

Udhampur constituency gave Indian youth new StartUp option of Lavender: Dr Jitendra

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Udhampur Lok Sabha constituency of Jammu and Kashmir has given the Indian youth a new StartUp option of Lavender and is fast emerging as an Agri StartUp hub, said Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh here on Wednesday.

Interacting with youth delegations during the campaign trail, Dr Jitendra recalled the Republic Day tableau at Kartavya Path New Delhi on 26 January depicting lavender farms of Bhaderwah which is a testimony of Bhaderwah and J&K being nationally hailed as the birthplace of "Purple Revolution", now emulated in other Himalayan States like Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh as well as Nagaland.

He said, the foundation of this Agri StartUp hub has been laid in the picturesque Bhaderwah town of district Doda in Jammu and Kashmir, where cultivation of lavender has been taken up on a large scale.

Dr Jitendra said, same lavender farming has now picked up in other parts of the constituency as well including upper reaches of Billawar, Ramnagar areas.

He recalled that PM Narendra Modi had in detail explained this success story in farming from district Doda of J&K in his "Mann Ki Baat" broadcast and told the listeners



Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh with a delegation of youth during the campaign trail on Wednesday.

about the small town of Bhaderwah where this experiment had been carried out as part of Aroma Mission by Ministry of Science & Technology, Govt of India.

This endeavour provides India an alternate source to propel its economy, Dr Jitendra stated.

Over 3000 flourishing lavender entrepreneurs from Bhaderwah have shown the youth of India a new and lucrative avenue of StartUp through agriculture which is an exclusive domain of this country and will contribute value addition to India's future economic growth and realisation of PM Narendra Modi's vision of "Vikriti Bharat" by 2047, he said.

The Minister informed that more than three thousand youth of J&K are engaged in this mission which has emerged as an avenue of self-employment as these youngsters are earning in lakhs.

Dr Jitendra underscored that this has been

achieved due to the personal efforts of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, and the government's measures to provide all possible support, be it imparting training to the youth or ensuring industry linkages for lavender products or provision of other necessary logistical aid, to spur this revolution. Lavender-made products are sold in thousands in States like Maharashtra, fetching rich revenue for the producers, he informed.

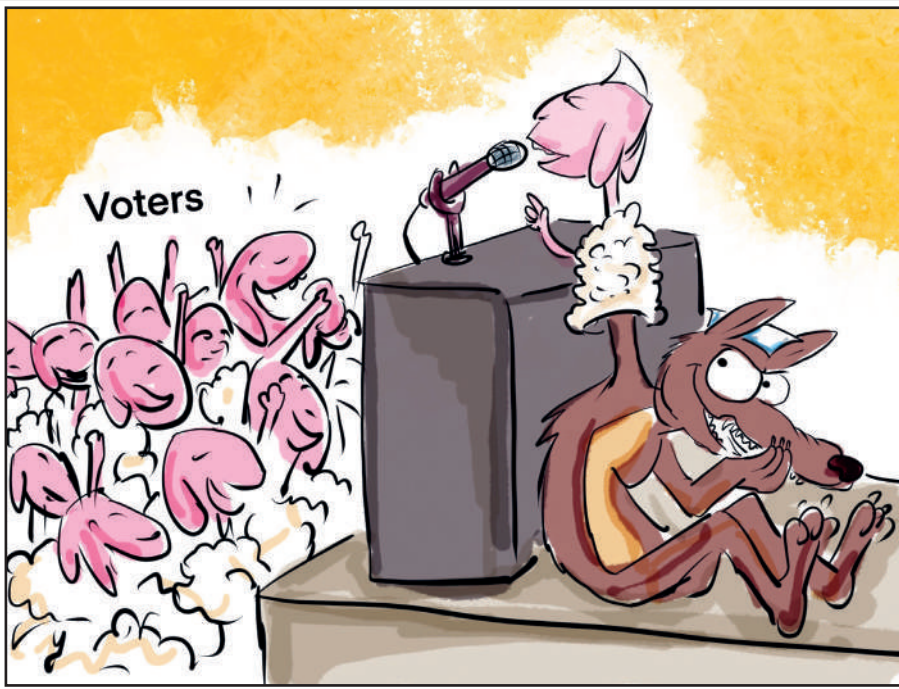
The Minister recalled that it was Prime Minister Narendra Modi who gave a clarion call of Start up India, Stand Up India from the ramparts of historic Red Fort. Following the Prime Minister's call, people joined the movement. As a result, the number of start-ups has now gone past 1.25 lakh from a mere 350 existing at that time, thereby placing India at number three spot in this field in the world, Dr Jitendra Singh informed.

