

Civil Society Kashmir organises Amarnath Yatra welcome event

Great gesture to represent real face of Kashmir to world: Sinha

Revival of age-old tradition to welcome Yatris with open hearts: Dr Darakhshan

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: In the first of its kind event held by Civil Society today at SKICC Srinagar for welcoming Amarnath Yatra after a gap in Kashmir, hundreds of people representing different social, business, religious bodies from the whole of Kashmir Valley participated. Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha was the Chief Guest while as Chairperson of J&K Waqf Board Dr Darakhshan Andrabi, Chief Secretary of J&K Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir P K Pole were the Guests of Honour. Civil Society representatives Mushtaq Chaya and Bashir Ahmad Rather were also present on the occasion. Introductory address about the importance of Yatra in bridging the gaps between communities was delivered by famed writer and intellectual Dr Satish Vimal. In his address, Lieutenant Governor said that this gesture of the civil society of Kashmir will present the real face of Kashmir to the world. "I am convinced that the



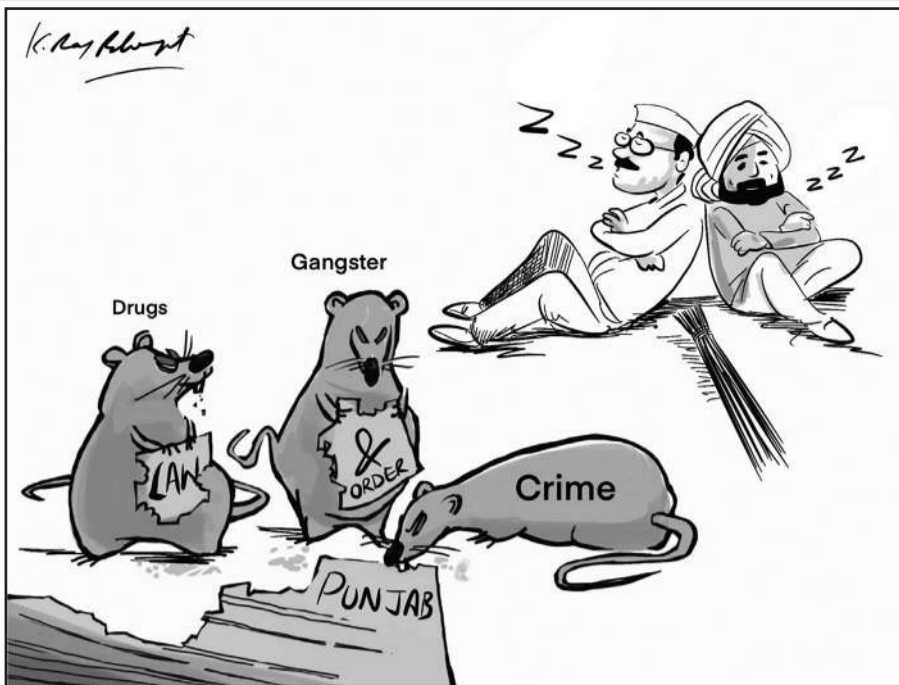
Chairperson of J&K Waqf Board Dr Darakhshan Andrabi speaking in a programme at Srinagar.

majority of the majority community stands for communal brotherhood and peace among faiths and this event is just another reflection of the same. Whole of Amarnath Yatra is a testimony of the spirit of co-existence in Kashmir," said Manoj Sinha. He praised the efforts of the civilians and public representatives for creating an atmosphere of brotherhood, communal harmony and peace in J&K. He said that peaceful conduct of this Yatra will add to the tourism potential of J&K as these Yatris are the ambassadors for our tourism and social image out of J&K. LG said that the govern-

ment was doing hard work in streamlining the systems of governance in J&K so that the life of the people gets benefited. "Peace is imperative for development and when people choose peace no one can stop the progress and development of the society," said Sinha. Dr Darakhshan said, "Our Sufis and spiritual saints have showed us the way to life a peaceful life based on the principle of co-existence and brotherhood and now we have to return to the roots and follow the teachings of our spiritual masters so that we bring peace to this land of Sufis & Rishis."

