

Chief Secretary pays obeisance at Baba Ballo Devsthan in Mathwar

Three-day annual Mela begins

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The three-day annual Mela commenced on Monday on the eve of Basant Panchami at Mathwar Dev Asthan, the holy shrine and birth place of Baba Ballo Ji Maharaj, here.

Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo paid obeisance at Baba Ballo Devsthan in Mathwar and sought blessings of Babaji.

He also performed Pooja and prayed for peace and prosperity of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Mahant of Baba Ballo



Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo paying obeisance at Baba Ballo Devsthan in Mathwar.

Devsthan, Yashpal Sharma congratulated the Chief Secretary and wished him for effective administration, prosperity and hoped that Babaji may fulfill his aspirations.

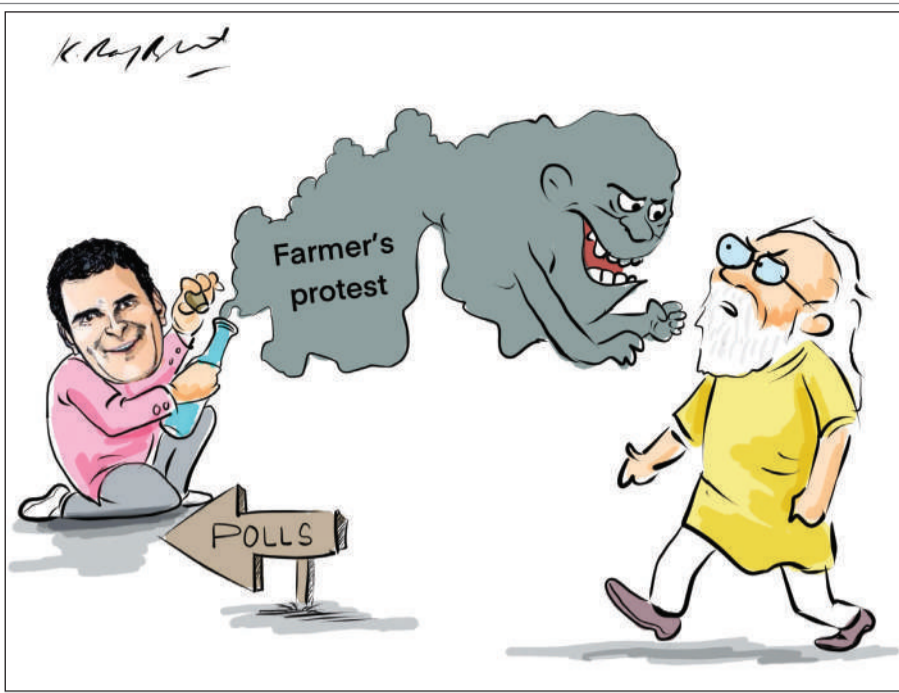
On first day, besides Chief Secretary, thousands of devotees from far and wide visited the Dev Asthan and paid obeisance to Baba Ji.

Jammu Administration made all the preparations for smooth celebration of Basant Panchmi Utsav.

The security agencies

ensured fool proof arrangements in and around the venue, besides proper barricading the area.

The Traffic Police Department made suitable arrangements for parking and smooth movement of vehicles in the area while PIIE Department ensured adequate water supply with provision of additional water tanks and PDD ensured proper lighting arrangements in addition to uninterrupted power supply during the celebration.



ADGP Jammu Zone reviews functioning of NAFIS Lab, progress of NAFIS Enrolment

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Additional Director General of Police (ADGP), Jammu Zone, Jammu Anand Jain, on Monday paid a visit to the District Police Lines (DPL) in Jammu to oversee the operations and conduct a comprehensive review of the activities undertaken in the district.

During the visit, ADGP Jammu Zone was accompanied by SSP Jammu Vinod Kumar, SP Hqrs. Jammu besides other district officers.

The primary focus of the visit was to assess the functioning of the recently established National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS) laboratory and to evaluate the progress of NAFIS enrolment in the district.

NAFIS is an integral part of modern law enforcement, facilitating efficient and accurate identification of individuals through fingerprint analysis.

