

Lays foundation stone of new campus of CUJ

J&K witnessing phenomenal expansion of education: Sinha

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday said the Union Territory of Jammu Kashmir is witnessing phenomenal expansion of education sector, which in turn is addressing the vital need of development, enhancing human capital and strengthening larger vision of nation-building.



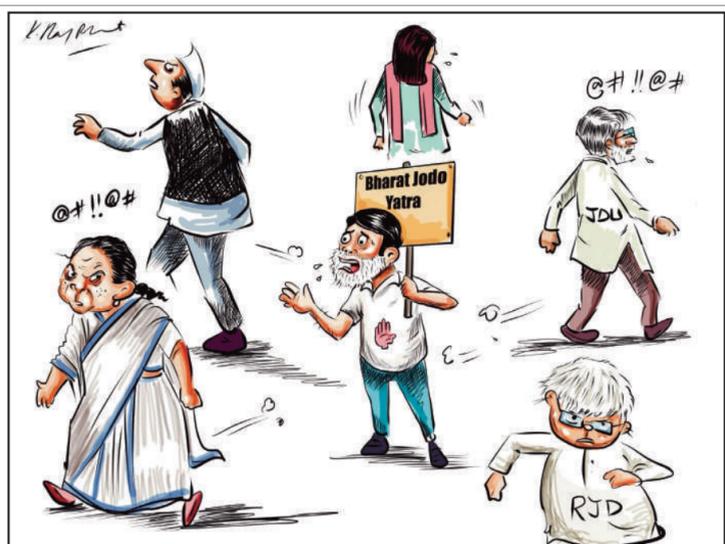
Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha chairing meeting after laying foundation stone of new campus of Cluster University, Jammu.

"Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Institutions and access to quality education is making valuable contributions to concerned sectors," he said. The Lt Governor also talked

about the reforms introduced in higher education sector in J&K over last few years. He impressed upon the Colleges under Cluster University to harness the opportunities and improve,

reorient and prepare market-ready skilled workforce. On the occasion, the Lt Governor congratulated the Vice Chancellor, Cluster University of Jammu, Prof Bechan Lal on successful completion of his tenure as VC and wished him good health and all the success in future.

Alok Kumar, Principal Secretary Higher Education; Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; senior officials, Principals of Associated Colleges, Heads of Departments and Faculty members of Cluster University of Jammu were present on the occasion at Raj Bhawan.



E-bus drivers, conductors protest; say stop harassment

MASROOR AHMAD
SRINAGAR: Although Smart City buses are back on routes after a brief halt, drivers are in a danger-like situation as passengers are turning violent against the e-bus operators. It has been seen that many passengers are not giving tickets and many are arguing to pay extra than the mini bus and even some passengers are attacking conductors and bus operators by taking the law in their own hands.

Shouting slogans "LG admin wake up, want justice", dozens of the e-bus drivers and conductors staged a protest in Srinagar on February 5 against the harassment meted out to them by the passengers. Pertinently, a video of a passenger attacking an e-bus operator in the Batamaloo area of the city went viral on social media, sparking protests by his fraternity. "We have been facing a series of issues ever since the e-bus service was started in Srinagar. However, the higher-ups of the SSCL despite being well aware of our problems have never been serious enough to address the same," Gulzar Ahmad, a protester said.

react," Gulzar said. The e-bus drivers and conductors threatened to suspend the service on all routes in Srinagar, in case the harassment meted out to them by the passengers was not immediately stopped. "We are all highly educated, but the unemployment issue has forced us to work as drivers and conductors. We cannot risk our lives and appeal to the Lieutenant Governor to take serious note of the problems we face or else we will be forced to halt services on all routes," they threatened. However, officials of the Srinagar Smart City Limited said that the e-bus conductors and drivers did not have any issue with them and were up against the hiring agency, seeking redressal of their issues.

LS passes landmark Examination Bill by Dr Jitendra; seeks safeguards for youth, children

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI: The Lok Sabha on Tuesday passed 'The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024' moved by Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh. Replying to an extensive debate on the Bill in which around 25 MPs from different political parties spoke, Dr Jitendra Singh said, the legislation seeks safeguards for "our youth and children". The legislation aims at curbing leaks, malpractices as well as organised malpractices in recruitment examinations like UPSC, SSC etc and entrance tests such as NEET, JEE and CUET. "Prevention of Unfair Means Bill, 2024" will also cover entrance examinations held by the Union Public Service Commission, the Staff Selection Commission, the Railways, banking recruitment examinations and all computer-based examinations conducted by the National Testing Agency. Initiating discussion in the house on the Bill, the Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and



Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh replying to the debate on "The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024", in Lok Sabha on Tuesday.