"We are reviving the age-old cultural tradition in Kashmir by welcoming Yatris with hearts," said Dr Darakhshan. She hoped that now onwards the world should know us by our real image of humanism and spiritual excellence which is the foundation of brotherhood. Welcoming Amarnath Yatra, Dr Andrabi hoped that like the record tourist inflow this year the yatra will also create records. Chief Secretary said that this event has to be a beginning of a continuous tradition of celebrating the inter-community and inter-faith festivities

throughout the year. "This Yatra will boost the economy of J&K to a great level and such huge festivities need to be part of our tourism network," said Dr Mehta. He appealed to the audience to send this message around so that the spirit of peace and co-existence gets deep roots in the society. Civil Society representatives Mushtaq Chaya and Bashir Ahmad Rather also spoke on the occasion and reiterated their faith in the communal harmony of the society. They said that the whole Kashmiri society is at the service of the Amarnath pilgrims and we assure all help and assistance to these guests in J&K. While welcome address was delivered by Civil Society Member Mohammad Abrar Khan, e thanks giving was done by Chairman of Chamber of Commerce & Industry Kashmir Tariq Ghaani. Famed broadcaster Rasheed Nizami anchored the event.



People of J&K grumbling, BJP left them in lurch: Bhalla



JKPCC Working President Raman Bhalla speaking in a party workers meeting.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: JKPCC Working President and former Minister Raman Bhalla on Wednesday claimed that all the development that is seen in J&K was done by the previous Congress Party government. This was observed by former Minister while presiding over meeting of Block Presidents. The meeting was organized by Yogesh Sawhney General Secretary PCC Incharge District President Jammu Urban. Block Presidents of Jammu East, Jammu West and Bhanu Assembly Constituency were present at the meeting. The meeting held discussions on the upcoming programs of the party. It was informed to the Block Presidents in the meeting that the party will start a Door-to-door Mass Contact Program. Discussions were also held various current issues troubling the general public such as the ongoing water crisis and various Congress party members voiced their inputs and suggestions regarding the

same. Reacting over current situation in J&KUT, Bhalla termed BJP Govt as directionless which failed to bring cheers to the common people especially the youth, students, the farmers and the labour class who suffered a lot due to worst economic slowdown and the COVID situation. He said there are no efforts to boost the rural economy and create job opportunities in the wake of large scale unemployment and retrenchments in the recent years due to wrong economic policies of BJP government coupled with covid situation. He condemned policies of Govt and said it failed to come up to the expectations of people of J&K. He called the working class, farmers and low paid employees besides school going children of the poor class as 'victims of BJP Govt's wrong policies. Former Minister launching a scathing attack on the BJP accusing the ruling party at the Centre of destroying democratic, ethnic and social fabric of the nation.

He said India was the only robustly functioning and flourishing democracy in South Asian region, thanks to the magnanimous role played by the Congress in the 70 years of history of the nation. Sawhney guided the Block Presidents to work dedicatedly as per party directions to strengthen the Congress party's efforts to amplify the voice of the public and bring basic public issues to the forefront. In this regard, Sawhney said, that the party will conduct a Door-to-door Mass Contact Program to increase the party's outreach to every nook and corner of the Jammu region. Prominent among those present on the occasion include Dr Ramakanth Khajuria, S P Sapolia, Varinder Singh Manhas, Jatin Vashisht, Atul Sharma, Chander Sheikhar Sharma, Anil Kumar from Jammu East, Pawan Sharma, Rakesh Sharma, Darshan Verma from Jammu West and Mandeep Singh, Janak Raj and Pawan Bhagat were present at the meeting.

Jal Shakti Deptt daily-wagers take out rally for regularisation, block Tawi bridge

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Amid scorching heat, hundreds of daily wagers of the Jal Shakti Department on Wednesday staged a massive rally and blocked a vital bridge here, seeking fulfilment of their long-pending demands including regularisation and release of pending wages. The workers, who are on a tool-down strike for the past one week, assembled under the banner of Public Health Engineering (PHE) employees united front at the main office complex of the chief engineer at B C Road in the heart of the city before taking out the rally. Chanting slogans against the Lieutenant Governor-led administration and the BJP, the protesters tried to move towards the Civil Secretariat but were stopped by police personnel who were deployed in strength to maintain law and order. After a brief scuffle, the protesters managed to break the police cordon and moved towards Jewel Chowk where they blocked the Tawi bridge, causing a massive traffic jam in the



