

## Efforts on to create inclusive, equitable society in J&K: LG

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday said his administration is working to ensure an inclusive and equitable society so that all enjoy the benefits of national development. The Lieutenant Governor was interacting with a 20-member delegation of the Padari tribe, who called on him at the Raj Bhawan here this morning, an official spokesman said.

"Our effort is to create an inclusive and equitable society, empower the marginalised and ensure they enjoy the benefits of national development," Sinha said.

He said Prime Minister Narendra Modi is committed to inclusive development of every section of the society with the mantra of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas'.



LG Manoj Sinha meeting delegation of Padari Tribe at Raj Bhawan on Wednesday.

### Delegation of Ex-Servicemen from Kishtwar calls on LG

JAMMU: A delegation of Ex-Servicemen from Kishtwar called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha at Raj Bhawan on Wednesday.

The members of the delegation put forth various issues pertaining to the welfare of ex-Servicemen including establishment of Zila Sainik Welfare Office and dedicated Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme for Kishtwar.

The Lt Governor assured the delegation of appropriate action on the issues and demands put forth by them during the interaction. Sunil Sharma, former Minister was also present.

The delegation led by BJP leader and former minister Sunil Sharma expressed

gratitude to Prime Minister Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and the

Lieutenant Governor-led administration for Scheduled Tribe status to the Padari

tribe.

The members of the delegation said the historic decision has paved way for the socio-economic empowerment of the community and it will create an enabling environment for the tribe to contribute to the development of Jammu and Kashmir and the country.

The BJP-led Central government recently added four more communities -- Gadda Brahmin, Koli, Padari tribe and Pahari ethnic group -- to the list of Scheduled Tribes (STs) in Jammu and Kashmir.

On February 12, a separate Pahari community and Other Backward Class (OBC) delegations met the Lieutenant Governor at the Raj Bhawan and expressed their gratitude to Prime Minister Modi for empowering them.



## Washington apples achieved big space in Indian market

US lawmaker and apple growers celebrate apple export to India

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Apple growers from Washington State have almost a million boxes of apples this year to India, which is 16 times more than last year.

"This is a new day in trade relations between the United States and India," Senator Maria Cantwell told reporters in Seattle on Tuesday.

She was joined by Prakash Gupta, the Consul General of the newly opened India Consulate in Seattle, along with apple growers from Central Washington and labour and port officials.

"Apples are the pride of the Washington agricultural economy. They are known worldwide. Today is a celebration because, for five years now, we have not seen the volume of apples leaving these docks and travelling to India," said Cantwell, who was flanked by apple growers.

In retaliation for the then-Trump Administration's decision to revoke India's trade benefits under the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) programme in March 2019, New Delhi imposed several retaliatory tariffs on American products, including Apple.

This increase in import tariff on apples by 20 per cent, caused the apple export market from Washington state to

India to plunge. Before the tariffs were imposed, Washington growers exported USD 120 million worth of apples to India and at the lowest point, growers exported less than USD 1 million. This had a massive financial impact on apple growers from Washington State. But business is back to normal this harvest season after the retaliatory tariffs were lifted during the historic visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the US.

Washington State Apple Commission said Washington growers have shipped approximately 1,190,000 40 lb. boxes of apples to India this season. So far, total apple sales from Washington to India are estimated to be about USD 19.5 million, and growers are only halfway through the shipping season. By comparison, the 2022-23 season totals were just 73,000 40 lb. boxes shipped and USD 1.3 million in sales.

"We are very committed to growing the Washington-India relationship in many fronts, in aviation, in technology, in healthcare, and especially in agriculture," Cantwell said.

"When Prime Minister Modi addressed the United States Congress in his recent visit he said we're going to increase trade with the United States. And then he said and these

are the places and the first state he mentioned was Washington. I always like to point out it's not because we were in alphabetical order. It's because India believes that this new (Consulate) and with this new export cooperation, that it is a very unique relationship. We are going to put in a lot of effort to grow for the future," she said.