During the inspection of the NAFIS lab, ADGP Jammu expressed satisfaction with the infrastructure and equip-



ADGP Jammu Zone, Anand Jain reviewing progress of NAFIS Enrolment.

ment in place.

He emphasized the importance of leveraging advanced technology to enhance the capabilities of law enforcement agencies in solving crimes and maintaining public safety.

He also commended the efforts of the personnel involved in operating the lab for their dedication and commitment to their duties.

Furthermore, ADGP Jammu conducted a thorough review of the progress made in NAFIS enrolment in the district.

NAFIS enrolment plays a crucial role in populating the database with fingerprints for effective criminal identification and investigation.

He stressed the significance

of accelerating the enrolment process and ensuring comprehensive coverage across the district.

ADGP Jammu interacted with the officers and staff at DPL Jammu to understand their challenges and address any issues impeding the smooth functioning of the department.

He reiterated the commitment of the police department towards maintaining law and order and extending full support to the personnel in their endeavors.

Anand Jain, while concluding the visit, expressed confidence in the capabilities of the Jammu Police and urged them to continue their efforts in upholding the rule of law and serving the community with diligence and integrity.

■ MASROOR AHMAD

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Disaster Management Authority has been issuing frequent avalanche warnings in the higher reaches of Kashmir, advising people to take precautions and avoid venturing to the avalanche prone areas.

On February 8, a massive avalanche struck the Sonamarg area on the Srinagar-Leh Highway. Earlier, twin avalanches had struck the famous ski-resort, Gulmarg and the prompt response by the rescue teams ensured the successful evacuation of skiers, who got trapped in the avalanche.

Earlier, on February 5, a low intensity avalanche hit the Affarwat areas of Gulmarg ski resort in North Kashmir. According to officials, four skiers were in the area at the time, however none of them was trapped in the avalanche.

In the wake of escalating temperatures, winter months are witnessing a surge in avalanches across various regions, experts say.

According to climate change experts the frequency of avalanches in the months of February and March has increased over the years.

"The traditional wetness associated with these months, coupled with increased temperature increases the frequency of avalanches," an expert said.



"When there is an increase in temperature, snow on the mountains, which is usually very sloppy, experiences a dangerous transformation. The melting of wet snow reduces the friction at the interface between the icy layers and rock. This reduction in friction triggers the downward sliding of snow blocks, constituting the basic phenomenon and the underlying reason for the increasing frequency of avalanches," he added.

Experts further pointed out that J&K and Ladakh have witnessed numerous casualties, both civilian and military, due to avalanches in recent times.

Last year in February, two Polish nationals died and 19 others were

rescued after a group of tourists were hit by a massive avalanche in Gulmarg. On January 29, 2023 a woman and a teenage girl were killed after they came under an avalanche in the Kargil district of Ladakh.

Studies suggest that climate change is a major driver of permafrost degradation. Permafrost is the ground that remains frozen for a longer time, sometimes upto 2 years. Warmer air temperatures would mean less winter season snow cover insulating the ground. This exposes permafrost to more heat transfer. As permafrost thaws, it causes destabilization of steep mountain slopes and terrain.

According to the Indian Meteorological Department, December recorded an unprecedented 79 percent deficit of rainfall in Jammu and Kashmir and January 2024 was one of the driest and warmest January in the last 43 years for most of the stations of Kashmir.

Ecologists and environmentalists said, due to global warming, melted snow penetrates deep within, causing the mountain slope to move rapidly. He said that the impact of global warming is evident in Kashmir, with mean minimum and mean maximum temperatures increasing over the decades and additionally, there is a decrease in precipitation, both in terms of rainfall and snowfall.

"The biggest impact is seen in the form of shorter winters and early springs. The seasonal shift affects snowfall, reducing its sustenance and freezing potential. Glaciers are receding, and the snow no longer transforms into ice masses due to early melting."

He added that decades back, it used to be snowfall even in the months of March-April, in higher reaches it used to be huge. When snowfall used to take place in upper reaches it used to sustain and freeze. Now all that has changed.

