

## Sukhnag Sozni Embroidery SFURTI Heritage Cluster of JK KVIB inaugurated at Magam

# Vocal for local initiative exposes J&K’s cultural, artistic heritage to world: LG

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

BUDGAM: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha inaugurated the Sukhnag Sozni Embroidery SFURTI Heritage Cluster of J&K Khadi and Village Industries Board on Saturday at Magam, Budgam.

The Lt Governor said this SFURTI Cluster will deliver a holistic approach towards development of Sozni craft from production to marketing stage while catering needs of at least 500 artisans.

The Government has taken various steps to make handicraft sector more competitive, boost exports and give a fillip to village industries, a repository of creative tradition. We are determined to ensure capacity building, foster innovation, best in class infrastructure, easy access to credit and market, the Lt Governor said.

We have implemented policies to ensure that the artisans get an opportunity to showcase their products at national and international expo and receives better price for their products, the Lt Governor said.

The Lt Governor observed that the 'Vocal for Local' initiative has exposed J&K's cultural and artistic heritage to the world.

"Handicraft sector faced many challenges due to Covid but it certainly has the potential to take UT's economic growth to a higher trajectory and to provide employment to a large pool of our youth," he said.

The Lt Governor emphasized that the creativity of all the craft-artists will be more productive in future with Government's focused investment in skill development, modern technology, innovative business practices which will directly contribute to the increased earnings of craftsmen.

Highlighting the role of artisans who represent the rich traditions, customs and cultures, the Lt Governor made a special mention of Sh Bashir Ahmed Bhat, an award winning artisan from Beerwah, who had been doing notable Sozni embroidery work.

On the occasion, the Lt Governor also awarded certificates to Artisans and Entrepreneurs for their outstanding performance under the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Program (PMEGP).

The Lt Governor said that under the



Lt Governor Manoj Sinha lighting ceremonial lamp during inauguration of Sukhnag Sozni Embroidery SFURTI Heritage Cluster of J&K KVIB at Budgam.

PMEGP scheme, Khadi Village Industries Board's achievement last year was five times more than the target. Financial support was extended to 5851 units against the target of 1008 units and more than 47 thousand people were directly provided with employment.

In all the schemes of the Handicrafts sector, we have tried to directly facilitate and provide hand holding to women and marginalized families. Out of the 12,000 units that have been installed in the last two years, 4000 units are being run by women and 1000 units belong to marginalized sections, he further added.

In Jammu and Kashmir, the clusters being created under the Scheme of Funds for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI) will focus on maximum participation of women. Around Rs 24 crore is being spent in setting up all these clusters which will help in better production and marketing of rural products.

On the occasion, the Lt Governor assured all possible support in the form of financial assistance, skill development, capacity building, etc. to the youth who are inclined to start any entrepreneurial activity related to the handicrafts sector.

The Lt Governor observed that the Industries Department has also started the Export Incentive Scheme in which an incentive of 10% is being given on the total volume of GI-certified products in order to promote the export of handicraft products.

The Lt Governor also mentioned the

QR code launched for the world famous carpets of Kashmir, besides several important steps taken for GI certification, testing, labeling and training to promote Kashmiri carpets. A project on innovative and economical packaging of handicraft products has also been completed in association with NIPT Srinagar to expand the reach of niche handicraft products.

The Lt Governor asked the concerned departments to continuously review all the schemes launched for the benefit of weavers and handicrafts. The Khadi and Village Industries and Handicrafts Department to work together on innovative marketing strategy to ensure better prices for J&K crafts, he added.

The Lt Governor reiterated administration's resolve to provide facilities like better market linkages for handicraft products, maximum employment opportunities, door-step financial assistance, design support, skill development, capacity building of clusters without any hassle.

The Lt Governor urged that the people must work for peace which is imperative for development.

The society should not get trapped into the nefarious conspiracy of the enemies and their handlers. All they intend is to push J&K back into the dark phase of violence, he further added.

On being apprised about the issue of promoting Homestays in Budgam, the Lt Governor said that issue would be taken up with the concerned quarters for appropriate action.

The Lt Governor also visited handloom stalls at Kanihama village and interacted with artisans.

Nazir Ahmad Khan, DDC Chairman Budgam, expressed gratitude to the Lt Governor led UT Government for taking dedicated measures for the welfare of the people.

Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary, said that the people of J&K are witnessing the positive change happening in every sector and congratulated the KVIB for making headways in the promotion of traditional arts & crafts.

The Chief Secretary also reiterated the government's commitment to double the income of artisans and craftsmen in coming future, besides providing necessary handholding to the budding entrepreneurs. He further articulated that KVIB should give all the support to the artisans to showcase their products to wider consumers.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Hina Shafi Bhat, Vice-Chairperson, J&K KVIB said that the establishment of the Sozni Cluster is one among many steps the board is taking for the promotion of arts and crafts. She further said that the traditional art & craft clusters like Sozni would be established throughout J&K to provide sustained employment for artisans and rural entrepreneurs.

Highlighting the achievements made under Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme, Dr Hina Bhat informed that in the last three years, 35,185 units established under PMEGP. Rs 747 cr Subsidy and Rs 2200 cr Bank Loan has been released, besides 2,80,000 livelihood opportunities were generated from these units.

Vivek Bhardwaj, Financial Commissioner (Additional Chief Secretary) Finance Department, while speaking on the occasion, highlighted the initiatives taken by the government for the welfare of artisans and craftsmen.

He said that the main aim of the newly established facility is to boost the local traditional industries activity. HoDs of various departments, PRI members; prominent citizens from all walks of life, besides artisans, craftsmen and entrepreneurs were present on the occasion in large number.



## ADGP Mukesh Singh seeks support of every section of society

# Lt Guv’s concern over drug abuse must be translated in reality by wiping out drug mafia: Team Jammu



ADGP, Jammu Zone, Mukesh Singh and other dignitaries taking pledge.

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Terming drug abuse as one of the dangerous and threatening challenges before humanity, Additional Director General of Police (ADGP), Jammu Zone, Mukesh Singh (IPS) on Saturday sought the support of every section of the society to eradicate this menace.

"Neither police nor society alone can face this menacing challenge which is destroying our younger generation", ADGP Mukesh Singh said while addressing a massive programme organized by the Team Jammu on eve of "World Anti-Drug Day" at Royal Estate Banquets, Toph Sherkhanian, here today.

Members of J&K Tawi Trekkers, Samvedna (NGO), volunteers of Parvivartan Drug De Addiction Centre, Jammu, noted Dogri writers, artists, singers, musicians and NCC Cadets from Women College for Parade, Jammu also participated in the program.

ADGP, Jammu zone, Mukesh Singh was the chief guest on the occasion, while Chairman, Team Jammu, Zorawar Singh Jamwal presided over the function. SP, City North, Kulbir Handa, SDPO, North, Rahul Nagar, Secretary General, J&K High Court Bar Association, Jammu, advocate Surjeet Andotra and eminent Journalist and senior Editor, Times Now Channel, Pardeep Dutta were the special guests on the occasion.

The ADGP Mukesh Singh emphasized the joint fight by involving every section of the society to protect the younger generation from this menace. He exhorted the society to remain vigilant against the drug mafia

and inform the police as soon as possible in case spotting any suspicious activities. "Your support is must to eradicate this menace from the roots", the ADGP said.

ADGP Mukesh Singh appreciated Team Jammu for organizing such awareness programme on eve of World Anti-Drug Day but emphasized redoubling the ongoing efforts. "You have to intensify your efforts because drug abuse increasing at a threatening and dangerous level in Jammu province", he cautioned.

The ADGP appreciated the NCC cadets of the Government Women College Parade for their performance to educate the younger generation against drug abuse.

Some drug victims whose identities were kept secret with masks also spoke on the occasion and shared their pain and agony as addict and also detailed their experience in rehabilitation centers. They also informed how volunteers of Team Jammu successfully guided them for rebuilding their careers.

Welcoming, Lt Governor, J&K UT, Manoj Sinha's concern over growing drug abuse here in Jammu and Kashmir, Chairman, Team Jammu, Zorawar Singh Jamwal asserted, "Lieutenant Governor's concern should not remain mere concern but it must be translated in reality and drug mafia has to be dealt with iron hands to save younger generation. The time has come to launch operation flush out against drug lords operating in J&K especially in Jammu Province."

Seeking support of the civil society to eradicate

menace of drug abuse, Team Jammu chief, Zorawar Singh Jamwal further said that cooperation of every section of the society is must to liberate our younger generation from the yoke of drug addiction. "We have to accept this reality that drugs are slowly tightening grip on the youth of the State. It is high time to start a deciding war against this menace", he said.