Space, Dr Jitendra said, one after another we have witnessed incidents of malpractices, paper leak, impersonation etc from various parts of the country. In Rajasthan, there have been 12 incidents of malpractices since 2018 while the Sub-Inspector Recruitment scam surfaced in Jammu & Kashmir in March, 2022 and SSC Combined Graduate Exam in 2017, he said. "There are several instances but prominently, in West Bengal, the Diploma in Elementary Education paper in November, 2022 was

leaked, again in the same state in February, 2023 English paper leaked besides School Service Commission, West Bengal also leaked. In December, 2022 Teacher Recruitment Scam unravelled in Rajasthan while in February, 2022 the Rajasthan Eligibility Exam for Teachers was also plagued by malpractices and the exam had to re-conducted. In May, 2022 Rajasthan Police Constable Recruitment Exam was hit by a scam," he said. Cutting across party lines, Dr Singh said the matter is above politics and that there is no difference of opinion among members of the House. The Bill is aimed at curbing corrupt practice by few unscrupulous elements that plays havoc with the future of our youth, destroying their careers and aspirations and occasionally resulting in fatal suicides, he said. "The future of our youth up to 40 years of age, who comprise 70% of our population, is at stake, who are stakeholders in the Viksit Bharat of 2047," he said. Later, replying to the debate, Dr Jitendra Singh clarified that the students or the candidates appearing in these examinations have been kept out of the purview of Bill and

Koul, Yudhvir flag off first Astha train for Ayodhya from City of Temples



BJP leader Ashok Koul, Yudhvir Sethi flagging off first Astha train for Ayodhya from City of Temples.

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Ashok Koul, General Secretary (Organization), BJP, Jammu & Kashmir, along with Yudhvir Sethi, party Vice President, who is also the Convenor of Ram Darshan Ayodhya, and Vikram Choudhary, former MLC and Reema Padha, Co-Convenors of Ram Darshan Ayodhya, on Tuesday flagged off first Astha train for Ram Temple Ayodhya from Jammu Railway Station. With great fervor and enthusiasm, more than 1300 Ram Bhagats embarked on a spiritual journey that holds immense significance in the hearts of millions across the nation.

and sacred journey of all the pilgrims and highlighted the significance of the pilgrimage in fostering unity and spiritual harmony among the people of India. Yudhvir Sethi, echoing similar sentiments, stressed the symbolic importance of the journey, stating that it not only symbolizes religious faith but also serves as a beacon of hope and unity for the entire nation. He said the Ram Temple reflects the nation's devotion to Shree Ram, who exemplifies justice, compassion and unwavering commitment to truth, hoping that it will serve as a symbol of collective aspirations of Sanatanis for a society founded on these timeless values. He said the contribution of thousands, irrespective of religion, caste or region, in building a magnificent temple is a symbol of inclusive India. Sethi said that this Astha train, on its maiden voyage from Jammu to Ayodhya, is a testament to the unwavering devotion of the Indian people and the Modi government's commitment in facilitating religious pilgrimages with utmost comfort and convenience. Yudhvir Sethi also thanked Prateek Shrivastava, DTM, Jammu Region, Northern Railways, for extending full support in flagging off this

first train from Jammu Railway Station. He also conveyed gratitude to all the party workers for making this event a grand success.

Power shutdown

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Chief Engineer (Distribution) JPDCL Jammu has informed that the power supply to Lower & Upper Gadigarh, Indira Nagar, Dharap, Sudan H/Care Centre and its adjoining areas will remain affected on February 08 from 10 am to 2 pm. Similarly, the power supply to Satwari, Military Hospital, Military Cantt.NaiBasti, Narwal, Jawahar Nagar, Ashok Nagar, Shastri Nagar and its adjoining areas will remain affected on February 09 from 10 am to 1 pm. Likewise, the power supply to Kheri, Rehal, Pandorijan, Rattinal and adjoining areas will remain affected on February 09 from 10 am to 12 noon. Similarly, the power supply to Arnia, Suhagpur, Allah and adjoining areas will remain affected on February 09 from 1 pm to 3 pm. Likewise, the power supply to Ramgarh and adjoining areas will remain affected on February 09

from 2 pm to 4 pm. Similarly, the power supply to Industrial Estate (Ghatti and adjoining areas will remain affected on February 09 from 9 am to 9.30 am and 4 pm to 4.30 pm. Likewise, the power supply to Doda, Padyarna, Padder and adjoining areas will remain affected on February 09 from 9 am to 3 pm. Similarly, the power supply to Tanda, Miran Sahib, Simbal, Kotli, Darsopur, Trishul Bottle and adjoining areas will remain affected on February 09 from 9 am to 2 pm. Meanwhile, the Superintendent Engineer, (Distribution) JPDCL O&M Circle, Kathua, has informed that the power supply to Badhori feeder and its adjoining areas will remain affected on February 08 from 10 am to 2 pm. Likewise, the power supply to Jakh and its adjoining areas will remain affected on February 07 from 10 am to 2 pm.

Prpl Secy reviews functioning of Libraries, Research Deptt

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Principal Secretary, Culture, Suresh Kumar Gupta, on Tuesday chaired a meeting here at Civil Secretariat to assess the functioning of Libraries and Research Department. Director, Libraries and Research, Mohammad Raffi, Director Finance, Culture, Satnam Singh, Special Secretary, Culture, Trishala Kumari, Deputy Director Planning, Dr Mohammad Maqbool, Deputy Director L&R Jammu, Parveen Kumari, Deputy Director L&R Kashmir, Sheikh Zahoor-ul-Haq and other concerned attended the meeting both in person and online mode.



