

Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Pracheen Marg Pavitar Chhatri Yatra**Rana calls for revival of ancient route to Mata Vaishno Devi shrine to connect devotees with cultural moorings****■ STATE TIMES NEWS**

NAGROTA: Amid religious fervour and spiritual serenity marked by chants of Jai Mata Shera Wali Da-Senior BJP leader Devender Singh Rana, joined by hundreds of devotees, clad in traditional attire, on Sunday took the Holy Jyot from the historic heritage Kol Kandoli Temple in a van decorated with flowers, followed by a cavalcade of bikers, cars and other modes of transport.

Rana sat in the van, carrying the Jhanki and Jyot, along with the functionaries of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Pracheen Marg Shrines Sanstha, comprising its President Harbans Singh and his team, Randeep Singh, Ashok Kumar, Jagdish Raj, Sanjeev Kumar, Rakesh Kumar, Puran Chand, Vinod Kumar, Jagdish Kumar, Kartar Chand and others.

The Yatra carrying the Holy Jyot was profusely greeted by the people, queued on both sides of the road, with flower petals while chanting Mantras and Shlokas, up to the Oli Temple on the ancient route to Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine on Trikuta Hills.

The residents had made elaborate



Prominent BJP leader Devender Rana taking out the Holy Jyot from Kol Kandoli Temple.

arrangements of drinking water and refreshment for the devotees. The atmosphere was filled with gaiety and enthusiasm, as the devotees-men, women and children-kept reciting Bhajans in reverence of the Mata on the second day of ongoing Navratras.

As part of the initiatives to revive the ancient heritage route to Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine, the Oli Temple at Bamyal in Nagrota is currently undergoing renovation under the aegis of

Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), launched by Devender Rana on March 7, this year.

Rana has spearheaded the initiative for revival of the ancient route, blessed with most revered temples and worship places, to connect the posterity with their spiritual and cultural moorings.

The heritage route, passes through Jagdamba Mata Kheer Bhawani Temple - Jagti, Durga Mata Temple -

Pangali, Shiv Temple - Thandapani - Drabi, Shiv Shakti Temple, Raja Mandir Temple - and Raja Nowalgarh Temple - Marh, Drabi, Kali Mata Temple - Gundla Talab, Ram Darbar, Shiv Temple - Bamyal and Oli Temple Chhapanoo-Bamyal before reaching the sanctum sanctorum of the Bhawan of Mata Rani on Trikuta Hills.

Rana believes that the restoration and promotion of the ancient road link to Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine will prove as a game-changer for bringing Nagrota to the central stage of Jammu's heritage landscape.

According to the organizers of the Jyot Yatra, the Navratra Festival at the Oli Temple will witness Bhaunts and other religious programmes during the ongoing Navratras.

The various government departments and agencies have established stalls at the festival site while the local manufacturers are also showcasing their produce.

Devender Rana appreciated the organizers, saying the effort will go a long way in promoting the ancient route, rich with spiritual bliss.

Need to provide platform to budding singers to harness their talent: Sham Sharma

Former Minister, Sham Lal Sharma lighting ceremonial lamp.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Former Minister and State Vice President BJP, Sham Lal Sharma along with senior BJP leaders on Sunday released Punjabi song video album 'Jammu Shehar Di Kudi'.

On the occasion, senior BJP leaders District President Rajinder Singh Chib and Dr. Parneesh Mahajan Convenor Department of Training

BJP were also present. The writer and singer of the released Punjabi song is Bunty Goriya.

Speaking on the occasion, Sham congratulated the entire team of video album 'Jammu Shehar Di Kudi' and hoped that this will

make waves in music industry besides is liked by netizens and people across the country.

The former minister said

He said that there is dire need to provide a platform to budding singers to further harness their talent.

He said that the video song made by these young budding artists is the greatest example of their intellectual, creative and latent ability that needs to be harnessed for their optimal self-actualisation.

Sham Lal said that the youth who are engaged in such activities should be encouraged both by the Government and social organisations.

"Such activities will not only keep away the youth from indulging in social crimes but will also keep them in good health and sound mind," he added.

