

3-day business workshop on ‘Homestay Capacity Building’ concludes

Boosting rural tourism enterprises shall have multiplier effect on J&Ks’ economy: Secretary Tourism

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The three day business workshop on 'Homestay Capacity Building', organized by the Directorate of Tourism for interested stakeholders and intending local entrepreneurs, concluded here at TRC Jammu.

The first of its kind workshop intended to sensitize the participants regarding various aspects of Homestay Business and skill enhancement of participating stakeholders in this regard.

The valedictory ceremony was presided over by Secretary, Tourism, Syed Abid Rasheed Shah, and was also graced by MD and CEO J&K Bank, Baldev Prakash.

The workshop witnessed various capacity building training modules, brainstorming sessions along with detailed informative presentations by experts from J&K Bank, Gramen Bank, Make My Trip and faculty members from Jammu University besides detailed presentations by senior officers of Tourism Department.

The participants were acquainted with different aspects of Homestay Registration Process with the Tourism Department, schemes of J&K Bank, formal aspects of functional operations for Homestays, guidelines and procedural aspects involved therein.



Secretary Tourism, Syed Abid Rasheed Shah, Joint Director Tourism, Sunaina Sharma Mehta and other dignitaries at closing ceremony of three-day business workshop.

A field exposure visit was also organized for all the participants on the second day of the workshop in which the participating delegates were taken to Hotel visits for formal interaction and on field exposure of the Hospitality sector.

Speaking on the occasion, Secretary stressed upon the need to organize more such workshops and exposure interactions for the interested Homestay stakeholders. He appealed the participants to keep themselves updated about technological advancements and sustainable practices, focus on socio-cultural tourism aspects and take benefit from various government schemes.

He assured that the Tourism Department shall provide all assistance to all interested stakeholders and youth volunteers for estab-

lishing their own Homestay enterprises.

Secretary hoped that boosting rural tourism enterprises shall have multiplier effect on overall economy of J&K and shall usher in an era of self reliance and growth. He reiterated the immense tourism potential in Jammu region and its cultural richness which provides for great opportunity to all stakeholders to invest their resources in the Hospitality Sector.

While addressing the participants, Baldev Prakash assured that the J&K bank is committed to support all budding enterprises and shall afford all assistance to the young entrepreneurs especially interested Homestay stakeholders.

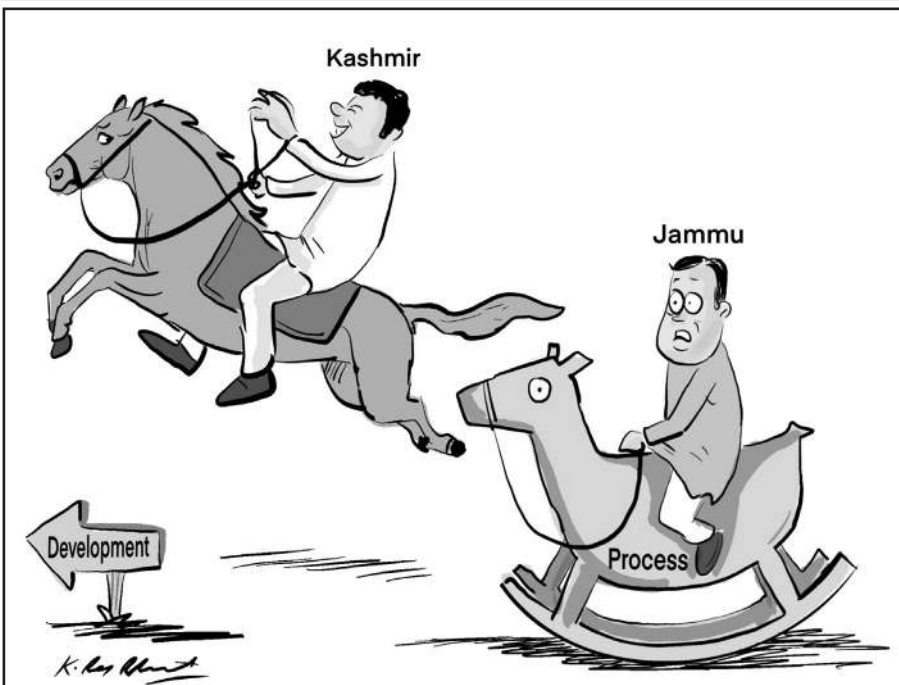
Director LEAD, Manish Ahluwalia, also appealed all participants to keep working in their endeavour to estab-

