

Villagers protest against tree cutting at cremation ground



Residents of Mote village staging protest.

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R.S. PURA: Residents of Mote village and nearby areas in R.S. Pura staged a strong protest today against the cutting of eucalyptus trees at the village cremation ground. The villagers alleged that the land, which has been used as a cremation site for years, is now being claimed by the Waqf Board, and several trees have been cut down without any

permission.

Former Sarpanch Omkar Singh, Mohan Chaudhary, and several other villagers participated in the protest, raising slogans against the administration and concerned departments. They demanded strict action against the contractor who carried out the tree cutting without consent.

Local residents stated that the land had long been used

for last rites, but now the Waqf Board is asserting ownership over it, leading to tensions in the area.

The villagers have urged the administration to investigate the matter urgently and clarify whether the Waqf Board's claim is valid. They also demanded an inquiry into whether permission was granted for the tree cutting or if it was done illegally.

Ramadhan ration kits distributed among 120 destitute families of Bhaderwah

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BHADEERWAH: As the month of Ramadan is going on which is not only a month of worship but also a month to help destitutes for the sake of blessings of Almighty Allah, people used to help the oppressed and poor people as much as possible with whatever they have to donate.

In this regard while extending their helping hand to the most needy section of the society in view of ongoing Ramadhan festival, J&K Yateem Foundation distributed ration and other grocery items among more than a 120 widows for the holy month of Ramadan at Bhaderwah.

The function was organised by J&K Yateem Foundation at its Bhaderwah headquarter located at Qilla Mohallah in which a large number of guests, donors, volunteers and destitute participated.

The programme was organized under the supervision of Javed Iqbal Qazi District



Dignitaries during the camp at Bhaderwah.

Representative JKYP Doda and Central Executive Committee Member Showket Hayat Malik, while Tehsildar Bhaderwah Kamalpreet Singh was the chief guest. Naib Tehsildar Parampreet Singh, President Anjuman-e-Islamia Bhaderwah Riaz Ahmed Najar and Ex President Anjuman-e-Islamia Bhaderwah Abdul Hafiz Khateeb were guests of honour on the occasion. The programme was presided over by Tehsil Representative (TR) Bhaderwah Sajjad Sarnadi.

The programme started with the recitation of verses of Holy Quran by the volunteers of the organisation.

Tehsildar Bhaderwah Kamalpreet Singh while appre-

ciating the concrete steps of J&K Yateem Foundation, emphasized the need to work for the welfare of widows, orphans, patients and other destitute so that they may share the happiness and blessings of Holy month of Ramadhan.

On this occasion, the relief in the form of ration kits containing food items and other grocery items were distributed among more than 120 widows belonging to poor families from different parts of Bhaderwah.

"We get donations from both Muslims and Non Muslim and like-wise beneficiaries are also from both communities," said

District representative (DR) Javed Iqbal Qazi.

"Under our WWP, we usually transfer the money in accounts of the beneficiaries but in addition to that, today we are distributing ration and other grocery items among 120 widows especially for the holy month of Ramadan," Qazi added, saying that we also extend helping hand in any emergency including accidents or natural disasters. Destitutes and widows registered with the foundation are getting regular monetary help in every two months, beside their wards are also being sponsored for higher education.

RBSK Team conducts deworming awareness program in Kishtwar

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KISHTWAR: The Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) team of Block Kishtwar organized a deworming awareness program at Upper Primary School Kundhali Poochal, Zone Kishtwar, on National Deworming Day. The initiative, aimed at improving child health and preventing intestinal worm infections, was conducted under the supervision of Dr. Rajinder Kumar, Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Kishtwar, and Dr. Anil Kumar Sharma, Block Medical Officer (BMO), Kishtwar.

Led by Dr. Nazir Hussain, Medical Officer, and Mr. Ashiq Hussain Malik, the team educated students on the harmful effects of worm infestations, which can cause anemia, malnutrition, weakness, and fatigue. As part of the nationwide campaign, Albendazole tablets were distributed free of cost to children aged 1-19 years. Dr. Nazir Hussain highlighted the importance of deworming, stating, "Intestinal worms are a silent threat to children's health, leading to malnutrition and stunted growth. Regular deworming helps improve overall well-being, ensuring better physical and cognitive



Team members along with children and others.

development." Sanjay Kumar Parihar, In-Charge Headmaster of Upper Primary School Kundhali Poochal, welcomed the RBSK team and emphasized the importance of maintaining hygiene to prevent infections. Dr. Nazir Hussain reinforced this message, urging students to adopt good hygiene habits such as washing hands, keeping nails short, and avoiding open defecation to minimize the risk of reinfection.

The team outlined key preventive measures, including maintaining cleanliness in surroundings, washing hands with soap before meals and after using the toilet, wearing shoes to prevent soil-transmitted infections, and always using a toilet instead of open defecation. Additionally, they advised washing fruits and

vegetables thoroughly, covering food, trimming nails, and drinking clean water to further reduce the risk of infections.