Principal Secy, Culture, Suresh Gupta chairing a meeting.

During the meeting, the Director L&R gave a presentation highlighting department's structure, achievements, human resources including staff position and existing vacancies. He emphasized the historical significance of libraries such as Shri Ranbir Singh Library, Jammu and Shri Pratap Singh Library, Srinagar, which stand as some of the oldest public libraries in the country. Regarding library infrastructure, it was informed that out of the total 131 libraries under the department's purview, there are 27 existing buildings, 85 rented

facilities, 19 rent-free premises and seven upcoming departmental infrastructures. In terms of intellectual resources, the department boasts an impressive repository comprising 14 lakh books and 5580 manuscripts spread across various libraries. The meeting also delved into visitor statistics, with over 5.86 lakh individuals patronizing the libraries across Jammu and Kashmir over the past two years. During this period, a total of 84,305 books were issued to the visitors. Furthermore, in January 2024 alone, 35,562 individuals visited different libraries, borrowing 3,515 books, the meeting was informed. The meeting had detailed discussion on recent initiatives including implementation of E-Granthalaya 4.0 cloud software in 26 libraries, identification and establishment of libraries in various locations and ongoing process of upgrading the department's website to enhance user-friendliness, among other measures. The meeting also addressed future strategies, pertinent issues and funding allocations under the capital expenditure budget. Speaking on the occasion, Principal Secretary remarked that the Libraries & Research Department plays a pivotal role in fostering knowledge dissemination and scholarly pursuits in our region. He said that the department is committed towards enhancing its capabilities and reach to serve the citizens of Jammu and Kashmir in an enhanced manner. He emphasized that the libraries stand as beacon of enlightenment, preserving our cultural heritage and facilitating lifelong learning. "It is imperative that we continue to invest in their development and modernization, he added.

JKEDI Dir conducts in-depth evaluation of institute's operations, performance

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Director, Jammu & Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI), Rajinder Kumar Sharma on Tuesday chaired a review meeting held at the Institute's Bari Brahmana, Jammu campus. During the review meeting, the functioning of the Institute was discussed threadbare and progress made under repayment

The meeting was attended by all District Nodal Officers of JKEDI and in-charge officers of the concerned sections through virtual mode across J&K. During the meeting the Director JKEDI exhorted upon all the District Nodal Officers to enhance their efforts and complete all targets in designated time. The Director gave a thorough analysis of a recovery data, highlighting the progress achieved in all the districts of J&K. The holistic review of the recovery and repayment

status underscores the Institute's dedication to transparency, accountability, and sustainable growth. Earlier in the day, the Director also had an introductory meeting with the faculty members and other officials of the Institute posted at Regional Campus Jammu. This interaction was aimed to strengthen internal communication channels, ensuring a cohesive approach towards achieving the Institute's goals. The Director highlighted the critical role of

teamwork in realizing the Institute's commitment to providing effective guidance and mentorship. He stressed the importance of a collaborative spirit among JKEDI employees to meet and exceed the expectations set forth in guiding the youth towards successful entrepreneurial endeavors. This collaborative approach, as envisioned by the Director, not only fosters a conducive working environment but also strengthens the institute's capacity to positively impact the lives of young entrepreneurs.

CRPF holds free medical camp at Channi Rama

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: As part of its Civic Action Program, the 76th CRPF Battalion, in collaboration with J&K Health Department on Monday organised a free medical camp here at Shiv Shakti Mandir, Channi Rama. The Camp was hosted under the guidance of Sandeep Khirwar, IG Jammu Sector and Ramesh Kumar, DIG Range Jammu. T.H. Khan, Commandant-76 Bn supervised the camp organized with the objective to reach out to the needy people of the area with free health care and make them aware about the healthy routine. In



T.H. Khan, Commandant-76 Bn supervising the camp.

the Medical Camp, a team of 2 Medical Officers Dr. S. Sowmiya, 76 Battalion, CRPF and Dr. Neeyati Abrol, Medical Officer conducted free medical check-up of around 350 civilians and provided free medicines. Ramesh Kumar, DIG

Jammu Range inaugurated the Civic Action Programme. On this Occasion, T.H.Khan, Commandant-76Bn appealed to all people of the area to stay fit by doing physical exercises regularly and sensitized them to maintain a healthy lifestyle & hygiene. Besides, he also elaborated the role of the CRPF in maintaining cordial relationship between locals & force. Anand Kumar, DIG(OPS) Range Hiranagar, Hari Om Khare, Commandant-160 Bn, Mahendra Singh 21C, Girish Chandra Singh Sontiyal Dy.Comdt., Praveen Kumar, Asstt. Comdt. and Medical Staff & Jawans of 76 Bn CRPF also participated in the camp. The initiative drew positive response and was received well by the locals with the urge that CRPF to organize such camps in the future also.