lish and run Homestays and boost the rural economy along with generation of self employment opportunities. He highlighted the need for continued engagement and collaboration to attract tourists from different parts of the country in Jammu region. He emphasized the importance of creating tourism cooperatives to foster collective efforts in developing a robust tourism ecosystem in the region. Director Tourism, Vivekanand Rai, highlighted the tourism potential of Jammu region vis-à-vis Rural Tourism, Heritage Tourism, Experiential Tourism and Leisure Tourism. He also highlighted the role of tourism in fostering cultural exchange and building bridges between communities in the modern day context.

In her detailed presentation on Procedural aspects and legal framework for Registration of Homestays with the Department of Tourism, Joint Director Tourism, Sunaina Sharma Mehta, sensitized the participants about various procedural aspects of Homestay Registration Policy of Tourism Department. She also elaborated various significant guidelines and mandates for Homestay Proprietors and presented it under the tagline of "Proneyo Aao Sadhe Behde" signifying the significance of guests in Dogri Culture.

The 3 day workshop concluded with certificate distribution, felicitation of esteemed guests and volunteers.

Among others present during the workshop were Amarjeet Singh, Special Secretary, Tourism Department, Sachin Dev, Additional Secretary Tourism, CA Rajeev Gupta, Board Member and Secretary LEAD, Dr. Umesh Shan, Deputy Director Tourism, Jammu, Abdul Jabbar, Deputy Director Tourism (Publicity) Jammu, Neha Mahajan, Deputy Director Tourism (Planning), Amit Sharma, Deputy Director Tourism (M&W), GM JKTDCC Sham Abrol and other officials of tourism department.



Pollutants, environmental determinants- neglected aspect of CVD: Dr Sushil



HoD Cardiology, Dr. Sushil Sharma with his team examining patients at a camp.

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JAMMU: As pollution has shown a progressive and unrelenting course in recent times particularly, keeping in view the above factors Head Department of Cardiology, Dr. Sushil Sharma held a day long cardiac awareness cum health check up camp at Hari Mandir, Rehari Colony Jammu in which people of all age groups and communities participated and they were educated about the rising prevalence of cardiac ailments due to ambient air pollution and ways to decrease the same. More than 450 people were screened, evaluated, diagnosed and free medicines were given as per the requirements.

While interacting with the people, Dr Sushil stated that over the last decade, a growing body of epidemiological and clinical evidence has led to a heightened concern about the potential deleterious effects of ambient air pollution on health and its relation to heart disease and stroke.

Of special interest are several environmental air pollutants that include carbon monoxide, oxides of nitrogen, sulfur dioxide, ozone, lead, and particulate matter ("thoracic particles" [PM10] <10 µm in aerodynamic diameter, "fine particles" [PM2.5] <2.5 µm, and "coarse particles" [PM10 to 2.5]). These pollutants are associated with increased hospitalization and mortality due to cardiovascular disease, especially in persons with congestive heart failure, frequent arrhythmias, or

both. The well-established causal associations between active and passive smoking with heart disease and stroke support the plausibility of an adverse effect of PM on the cardiovascular system, Dr. Sushil said.

He elaborated that Air pollution may accelerate the development of coronary atherosclerosis and worsen its sequelae. Some of these effects may occur over time, as with acceleration of the progression of atherosclerosis, or rather abruptly, as with the triggering of an arrhythmia or myocardial infarction by acute inflammatory responses, altered platelet adhesiveness, or perhaps vascular endothelial dysfunction.