To ensure that every child receives the necessary treatment, a Mop-Up Day has been scheduled for March 17, 2025, to cover those who missed the initial deworming session. This initiative, carried out under the Health Education Bureau, Directorate of Health Services Jammu, is aligned with the Anemia Mukht Bharat campaign, aiming to reduce the prevalence of parasitic infections among children. By raising awareness and providing essential treatment, the RBSK team is making a significant contribution to safeguarding children's health and ensuring a healthier future for the young population of Kishtwar.

GDC Akhnoor celebrates International Women's Day 2025

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

AKHNOOR: Government Degree College (GDC) Akhnoor celebrated International Women's Day with great enthusiasm and fervor under the aegis of the Women's Studies Centre.

The event, held in the college premises, was guided by the esteemed Principal, Dr. Romilla Malla Bhat, and focused on the theme "Accelerate Action," which calls for proactive measures towards achieving gender equality.

The Chief Guest for the occasion, Prof. (Dr.) Yasmeen Ashai, former Director of Colleges, Jammu & Kashmir, delivered an insightful speech on the significance of the day wherein she focused on education, which is the key to unlocking women's potential and this is the area where J&K has made significant progress like rest of India.

Asserting her statement she highlighted the data of University Grants Commission, which mentions that the enrollment of girls in higher education in India has increased from 39 percent in 2008 to 49 percent in 2020 which is a remarkable achievement, and it shows that the society is moving in the right direction.

Dr. Ashai stressed that International Women's Day serves as a reminder to honor women's remarkable achievements and to continue pushing for gender equality and discussed the importance of collective action in overcoming the challenges that still hinder women's progress.

She believed that all the challenges also present opportunities for growth and change. In her con-



cluding remark, Dr. Ashai stated that as we strive for a more equitable society, it is essential that all should work together to create a world where women have equal access to education, employment, and healthcare.

On the same day Dr. Ashai inaugurated the fair

which was setup by women entrepreneurs in which they showcased fresh ideas and good managerial skills. The fair featured artworks by students and local artists.

Dr. Romilla Malla Bhat, Principal of GDC Akhnoor, also addressed the gathering, emphasizing the theme "Accelerate Action".

Dr. Malla cited the recent report by the World Economic Forum, which states that it will take approximately 132 years to achieve complete gender parity at the current rate of progress. While this statistic may seem daunting, it highlights the importance of collective efforts to bridge the gap.

She encouraged everyone to not only acknowledge the progress made so far but to actively engage in eliminating the existing barriers to gender equality in all spheres of life.

Dr. Anju Bala, Convenor, Women's Studies Centre, spoke on the importance of the celebration of this day which is a reminder to accelerate efforts towards a more inclusive and equitable society. Among the eminent speakers are Dr. Monika Malhotra (HOD English), Dr. Deep Kumar Bangotra (HOD Computer Applications) and Dr. Gopal Singh (Assistant professor Dogri) who also shared their experiences.

A formal vote of thanks was presented by Prof. Neelam Thapa and the proceedings were conducted by Komal Sharma. The event was a successful celebration of women's achievements and the continued struggle for equal rights. The event witnessed a huge participation of staff and students.

37th Academic Council meeting held at SMVDU

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KATRA: Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University (SMVDU) held its 37th Academic Council meeting. The meeting was presided over by the Vice-Chancellor Prof. Pragati Kumar, SMVDU.

The meeting was attended by eminent academicians, including Prof. Sandeep Sancheti, Vice President of Research Relations & Academic Affairs at Elsevier (India), and Prof. Anju Bhasin, Dean of Academic Affairs, University of Jammu.

Other external members Prof. Majid Jamil from Jamia Milia Islamia, New Delhi, Prof. S.K. Verma from BITS Pilani, Prof. Rina Surana from MNIT (Jaipur), Prof. Pranavnt and Prof. Madhusudan Singh (DTU, Delhi) joined



VC Prof. Pragati Kumar, SMVDU chairing the meeting.

the meeting in virtual mode. Registrar, Finance officer, Deans and Heads of various schools of SMVDU, Faculty Incharge Examination, CEO TBIC, Program Coordinators of DYD and B. Design were also present to deliberate on the academic reforms and initiatives.

The meeting was focused on key academic decisions

and new initiatives aimed to strengthen the university's educational framework.

The meeting started with a welcome note followed by introductory remarks by the Honourable Vice-Chancellor, SMVDU highlighting the university's achievements over the past year. Prof. Kumar emphasized the institution's commitment to aca-

ademic excellence, research development, and student-centric policies.

The agenda items for discussion were presented by Prof. Balbir Singh, Dean of Academic Affairs and Dr. Shafaq Rasool, Assoc. Dean, Academic Affairs, leading to several significant decisions. The council approved the inclusion of B.Sc. Computer Science as a major under the 'Design Your Degree' program, allowing students greater flexibility in tailoring their academic pathways.

Another key development was the approval of ordinances governing the SMVD Institute of Medical Excellence (SMVDIME) and its associate hospital, marking an important step in strengthening medical education and healthcare services at the university.

Further, it was decided that a new postgraduate program, M.Sc. Chemistry will be introduced from the 2025-26 academic session, expanding the university's offerings in the sciences. The council also deliberated on introducing B. Tech programs in Robotics & Automation, Machine learning and Artificial Intelligence and M. Arch programs aimed at equipping students with skills to meet the demands of the 21st Century.

