam Preeti Khajuria, Sumit Mangotra, Dwarka Prasher, Sahyed Shakeel Shah, Yashpal Sharma, Asha Partab Singh, Suraj Parksah Ch, Amar Singh, Vinny Sharma beside others.

Speaking on the occasion, Mir described the Delimitation Commission draft report as bizarre and said his party would not allow any attempt to divide the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

He termed the report as a sheer mockery of the universally accepted and constitutionally established norms of peoples' representation.

He expressed concern over the repeated attempts of disempowering the people of J&K by coming up with atrocious measures one after the other. "The Centre, however, continued with its agenda to disempower Jammu and Kashmir," Mir said, adding that the Congress was framing up a detailed response to the draft report which was patently against the constitu-

tional morality, constitutional propriety and constitutional values.

Bhalla said Govt is only killing and buying time with futile programmes and accused BJP for weakening grass roots democracy after its failure to fulfill the promises made to the general masses.

He said that so far BJP has only befooled people with false promises. Being the ruling party at the Centre and having secured heavy mandate in the elections from Jammu region, he blamed BJP for its total failure to address the genuine problems and concerns of the people.

Alleging that the people of J-K were witnessing the "ugliest situation on every count", Bhalla questioned the "delay" in holding assembly elections and granting statehood to J-K as promised by the Centre in Parliament.

JKPCC General Secretary Yogesh Sawhney in his address expressed serious concern over the difficulties concerning people on account of local issues and blamed the Govt for failing to address the developmental needs, besides expressing serious concern over the rising unemployment in J&K.

## AAI plans to make Jammu Airport disabled-friendly

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Airports Authority of India, Jammu, CISF and other stakeholders have got together in order to create facilities for safe and hassle free travel for travellers facing benchmark disabilities.

A local committee meet was convened by Gurjeet Singh Commandant, CISF Jammu Airport under the chairmanship of Airport Director Sanjeev Kumar Garg wherein five prominent NGOs of Jammu division, Airport managers of all airlines, representative from Red Cross society deliberated on the difficulties/inconvenience faced by Passengers with Disabilities (PWDs) while travelling by air.

Sandhya Dhar, President Jigar Foundation, Umesh Sharma, Member Disability Advisory Board & Parent



Airport Director Jammu, Sanjeev Kumar Garg chairing a meeting.

Association, Sushil Sharma, Chairman All J&K Disability Board, Deepak Sharma, Progressive Federation for the Blinds and Preet Dutta, Red Cross Volunteer attended the meeting.

The facilities/special provisions to the persons with disabilities at airport in detail were discussed at the meeting.

It was decided that the vehicles of PWDs shall be allowed

upto the forecourt area on production of UDID cards /Disability certificate at the main entry gate.

A dedicated parking for the vehicle of PWDs is reserved at the airport and a CISF "Help Desk" especially for PWDs in the Fore court area has been established wherein important telephone numbers and flight schedule are placed for the convenience of passengers.

A list of 21 types of disabilities is also made available at the "Help Desk" so that the passenger can be facilitated according to the disability criteria. In the meeting, Airport managers apprised that three seats in every flight are kept reserved for the PWDs close to the washroom. "A separate low height Check-in counter has been earmarked for the passengers with disabilities. The person accompanying the deaf and dumb passenger should approach the CISF "Help Desk counter" in the Forecourt area to escort such passenger upto the boarding gate. A separate line for PWDs has also been earmarked for security check in SHIA. The wheel chairs are also made available in standby at the arrival alighting point at Jammu airport for the facilitation of the passengers with special needs," they said.

Sandhya Dhar advised to conduct the access audit of terminal building for accessibility at Jammu airport.

The Airport Director directed Terminal Manager to approach Social Welfare Department Jammu for the access audit.

CASO Gurjeet Singh assured that ASG at Jammu airport is committed to make air travel a smooth experience and solution to the concerned issues will be worked out in co-ordination with AAI and other stakeholders.

The local committee to facilitate PWDs shall meet after every two months to review the decision taken. This initiative has been taken at all the 65 Airports manned by the CISF in India.

## Domestic violence against women rising across Valley

■ SHAKEELA ANDRABI

SRINAGAR: Violence against women is a serious problem in India as overall, one-third of women, of age-group 15-49 years, have experienced physical violence and about 1 in 10 have experienced sexual violence. In total, 35 per cent women have experienced physical or sexual violence. After abrogation of Article 370, Jammu & Kashmir has lost many commissions including Women Commission, which was one of the most important commissions. Due to absence Women Commission, domestic violence against women in Kashmir was on rise. In 2021, especially in rural areas of Kashmir;

many incidents of violence against women were reported, in which many young women were tortured by in-laws and ultimately lost their lives. It is unfortunate the real cause of the death was always concealed by in-laws.