The putative biological mechanisms linking air pollution to heart disease involve direct effects of pollutants on the cardiovascular system, blood, and lung receptors, and/or indirect effects mediated through pulmonary oxidative stress and inflammatory responses. Direct effects may occur via agents that readily cross the pulmonary epithelium into the circulation, Dr. Sushil further said.

He added that short-term exposure can increase the risk of heart attack, stroke, arrhythmias and heart failure in susceptible people, such as the elderly or those with pre-existing medical conditions. The risk of death is greater from long-term exposure. Current science suggests air pollution facilitates atherosclerosis development and It also may play a role in high

blood pressure, heart failure, he said.

Dr Sushil Sharma in his concluding remarks told that public awareness of the health risks of air pollution has never been higher and while we may have known for many centuries that air pollution is damaging to health, it is only in last two decades that the full magnitude of the problem has been recognized and the statistics are staggering.

"Time is running out, and we must work together to ensure that our children can grow up in healthy cities, breathing clean air and living long, heart-healthy lives," Dr. Sushil said.

Management Committee of Shri Sanatan Dharam Sabha Hari Mandir Rehari Colony Jammu Naveen Bali, Harsh Sharma, Hans Raj Gupta , Anu Bali (Corporator), Pt. Kishore Shastri , Baby Sharma, Madhav Suri, Rohit Sharma and Aman Kumar appreciated the efforts of Dr Sushil and his team for conducting cardiac awareness cum health checkup camp for the welfare of people and the society.

Others who were part of this Camp includes Dr Nasir Ali Choudhary, Dr Anital Singh and Dr Dhaneshwer Kapoor. Paramedics and volunteers includes Raghav Rajput, Rajkumar, Rajinder Singh , Mukesh Kumar, Gourav Sharma, Jatin Bhasin, Jamshed Ali, Vikas Kumar, Sandeep Pal, Aman Gupta, Maninder Singh, Ranjeet Singh, Maneet Kumar and Paramveer Singh.

Under Modi leadership, J&K turned peaceful NaMo key 9 saal, Bemisaal, Bemisaal, Bemisaal: Ch Sukhnandan

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JAMMU: Conveying wishes to Narendra Modi (NaMo) for completing nine years as Prime Minister, the former Minister and senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Choudhary Sukhnandan Kumar said that almost a decade-long tenure of PM Modi marks peace, prosperity and huge development in J&K as well as in other parts of the country.

While addressing public gathering at Gajanso Marh on Sunday, Ch Sukhnandan said under the leadership of PM Modi, J&K turned to be peaceful place and almost terror free.

"It was possible only under the leadership of PM Modi that Article 370 which was a big hurdle in the development of J&K, was removed," said Sukhnandan.

The senior BJP leader said even though the country touched new heights since PM Modi took the reins, it would not have possible to see our country's economy growing from 1 trillion dollars in 2014 to 3.5 trillion at present.

Choudhary Sukhnandan Kumar said for the first



Former Minister and senior BJP leader Ch Sukhnandan Kumar interacting with senior citizen at a programme.

time, Rs 29 lakh crore have been directly transferred to beneficiary bank accounts.

"Under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana (PMGKAY), more than 80 crore poor were provided food grains across the country free of cost," Choudhary said, adding that Rs 5,182 crore have been disbursed in 42.87 accounts under PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) till March 2023.

Over Rs 7,558 crore worth of loans have been sanctioned by the Modi government under Stand Up India to SC and ST beneficiaries.

"During nine years of Modi government, Rs 28.90 crore unorganised workers have registered in E-Shram Portal which has been created as a National

Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW), which will be seeded with Aadhaar, Choudhary Sukhnandan said.

"Under PM Modi's leadership, Rs 1 lakh crore worth road and highways projects are being carried out while as train from Kashmir to Kanyakumari is set to start soon," the former minister said, adding that it was possible only under the leadership of PM Modi that Srinagar was given a chance to host first ever G-20 Summit with focus on exploring tourism potential or the UT.