The Union Minister

urged the youth to join the agri start-up ecosystem so that they can contribute to

making value addition to the economy, and help in realising the national goal of making India a number one economy in the next 25 years of Amrit Kaal.

Calling for action, Dr Jitendra Singh said the areas which are either unexplored or under-explored hold the potential of making value addition to the economy, adding that the role of Jammu and Kashmir- pioneered purple revolution will be of critical importance to make India a developed nation by 2047.



Hands on Training on 'Industrial Microbiology' and 'Cloning & Protein Expression' concluded at IIIM

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Two skilling programmes of three days each, on "Industrial Microbiology" and "Cloning and Protein Expression" concluded here at CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine, Jammu which saw participation from all over India.

Dr. Zabeer Ahmed, Director, CSIR-IIIM, was the Chief Guest at the event who in the valedictory address has congratulated the participants on the successful completion of the training programs and appreciated the participants for their dedication and diligent engagement throughout the training.

He emphasized on the importance of these workshops in providing job-oriented practical training, as well as raising scientific temperament among participants.

He said that these workshops also provide a flavour of research to young college students and may encourage them to take up research as a career. Such workshops and skilling courses are pivotal to achieve the goals of Viksit Bharat, he added.

In the press handout, it was informed that fifty participants drawn from all over India, including states of



Director, CSIR-IIIM, Dr. Zabeer Ahmed posing with students and faculty members.

Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Gujarat, Bihar, Goa, Ladakh and UT of Jammu and Kashmir, underwent these trainings.

During the hands on training on Cloning and Protein Expression, the participants have been imparted with practical working knowledge in cloning and protein expression with precisely designed hands-on training practical sessions equipping participants with fundamental skills and knowledge in basic microbiological techniques as well as theoretical sessions from the eminent scientist of the division.

Dr. Sumit G. Gandhi, Sr. Principal Scientist, and Head, Infectious Diseases Division delivered a lead lecture on Introduction about the institute and Polymerase Chain Reaction, its variants

and applications while Dr. Kuljit Singh, Scientist talked about "Basic principles of gene cloning and protein expression".

In the practical session, the genomic DNA as well as plasmid isolation was performed along with a PCR run. The final product of DNA, plasmid, and PCR was visualized in agarose gel electrophoresis.

On the second day, Dr. Avisek Mahapa, Sr. Scientist gave an insightful lecture on "Types of cloning vectors and protein expression systems".

The students got insights about various engineered vectors (pET28a, pET 28b, etc) and different insertions, making cells competent for cloning. In the subsequent practical sessions, students performed double digestion and ligation for the amplified gene and plasmid, positive

colony selection, transformation, and protein expression using IPTG induction on the same day.

On the third day, Dr. Rashmi Sharma, Scientist, talked about "Biosafety Levels and Basic Principles of Drug Discovery Process" and highlighted the major importance of BSL labs and SOPs to follow while handling the pathogens while In practical session, the bacterial cells samples were lysed, protein sample was prepared and electrophoresed on SDS-PAGE to check the protein over expression.

In the second training programme conducted on "Industrial Microbiology", Dr. Sundeep Jaglan, on the first day of training delivered a lecture and conducted practical training on Isolation, characterization and preservation of microorganisms,

while Dr. Meenu Katoch talked about Recombinant technology and its industrial applications. On the second day, Dr. Asha Chaubey and Dr. Vinod Kumar imparted training on Fermentation media in Industrial Processes. Dr. Kanhaiya Kumar discussed the Types of Reactors used in Fermentation Technology. On the last day of the workshop, Dr. Vikash Babu talked about Industrial enzymes.

