

Enchanting Ecosystem: Gharana Wetlands blossom in global spotlight on World Wetland Day celebration

"Captivating synergy of nature and art unveiled at Gharana Wetlands"

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Directorate of Tourism Jammu, in collaboration with the Wildlife Department Jammu, Himalayan Aviation, and the Department of Statistics, University of Jammu, celebrated World wetlands day with an enchanting fusion of nature and creativity at Gharana Wetlands. This extraordinary event featured a photography competition and bird-watching tour, showcasing the vibrant spirit of conservation and artistic expression.

Flagged off from the Directorate of Tourism Jammu by Vivekananda Rai, Director Tourism Jammu, alongside Sunaina Mehta, Joint Director Tourism and Abdul Jabbar, Deputy Director Tourism, the tour witnessed enthusiastic participation from students if Sunshine Hr Secondary School Sikenderpur, Miran Sahib. Their poignant skit on



Birds reaching at Gharana Wetland in Jammu on Friday .

wetland conservation resonated with a collective commitment to preserving our ecological heritage.

Anil Atri, Wildlife Warden Jammu, outlined visionary plans for Gharana Wetland development, promising an enhanced experience for visitors. He revealed the remarkable revival of native fishes and the presence of 150 bird species, with 50 species

observable simultaneously - a spectacle unparalleled in other regions. Upcoming facilities, including an interpretation hall, visitor park, telescopes, and shooting scopes, aim to provide an immersive encounter with nature.

Prof Parmil Kumar, Head of the Department of Statistics, University of Jammu, shed light on this

year's theme, "Wetlands and Human Wellbeing." He emphasized the recent identification of five Ramsar Wetlands, highlighting the significance of Bar-headed geese flying over Everest, symbolizing the delicate interconnectedness of migratory patterns.

Joint Director Tourism, Sunaina Sharma Mehta, presided over the awards ceremony for the painting competition. Ashmita Yess secured the first prize, followed by Riyan Gupta in second place and Amit Kumar in third. Trophies were also presented to the management of Sunrise Hr Secondary School and Bhavya Gupta for their outstanding contributions.

The event featured esteemed personalities, including Gurdev Raj, Head of The Himalayan Avian and Vanshika, Head of the Study Group Himalayan Avian, adding to the grandeur of the occasion.

This fusion of nature and art not only celebrates our rich biodiversity but also underscores the commitment of the new generation to safeguard our environment. The Gharana Wetlands event stands as a testament to the harmonious coexistence of humanity and nature, a narrative woven through the lens of conservation.

Prof. Yash delivers invited talk at UGC-MMTTC, Amravati University

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JAMMU: Prof Yash Pal Sharma, former head, Department of Botany, delivered a talk on Wild Edible Mushrooms for Sustainable Future to the senior faculty participants of the Refresher Course in Environmental studies and Sustainable development organized by the UGC-MMTTC, Sant Gadge Baba Amravati University, Maharashtra, on Friday.

Prof. Sharma began by introducing the audience to the realm of fungi in general and mushrooms in particular. He described the unique "live-in" relationships that fungi have with plant roots (called mycorrhiza or fungal Internet, or wood wide web, www), with algae (called Lichens), within the plants (as endophytes), and with termite mounds (composed of ants, beetles, and other insects)-known as Ambrosia fungi. In terms of morphology, ecology, metabolism, and phylogeny, fungi are diverse. Researchers studying natural



products can find novel chemical varieties with agricultural, industrial, and medicinal applications by using them as a valuable source of bioactive compounds.

"But even with its significance in these fields, identifying fungi is still a difficult chore for scientists, particularly for those who don't collaborate with a professional mycologist", he opined.

He described how the fungal mycelium works around the clock in all climate circumstances, providing specifics about the preponderance of protein-coding genes in the mycelium compared to the fruiting body of

the mushroom. Despite the fact that mushrooms play a significant role in industry, biodiversity preservation, and human nutrition, the learned mycologist was concerned about the indifference and lackadaisical attitude towards fungal conservation.

Citing a recent assessment report of year 2023 from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew cautions that many of the vast majority of plant and fungus species on earth face extinction and could do so before science can fully understand their existence. The talk culminated with the presentation of the several kinds of mushrooms that Dr. Sharma and his group of researchers from Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh's Trans-Himalaya and North-West regions had identified. Additionally, he emphasized the use of mushrooms as a means of reducing the current problems associated with environmental degradation, unemployment, and nutritional security.