While acknowledging the challenge of long-term avalanche prediction, experts emphasized the feasibility of short-term forecasting. He explained that while it is difficult to predict avalanches over extended periods, forecasting for shorter timeframes, ranging from days to weeks, is possible with advancements in avalanche and weather forecasting technologies.

As climate change continues to influence weather patterns in Kashmir, experts have stressed the need for research and preparedness to deal with the growing risks associated with avalanches in the region. The Early Warning Systems (EWS) can reduce the risk of avalanches. Placing these systems in dangerous regions can provide an early warning about avalanches, which can ultimately save lives.

Apni Party will end discrimination in J&K if it forms Govt: Bukhari

Demands railway line linkage up to Poonch, Uri, Karnah, Kralpora in Kupwara

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Apni Party President, Syed Mohammed Altaf Bukhari on Monday said that if his Party forms the next Govt they would end the discrimination in Jammu and Kashmir by ensuring equitable development, employment to the educated unemployed youth, revamp of educational and health care infrastructure across the erstwhile State.

Bukhari was addressing a public meeting here at Gole Gujral, 'The largely attended meeting was organized by Party leader, Balbir Singh (Bawa).

"I see a wave of change in Jammu. People want to give a chance to a new political party because they feel misled by the traditional political parties in Jammu and Kashmir. The people of Jammu have also developed a feeling of disconnection with the BJP after 2014 last assembly elections in which the Jammu voted the BJP to power. However, the



JKAP President, S.M.A Bukhari speaking at public meeting.

BJP failed to fulfil the promises which were made with the people," he said while expressing his support to the people who were feeling alienated without an elected Govt.

While the country is witnessing assembly elections in various states, he said that "The assembly elections are not being held in Jammu and Kashmir for the last five years without citing any reason."

"The Panchayats and

Municipalities have completed terms, but no elections were declared for these democratic institutions including the assembly elections in J&K," he said.

He appreciated the people for extending their support to the Apni Party, especially in Jammu.

He asked the people to bring change in Jammu and Kashmir by supporting the Party candidates so that his Party can form an elected Govt and represent the people to resolve the issues. He also sought support of the people for the restoration of statehood.

Appreciating the Govt of India for railway link up to Rajouri, the Party President demanded that the railway line should be extended up to Poonch and then the border district shall also be linked through the railway line with Uri for 12 months connectivity (all weather) that would help the local economy to grow and the security forces on the other

hand.

He said that the railway line shall also be further extended from Kupwara to Karnah - Karalpora etc unconnected area to provide better connectivity through Indian Railways in the rural and unexplored populated areas in Kashmir Valley.

Prominent among those who were present on the occasion include State General Secretary, Syed Asgar Ali, Media Advisor, Farooq Andrabi, Additional General Secretary, Arun Kumar Chibber, Provincial Vice President, Adv Nirmal Kotwal, State Secretary, Mohinder Singh Parihar, District President Jammu Rural-A, Pushp Dev Kumar Uppal, District President Jammu Rural-B, Harpreet Singh, SC State President Bodh Raj Bhagat, Provincial Secretary/Incharge Membership Drive, Dr Rohit Gupta, State President, Apni Trade Union, Ajaz Kazmi and others.

Delegation of ex-MLAs calls on LG; projects issues of SC community



Delegation of ex-MLAs calling on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A delegation of former Legislators representing Scheduled Castes community on Monday called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, here.

The members of the delegation led by Dr DK Manyal, former Minister discussed with the Lt Governor the efforts of the UT Administration for all-round development of the SC community.

They expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Lt Governor led J&K Administration for ensuring social justice,

empowerment of women, youth and socio-economic upliftment of the community.

The delegation apprised the Lt Governor of various welfare issues of Scheduled Caste (SC) community including reservation in promotion; comprehensive transfer policy for Jammu Based SC employees posted in Kashmir; enhancement in reservation quota and reservation of One Lok Sabha seat for SC community in J&K UT.

They also put forth the issue of compensation to all owners of the land situated

across the defence wire on India-Pakistan border in the UT; land ownership rights to PoJK refugees, displaced persons and West Pakistan Refugees, and extension of PM Kisan Samman Nidhi benefits.

