

PoJK displaced persons hold rally, raise long-pending rehabilitation issues

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The PoJK DP's Front (Non-Camp), 1971 Chhamb Niyabat, organized a rally at Maharaja Hari Singh Park here on Monday to highlight the long-pending concerns of displaced families from Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK).

The gathering was chaired by Front President Captain (Retd.) Yudhvir Singh Chib, accompanied by General Secretary J.P. Sharma and Mahila Wing President Sakandaya Devi, along with a large number of displaced persons (DPs).

According to the organizers, participants assembled at the park at around 10:30 am and attempted to march towards the Civil Secretariat to press for their demands. However, the rally was stopped by a heavy police contingent near Dogra Chowk. Despite the restric-



PoJK displaced persons raising slogans during a protest.

tions, members addressed the gathering and reiterated their long-standing grievances, many of which, they said, have remained unresolved for over six decades.

The Front emphasized the recommendations of a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) constituted in 2013, which had proposed compensation of Rs 30 lakh for each displaced PoJK family.

Leaders stated that while Rs 5.5 lakh has been disbursed to many beneficiaries,

a significant number of claimants are still awaiting payments, and the remaining amount is yet to be released.

They appealed to Lt Governor Manoj Sinha to take up the matter with the Central Government to ensure early release of pending funds.

Another major issue raised during the rally was the allotment of agricultural land to displaced families who have not yet been rehabilitated.

Representatives of the

Front urged the administration to consider allocating six acres of irrigated and eight acres of non-irrigated land from recently retrieved agricultural areas to non-camp PoJK DPs who were displaced during the wars of 1947, 1965, and 1971.

The Front also highlighted delays in granting ownership rights to those who were previously allotted agricultural land. Members alleged that despite government orders issued in August 2024, revenue authorities have not fully implemented the decision, preventing beneficiaries from accessing certain welfare schemes.

In addition, the displaced families demanded the creation of residential colonies and allotment of plots for non-camp PoJK DPs of the 1971 conflict, along with financial assistance under housing schemes. They also raised concerns about pend-

ing direct benefit transfers of compensation files forwarded to the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2022, claiming that many beneficiaries have yet to receive payments.

Addressing the gathering, J.P. Sharma and Sakandaya Devi urged unity among displaced families and said that efforts are ongoing to raise these issues at various administrative and legislative forums. They expressed hope that the matters would be taken up in upcoming Assembly sessions for early resolution.

Several prominent members, including Kuldeep Singh Chib, Varinder Singh, Kulbir Singh Chib, Sukhdev Singh, Kehar Singh, Master Raghunath Singh, Ch. Rattan Lal, Thoru Ram Chib, Sham Singh Chib, Kamal Sharma, Hoshnaki Ram, and Ranjit Singh Chib, were present during the rally.

Yudhvir Sethi inaugurates water supply projects worth Rs 45 lakh in Jammu East

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: MLA Jammu East Yudhvir Sethi on Monday inaugurated two major water supply infrastructure projects in Ward No. 8 aimed at strengthening drinking water facilities for local residents.

The works include the laying of a PHE pipe distribution system from Manda to adjoining areas under the PHE Sub Division Dhouthly (AMRUT) at an estimated cost of Rs 29 lakh, and the laying of a new pipe network from Old Rehari to the New Kashmiri Pandit Sabha under UT Capex at a cost of Rs 16 lakh.

Addressing the gathering, Yudhvir Sethi said that improving basic amenities remains a top priority for the constituency. "Clean and reliable drinking water is a fundamental necessity. These projects will significantly improve water distribution in Ward No. 8 and ease long-standing issues faced by residents," he said, adding that



MLA Yudhvir Sethi inaugurating water supply infrastructure project.

more development works are being planned to upgrade civic infrastructure across Jammu East. He further emphasized that coordinated efforts between the government departments and public representatives are essential to ensure timely completion of projects. Sethi also directed the executing agencies to maintain quality standards and complete the works within the stipulated timeframe so that people receive maximum benefit without delay.