Welcoming the opening of the new consulate in Seattle, the American Senator said that so many people in India could benefit from American apples.

"This will help us in Washington. It will help stabilise the growth that we have in the central part of the state. To have this market grow for the future gives our producers the ability to continue to do what they do best," she said.

"So today is a celebration because for five years now we have not seen this volume of apples leaving these docks and travelling to India. This is a guarantee that they are going to reach their destination and have shelf space. As Todd mentioned, that means we want more shelf space. We want them to be a permanent part of the Indian economy and we want to grow the relationship," Cantwell told reporters.

## High level Canadian delegation led by Premier Saskatchewan meets Dr Jitendra

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: A High-level Canadian Delegation led by Mr. Scott Moe, Premier of Saskatchewan province, today called on Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; Minister of State (Independent Charge) Earth Sciences; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh and discussed bilateral collaboration as well as joint ventures in areas like Electric Vehicles, Cyber Physical System, Quantum Technologies, Future Manufacturing, Green Hydrogen Fuel, Deep Ocean Mining etc.

Welcoming the Canadian delegation, Dr Jitendra Singh said, 23 Lakh Indian diaspora are reinforcing Indo-Canadian relations and contributing to the development of both the nations.

Stating that India has among the largest Diaspora in Canada at 2.3 million, Dr Jitendra Singh said, the presence of Indian diaspora in Canadian Parliament and even the cabinet is a testimony of our longstanding relation. He said, the dias-



High-level Canadian delegation leader, Premier Saskatchewan Scott Moe calling on Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh at North Block, New Delhi on Wednesday.

pora which contributes positively to both countries, would act as a bridge between the two nations, as Canada is one of the favoured destinations for Indian youth.

The Minister also informed the delegation that under Prime Minister Modi's leadership, India established the 'Anusandhan' National Research Foundation, prioritizing research in areas of technology and science to foster and revitalize the innovation ecosystem with around 60-70% participation of the private sector. He also emphasized that the government is keen on opening arms to welcome non-

governmental organizations to contribute in technology development and support them.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, India is keen to develop research collaborations with Canadian R&D institutions and technology collaboration with Canadian industries especially focusing on the following areas such as Sustainable Energy Technologies (generation, conversion, storage and conservation), Environment and Clean Technologies, Bioeconomy, Bio-based materials for different applications, Food & Agri Technologies, Affordable Healthcare (including Pharmaceuticals and

Biomedical Instrumentation), Technologies for Advanced Manufacturing, Integration of AI and Machine Learning in all domains.

The Minister of Science and Technology categorically mentioned 'Global Biofuels Alliance' (GBA), an initiative by India as the G20 Chair last year, bringing together the biggest consumers and producers of biofuels to drive development and deployment of bio-fuels. The initiative aims to position biofuels as a key to energy transition and contribute to jobs and economic growth.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, National Hydrogen Mission (NHM) has been launched by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi while commemorating India's 75 years of Independence with an aim to cut down carbon emissions and increase the use of renewable sources of energy. It is a futuristic vision that can help India not only cut down its carbon emissions but also diversify its energy basket and reduce external reliance, the Minister added.

Referring to the success of VAIBHAV fellowship programme, the Minister also mentioned PM Modi's invitation to India's diaspora to

do research in India's premier institutions and contribute to its progress.

Scott Moe said that Canada and India relations have made great strides in recent years and have become truly multidimensional, spurred by a significant convergence of interests, mutual goodwill and exchanges.

He said, Science and Technology cooperation is one of the strategic pillars of the bilateral relationship between the two countries. Academia, Research Institutions and Industries of both countries have strong bonding and are playing the role of catalyst in our strategic research and development partnerships.

Scott Moe said that the relationship has grown between India and Saskatchewan, especially after opening their office in Delhi and strengthens their resolve to work with India and achieve collective growth.