On the last day of the workshop, Dr. Saurabh Saran also delivered a lecture on "Star-up Ecosystem and Success Stories from CSIR-IIIM Technology" to all the trainees and the participants got the opportunity to visit all the labs in the Institute, including the Central Instrumentation, QC-QA and Technology Business Incubator.

The Proceeding of the valedictory session was conducted by Arusha Tickoo and Dr. Nasir ul Rasheed presented the formal vote of thanks.

Pertinently, the Training programs were conducted under the patronage of Dr. Zabeer Ahmed, Director CSIR-IIIM and under the overall supervision of Er Abdul Rahim, Chief Scientist and Head, RMBD & IST Division.

Northern Railway slashes ticket prices for Kashmir, restores pre-COVID fares

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: In a major relief to train commuters, Northern Railways has reduced ticket fares to pre-COVID times in the Kashmir valley, officials said on Wednesday.

A top railway official said

that railways reinstated Second Class Ordinary Fares on passenger trains in Kashmir.

"The fare charges have been dropped by nearly 40-50%, reverting to pre-COVID levels," he said, adding that previously, the

ticket fare was Rs 35 from Sadura station to Srinagar, now it has been reduced to Rs 15.

He further said that there are system errors occurring at various locations, they are implementing rate reductions across all stations.

Ministerial Bungalows occupation echoes in CJ's Court

Petitioner's counsel highlights public concern over Dual Standards of Estates Department

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In the much publicized PIL highlighting occupation of Ministerial Bungalows/A-Type/B-Type Kothis/Flats by Ex-Legislators/Ex-Ministers, Advocate S.S. Ahmed appearing for the petitioner in PIL No. 17/2020 highlighted the dual standards of the Estates Department by giving undue favour to certain Ex-Ministers/Ex-Legislators who are overstaying in the Govt. accommodation despite having lost the eligibility and are having their own residential houses in Jammu/Srinagar. When this PIL came up for hearing, Advocate S.S. Ahmed with Advocates Rahul Raina and Syed Majid Shah appearing for the petitioners, drew the attention of the Division Bench comprising the Chief Justice N. Kotiswar Singh and Justice M.A. Chowdhary towards the Order dated September 13, 2023 wherein the Division Bench had taken note of Regulation 5 of J&K Estates Department (Allotment of Government Accommodation)

Regulations, 2004 which clearly provides that Residential Accommodation shall not be allotted to persons who own or possess a house in the concerned city whether in proprietorship or lease or otherwise, whether by themselves or through their spouses, sons, unmarried daughters or parents.

Advocate S.S. Ahmed vehemently argued that more than 45 Ex-Ministers/Ex-MLAs having their own accommodation are being allowed to continue in the Govt. accommodation despite having lost their entitlement and are also having their own accommodations in the capital cities either directly or through their kith and kins.

Advocate S.S. Ahmed specifically pointed out the case of Ex- Deputy CM/Ex-Speaker, J&K Govt. Kavinder Gupta who in response to the communication of Estates Department with regard to Regulation 5 stated that an ancestral house is there which has been occupied by the other family members i.e. brothers.

Advocate S.S. Ahmed further submitted that the petitioner had placed on record a copy of Gift Deed dated August 10, 1987 executed between Kavinder Gupta, former Deputy CM and one Yog Raj Singh with regard to land measuring 1 Kanal bearing Khasra No. 331 min Khewat No. 47 min Khata No. 559 at Paloura, Janipur (Excelsior Lane) and pursuant to the directions passed by the Division Bench on December 5, 2023 in CM No. 7532/2023 when the Division Bench directed the Estates Department to ascertain the correctness of the Gift Deed dated August 10, 1987 and also of the persons namely Yog Raj Singh and Kavinder Gupta (Former Deputy CM, J&K).