The 37th Academic Council meeting marked another milestone in SMVDU's pursuit of academic excellence and institutional growth. With these developments, SMVDU continues to strengthen its position as a leading institution committed to quality education, academic innovation and research-driven education.

Blood donation camp held at JU's Kathua Campus

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KATHUA: LG Electronics, in collaboration with J&K Thalassemia Welfare Society and GMC Jammu, organized a Blood Donation Camp at Jammu University's Kathua Campus under their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, faculty, and local residents, all coming together for the noble cause of saving lives through voluntary blood donation. Trained medical professionals from GMC Jammu ensured a smooth, safe, and



hygienic donation process. Over 90 donors from Kathua Campus and UIET contributed, providing vital support to patients suffering from anemia, thalassemia, leukemia, accident-related injuries, and critical surgeries. Volunteers from 4 J&K Bn NCC, Kathua Campus, and the Community Service and Social Justice Club, UIET, played a key role in assisting donors, managing logistics, and raising awareness. Prof. Arvind Jasrotia, Rector of Kathua Campus, emphasized the importance of social responsibility beyond academics, while Dr. Rocky Gupta, Principal, UIET, highlighted the profound societal

impact of such initiatives.

The donation process included health screenings, refreshments, and certificates of appreciation for donors. Lt. Anit Sharma, Coordinator of the Blood Donation Camp, reaffirmed the commitment to making blood donation drives a regular initiative at the campus. The event was managed and directed by Mukteesh Sharma, who emphasized the significance of voluntary blood donation. The medical team from GMC Jammu, led by Dr. Anshu Mahajan, Senior Resident, Sonu, Counsellor, Deepa, Senior Staff Nurse, Renu, Senior Staff Nurse, Surinder, Multi-Tasking Staff,

GDC Doda organises plantation drive on International Women's Day

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DODA: On the occasion of International Women's Day, Women Development Cell GDC Doda and NSS unit in collaboration with Ummied Charitable Trust organized a mega Plantation Drive on Monday. The drive was organised to celebrate the achievements of women and promote environmental sustainability. The event aimed to raise awareness about the importance of women in the society while encouraging eco-friendly initiatives.

The event commenced with an inspiring speech by Prof. Falak, Convenor Women Development Cell highlighting the significance of International Women's Day and the need for environmental conservation. Faculty members, students, and staff actively participated in the drive by planting saplings across the campus and in Bagh-I-Iram Botanical Garden.

The entire event was organised under the supervision of Dr. Javid Iqbal Principal of

the College who in his speech lauded the efforts of the college and Ummied Charitable Trust and assured them of full support and mentorship. He further informed that more initiatives would be taken by the institution where in students shall participate and develop a sense of environmental sustainability.

Dr. Javed Iqbal Tramboo, Dr. Tanveer Hussain, Prof. Sudesh Kumar, Prof. Sandesh Kumar, Prof. Purnima Manhas, Prof. Upma Kumari and Prof. Majid Gani graced the occasion. Ummied Charitable Trust was represented by Mr. Farhan Rather Chairman, Mr. Khalid Mattoo Vice Chairman, Er. Tanzeel Rather Cashier and Mr. Touseef Ahmed Gen Secretary.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Jamsheed Ahmad who thanked the principal and staff, participants, Ummied Charitable Trust Doda and encouraged them to continue their support in such meaningful initiatives.

VC BGSBU engages with research scholars to strengthen research ecosystem

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RAJOURI: Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University (BGSBU) hosted an interactive session between Vice Chancellor, Prof. Jawaid Iqbal, and research scholars to foster dialogue, address academic concerns, and explore opportunities for enhancing the university's research ecosystem.

During the session, Prof. Jawaid Iqbal reaffirmed the university's commitment to cultivating a culture of high-impact research that contributes to both national and global knowledge while addressing regional challenges. He emphasized that BGSBU is dedicated to fostering an environment where research thrives through innovation, collaboration, and academic rigor. He assured scholars that the university would extend its full support—both administratively and academically—to help them pursue groundbreaking research.

"Research is the backbone of any academic institution,



and our scholars are at the forefront of knowledge creation. BGSBU is committed to providing every possible resource to support innovative and impactful research. I encourage our scholars to think beyond conventional boundaries, collaborate with peers, and contribute meaningfully to academia and society," said Prof. Iqbal.

Prof. M. J. Warsi, Dean Academic Affairs, was also present on the occasion, sharing valuable insights on academic and research excellence.

Prof. M. J. Warsi encouraged scholars to engage in interdisciplinary research, produce quality publications, and pursue innovation-driven studies. He underscored the

significance of ethical research practices and assured the scholars of the university's unwavering support in their academic endeavors.

The session witnessed active participation from scholars, who shared their experiences, challenges, and suggestions for improving the research environment at BGSBU.

The interaction concluded with a renewed dedication to research integrity and innovation. Scholars expressed gratitude for the encouragement and guidance provided by the Vice Chancellor and Dean Academic Affairs, pledging to contribute meaningfully to the university's research landscape.

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