While appreciating the police for launching campaign against drug mafia in Jammu Province, Zorawar Singh Jamwal, however, said that still there are some black sheep among cops involved in helping drug mafia. "Need of the hour is to single out such black sheep to make the ongoing campaign more effective and result oriented", he said.

Eminent Journalist, Pradeep Dutta in his address suggested tips to effectively deal with peer pressure. "The biggest reason teens start using drugs is because their friends utilize peer pressure. No one likes to be left out, and teens as well as adults too find themselves doing things they normally wouldn't do just to fit in," explained Pradeep Dutta.

Noted Dogri poets, Thakur Randheer Singh Raipuria enthralled gathering with their famous Dogri poems written on drug abuse while Arti Sharma, chairperson, Sprawling Buds School, Chinore compered the program.

Earlier, Law Student, Vasudev Singh welcomed the jampacked gathering, while Happy Jamwal, Rajat Manhas, Keshav Chopra, Pratap Singh, Sardar Lucky Singh also spoke on the occasion.

# Congress’ emergency move darkest era in Indian politics: Kavinder

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Decrying Congress Party for destroying the democratic institutions by imposing emergency in 1975, senior BJP leader and former deputy CM Kavinder Gupta said that 21-month period between June 25, 1975 and March 21, 1977 was the darkest era of the Indian politics showing dynastic mindset of the oldest political party in the country.

Addressing a programme in connection with observing Black Day on the anniversary of imposing emergency by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi held in BJP Office here on Saturday, Kavinder said that the move of the Congress party showed its authoritarian mindset and firm belief in dynastic politics which is still harming the nation by one way or the other.

He said that the present day Congress leadership has not changed a bit and is having a dictatorial frame of mind though the cosmetic changes have been made to



Senior BJP leader Kavinder Gupta presenting memento to Satish Sharma, All India General Secretary Loktantra Senani Sangh from Delhi.

fool the electorate.

The senior BJP leader said that morally Congress has no locus standi to question BJP's policies because BJP is working for the downtrodden and the marginalized sections unlike the Congress which stood for the elite and the rich.

Recalling the dark era of emergency, Kavinder said that at the age of 13 he along with 13 other members of his family were jailed during the emergency.

He said that veteran Congress leader Dr Karan

Singh was the part of the then Cabinet headed by then PM Indira Gandhi. He also criticized the then President of India Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed who allowed imposition of emergency by signing the document in the middle of night at 3 AM and showed no spine to question this unwarranted decision.

Kavinder said that today, the entire nation is standing shoulder to shoulder with the pro-people policies of PM Modi and there is no doubt that the BJP will come to power again with

high margins at the Centre in 2024. He said that the country is witnessing progress as never before and this is the reason that people are fully satisfied with the

incumbent government and waiting for the chance to once again give a chance to BJP to steer the nation to pinnacle of development, peace and prosperity.

## Govt coercing Jammu employees posted in Kashmir: Congress

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress has lashed out the UT administration and Central Government for coercing agitating Jammu employees posted in Kashmir to join back or face consequences. In a sharp reaction, JKPC Chief spokesperson Ravinder Sharma has strongly criticised the UT administration and centre government for coercing the Jammu employees for forcing them to join back their duties in Kashmir valley without resolving their issues of safety and security. Terming such threats and coercion as very unfortunate and against the human rights of employees and their families, JKPC criticized such harsh actions.

The government should resolve their genuine issues and concerns before forcing them to resume their duties in Kashmir valley, Sharma said.

These employees are facing threat to their lives and have genuine apprehensions in the wake of recent targeted attacks on the innocents especially minorities in Kashmir.

The party expressed solidarity with the agitating employees and demanded a fair transfer policy for them back to their native divisions and districts besides posting in safe zones and till then no coercive action should be taken against any one of them, otherwise party shall join their agitation.