Advocate S.S. Ahmed further submitted that pursuant to Order dated December 15, 2023, the Estates Department through Sr. AAG S.S. Nanda has filed a fresh Compliance Report and with regard to the Gift Deed executed between Kavinder Gupta and Yog Raj Singh, the Status Report

states that, "Response filed on January 9, 2023, stating therein that an ancestral house at Excelsior Lane, Janipura, Jammu, a deed was too executed between Yog Raj Singh and applicant (Kavinder Gupta). But at present, two families of two brothers of applicant are putting up there. He further states that having a sparse space and lesser consideration of security requirements of the applicant, he had applied for the current accommodation (of Estates Department)."

Advocate S.S. Ahmed vociferously argued that this is a classic case of express violation of Regulation 5 as former Dy. CM Kavinder Gupta is owner of a double-storeyed residential house at Excelsior Lane, Janipur, Jammu and misled the Estates Department by stating wrongly that it was an ancestral house when the fact remains that the land was gifted to him by one Yog Raj Singh in 1987.

Advocate S.S. Ahmed further submitted that this is just a tip of an iceberg as Estates Department

is in connivance with other high-profile occupants also as he has furnished a list on June 9, 2023 before this Court indicating the particulars/addresses of the personal accommodations of the over-staying Ex-Legislators.

After considering the submissions of Advocate S.S. Ahmed, the Division Bench headed by the Chief Justice N. Kotiswar Singh in the open Court asked Advocate General D.C. Raina with regard to the violation of Regulation 5 as indicated above and to this, the Advocate General D.C. Raina appearing for UT Administration submitted that Senior AAG S.S. Nanda is unwell and the PILs have been entrusted to him but Advocate S.S. Ahmed submitted that this matter is of wide public importance and the public at large is awaiting its outcome at an earliest.

Upon this, the Division Bench looking into the urgency expressed by Advocate S.S. Ahmed, directed the Registry to re-notify the instant PIL on April 3, 2024.

Employee cannot claim equal pay due to mere similarity of designation: HC

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Justice Javed Iqbal Wani of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court holds that employee cannot claim equal pay due to mere similarity of designation.

This significant judgment has been passed in a petition filed by Jagdish Kumar and ors seeking direction to the concerned respondents for placing the petitioners in the higher grade i.e. 2000-2300 (pre-revised) which is being given to similarly placed persons in other State Govt. departments in order to satisfy the mandate of Article 39(d), 14 and 16 of the Constitution of India and also seeking direction to the respondents to declare the petitioners as separate cadre of service by framing of prop-

er recruitment rules in order to safeguard the service rights of the petitioners in all aspects and remove the stagnation.

The background facts under the shade and cover of which the aforesaid reliefs are prayed by the petitioners are that pursuant to an advertisement notice No. 3 of 1997 dated April 29, 1997 issued by J&K Service Selection Board, Jammu (for short "the SSB"), posts of Data Operators carrying the grade of 950-1500 (pre-revised) came to be advertised besides other posts to be filled up in various government departments including the respondent 2 - State Pollution Control Board. The petitioners claimed to be possessed of the eligibility qualification prescribed for the posts

applied and after participation in the selection process conducted by SSB, came to be appointed in the intending department i.e. State Pollution Control Board - respondent 2 herein in terms of Order No. 35 of 1999 dated March 11, 1999, Order No. 60 of 1999 dated April 13, 1999 and Order No. 68 of 1999 dated April 24, 1999 respectively.

Justice Javed Iqbal Wani after hearing Adv Shrivani Jalali for the petitioners whereas AAG Amit Gupta for the respondents, observed that aforesaid principle and proposition of law and reverting back to the case in hand, the petitioners herein for the purpose of seeking parity of scale of pay in their case have referred to and relied upon

the employees working in the J&K Forest Departments, in the High Court of J&K as also in Agriculture Department, besides a similar post advertised in advertisement Notice No. 3 of 1996. A deeper and closer examination of the plea and the documents supporting the said plea relied upon by the petitioners would manifestly show that the parity is being sought qua advertisement notice No. 3 of 1996 qua the post of "Computer Assistant" in Fishery Department as also the post of "Computer Analyst" in the same department and the post of "Computer Operator" in Forest Protection Force, besides placing reliance on a letter claimed to have been addressed by the Director Agriculture to Deputy

