

Div Com flags-off Mata Kheer Bhawani Yatra from Nagrota

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Amid tight security arrangements, the annual Mata Kheer Bhawani Yatra was flagged off by Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Ramesh Kumar from Nagrota on Wednesday morning. Deputy Commissioner, Jammu, Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner (M) J&K, SSP Jammu, SSP Traffic Jammu, Director Health Services, Joint Director Tourism, other officers and community leaders were present on the occasion.

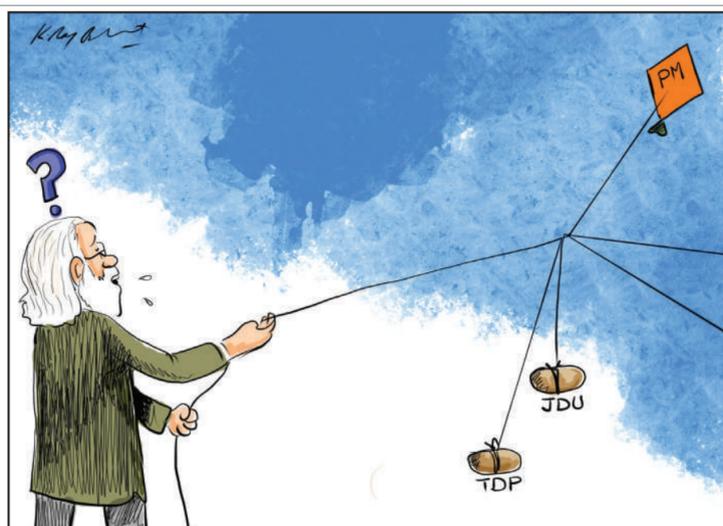


Div Com Jammu, Ramesh Kumar flagging-off Mata Kheer Bhawani Yatra 2024 from Nagrota.

The Divisional Commissioner said that all the necessary arrangements have been put in place en-route the

Yatra by the concerned district administrations and stakeholder departments. The arrangements include busses for transportation, security, accommodation, langar and other facilities for the devotees.

Around 5000 yatis on board 176 buses left for different destinations of Mata Kheer Bhawani Mela viz Tulumulla (Ganderbal), Tikker (Kupwara), Devsar & Manzam (Kulgam) and Logripora (Anantnag). The main congregation will be held at Tulumulla (Ganderbal) on the auspicious occasion of Zvesht Ashtami on June 14, 2024. Relief Organisation, in collaboration with concerned district administration has made all the necessary arrangements for the convenience of the pilgrims of the devotees of Mata Kheer Bhawani. Yatra shall return back on June 15, 2024, it was informed.



Terror attacks: JKRTCH Trust calls for peace, vigilance



Civil society members during a meeting at Jammu on Wednesday.

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Amidst a disturbing surge in terrorist violence plaguing the Jammu region, concerned citizens rallied together under the auspices of the Jammu Kashmir Religious Tourism Culture & Heritage (JKRTCH) Trust. Led by Mahant Rajesh Bittu, Chairman of the Trust, the gathering, dubbed as Chintan Baithak, convened at the Press Club Jammu, drawing a diverse array of prominent figures from various spheres of society. Expressing profound dismay, the civil society of Jammu vehemently denounced the recent spate of terrorist-related incidents, lamenting the loss of innocent lives and the martyrdom of security forces personnel. Mahant Bittu underscored the urgent need for concerted action, cautioning the Jammu and Kashmir government against the grave repercussions of inaction. He warned of unified demonstrations and protests across Jammu if the scourge of terrorist attacks persists unchecked. Zorawar Singh Jamwal, the Chief of Team Jammu, echoed these sentiments, condemning the terrorist onslaught in Reasi, Kathua, and Doda districts. He called for decisive measures to thwart the nefarious designs of anti-national elements, urging the Central government to uphold the sancti-

ty of the region's tranquility. Former President of Amar Khastriya Rajput Sabha and Senior BJP Leader, Narayan Singh, highlighted the impending commencement of the Amarnath Yatra amidst heightened security concerns. He stressed the imperative for proactive governmental intervention to safeguard the pilgrimage and preserve the region's peace. A unanimous resolution emerged from the gathering, signaling a collective resolve to launch a mass campaign aimed at heightening vigilance and raising awareness among the populace. The resolution emphasized the need for swift and decisive action against any suspicious activities, underscoring the community's determination to repel the advances of anti-national elements. The meeting witnessed the participation of several notable figures, including Rajive Gupta, Vice President of the Chamber of Commerce, Ravinder Singh, Jasvinder Singh, Vicky Sarpanch, Tarsam, Rajan Gupta, Karan Singh, Manav Gupta, Kuldeep Kandari, Rajinder, Bharat Raksha Manch, former Corporator Amit Gupta, Vishal, Pankaj Gupta, Mahant Shanti Giri, Mahant Mohan Giri, Vijay Krishan Prasher yoga Acharya, Mohan Bharati, Mahant Jasmeer, Mahant Meshanand and Mahant Raj Giri.