National Family Health Survey (NFHS) conducted by the Union Ministry of Health has made shocking exposures about domestic violence against women in Jammu & Kashmir. The survey report, released in 2020, stated that 9.6 per cent of women in age group 18-49 years experienced domestic violence in 2019-20. Last month, a family from Shelpora village of Achabal, Anantnag alleged their daughter

was killed by her in-laws on demand of dowry. The family alleged their daughter was being regularly tortured by her in-laws for last couple of months for dowry. Though, the family members of the deceased demanded strict action against accused, the In-laws have denied allegations. Last year, a 32-year-old woman ended her life at her in-laws' house in Anantnag. In a video recorded before her death, the woman accused her in-laws of assaulting her and setting her ablaze. A 28-year-old, mother of two kids was set afire allegedly by her in-laws in same district. She received 80 per cent burns and is still battling

for life in a hospital.

In the same year, another 27-year-old woman from Bandipora district, was found dead at her in-laws' house in mysterious conditions. Later police arrested three members of her in-laws' family. These are not isolated cases, but violence against women has seen a sharp rise in recent years. The increase in cases of rape, abduction, molestation and domestic violence has become a cause of concern among civil society members and women. According to women's rights activists, silence by the society on such brutal atrocities will only cause increase in violence.

# PM Narendra Modi in 2019 opened way for fair Delimitation for UT of J&K

►► PM Modi has done his job in 2019 and now it is for DC to do a fair Delimitation ◀◀

►► Task with DC for UT of J&K is very challenging since it needs serious corrections to earlier wrongs ◀◀

■ DAYA SAGAR

The Common man of UT of J&K is very hopefully waiting for the day the Delimitation Commission (DC) for UT of J&K would issue an order in true fairness with the constitutionally laid down codes/ laws/ parameters. But surely the present Delimitation commission for UT of J&K will have to work hard to execute the job which is surely first of its class that any DC may have taken so far in India.

A Delimitation Commission ( DC) for a Legislative Assembly is not a simple court where people have to lay down their case for justice or redressal of grievance and plead . Instead DC is body appointed by government to execute an assignment as per the parameters/ indicators constitutionally laid down in law after obtaining all types needed data / information , analysing the same, then laying down the real maps of the individual single member assembly segments of a Legislative Assembly and finalising the same only after taking opinion (though opinions not binding ) of the stake holders. The responsibility on the DC is so huge since its final order cannot be challenged in any court of law (Section-60(5-c) of Act 34 of 2019) where as even judgement order of HC or SC can further be challenged.

2. The task before the present Delimitation Commission for UT of J&K is of the class the type of which no any Delimitation Commission in India might have had before it in the past since this DC has to in a way apply 'even serious' surgical corrections earlier WRONGS keeping in view the information as regards history of delimitations

done upto 1995 & also likely illusions that may be there due to unfair administrative orders of erstwhile J&K State like reorganisations of District in 1979 and 2007.

All apprehensions and misunderstandings carried by some 'People' that population is the only criteria for deciding the limits of MLA constituency need to be set on rest once for all since had it been so then J&K /UT of J&K would have only 30 or so constituencies keeping in view that UP has 403 MLAs

A. Wrongs To be brief the wrongs of earlier Delimitation commissions could be seen in facts like

(i) No pointedly fixing parameters were available for delimiting the segments of Constituent Assembly of J&K in 1951 except the order of the Regent of J&K that representatives in the constituent assembly be taken 1951 @ 40000 souls per constituency on the basis of 1941 Census population ( 4051158) . But 43 seats were kept for areas in Kashmir Valley so erroneously assuming that 17,20,000 population out of total population 17,28,686 was still left in areas of Valley not occupied by Pakistan even after excluding Muzaffrabad District . 2 seats for areas in Ladakh Region and only 30 seats for other areas ( Jammu province ) so erroneously assuming that only 12,00,000 population out of total population 20,10, 557 was left in areas of Jammu province excluding Mirpur District occupied by Pakistan

(ii) Anyhow in 1957 J&K Representation of Peoples Act was enacted laying down very clearly the guidelines/ parameters (Section- 4, Sub Section -2, Clause a(i) : Population , a (ii) : Geographical Compactness, a (iii)

:Nature of Terrain , a ( iv) : Facilities of Communication, a ( v): And like considerations . Ofcourse Population is

mentioned for reference but it is not prime factor as regards allocating a single member constituency of the Legislative Assembly to the population of an area, no doubt population is the only factor for deciding the number of constituencies to be reserved for SC/ST and marking the constituencies to be reserved for SC/ST/} for Delimiting the Single Member Segments of the Legislative Assembly of J&K (MLAs). It was expected that after 1957 Delimitation for the Legislative Assembly will be got done as per the JKRP of 1957 but so unfairly the adhoc distribution done for constituent assembly was in a way was also carried irrationally for Legislative Assembly also.