JSD daily-wagers blocking Tawi Bridge during a protest at Jammu.

city. We initially gave a call for a 48-hour-long tool down strike on June 22 but the government paid no heed, prompting us to intensify our agitation in support of our genuine demands, Ravi Hans, one of the leaders leading the protest, said. Over 60,000 daily wagers, casual labourers and other workers are performing their duties in various

departments over the past two decades and are regularly holding protests in both Jammu and Srinagar in support of their long-pending demands including regularisation, implementation of minimum wages act and release of their pending wages. This government is only buying time by giving false assurances. We met Lt Governor and senior officers

of his administration besides the local BJP leadership over the past two years and were assured that all our genuine demands will be addressed within a short period of time, Hans said. He blamed the administration for the suffering of the people due to the non-availability of drinking water over the past one week and said we are not ready to be misled by false promises and want the government to take a call on our demands forthwith. We will further intensify our agitation if there is no response from the government, he threatened. Meanwhile, residents of Janipur including a large number of women blocked the High Court road to protest the erratic water and power supply. The protests were also reported from different parts of the city and Shiv Nagar in Udhampur district against the shortage of water; officials said, adding the protesters dispersed peacefully on the intervention of the civil and the police administration.

Dr Jitendra leads India-Norway bilateral Ministerial talks

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

LISBON: India's Minister for Science and Technology and Earth Sciences Dr Jitendra Singh on Wednesday led India-Norway bilateral Ministerial talks. While Dr Jitendra Singh was accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising Secretary and senior officers from different Ministries in the Govt of India, the Norway side was represented by a delegation headed by Espen Barth Eide, the Minister for Climate and Environment. The bilateral, which took

place on the side-lines of the ongoing UN Ocean Conference, discussed several issues of mutual interest. The meeting comes close on the heels of the 5th India-Norway Task Force meet in New Delhi last week on Blue Economy between Norwegian Ambassador to India, Hans Jacob Frydenlund and the Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences Secretary Dr M Ravichandran. The Task Force Meet agreed on new projects and a roadmap for connecting ocean industries on both sides.



Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh and his Norway counterpart Espen Barth Eide, along with their respective delegations, posing for a group photograph.

Both the Countries agreed to explore more cooperation on Green Maritime, Sustainable Ocean Management, Deep

Ocean Technology and Offshore Wind. Dr Jitendra and Espen Barth Eide expressed satisfaction over

the progress made so far in the 5th India-Norway Task Force meet. The two sides also reviewed the dialogue and

progress on issues like integrated ocean management, marine pollution, green shipping, ocean based renewable energy etc. The two Ministers appreciated the ongoing close cooperation between the two countries and hoped that the partnership grows from strength to strength in future. Dr Jitendra referred to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting with his Norwegian counterpart Jonas Gahr Store in Copenhagen on the side-lines of the 2nd India Nordic Summit last month, where Modi highlighted that Norway's skills and India's scope provided natural complementarities. Quoting Prime Minister Modi on the Copenhagen meet, Dr Jitendra underlined the potential for deepening engagement in areas like Blue Economy, renewable energy, green hydrogen, solar and wind projects, green shipping, fisheries, water management, rainwater harvesting, space cooperation, long term Infrastructure investment, health and culture.

Dr Singh also referred to a pilot project between the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) and Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur (IIT KGP) agreed in January this year to improve interdisciplinary skills, digital literacy, and critical thinking of undergraduate students. The Indian Minister emphasised that these skills are highly needed with the growing demand for new technologies and innovative solutions in the maritime sector.