The Lt Governor assured the former Legislators of appropriate redressal of the issues and demands projected by them during the interaction.

Dr KL Bhagat, Prof GR Bhagat, Neelam Langeh, Kuldeep Kumar - former MLAs and Dharminder Kumar, DDC Member were present.

Court takes cognizance in ED complaint against IAS, others

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Special Judge CBI Bala Joyti on Monday took cognizance against IAS and others in ED complaint and directed all accused to appear on April 26, 2024.

The instant complaint under section 45 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act 2002 for the commission of offences under section 3 and punishable under section 4 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act 2002 has been filed by the Assistant Director, Directorate of Enforcement Govt of India Transport Nagar Jammu against Rajeev Ranjan IAS, Rahul Grover, Gagan Singh, Itrat Hussain Raffiqui, Tariq Athar Beigh, Zumurad Hussain Shah, Syed Adeel Hussain Shah alias Sayed Adeel Hussain Shah, Syed Akeel Shah, Abdi Hussain Shah, Madan Mohan Bhargav, Mukesh Bhargav, Devi Dayal Khajuria, Kumar Jyoti Ranjan, Kripa Shankar Roy, Gaganpreet Singh, Hunney Preet Singh, Razia Rafiqi and Syed Atiq Ur

Reham Nazki alias Dr. Atiqualla.

Special Judge CBI Bala Joyti after perusal the contents of the complaint carefully and entire material on record which transpires that prima facie accused person appears to have committed offences under aforesaid sections as such process be issued for securing their presence accordingly.

Office is directed to issue notices to accused persons for appearance and for filing their reply on the next date of hearing, court said.

During the course of hearing Adv S.K Bhat moved an application to defer taking of cognizance in ED, complaint No. ECIIR/JMS204/2020 till the status report of predicated offence's from CBI is obtained and till the final report u/s. 173 of J & K CrPC is filed before the CBI Court. A copy of the same is furnished to the other side for detailed response. Let this matter come up again on April 26, 2024 for the appearance of all accused persons and for further proceedings, Court ordered.

Pr Secy Culture assesses functioning of Archives, Archaeology, Museums Deptt

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Principal Secretary Culture, Suresh Kumar Gupta, on Monday chaired a meeting to review the operations of the Archives, Archaeology, and Museums (AAM) Department in Jammu.

Director AAM, J&K, Raj Kumar Katoch; Director Finance in Culture Department, S. Satnam Singh; Special Secretary Culture, Trishala Kumari; Assistant Director, AAM Jammu, Dr Sangeeta Sharma; Assistant Director AAM Kashmir, Mushtaq Ahmad Beigh and other concerned attended the meeting in person and via online mode.

During the meeting, Director AAM, RK Katoch delivered a comprehensive presentation, outlining the department's activities and various operational facets, including archives repository, archival records, reference libraries, and museums.

A significant focus of the meeting was dedicated to the status of protected monuments across Jammu and Kashmir, emphasizing their numbers and the ongoing conservation efforts. Principal Secretary highlighted that out of the 495 heritage monuments listed by the Government of India, 56 have been undertaken for preservation by the Archaeological Survey of India through Central Act notification.

Additionally, 54 monuments have been identified under JK Act notification, with a total of 110 monuments currently undergoing preservation work.

Specialized schemes aimed at the conservation and preservation of monumental structures were discussed, with specific attention to



Principal Secretary Culture, Suresh Kumar Gupta reviewing operations of AAM.

the Scheme for Revival, Restoration, Preservation, and Maintenance and Heritage Jammu and Kashmir.

Principal Secretary Gupta emphasized the importance of public awareness regarding the rich heritage and cultural legacy of Jammu and Kashmir. He directed officers to disseminate information about JK heritage monuments to the public to foster greater appreciation and understanding.

Furthermore, it was noted that Additional District Development Commissioners (ADDCs) in all districts have been appointed as nodal officers, tasked with expediting restoration efforts within their respective jurisdictions.

Also, Suresh Kumar conducted an on-site inspection of various sections of the AAM office at Old Secretariat Mubarak Mandi, including the Archives Reference Section, Historic Documents Section, and State Archives Repository Jammu.