Registrar, High Court of J&K dated April 26, 1997 pertaining to the post of "Computer Operator" carrying the pay-scale of 1400-2300 as also a letter dated April 28, 1997 addressed by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forest to the Deputy Registrar (Computer), High Court of J&K reflecting therein the grades attached to the post of "Computer Operator" as 950-1400. A reference has also been made for the purpose of claim of the petitioners on the advertisement notice No. 3 of 1997 also pursuant to which the petitioners came to be appointed qua the post of "Data Entry Operators" in the Finance Department carrying the grade of 1200-2040. The petitioner though in order to buttress their

claims have referred to the aforesaid facts and the documents, yet have failed to show that the aforesaid posts they are appointed against and the posts with which the petitioners are seeking parity are same and similar in regard to the functions, responsibility, reliability and confidentiality. A general plea raised by the petitioners for invoking the principle of "equal pay for equal work" without even remotely showing the applicability of the principles laid down by the Apex Court in the judgment (supra) cannot be entertained. The claim of the petitioners seemingly is misconceived and legally unsustainable. Viewed thus, the petition is found to be without any merit and is, accordingly, dismissed.

Under PM Modi, J&K will march to greater heights: Koul



Prominent political and social personalities joining BJP.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Prominent political and social personalities including many Sarpanches, Naib-Sarpanches, Panches having affiliations to various political parties and ex-servicemen from Reasi and Jammu, joined Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), at party headquarter, Trikuta Nagar, here on Wednesday.

Ashok Koul, General Secretary (organization), J&K BJP welcomed the new entrants into the party fold.

Kuldeep Raj Dubey senior leader BJP, former MLA Balwant Singh Mankotia, Arvind Gupta, District Reasi Prabhari, Sarf Singh Nag, DDC Chairperson, Abdul Rashid, DDC Member, Ranjodh Singh Nalwa President BJP Minority Morecha, Choudhary Roshan Hussain, President ST Morecha and others were also present on the occasion.

Ashok Koul, welcoming the new entrants, said that anyone who believes in the ideology of BJP is welcome in the Bharatiya Janata Party. He said that the public welfare schemes launched for poor and needy by the Modi government testifies its commitment for the overall development of its citizens on the lines of "Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Prayas, Sabka Vishwas".

"Hundreds of people are joining BJP everyday, trusting the policies of Modi Government. Today, also prominent political and social personalities from far-flung areas like Reasi, Mahore, Arnas have joined BJP, hav-

ing witnessed the development taking place in their areas. They have a strong belief that under the leadership of PM Modi, Jammu & Kashmir will march to the greater heights", said Ashok Koul.

Balwant Singh Mankotia said that the numerous prominent persons representing various communities and having previous affiliations to different political parties are contacting the party leaders to join the ranks of BJP to serve the nation.

Kuldeep Raj Dubey said that under the Modi government, the development has reached the far-flung areas of Reasi, which lacked even the basic facilities earlier, due to the apathy of governments led by NC, Congress and PDP.

Dr. Bhawana Kaushal (educationist) from Jammu joined on the occasion.

Mohd. Shafi (Sarpanch), Shamsher Singh (Sarpanch), Antif Hussian (Sarpanch), Haji. Mohd. Mustaq (Sarpanch), Madam Shamema Akter (Sarpanch), Mohd. Latif (Sarpanch), Madam Lakhwinder Kour (Sarpanch), Tara Mani (Naib Sarpanch), Seva Singh (Panch), Mohd. Mansha (Panch), Rattan Singh (Naib Sarpanch), Chanday Ram (Panch), Kartar Singh (Panch), Zail Singh (Panch), Basharat Ali (Panch), Captain Mohd. Aslam (Ex Service), Captain Vikrant Singh and other Ex-Servicemen from Reasi joined BJP on the occasion.