Srinagar's largest sacrificial animal market seeing fewer buyers

MASROOR AHMAD
SRINAGAR: With just a few days remaining until Eid-ul-Azha, the sacrificial animal market at Eidgah Srinagar is experiencing an unusual slowdown. Traditionally a bustling hub of activity, this year's market is seeing fewer buyers, much to the dismay of sellers. Mohamad Altaf, a seller, who has travelled from another district, has the most expensive sheep in the market, priced at a hefty Rs 70,000. However, Altaf is struggling to find a buyer willing to meet the price. "This year, the market is very slow. People just don't have the money to spend," he said. Another seller, Ghulam Muhammad echoed same views, attributing the decline in purchasing power to ongoing economic hardships exacerbated from 2019. "Ever since the economic conditions have worsened for many people here, it has become harder for them to



afford even essential purchases, let alone sacrificial animals," he said. You can gauge the economic conditions of the people of Jammu and Kashmir from the fact that the Central Hajj Committee has allocated the annual Haj quota 11500, but only 7000 people have submitted their Hajj forms because, despite the holy journey for Muslims, the people are not in a position to pay Rs 5 lakh for this journey," he said. He said that subsidy was given in the previous governments but this government scrapped it and the people are suffering. Abdul Mufeez Dar, a buyer from Srinagar said that the inconsistency in animal prices has added to the mar-

ket's unpredictability. "The rates are fluctuating. Yesterday, sheep were being sold for Rs 400 per kg, but today, the price has dropped to Rs 380 per kg. There's no regulation, and it's making it difficult for buyers," Dar explained. General Secretary of the Mutton Dealers Association Kashmir, said there is a discrepancy between supply and sales. "Sales have not met our expectations so far, but the true level of consumption will become clear after Eid," he said. He said: "This year, we have a variety of high-quality breeds from outside the state, including Rajasthani, Marwadi, Kaju Walla, Jasalmeeri among others. Currently, these out-of-state varieties are known for providing the best quality meat for buyers." Sharing details about livestock arrival in the Valley, he said that on an average, 50 to 60 trucks loaded with sheep are arriving in the Valley daily. The supply from outside the state remains strong and will continue up to two days before Eid. The reduced buzz and economic strain suggest that this year's Eid-ul-Adha celebrations may be more subdued than usual for many families in Srinagar. As the festival approaches, both buyers and sellers are hoping for some last-minute activity to uplift the market's spirits.

Let's unitedly fight menace of terrorism: Rana

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Senior BJP leader Devender Singh Rana on Wednesday strongly condemned one after another terror attacks in Reasi, Hiranagar and Doda in the Jammu region perpetrated by the rogue nation Pakistan, and described these barbarous acts as serious threat to national security. "Unmoved and frustrated over peace and normalcy returning in Jammu and Kashmir with people overwhelmingly participating in the just concluded elections to the Lok Sabha in all the five constituencies of the Union Territory, Pakistan and its notorious terror regime has resorted to violence", Rana said in a post X. He said the people of Jammu and Kashmir are resolute enough to foil all machinations of Pakistan and its sponsored terrorists. The Security Forces are effec-

tively working on the ground and succeeded hugely in bringing terrorism to its last legs. The day is not far when the residual terrorists and its ecosystem will be annihilated completely across the Union Territory, he added. Devender Rana said the bold and effective leadership in Delhi has proved over the past ten years that it has the will and ability to fight the menace of terrorism with its uncompromising zero tolerance policy towards terrorism, Terrorists, their perpetrators, over ground workers and sympathisers cannot get away for their inhuman acts against the civilized and peaceful society. He said the peace dawning across the Union Territory has become eyecore for all those furthering their interests on graveyards but the people are going to give them a befitting reply. "We all, irrespective of religion, region

caste or creed want peace in Jammu and Kashmir and have a high stake in normalcy", Devender Rana said, adding that near normalcy in the past five years have led to resurgent, transformed and buoyant J&K. "Let us all who belong to J&K unitedly rise to the occasion and together fight the menace of terrorism provide all support to the Security Forces and the Administration to fight this menace of terrorism unleashed by the enemy neighbour", Rana said, adding that the nation salutes the martyred soldier who attained martyrdom today in the line of his duty. Rana also expressed his solidarity with the families of pilgrims who lost their lives in the Reasi terror attack. He prayed for speedy recovery of the injured. He said the entire nation is sharing the pain and agony of bereaved families.