With Modi's personal efforts, J&K saw record number of tourist arrivals for the first time at 1.88 crore in 2022 and the figure is set to go high in the this year. Srinagar saw real

development under the smart city project while Jammu too touched new heights of development and got the largest zoo in northern India.

Connecting Kashmir with Ladakh wasn't possible without Z-Morh tunnel and cutting the distance of Srinagar-Jammu by two hours through Navyoug and other tunnels besides making the J&K terror free place, but "Modi hai to Mumkin hai," said Ch Sukhnandan Kumar.

Others who attended the public meeting include Geetu Anulakh (DDC member Phallian Mandal), Balbir Lal (DDC member Marh), Vikas Choudhary (State Secretary BJP), Jitender Singh (Chairman Municipal Council Ghou Manhasa), Sham Lal Sharma (BJP District Vice President), Deepak Pandey (District Secretary BJP), Vikramjeet Singh (Mandal President BJP Marh), Shakti Sharma (Senior leader BJP), Sarpanch Harjeet Singh, Sarpanch Narinder Singh, Sarpanch Mulkh Raj Sharma, Sarpanch Balbir Lal, Sarpanch Balbir Singh and Sarpanch Parshotam Sharma.

Azad extends greetings to Haj-2023 pilgrims

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Chairman Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) and former Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad has extended greetings to all the pilgrims who are embarking on spiritual journey of Haj this year.

In a congratulatory statement to Haj pilgrims from Jammu and Kashmir as they leave for Jeddah on June 7, Azad said, "I wish them well in their spiritual journey and pray to Almighty Allah to give them strength so that they perform their Haj in best health conditions and may their prayers be accepted and answered during the sacred pilgrimage."

Expressing delight over their departure to holy places of Makkah and Madinah, the former Chief Minister who established Hajj House in Srinagar, urged Government to ensure that all the Haj pilgrims are provided best facilities so that their journey at the outset remain memorable.

"I also request Haj pilgrims to seek divine blessings for peaceful and prosperous Jammu and Kashmir," Azad said.

No doubt more needs be done but surely after 2019 an Era with meaningful difference has arrived for UT of J&K

■ DAYA SAGAR

It has not been only in J&K but in recent years an era of exploitation of educated / qualified unemployed youth living under socio-economic stresses and desperately looking for some employment for bread earning had started where even the governments started recruiting youth for performing jobs against regular vacancies @ wages / terms of services much inferior to otherwise prescribed for such like public service jobs like employment on contractual basis or by framing inferior recruitment rules like as were ordered by Omar Abdullah lead J&K Government under order No 257 F of 2011 on 27 Oct 2011 laying down 'Modalities' for fixed salary mode of Recruitment in Non-Gazetted categories for class-IV, III / other Non gazetted posts where under appointment was paid around 1/3rd of due wages for some years and after that through SRO 202 of 30-06-2015 PDP lead J&K Government ordered J&K Special Recruitment Rules, 2015 where under during first five years the employed had to not only remain on probation but were also paid lowest of the wage in grade without any allowances & increments till the period of probation was over. Even MBBS degree holders

were appointed as medical officers against regular vacancies and post graduates had been forced to take appointments under such service conditions as primary school teachers/ junior clerks. Although it had been with continued representations but as soon as proper feedback could reach the LT Governor Manoj Sinha all the bads have been washed away with the issue of S.O. 425 on 06-09-2022 relieving thousands already employed and those seeking employment of unbearable stresses.