Executive Engineer PHE Tajinder Pal Singh, AEE Rajesh with his team of officials along with several senior party

leaders and former corporators including Dr. Akshay Sharma, Suneet Raina, and Nidhi Mangotra, were present on the occasion. Local leaders Swati Sharma (Amphalla Mandal President), Raman Sharma (District Spokesperson), Rohit Gupta, Ashok Salgotra, Puneet Chawla, Karan Sharma, Pooja Sharma, and other party workers also attended the inauguration ceremony. Residents welcomed the initiative and expressed hope that the new pipeline network would resolve water supply issues in the locality and contribute to improved public health and sanitation.

'Shirtless' protest: BJP Mahila Morcha burns effigy of Rahul Gandhi

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The BJP Mahila Morcha on Monday held a protest in Jammu and burnt an effigy of Rahul Gandhi, condemning the Congress for what they termed an "objectionable and irresponsible" protest by its youth wing at the AI Impact Summit in New Delhi.

On Friday, a group of Indian Youth Congress (IYC) workers staged a dramatic shirtless protest at an exhibition hall during the AI Impact Summit at the Bharat Mandapam, walking around holding T-shirts with slogans against the government and the India-US trade deal printed on them.

Seven IYC workers have been arrested and a few more have been questioned by the police.

Led by J-K BJP Mahila Morcha president Neha Mahajan, the protesters gathered outside the Press Club, raised slogans against the Congress and demanded an apology from Gandhi, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, for allegedly hurting the country's honour and image.

The Mahila Morcha accused the Congress of politicising a prestigious international event held at Bharat



BJP Mahila Morcha members burning effigy during a protest.

Mandapam meant to showcase India's technological progress.

The protesters raised slogans of "Desh ka samman, sabse upar" and "AI Summit par rajneeti bandh karo" during the demonstration. The effigy-burning, protesters said, was carried out peacefully to register protest against what they described as "politics against development". Addressing reporters,

Mahajan said the Congress' actions reflected "frustration and disregard for national interest" and asserted that India's technological rise under Narendra Modi could not be undermined by protests such as the one at the summit. She said the BJP Mahila Morcha would continue to oppose misinformation and any attempt to "tarnish" India's international reputation.

Day 5 of 'Adi Shankaracharya Sansar' Workshop: DIG CRPF, SKUAST-K VC assure support to artistic initiative

STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: The ongoing national art workshop 'Adi Shankaracharya Sansar' witnessed significant developments on Day 5 as senior dignitaries lauded the initiative and assured their support. The workshop is being organised by the Master Sansar Chand Baru Memorial Charitable Trust in collaboration with the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India.

Held at the 43 Battalion Headquarters of the Central Reserve Police Force in Budgam, the workshop brings together artists and scholars to explore the spiritual legacy of Adi Shankaracharya through contemporary visual art.

On Day 5, Anuradha Rishi, President of MSCBMC Trust, first met Vivek Bhandral, DIG CRPF. She briefed him about the objectives of the workshop and its role in engaging youth through cultural and spiritu-



Anuradha Rishi, President of MSCBMC Trust, meeting Vivek Bhandral, DIG CRPF.

al themes.

Addressing the gathering, Anuradha Rishi said, "Art is a universal language. It transcends spoken words and connects hearts and minds. Through art, we communicate peace, unity and inner awakening. When young people immerse themselves in creative expression, their minds become focused, disciplined and constructive."

She added that art has a deep impact on brain development, enhancing creativity, concentration, emotional balance and innovative thinking. "Art channels youth energy in the right direction

and keeps them connected to culture and values," she stated.

DIG Vivek Bhandral appreciated the initiative and assured full support for such cultural and educational activities that promote positivity and national integration. He emphasized that constructive engagement of youth through art and culture strengthens society and nurtures responsible citizens.

Later, Anuradha Rishi met Prof. Nazir Ahmed Ganai, Vice Chancellor of Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and

Technology of Kashmir. She highlighted the intellectual and creative dimensions of the workshop and its focus on philosophy, heritage and innovation.

Prof. Ganai praised the initiative, noting that art enhances cognitive abilities, imagination and critical thinking among youth. He assured academic encouragement and support for initiatives that blend cultural heritage with contemporary learning.