August 5, 2019 beginning of new era: Rana

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Describing the political developments of August 5, 2019 as beginning of a new era in Jammu and Kashmir with people of both the regions getting equal opportunities in political discourse and ending the hegemony of selected few, who always thrived on the politics of graveyards and want to keep the situation of boil, Sr. BJP Leader, Devender Singh Rana said that the Union Territory has proactively joined the country's growth story under Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Interacting with deputations and individuals during weekly public hearing at the BJP headquarters along with Venu Khanna, BJP State Secretary

and Shalinder Vaid, BJP Additional Protocol Secretary, Rana referred to the dawning of peace in Jammu and Kashmir post Article 370, leading to new era of progress, development and buzzing economic activities. Rana said "The stone throwing and Hartal culture has been taken over by humming tourism and economic activities. This has obviously rattled the power torn political actors, who had been thriving on miseries and agencies of their own brethren."

"BJP has been on mission mode in respect of bringing complete peace and normalcy besides ensuring equitable development of Jammu and Kashmir "Devender Rana said, adding that the milestones

registered in the past four years stand testimony to the sincerity of the governments at the Centre and here.

He said the commitment of the Prime Minister to public welfare keeps every BJP Karyakarta on mission mode.

"Being Indian under the leadership of Modiji is a matter of pride, given his crucial role in giving a new identity to India in the world", he maintained.

GDC Kunjwani promotes Road Safety Awareness through Innovative Test

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The NSS unit of Govt. Degree College (GDC) Kunjwani organized a Road Safety Awareness Test for the students in connection with the Road Safety month 2024.

The event aimed to enhance understanding of road safety principles among the students, fostering a culture of responsible road behaviour. Dr. Deepika Sharma, NSS Programme Officer conducted the test. Prof. Pooja, Prof. Risha and Dr. Ramnik Kour faculty member of the College evaluated the list. Prachi Rajput of semester VI secured first position, Shubam Choudhary of semester VI got second and Hardik Manchanda of semester IV got third position. To inculcate the sense of achievement and competition, Cash Prize of Rs. 700, Rs. 500, Rs. 300 were awarded to first, second and third respectively. The college administration lauded all participants for their enthusiasm and commitment to creating safer road environments.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In a much publicized Kiru Hydroelectric Project case, Special Judge CBI Jammu Bala Joyti on Friday rejected the pre-arrest bail applications of two persons of Delhi namely Sumit and Arun Kumar.

During the course of hearing Public Prosecutor Manmohan Sharma for the CBI argued strenuously that the present application is not maintainable at all being devoid of any legal force, hence on merits is liable to be rejected, In fact the conspectus of the matter in hand is that vide Letter No.GAD VIGOMISC/2/2022-07-GAD dated March 23, 2022 has conveyed the decision of Govt of UT of J&K for investigation by CBI into allegations of malpractices in award of contract in respect of civil works of 'Kiru Hydro electric Power' Project and on the basis of

reports of 'Anti Corruption Bureau', UT of J&K and Power Development Deptt. Govt of J&K and keen perusal of these reports reveals that in award of contract in respect of Civil Works of 'Kiru Hydroelectric Project, guidelines regarding e-tendering were not followed and though a decision was taken in 47th Board Meeting of CVPPL (Chenab Valley Power Projects (P) Ltd for re-tender through e-tendering with reverse auction, after cancellation of ongoing tendering process, same was not implemented (as per decision taken in the 48th Board meeting) and tender was finally awarded to M/s. Patel Engineering Ltd. PP further apprised this Court that after receipt of the said complaint, regular case RC0042022A0005 was registered on April 20, 2022 again (Navin Kumar Choudhary, as the then Chairman,

'Chenab Valley Power Projects' Pvt. Ltd (CVPPL) (ii) M.S Babu, the then Managing Director, CVPPL (iii) Arun Kumar Mishra, the then Director, CVPPL (iv) M/s. Patel Engineering Ltd atjd (vi) unknown others u/s. 5(1)(d) r/v 5(2) of J & K PC Act v Samvat 2006 and Sec 120-B of J & K RPC on the basis of reference received from Govt of LLT of J&K for investigation by CBI into allegations of award of contracts.