Dr. Abhay Karandikar, Secretary, Department of Science and Technology and senior officers were present in the meeting who briefed the high-level delegation on India's progress in various emerging technology sectors.

## Jammu-Srinagar NH partially opened for traffic; stranded vehicles being cleared

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The 270-km strategic Jammu-Srinagar national highway was opened for one-way traffic on Wednesday afternoon after remaining closed for the past two days due to multiple landslides in Ramban district, officials of the traffic department said.

The highway was closed for vehicular traffic on Monday morning after landslides and shooting of stones from the hillocks hit the highway, the only all weather road linking Kashmir with rest of the country, at over a dozen places, they said.

The officials said the operations to clear the debris from the arterial road at Dalwas, Peerha, near Peerha Tunnel, Mehad-Cafeteria, Jaiswal bridge, Trishul Morh, Seri,



T2, Monkey Morh, Mom Passi, Gangroo, Hingni Marog, Kishtwari Pather, Shalghari Rampari, Tabela and Chamalwas were hampered by incessant rains and snowfall.

With improvement in weather this morning, the concerned road clearance agencies mobilized more men and machines and managed to partially open the highway for one-way traffic this afternoon,

paving the way for clearance of the stranded vehicles between Nashi and Banihal, they said.

The officials said the clearance operation was going on and the road is likely to be made trafficable for both ways by tonight.

Fresh traffic from both sides will be allowed on Thursday morning after a fresh review of the road condition, they said.

## BJP confident of winning all LS seats in J&K, Ladakh: Raina

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Buoyed by the massive turnout of people at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's public rally here, Jammu and Kashmir BJP chief Ravinder Raina on Wednesday exuded confidence of winning all the six Lok Sabha seats in J&K and Ladakh in the upcoming polls.

Modi visited Jammu on Tuesday to inaugurate and lay the foundation stone of multiple developmental projects. He also addressed a rally in the city.

Raina also said the doors of his party are open for anyone who wishes to join the party and serve the people under the leadership of the prime minister.

There are five Lok Sabha seats in J&K and one in Ladakh.

"Preparations are going on in all the six Lok Sabha constituencies of J&K and Ladakh and we will fight the



J&K BJP Chief Ravinder Raina briefing media in Jammu.

elections on our own strength. We will win all these seats with the support of the people who will give their votes to Modi," Raina told reporters here.

He said his party is sure that the people would wholeheartedly support Modi who opened the coffers of his government to facilitate massive development in all the three regions of erstwhile state besides providing justice to the people, especially those who have been deprived of their rights over the past

seven decades.

He thanked the leaders of various opposition parties including National Conference president Farooq Abdullah and former deputy chief minister Muzaffar Hussain Baig for praising Modi during the prime minister's public rally at Maulana Azad Stadium on Tuesday.

While Abdullah joined the function at Nowgam railway station in Srinagar, Baig attended the rally.

Asked about rumours of former minister Choudhary Lal

Singh returning to the party fold ahead of the elections, he said, "It is good (if he is back in the party). We have kept our doors open and everyone is welcome. We should all come together to serve the people."

Singh, the chairman of the Dogra Swabhiman Sangathan Party (DSSP), was granted bail by a special court in Jammu on December 23 last year after he was arrested by ED in a money laundering case in November 23.

A two-time MP and three time MLA, Singh switched from Congress to BJP in 2014. However, he resigned from BJP in 2018 following an uproar over his participation in a rally in support of the accused in a rape and murder of the eight-year-old girl in Kathua in January 2018.

However, he defended his participation in the rally stating that he was there to "defuse the situation".

Thanking people for the warm welcome accorded to the prime minister despite inclement weather, Raina said the people know the reality as Modi ended injustice to various sections of the society by granting their rights, ensured massive development in all sectors and laid the foundation of peaceful and prosperous J&K.

"The past rulers oppressed the people and kept them hostage while the money pumped for the welfare of the poor was looted over the past 70 years. Time has changed with Modi's mantra of 'Sabka saath, sabka vikas, sabka vishwas, sabka prayas'," he said.