DySP Sham Datt gets Medal for Excellence in Investigation**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: Deputy Superintendent of Police, Sham Datt, who is working in the Anti Corruption Bureau wing at the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) headquarters in Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory was presented the Union Home Minister's Medal for Excellence in Investigation.

Union Minister for Law and Justice Kiran Rijiju presented the award to the officer at an event of All India CBI Investigating Officers held at Vignana Bhawan in, New Delhi in the presence of CBI Director Subodh Kumar Jaiswal.

Sham Datt will receive the honour in recognition of his innovative methods and outstanding contribution in the field of investigation.

Rijiju applauded the professional working of CBI officers in achieving the high conviction rate and stressed on tremendous team work exhibited by the premier investigating agency of the country.



Union Law Minister, Kiran Rijiju presenting Home Minister's Medal for Excellence in Investigation to Dy SP, Sham Datt.

Div Com flags-off Parikrama Yatra from Raghunath Temple**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Dr Raghav Langer on Sunday flagged off Parikrama Yatra to different historical temples of Jammu here from historical Raghunath Temple.

The Yatra was organised by the Jammu and Kashmir Religious, Tourism, Culture and Heritage with the aim to promote religious tourist circuits in districts of Jammu division and inculcate spiritualism amongst the masses.

Chairman J&K Religious, Tourism, Culture & Heritage, Mahant Rajesh Bittu, President Chamber of Commerce, Arun Gupta; Executive Director Mubarak Mandi Heritage, Deepika Sharma, other Mahants from Sant Samaj, Vivekanand Rai, Director Tourism Jammu, Naresh Kumar, Deputy Director Tourism Jammu, Dr Arvinder Singh Ann,



Div Com Jammu, Dr Raghav Langer flagging off Parikrama Yatra at Jammu.

Additional Secretary J&K Academy of Art, Culture & Languages, Kulbir Handa SP North Jammu, Kunwaran Ritu Singh President J&K FICCI FLO Chapter besides Advocate Ajay Gondotra, President J&K Dharma Trust and Dr. Gopal Parthasarthy Sharma Secretary J&K Dharma Trust besides presidents of Market Associations, civil

society members and a large number of locals participated in the Yatra.

On the occasion, A book written by Prateek & Manik Gupta, briefing about history of these temples, was also released at the commencement of the Yatra.

Speaking on the occasion, the Div Com said that the government has adopted a multi-pronged strategy for

the promotion of religious, heritage adventure and other tourism in Jammu region.

"The traditional and Cultural Festivals are being promoted in the districts of the division to attract tourist footfall towards new destinations. We discussed the issue of development of pilgrim tourism circuits with all the stakeholders and this Yatra is a good start for it," Dr Langer said. "With the development of tourist circuits in the region, the local economy will definitely get a boost," he added.

He said the development of pilgrim tourism circuits will provide an opportunity to the pilgrims who are visiting Shri Amarnath and Shri Mata Vaishno Devi to visit other religious and heritage places ringed on the identified circuits of Jammu.

While giving details of the Yatra, Mahant Rajesh Bittu

informed that Parikrama Yatra has been organised to promote religious tourism and to preserve and promote our historical temples in Jammu.

He informed that Yatra started from Raghunath Temple will visit via Peer Kho to other historical temples including Shri Krishna Rukmani Temple, Shri Chintpurni Temple, Shri Balram Ji Temple, Shri Billu Ji Temple, Shri Gadhadhari Temple, Mubarak Mandi, Shri Ranveereshwar Ji Temple and will culminate at Hanuman Ji Temple Gummata Bazar.

Later, the Divisional Commissioner visited Gurdwara Digiana Ashram and took part in a Samagam organised to celebrate Prakash Utsav of Shri Guru Teg Bahadur Ji.

The Div Com paid obeisance at the Gurdwara.