Special Judge CBI Bala Joyti after hearing both the sides, observed that the nature of allegations and gravity of accusation/stage of investigation, this Court is of the firm opinion that investigating agency must be given sufficient time in conducting analyzed and effective investigation, in view of gravity of accusations and material available. Thus, in view of the above said the present application

can not be allowed and interim 'protection cannot be granted as it may frustrate the investigating agency in interrogating the accused persons/applicant and in useful information and also the material which might to be concealed and moreover success in such interrogation would elude if the accused knows that he is protected by the order of the Court. Thus to my mind, grant of anticipatory bail at tins stage would definitely hamper the effective investigation, having regard to the material said to have been collected by the respondent CBI and considering the stage of investigation, I am of the firm view that it is not a fit case to grant anticipatory bail to applicant/accused as the matter being at infancy stage as such the present application being devoid of any legal force merits rejection and is accordingly dismissed.

Dr Gautam elected President of Dental Association

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Dr. Gautam Sharma, has again been elected as the President of Indian Dental Association (IDA), Jammu. This is the third time that Dr. Gautam has taken over as President of IDA.

Dr Nipun Gupta was elected as President for the year 2025.

The executive body of IDA Jammu will comprise of Dr Himja Mengi and Dr Nimrat Kaur as vice-presidents, Dr Vibha Raina (branch secretary), Dr Rajiv Mengi, consultant dentisty, J&K Government (representative to Govt.), Dr Premilata (editor), Dr Aayush Sharma (treasurer), Dr.Burhan (joint seere-

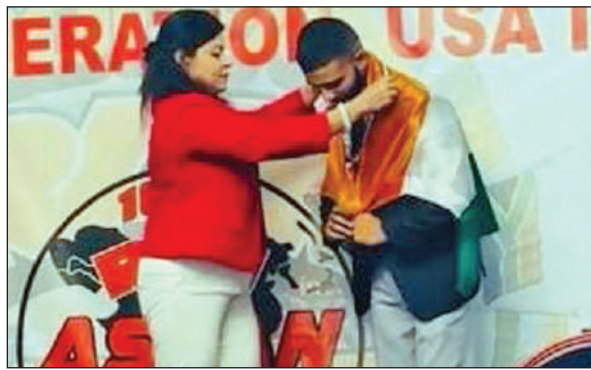
tary), Dr Manik Gupta (convener CDE), Dr Arshia (con-



vener CDH), Sunaina (student's representative).

Executive committee will include Dr Parul, Dr Abhimanyu Rohmetra, Dr Ankur Salada, Dr Himani Angurana, Dr Anshu Gupta, Dr Nippun Vaid, Dr Iram.

Sumit Thakyal wins two gold medals in Asian Powerlifting Championship



J&K Powerlifter, Sumit Thakyal receiving gold medals.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In a recent Asian Powerlifting Championship held from 27 to 28th Jan 2024 at Bur Dubai, Sumit Thakyal, Powerlifter boy had brought laurels by winning two Gold Medals (one

in deadlift and one in benchpress) to his name. He broke the Asian record in the 52-kilogram category in Dead Lift event by lifting 177.5 kg and won the title of Strongman of Asia.

Sumit started his career at 18 years of age and despite all the hardships he won several medals at national and International levels. Last year in 2023 at International Powerlifting Championship, he won 2 Gold Medals and broke the world record in the 52 Kg Weight Category. He also broke the world record in the 52-kilogram category in Dead Lift event by lifting 170 kilogram weight. The previous world record was 145 kilograms in the name of Nick Hartmann of (US-PA), 2013.

Sumit mantra for success is "Stay focused, stay positive, stay fit and never stop believing in yourself and your dreams".

CS assures public delegation of making MCH Reasi functional soon

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Friday assured the public delegation from Reasi for making the newly constructed Mother & Child Hospital (MCH) functional soon.

The delegation comprising of ex-PRI and other civil society members today called on the Chief Secretary in his office here and raised this demand before him. In response the Chief Secretary assured the visiting delegation of operationalization of this health facility soon. He remarked that the LG administration is keen to extend every possible facility to the citizens of the UT nearer to



Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo interacting with delegation.

their doorsteps. He made out that the easy accessibility of basic amenities like health is the top priority for current dispensation.

On the occasion the delegation raised other demands related to the development of their area. These includes the

ones for the growth of tourism and other civil infrastructure there.