Artists continued to draw inspiration from the historic Shankaracharya Temple and Kashmir's spiritual landscape. Among the participants, Mohammed Suhail Khan, a deaf and non-verbal artist, showcased compelling artworks that received special appreciation.

His recent participation in a snow festival in the United States, where his sculptures and paintings were widely praised, reflects the growing global recognition of emerging Indian talent.

Dr. Veethika Tikoo mesmerizes with santoor recital at Rashtrapati Bhawan

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Dr. Veethika Tikoo, renowned Santoor Maestro from Jammu Kashmir having a good reputation especially in the music field of classical and suffiyana Santoor playing, has been honoured to perform in the Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi the other day.

Invited by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, Dr. Tikoo was honoured to perform in the presence of President of Bharat, Draupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President of Brazil, Luiz Inacio Lula Da Silva along with high powered delegation who were a part of AI impact summit.

Dr. Veethika, youngest and the only female Santoor Vadika, has represented to promote the musical heritage of



Jammu and Kashmir.

It is noteworthy to know glorious achievements of Dr. Veethika Tikoo, a highly accomplished Santoor artist has performed extensively across India and overseas, holds the distinction of being the first Santoor Vadika to perform at the European parliament.

Dr. Veethika accompanied by Saubhagya Gandharv on flute, Nageshwar Lal Karan on Tabla has played varieties of Indian Raaga, Hamsadhawani, yaman, Chandrakauns and Pahadi.

The presenting of Jammu and Kashmir by Dr. Veethika Tikoo in this prestigious programme is being seen as a proud moment for Jammu and Kashmir's cultural fraternity.

NHPC celebrates Vasant Utsav 2026 with enthusiasm



NHPC officers and participants of Vasant Utsav 2026 celebration.

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Vasant Utsav 2026 was celebrated with great enthusiasm by NHPC, India's 100% renewable energy company, at the NHPC Residential Complex, Faridabad. The festival was inaugurated by Bhupender Gupta, Chairman and Managing Director, NHPC and Shikha Gupta, Chairperson, NHPC Mahila Kalyan Samiti. NHPC celebrates Vasant Utsav during the spring season with the objective of showcasing the richness and diversity of Indian culture. While addressing the gathering during the program, CMD, NHPC extended his best wishes to everyone and said that the spring season brings new energy, new enthusiasm

and new hope into our lives. After the biting cold of winter, when the weather becomes pleasant, crops begin to sway in the fields, new buds sprout on trees and colorful flowers bloom all around, nature conveys the message that change is the foundation of life and that moving forward after every pause is the path to progress. In his address, Shri Gupta also spoke about NHPC's ongoing projects and future plans, stating that the previous year had been a year of achievements and transformation for NHPC. He said that NHPC had not only achieved its targets but, in many areas, had surpassed them with excellent performance.

On this occasion, Uttam

Lal, Director (Personnel), Sanjay Kumar Singh, Director (Projects) and Suprakash Adhikari, Director (Technical) along with members of the NHPC Mahila Kalyan Samiti - Mona Lal, Garima Singh and Soma Adhikari were also present.

During the festival, local artists from Mathura presented folk songs, music and folk dances, whose splendid performances mesmerized everyone. To promote local handicraft products from various states and Union Territories such as Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, West Bengal, Uttarakhnad, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam etc., stalls were also set up by NHPC power stations, projects and regional offices.

DLSA organises awareness event on Mediation for Nation 2.0 Campaign

STATE TIMES NEWS

REASI: Under the visionary leadership of Chairman, District Legal Services Authority, Reasi (also Pr. District and Sessions Judge Reasi), Khalil Choudhary and the able guidance of Secretary, Pooja Gupta, a mediation for Nation 2.0 Campaign was conducted by the Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs) of DLSA at main Bazar Reasi. The programme aimed at promoting amicable settlement of disputes through mediation mechanisms, thereby reducing litigation burden and ensuring speedy, cost-effective and accessible justice for the common people. The public was encouraged to actively participate in the campaign with the shared objective of enhancing legal awareness, promoting amicable dispute resolution and strengthening access to justice for all. Another awareness programme on Marriage Assistance Schemes and other Welfare Schemes was successfully conducted by the Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs) at Mahore Court Complex and several other places. During the programme, the participants were made aware about various Marriage Assistance Schemes launched by the Government for economically weaker sections.