Encouraging investors focus of J&K Bank: Baldev Parkash**Holds interaction with Hoteliers, FHRICJR**

President HRAK, Rakesh Wazir interacting with MD-cum-CEO J&K Bank Baldev Parkash during a meeting.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Managing Director cum CEO J&K Bank Baldev Parkash while speaking in an interaction organised by Hotel & Restaurant Association, Katra (HRAK) in association with Federation of Hotels, Restaurants, Industries & Commerce of Jammu Region (FHRICJR) wherein President HRAK /FHRICJR Rakesh Wazir, J&K Bank's President Jammu Zone Sunit

Gupta, Zonal Head Rajesh Gupta, Cluster Head Ravi Kumar Sharma, Territory Manager BPCL LPG, Sandeep Raina, Territory Manager BPCL Retail (Petrol Pumps) Eshu Kumar, former Minister Jugal Kishore Sharma, former MLA Baldev Raj Sharma, Chamber of Commerce & Industry Katra President & HRAK Senior Vice President Virender Kesar, Hotel & Restaurant Association Patnitop President Kushal Magotra, HRAK Vice President Vivek Sharma, Rajesh Sadhotra, Ravi Nag, Sunil Dogra, Hari Om Singh, Gautam Sharma etc. were also present, said that it is very important that more and more people should invest in the Union Territory so that maximum employment is generated and younger generation may get maximum work opportunities and for that, every effort including liberal financing and tailor made schemes as requested would be provided to entrepreneurs. He further said that all support and help would be provided to affected Tourism sector and Hotel Industry in particular, which was the worst sufferer of COVID pandemic and J&K Bank will leave no stone unturned in their revival so that it may reach its peak once again. Others who spoke on the occasion included Jugal Kishore Sharma, Rakesh Wazir, Sandeep Raina, Eshu Kumar, Baldev Raj Sharma, Virender Kesar, Kushal Magotra and Ravi Nag.

JAMMU: TEDx Rajender Park hosted its second season of TEDx Talks today at Convention Centre, here in which a galaxy of the noted achievers from the soil of Jammu and Kashmir shared their inspiring journeys.

Prof. M K Dhar, Vice Chancellor, University of Jammu was the Chief Guest of the event. He lauded the efforts made by the team TEDx Rajender Park and recommended them to

organize more such an event in our state.

The theme for this year's TEDx Rajender Park event was '#Breakthrough'. The theme evokes a sense of bringing about change or discovery through one's own ability. It's not just about finding out something new but rather creating the ability to develop something innovative or make a quantum leap.

Each Speaker had a high value success story in their

respective fields, treading a tough track of trials and tribulations; disseminating great awareness and motivational message through their exceptional life stories.

The cheering audience lived through unique experiences of the Presenters at TEDx Rajender Park Programme which is a landmark platform that has come to Jammu.

The speakers of the event included Capt. Bana Singh PVC, Mohita Sharma IPS;

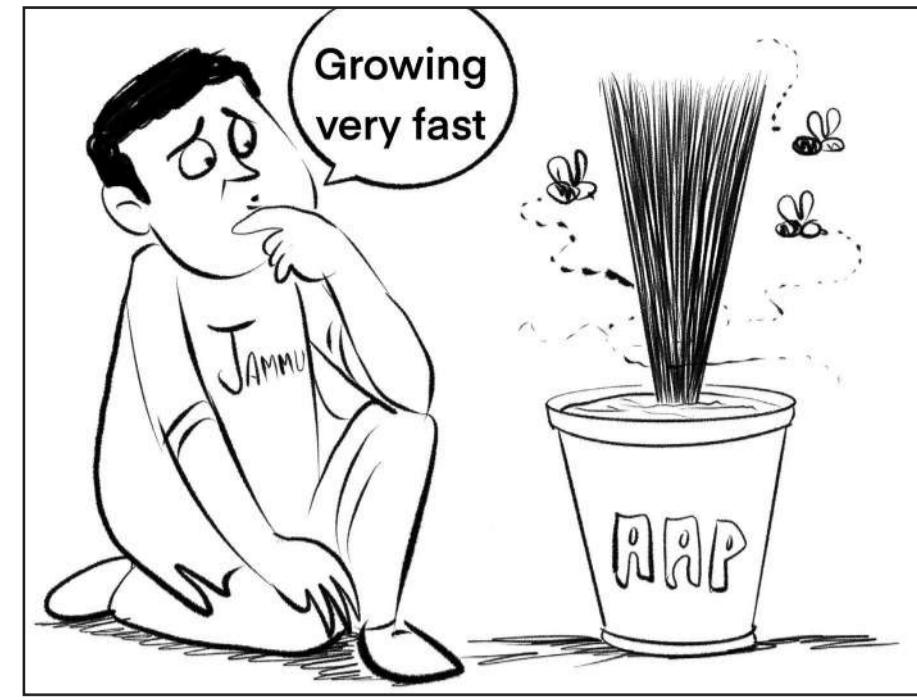
Javed Ahmed Tak Padma Shri awardee 2020; Darshan Darshi a noted Sahitya Akademi awarded poet; Kritika Khanna first Indian Female Para Rower, Shshank Bhardwaj civil servant and Rohil Bhatia Musician.