No doubt there are still 'some categories of jobs' which are 'more' demanding and are no less than regular jobs but the appointees are still not been paid wages as would be due for performing same job as regular appointee but wages paid are also too inadequate to meet minimal daily/ family needs. Only reason for such discrepancies could be that those heading the Government (like LG in J&K) are not provided unbiased feedback for such types of inadequacies / unfair treatments as otherwise once convinced it should be hoped that atleast the present administration / Government in J&K and UT of Ladakh would surely remove such unfair policies as has been done by LG Manoj Sinha by getting issued S.O. 425 on 06-09-2022 undoing the bad policies/ rules like SRO

-202 of 30-06-2015 and it shadows resting in SO 192 of 17-06-2020 which was a very cruel tool shaped by even "elected J&K government" to exploit the needy youth who were appointed even against regular substantive post (even that of Assistant Surgeons/ Medical Officers in Health Department).

Such policies of employing the needy youth on reduced terms of employment not only affect the working of the employed but also damage the interests of the community to which they are supposed to serve like if a teacher is poorly paid surely since one is under socio-financial stresses the kids/ students too do not receive proper attention from him/her; number of heads employed for teaching do increase with those employed under schemes like Rahbar e Taleem but the number of "teachers" does not increase. Similar is the case of youth who are appointed as Special Police Officers in UT of J&K (there numbers may be more than 30000) on a consolidated salary of just Rs.6000/pm (before 2019 it was Rs.3000/pm and it has been only when Union Home Minister Amit Shah intervened to make it Rs.6000 per month for



A Look through the Mist Part-II

review after 3 years to make it Rs.9000/ pm) who on ground are required to perform the same duty as is performed by regular police constables. No doubt with high degree of unemployment still many youth apply for SPO post hoping that may be one day they become regular. It was reported in media 01-12-2019 that over 77,000 candidates applied in response to SPO recruitment drive of the Jammu and Kashmir Police to fill about 5,200 posts of Special Police Officers (51,047 youths applied for the SPO recruitment in the Jammu region and 26,594 in Kashmir valley). This clearly shows under what economic stresses/ compulsions the youth is living.

The recruitment of SPOs is being regularly made over last 3 decades and hence it is no less than a regular recruitment of police force. It has been learnt that in August 2019 there were around 10821 SPOs with more than 15 yr service, 5132 SPOs with 10 yr completed services, 3436 SPOs with 5yr completed service ,1134 SPOs with 3 yrs completed service and 8590 SPOs with less than 3 yr service.

Firstly it is exploitation of the needy,

secondly the appointee always remains under financial stresses & hence under social stresses also where as one has to perform a job that requires total involvement / high level of truthfulness & sincerity / preparedness worth even risking one's life. It was reported on 28-09-2018 that J&K Chief Secretary B.V.R. Subrahmanyam was so much concerned for the cause of SPOs that he wrote to Union Home Secretary Rajiv Gauba on September 24 opining that "given the risks that SPOs are likely to face in performing their duties and the threats to their lives, there is a need to pay 'experienced' SPOs a slightly higher rate that would also motivate them to work in difficult circumstances".

Union Home Ministry had in 2019 considered the proposals passionately and ordered increases in consolidated wages with length of engagement/ service (those with min 15 yrs of service Rs.18000/pm, with 10 yrs but less than 15 yrs of service Rs.15000/pm, with five yrs and less than 10 Yrs service Rs.12000/pm and with 3yrs but less than 5 years service Rs.9000/pm and with f less than 3 yrs service Rs.6000/pm). . Imagine the family needs of a person who serves for 15 years and then only gets

Rs.18000/- per month having travelled through years of inflation.

Those affected have started looking in the person of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha (who has already made some daring corrections) with great hopes hoping that he would be also be proposing to Home Ministry for awarding a regular pay scale to the SPOs.

Similarly are unduly under-employed thousands of young women working in the Anganwadi Scheme of GOI (Union Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoW&CD) scheme now renamed as Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme implemented by States/UTs, had as on June 2021 13.89 lakh AWCs) who are in a way the life line for the success of the ICDS which is a missionary task taken up by GOI since 1975 for the care and support of under privileged rural/ semi urban masses particularly infants/mothers.

Undoing the practice of under employing the needy in government services will also check the private sector from exploiting the needs of educated unemployed.

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