He also praised Modi for inaugurating and laying the foundation stone of development projects worth over Rs 32,000 crore including commissioning of Banihal-Sangaldan rail link and inauguration of AIIMS Jammu, IIT and IIM Jammu.

## Power shutdown

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Chief Engineer (Distribution) JPDCL Jammu has informed that the power supply to PHE Dansar, Railway Station Katra, Katra back, and adjoining areas will remain affected on February 22 and 23 from 11 am to 3 pm.

Similarly, the power supply to Shiv Khouri, Bharakh, Ransoo and adjoining areas will remain affected on February 25 from 9 am to 2 pm.

Likewise, the power supply to Upper Barnai, Lower Muthi, Paloura, JK Colony, ChandanVihar, PHE Roop Mahar, MES Rajouri Lines, Patoli, BSF Paloura and adjoining areas will remain affected on February 24 from 9 am to 1 pm.

Similarly, the power supply to Keerian Local, Keerian Industry, CTM-1, CTM-2, Kathua-3 GMC and adjoining areas will remain affected on February 24 from 10 am to 3 pm.

Meanwhile, Superintending Engineer (Distribution) JPDCL, O&M Circle Kathua has informed that the power supply to Patli, Gawal and adjoining areas SIDCO shall remain affected on February 23 from 10 am to 2 pm.

Similarly, the power supply to Sarore Local, Sarore Industry and adjoining areas SIDCO shall remain affected on February 25 from 10 am to 2 pm.

## Labour Com reviews preparation for Amarnathji Yatra, calls for hassle free registration of service providers

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Labour Commissioner, J&K Charandeep Singh on Wednesday chaired a preparatory meeting regarding Shri Amarnathji Yatra-2024 with the Labour Department Officials here.

Deputy Labour Commissioner Jammu, Deputy Labour Commissioner (Central), Deputy Director (Planning), Assistant Labour Commissioners of Ganderbal, Srinagar, Anantnag, Reasi, Doda, Kishwar, Ramban, Udhampur and Rajouri besides other officials were present.

Detailed deliberations were held regarding the Action Plan-2024 for Registration of Service Providers viz Ponywalas, Palkiwalas, Pithuwalas and Dandiwalas who come from various districts of Jammu & Kashmir



Labour Commissioner, J&K Charandeep Singh chairing a meeting.

and facilitate the Yatries in their journey to the Holy Cave of Shri Amarnathji from both the Pahalgam and the Baltal Axis each year.

The Labour Commissioner asked the officers and officials of the Labour Department to gear up for timely and hassle free registration

of service providers for smooth conduct of the SANJY-2024.

"Labour Department has a significant role in the smooth conduct of the Yatra", Labour Commissioner, J&K said and added that Labour Department will be facilitating advance Registration of Service Providers

both in their native districts and also at camps located in Ganderbal and Anantnag Districts besides ensuring timely and hassle free issuance of RFID Cards in their favour in coordination with the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB) and concerned District Administrations.

Labour Commissioner instructed that as and when the dates for commencement of the Registration Process are finalized, the same shall be communicated to the service providers through the print and electronic media as well as social media.

While emphasising on better coordination with other line Departments with regard to contractors and contract workers hired for different works for the Yatra-2024, the Labour Commissioner

said that line Departments being the Principal Employers are required to share the list of all such contractors engaged by them with the Labour Department so that interest of contract workers are protected in terms of wages, hours of work and other basic amenities.

It was informed that during SANJY-2023, 32819 Service Providers were registered by the Labour Department including 15903 Ponywalas, 10023 Palki/Dandiwalas and 6893 Pithuwalas. Registration Camps for the purpose were established at Sonmarg, Kangan, Manigam, Gund, Gutlibagh and Baltal in District Ganderbal and Matigawran, Sallar, Khayar, Aishmuqam, Anantnag and Pahalgam in District Anantnag besides other district headquarters.