The TEDx Rajender Park has grown into a robust team led by Shivani Vaid Sharma and has successfully hosted two events.

The show was hosted by Manpreet Kour and co-organized by Sourav Sethi and Manpreet Kour.

They gave platform to the local talent and success stories worth spreading by sparking conversations and providing people with a platform to share revolutionary ideas and life-changing experiences.

The event was attended by a large number of eminent citizens and students.



NC leader Adv Sawani from Udhampur joins BJP

No threat to BJP in J&K, we will sweep assembly elections: Raina

Newly joined members posing with BJP J&K President Ravinder Raina and other leaders.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir BJP president Ravinder Raina on Saturday

come several prominent people, including some doctors at the party headquarters here.

Asked about the rising number of AAP members, Raina

said "BJP is the world's largest political party, having 18 lakh members in J&K."

"We have two Members of Parliament and public representatives in the form of DDCs, BDCs, Municipal Councillors, Sarpanches and Panchs... BJP is present in every household," he said, when asked about media reports suggesting several former ministers and legislators along with 100 Panchayati members are likely to join AAP in coming days.

The BJP leader said he toured different parts of Jammu and Kashmir recently and saw the enthusiasm among the people for the party fold.

Raina welcomed new entrants into the party fold.

Raina told reporters at a function organised to wel-

Raina said people are happy with the functioning of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and "we are going to sweep the next assembly elections to form the new government in J&K with our own chief minister."

He claimed that the party will achieve its target of 50-plus assembly seats and there will be no need to seek support from any other party

Raina said people are joining the BJP due to its development-centric policies. He said the BJP is the best platform to serve the nation and society. This is the main reason that why the prominent civil society members as well as prominent political personalities are joining the party in large numbers.

Huge tourist rush in Kashmir, further increase expected in coming days**■ SHAKEELA ANDRABI**

Srinagar: The tourist arrivals in Kashmir are close to break all previous records, with more than 2 million visitors already visited Asia's largest Tulip Garden near Dal Lake, during last ten days, with an average of around 50,000 tourists per day.

With increase in tourist numbers, Srinagar International Airport is also becoming one of the busiest Airport as it received an average of 86 to 90 flights per day last week. According to airport officials, "We are handling an average of 13,000 to 14,000 guests from across the country every day, but March 28 was the busiest day in history of Airport, as for first time over 15,000 passengers travelled in and out of Kashmir, with 45 flights carrying 7,824 passengers landed at Airport while 45 carrying 7,190 passengers departed for various destinations."

Spring tourism season is at bloom and authorities are hopeful that all the previous records will break soon. It is really a good sign, as there are thousands of people who are directly associated with tourism sector, said a Taxi owner.

Director Floriculture informed that in first two days of April, more than 80,000 people visited garden which increased the total footfall of last ten days to 2 lakh plus. As per official statistics, "1.50 lakh tourist footfall was registered at Tulip garden during 2017 and the number was 1.83 lakh in 2018. In 2019, it was around 2.10 lakh but the garden was not opened due to COVID in 2020. Similarly, last year also COVID proved to be a dampener. But, this year the garden has already witnessed 2 lakh visitors after its opening." Tourism officials are hopeful that with summer vacations beginning in many outside states, visitor arrivals are further expected to increase.

A large number of visitors from Thailand and Malaysia are also likely to visit the garden which sends across a positive message globally. Earlier Director Tourism said, "The response has been overwhelming from both locals and tourists and we hope that footfall will further increase in coming days. A complete care is taken about comfort and convenience of visitors coming to the garden." In order to attract more tourists, a food festival was also organised at the garden.



Dignitaries at 'TEDx Talks' event in Jammu on Sunday.

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