# Regular commercial tourist traffic Valley via Basohli-Bhaderwah-Kishtwar is still a question?

### ■ DAYA SAGAR

It was in January 2009 that the then Chief Minister of Indian state of Jammu & Kashmir Omar Abdullah while addressing a function (150th Anniversary of the First War of Independence ) organized by the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages had said that he had traveled far and wide but nowhere witnessed a composite cultural richness and diversity as is evident in Jammu and Kashmir. No one can deny what Omar Abdullah had said but the question is has any one like 'him' cared that truthfully to exploit the values contained in the composite cultural richness of J&K for the betterment of the people there in ? Among other things the cultural diversity of quality and ancient historical 'prints' that exist in J&K have enough scope for creating infrastructure worth salable commercial tourism with the support of pilgrim tourism to benefit so particularly the Jammu and Ladakh regions that have not been otherwise

blessed with that favorably climate wise as has been Kashmir Valley. Still enough of scope for commercial ( even summer tourism) exits in Jammu region but there have been only promises but no serious plans for delivery of infrastructure on ground.

Jammu Region does have a little rough climate during summers enroute to spots worth development as tourist resorts but instead this region is blessed with more of pilgrimage places near to potential tourist destinations . This way there is multi dimensional scope for carrying the visitors / likely tourists/ pilgrims in and around areas of Jammu region where a good number of adventure sports as well as cable car projects too could be promoted. So still a high order pilgrim as well as commercial tourism could be promoted particularly in areas outside Kashmir valley like that in Jammu Province but that has not been done even after the Kashmir Valley tourism was so badly affected in 1990s. One would ask why?

Even after PDP- BJP alliance had taken over the governance since March 2015 and some draft references were made in the Agenda for Alliance March 2015 for development of Jammu region as an independent tourism circuit with specific plans for: \*Suchetgarh - Samba - Hiranagar border tourism,\* Katra - Patnitop - Bhaderwah sector, Parmandal - Utterbeni -Surinsar - Mansar sector\* Katra - Majalta - Billawar- Basohli sector\* Bani - Sarthal- Jai circuit and Rajouri - Poonch ( seven lakes) sector and \* Enhancing connectivity by building Basoli-Bani-Bhaderwah road, 'appreciable' commercial tourism infrastructure is nowhere in sight worth attracting the tourist for leisure , stay and relax for a week or 10 days even in the so often talked about "Bhaderwah- the Mini Kashmir" zone/ zone what to talk of other areas.

To quote in a way the work on



## A Look through the Mist

Bhaderwah-Bani Basohli - road ( J&K) was started in 1964 by the J&K Public Works Department (PWD) .it was handed over to BRO in 1986 and though BRO claimed that the 165Km road was completed as single lane traffic movement in 1993 surely it was of no use from tourism point of view. It was also reported by media quoting Border Roads Organisation India (BRO) / GREF sources in November 2012 that in J&K Bhaderwah-Bani Basoli double lane road (165 Km) will be completed for commercial tourism flow by 2017 connecting Lakhampur with Bhaderwah and with Himachal Pradesh via Bhaderwah - Chamba Road. The status worth tourist friendly easy& safe all through atleast two lane highway through to Bhaderwah is still not there in 2022.

It was expected that after BJP has come in power both in Center and in State the neglect suffered by areas

outside Kashmir valley would be undone by pumping in extra financial and human resources to make good the loss but nearly 7 years have passed and so disappointingly even the Katra - Patnitop - Bhaderwah sector has not been suitably exploited what to talk of Bani/ Basoli/ Bhaderwah/ Chamba track / or to Valley via Kishtwar. Even the so called Kud Mall project of Patnitop Development Authority is an 'infant' 3 decades old .It is the summer tourism ( to some extent adventure tourism too), that brings in the tourist who spends money to buy leisure , comfort, entertainment and services worth improving the economy of the locals.

Himachal Pradesh has been able to attract lakhs of tourist even in small places like Dollhouse , Macleodganj and Khijiar but J&K could not even carry a couple of thousands of tourist to Bhaderwah sector for holidaying what to talk of other areas.

It is no use blaming the Kashmiri

leadership, Kashmiri bureaucracy and civil society for the neglect meted to Jammu Region since the Jammu region leadership, bureaucrats (what-ever small may be the number) as well as civil society too has not rendered the needed attention and services for suggesting, promoting and following development projects.

Writer has at occasions submitted a brief on potential spots in Jammu Region indicating holy places of pilgrimage as well potential exploitable tourist destination nearby to the erst-while directors of tourism as well but even clues have not been taken from that. The local civil society and political leadership must come forward and build pressures on the Government to pump in extra resources in Jammu region for development of tourism to compensate for the neglect meted so far.

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