The Chief Secretary listened carefully to them and assured the delegation that all their genuine demands would be given due consideration and fulfilled in a time bound manner:

Dr. Rakesh Magotra takes over as DHSJ

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JAMMU: Dr. Rakesh Magotra on Friday took over as Director Health Services Jammu. He was Medical Superintendent Government Hospital Gandhi Nagar Jammu prior to joining as Director Health Services Jammu.

The charge of Director Health Services Jammu is in addition to the post of Dy. Director Health Services (HQ) Jammu that has been assigned to Dr.Rakesh Magotra. He joined as Assistant Surgeon in the Health Department and served the department in various other capacities as



Block Medical Officer Bishnah, Dy. Chief Medical Officer Samba and Chief Medical Officer Kathua.

As the new Director, Dr. Rakesh Magotra shall oversee the health services in Jammu Division and with his previous administrative experiences will contribute to the betterment of the healthcare system.

Heritage School coach clinches silver



Heritage faculty felicitating winner coach.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In a display of outstanding skill and determination, Preeti Gupta, the

Badminton coach from Heritage School, secured a silver medal in the women's doubles category under 40 years, at the Yonex Sunrise Maharaja Agarsen All India Masters Ranking Badminton Tournament.

The event took place in Mohali, Punjab, from January 27 to 31, 2024.

Gupta's outstanding performance not only brought glory to Heritage School but also added prestige to the Jammu Badminton Circuit.

The Heritage family extended congratulations to Preeti Gupta for her stupendous achievement.

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The event witnessed oath taking by NGOs, PRI members, departmental officials, senior citizens, faculty and students of educational institutions regarding preservation and protection of wet-

lands in human wellbeing. Also, on display were photographs of migratory birds of wetlands captured by the ornithologists and the modern equipment used by the Department in census, survey, rescue and management of wildlife.

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Dheeraj Gupta chairs World Wetlands Day celebration at Surinsar

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JAMMU: Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) Forest, Dheeraj Gupta, on Friday presided over World Wetlands Day celebration at Surinsar Lake, a Ramsar Site.

ACS visited stalls established by the Central University Jammu, Institute of Mountain Environment, Bhaderwah Campus and Wildlife Department. The display showcased the wetland diversity of J&K besides highlighting role being played by

wetlands in human wellbeing. Also, on display were photographs of migratory birds of wetlands captured by the ornithologists and the modern equipment used by the Department in census, survey, rescue and management of wildlife.

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ACS Forest, Dheeraj Gupta, flagging off rally during World Wetlands Day celebration at Surinsar Lake.

lands. Dheeraj Gupta called for preparation of master plan for

Surinsar Mansar Wetlands in consultation with all relevant stakeholders including PRIs,

tourism development authorities, agriculture, industry and commerce and Forest and Wildlife Departments.

ACS urged upon the people to support the wildlife department in conservation of Surinsar-Mansar Wildlife Sanctuary and the wetland which are vital for local ecology, agriculture, horticulture, tourism and other economic activities. He listened to the concerns of representatives of PRIs regarding various approvals required for execu-

tion of development works. He asked the development agencies to apply for regulatory clearances well in time.

Chief Wildlife Warden, Sarvesh Rai, apprised the participants of various activities of the department being undertaken for conservation of Surinsar-Mansar sanctuary and the wetland. This included measures for reducing silt load, removal of weed, improvement of littoral zone and development of basking sites for turtles. He informed

that similar events are being held today at Gharana, Hokersar, Shalbugh, Hygam and Wular wetlands.

NGO member, Nazir-Be-Nazir and Professor Institute of Mountain Environment, Bhaderwah Campus, Dr Neeraj Sharma also spoke about the need for involvement of various stakeholders in conservation of the wetlands.

The event was attended by Roshan Jaggi, PCCF and HoFF, Senthil Kumar,

APCCF, Ramesh Kumar, CCF Jammu, Dr. M.K. Kumar, Regional Wildlife Warden, Jammu, Mohan Das, CF East, Vijay Kumar, Wildlife Warden, Kathua, Kusum Salaria, President Women Era, Dr. Vinita Sharma, Dr. Pankaj Chandan, Director NDF, Research Scholars, PRI members, prominent citizens and students.

The event ended with flagging off of a walkathon by Dheeraj Gupta.