Kavinder condemns Udaipur killing, seeks exemplary punishment for culprits

Reaches Hyderabad to attend National Executive Meet

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

HYDERABAD: Senior BJP leader and former Deputy chief minister Kavinder Gupta on Wednesday condemned horrendous killing of 40-year-old tailor Kanhaiya Lal in Udaipur and demanded exemplary punishment for the killer duo behind this gruesome act of terrorism. This was stated by Kavinder Gupta while talking to media persons at Hyderabad Airport. Kavinder visited to attend the two-day National Executive meet of BJP which is scheduled to start on July 2. The former Deputy Chief Minister said that such incident was not acceptable at any cost as the same is a serious threat to communal harmony and brotherhood in the country. "Beheading a Hindu tailor with such a brutality in the name of religion cannot be tolerated. Those spreading terror through such brutality should be punished



Senior BJP leader and former Dy CM, Kavinder Gupta being welcomed at Hyderabad.

immediately," he said, adding that people should exercise maximum constraint and defeat hatred together. Kavinder appealed to the countrymen to maintain peace and brotherhood to thwart the designs of perpetrators of such fanatic actions of terror. He said that such dastardly acts have no place in a civilized society and therefore the need of the time is to come forward

and save the country's brotherhood and bonhomie. He said that the barbaric act of violence in Udaipur needs to be probed looking into all angles of terrorism because the blunt attitude of the culprits in this terror incident speaks of a bigger conspiracy which needs to be unraveled and bring to logical conclusion so that such unfortunate incidents do not happen again.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday said that braving all the challenges of agricultural reforms, the monthly farm income have improved and Jammu and Kashmir stands tall among top 5 states/UTs of the country. "In spite of rapid urbanization, nearly 70% population's livelihood is dependent on agriculture and it is the key to remove developmental imbalances between urban and rural areas. To some extent, this goal has been realized," the Lt Governor said at Kisan Maha Sammelan held at SKICC Srinagar. Sinha felicitated innovative, technically empowered farmers for their contribution to agriculture and horticulture sector. J&K has limitless potential in agriculture & concerted efforts are opening up doors of opportunity for small & marginal farmers. Never before had high-density plantation investment in agro-based industries taken place at the kind of speed witnessed in the last two years, observed the Lt Governor. He further said that Green Agriculture Revolution, and the contribution of Agricultural Universities, Institutions & Krishi Vigyan Kendras has changed the way of farming in an innovative way by extending benefits



Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha addressing Kisan Maha Sammelan at SKICC Srinagar.

of modern technologies to the farmers. The Lt Governor informed that under the Kisan Maan Dhan Yojana started by the Prime Minister; last year J&K administration covered 82,188 farmers and this year, the target is to register 50,000 additional farmers under the scheme. The farmers associated with this scheme will get a pension of Rs 3000 every month in their account after the age of 60 years. Large every eligible beneficiary to take advantage of this scheme, he added. The Lt Governor termed farmers, youth and women entrepreneurs as the priority of the J&K administration and assured every possible support to them. On the occasion, the Lt Governor handed over sanction letters to beneficiaries, and financial assistance to farmers under the National Saffron

Mission. He also released a book titled "Zero Budget Natural Farming" and inspected the impressive stalls set up by government departments, startups and other stakeholders. The Lt Governor emphasized that such success stories of progressive farmers & agripreneurs must reach the youth, and underlined the need to make these inspirational journeys a part of school curriculum. More girls, women becoming farmers, taking agriculture as a career is a matter of pride, he added. Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary, congratulated the farming community and the Agriculture department for the impressive performance of J&K in the agriculture sector. He expressed hope that with continuous innovation and committed efforts, J&K would be the leading

UT in terms of farm income. Prof. J P Sharma, Vice-Chancellor SKUAST, termed the farmers of J&K as the Agricultural Ambassadors of the country. He advised the farming community to put more focus on processing, value addition and marketing, besides replicating the best agriculture and farming practices to yield favourable results. Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture Production Department, while speaking on the occasion, emphasized the need to take necessary measures to overcome various challenges pertaining to land availability, weather conditions, natural resources, besides highlighting the up-coming initiatives. Chowdhary Mohammad Iqbal, Director Department of Agriculture Production & Farmers Welfare Kashmir, in his welcome address, highlighted the initiatives taken by the department to extend handholding to the farmers, and making the agriculture sector more remunerative. KK Sharma, Director AP & FWD, Jammu delivered the Vote of Thanks. Pandurang K Pole, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; HoDs; progressive farmers, Agripreneurs and prominent citizens from all walks of life attended the 'Kisan Maha Sammelan'.