Not only that, even when as per J&K Constitution the number of MLAs for direct election with provision for delimitation of constituencies after every 10 years were mentioned for whole of J&K State as a unit (in 75 MLAs for all the three regions in 1957) but keeping in view the habitations & stretches of J&K as regards the Legislative Council as per Section-50 of J&K Constitution the elected MLCs were kept region wise i.e 12 elected MLCs for Kashmir Valley and 16 Elected MLCs for areas outside Kashmir Valley ( 14 elected MLCs for Jammu Region and 2 MLCs for Ladakh Region) it was expected that future Delimitation Commissions would someday undo the wrong distribution done at the time of constituting Constituent Assembly of J&K /that done thereafter.



### A Look through the Mist Part- II

But still the MLAs outside Kashmir Valley were kept less than Kashmir valley through adhoc delimitations as well as the regular delimitation process that was started in 1981 and completed in 1995 totally flouting laid down law in the J&K Representation of Peoples Act 1957 and so blindly ignoring the fact that the areas outside Kashmir Valley had constitutionally more (14) elected MLCs and Kashmir valley had less (only 12) MLCs.

B. Illusions : Similarly it may not be unfair to say that the earlier government in J&K had remained Kashmir Valley centric and enjoyed even the confidence of governments in Delhi since the GOI had not even taken notice of the irrational reorganisations of the districts being done by J&K Governments where under the first reorganisation 2 districts of Kashmir Valley ( 15948 sq km Anantnag and Baramulla) were reorganised into 3 districts ( Anantnag, Srinagar, Baramulla ) & 4 Districts and 2 Jagirs (26293 sq km Jammu, Kathua, Udhampur, Reasi , Poonch Jagir, Chenani Jagir ) were reorganised into 6 Districts ( Poonch, Rajouri, Jammu, Kathua, Udhampur, Doda) but so irrationally through executive orders in 1979 districts in Kashmir valley were increased from 3 to 6 ( Anantnag, Pulwama, Srinagar, Badgam, Baramulla and Bandipora) without increasing districts in Jammu Region. Inspite of the fact that Wazir Commission in 1984 recommended for increasing districts in Jammu Region from 6 to 9 the State government in 2006-07 once again so irrationally

increased the districts in Kashmir Valley from 6 to 10 and in Jammu Region also from 6 to only 10. Such type of data on ground is surely going to mislead any commission unless the Commission ventures into real investigations /cross checking of the ground information as regards physicals.

4. The present Delimitation Commission has to Delimit 90 single member segments for the first Legislative Assembly of J&K in terms of Section -60 (2) of J&K Reorganisation Act of 2019 , Act 34 of 2019 But the way the reports have appeared in the media through unofficial sources on 21st Dec 2021 and on 4/5 Feb 2022 it appears that job is still half done since (i) DC has delimited only 7 increased seats over the earlier 83 seats that the areas now in UT of J&K had while in J&K state delimitation commission has to delimit all the 90 segments, any adjustment of some segments that has been done is more so in view of the new constituencies to be created and the due to the boundaries of new 8 districts carved out in 2006-2007 (ii) As per the unofficial reports DC has retained 47 MLA seats in Kashmir valley districts and distributed only 43 MLA seats over areas outside Kashmir Valley which surely deserved more MLA seats than Kashmir valley. How the areas that had constitutionally more elected MLCs can have lesser MLAs shall have to be explained by the D. Commission .

5. As already said population is only one of the 5 parameters and even if as per 2011 census population of the Kashmir Valley districts is more than the areas outside Kashmir Valley the areas outside Kashmir Valley still deserve more MLAs in terms of Sub

Section(2) of Section-60 of Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act of 2019, Act no 34{(a) all the constituencies shall be single-member constituencies; (b) all constituencies shall, as far as practicable, be geographically compact areas, and in delimiting them, regard shall be had to physical features, existing boundaries of administrative units, facilities of communication and conveniences to the public;}

Those who profess for population to be main factor should with cool mind try to understand why a MLA from Uttar Pradesh voting in Presidential Election carries a vote value of 208 and that from J&K carried a vote value of just 72 ? ( UP 208, Jharkhand 176, J&K 72, HP 51, Sikkim 7) . And a MP carries vote value of 708 whether one belongs to UP or J&K or Sikkim.

6. Of course the Associate Members ( MPs from J&K , although they do not have any voting right ) and Election Commissioner of J&K do have added responsibility see that other members of DC are provided fair and adequate view of the ground data to enable them have real feel of the requirements of the areas in terms of the guidelines laid in the relevant laws for delimitation of the MLA segments of a Legislative Assembly worth doing a fair exercise that the people are hoping to be there in 2022 . otherwise How the areas that had constitutionally more elected MLCs can have lesser MLAs shall have to be explained by the Delimitation Commission ?.Through delimitation the DC has to provide a representative of nearness in time & distance to the voter citizen.

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