FICCI FLO JKL launches "From Farm To Heart"-prompting agro-tourism through strawberry picking initiative

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: FICCI FLO JKL, under the leadership of Chairperson Aarti Chowdhary and her core team, organised an innovative members' connect meet titled "From Farm To Heart" at Vijaypur Agro Fruits And Vegetables Producers Cooperative LTD, Block Samba. The initiative marked the official launch of the "Pick Your Own Strawberry" experience - an initiative aimed at promoting agro-tourism while directly supporting local farmers.

The initiative brought FLO JKL members closer to the farming community, allowing them to experience the joy of harvesting fresh strawberries straight from the fields. Beyond the experience, members actively contributed to the economy by purchasing the strawberries they hand-picked, ensuring direct income support to the farmers and the Farmers Produce Organisation (FPO).

This simple yet impactful gesture reinforced FLO JKL's belief in sustainable empowerment - where



FICCI FLO JKL members and others posing for a photograph.

engagement translates into tangible economic benefit for grassroots producers. By consciously buying farm-fresh produce at source, members strengthened market linkages and encouraged farm-based entrepreneurship. Chairperson Aarti Chowdhary emphasized that FLO JKL remains committed to creating meaningful platform that connect urban networks with rural enterprise. She further highlighted that agro-tourism offers

farmer an additional revenue stream while fostering awareness about local agriculture.

The event was hosted at Vijaypur FPO, Samba, by Mr. Baldev Raj (President Vijaypur FPO) reinforcing FLO JKL's ongoing collaboration with FPOs and SHGs. Through initiative like "From Farm To Heart", FLO JKL continues to bridge communities while promoting entrepreneurship and economic empowerment

at grassroots level. Members enjoyed an afternoon filled with sunshine, fresh produce, and fellowship - truly celebrating the sweetness of both Strawberries and sisterhood.

FICCI FLO JKL reiterates its commitment to supporting farmers, encouraging agro-tourism, and building sustainable rural-urban Partnership under its guiding vision - "The Power To Empower".

Modi lauds unveiling of bust of Chakravarti Rajagopalachari at Rashtrapati Bhavan

STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday lauded the unveiling of a bust of Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, the first and only Indian Governor General of independent India, at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here.

This reflects the country's resolve to honour those who shaped its destiny and to shed remnants of a colonial mindset, Modi said.

President Droupadi Murmu unveiled the bust of Rajagopalachari, popularly known as Rajaji, on Monday. "A commendable effort, which reflects India's resolve

to honour those who shaped our destiny and to shed remnants of a colonial mindset. Rajaji was a towering scholar, freedom fighter, thinker and administrator. His life embodied integrity, intellect and unwavering commitment to the nation," Modi wrote on X.

Rajagopalachari's bust at the grand open staircase near Ashok Mandap in Rashtrapati Bhavan replaces that of Edwin Lutyens, the main architect of several monuments in New Delhi, including the Rashtrapati Bhavan, North Block, South Block and India Gate.

Modi also said that the Rajaji Utsav, which is being celebrated at Rashtrapati Bhavan, is a wonderful initiative, which brings out different aspects of Rajaji's rich contribution to the nation.

"I urge you all to visit it and get inspired!" he said in another post on X.

Prime Minister Modi on Sunday said statues of colonial rulers were allowed to remain in Rashtrapati Bhavan even after independence and a statue of British architect Lutyens will now be replaced with the bust of Rajagopalachari.

In his monthly radio address Mann Ki Baat, he said, the country is leaving behind the symbols of slavery and has begun to value symbols related to Indian culture.

Unfortunately, PM Modi said, even after independence, statues of British administrators were allowed to remain in Rashtrapati Bhavan, but those of the nation's greatest sons were denied space.

An exhibition on Rajagopalachari is also being held during the Rajaji Utsav. This exhibition will be on from February 24 to March 1.