Two day interactive session on Macroeconomic Aggregates concludes

STATE TIMES NEWS
SRINAGAR: The two day interactive session on Macroeconomic Aggregates, organized by the Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Planning Development & Monitoring Department in collaboration with National Accounts Division, Union Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation, at Directorate of Economics & Statistics Srinagar, concluded here on Wednesday. The valedictory session was presided over by ADG and Head National Accounts Division, Union Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation, Dr. Prafulla Chandra Mishra, who was accompanied by a team of senior officers comprising Rajeev Kumar, DDG, NAD, Rohit Maurya, Director, NAD and Kirti Arora, AD, NAD. The event was attended by Satvir Kour Sudan, Director General (E&S) J&K, Shahazada Bilal, Director General (PM&CE), PD&MD, Athar Hussain Qadri, Regional Director, Evaluation & Statistics Kashmir, Ashu Gupta, Regional Director, Evaluation &

Statistics Jammu, Parvaiz Ahmad Handoo, Director Planning, Financial Commissioner Revenue, J&K, Rajni Charak, Director Planning, National Health Mission J&K, Reyaz Ahmad Romshoo, Director (Evaluation), DES J&K, Suneel Kumar Pandita, Director (Central), DES J&K, Muddasir Latif Tasir, Additional Secretary, PD&MD and other senior officers of Planning Development & Monitoring Department, Chief Planning Officers of J&K, District Statistics & Evaluation Officers of J&K and representatives from UT of Ladakh. The session commenced with programme overview by the Director General (E&S), who emphasized the critical role of macroeconomic aggregates in shaping economic policies and strategies. The keynote address by Additional Director General, National Accounts Division, MoSPI, set the tone for the discussions, focusing on the significance of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), District Domestic Product and other vital economic indicators.

The session featured several expert presentations and panel discussions, covering key topics such as Compilation of Gross State Domestic Product in J&K, discussion on compilation of District Domestic Product and issues faced in compilation of DDP, compilation of expenditure side Aggregates, discussions on bifurcation of some of the administrative information between J&K and Ladakh. In the closing ceremony, Regional Director, Evaluation & Statistics, expressed gratitude to all speakers, participants and organizers for their contribution towards making the session a huge success. "This interactive session has been a remarkable platform for exchanging knowledge and exploring the complexities of macroeconomic aggregates. We are confident that the insights gained here will significantly benefit all participants in their respective fields," he stated. The session was lauded for its comprehensive agenda, expert speakers and interactive format, receiving positive feedback from the participants.

Why even 'Top Grade' Engineers even from IITs rush for IAS stream & not even IES as first preference?

DAYA SAGAR
To be brief a Graduate Engineer through PSC presently enter service (SRO 297 of 14 September 2006) at Grade Level 8-A (8000-275-12950/ 9300-34800 GP 5200/ 50700-160600) as Asstt Engineer where as a KAS (even with a simple graduate degree) enters service at Grade Level- 8 (Jr Scale 7500-12000 / 9300-34800 GP 4800/47600-151100) through PSC in Jr Scale but for a KAS officer Non Functional Grade Promotion Provision is there for rising to Grade level - 13 after 18 years where as for a Asstt Engineer there is no provision for Non Functional Grade Promotion and even through regular promotions one can rise only to the Level 13 as CE and no promotions beyond CE where as Jr KAS officer can rise to Grade Level - 14 without out much problem. Erosion in the status of Gazetted Engineering service cadre which was much above many other gazetted JK services in 1960s well reflects in Table - A referred here in even if progress there in an ideal time frame laid in the service regulation/ recruitment rules (297 of 14 September 2006) what to talk of the way the service matters are being handled on ground for J&K Engineering Services in PWD (R&B)/ PDD/ PWD (MECH)/PWD(Hyd) and like where it has become a routine for promotion of Engineers in Incharge capacity as AE to I/C AEE then I/C to I/C EE then I/C SE then I/CSE to I/C CE and retiring officers as I/C CE with pension pay orders in the grade or AEE or EE (even I/C promotions are not made as per due schedule). Retired engineers have been found running for regularisation of I/C promotions even for 8 to 10 years after retirement or even more. Wide GO No 271 PWD(R&B) of 2021 dated sanction was accorded for placement of two I/C SEs as I/C Chief Engineers in their own pay and grade (how was charge allowance worked out for them could be a ?). In 2024 the administrative departments may try to contest the quotes made here saying that position is not like that now in 2024 (G.O 27 JK(JSD) of 2043 dated 31/01/2024 promoting Mr Tariq Ahmed Dar AEE wef 01-05-2020 and Ashwani Khajuria AEE wef 01-01-2024 as IEs pre revised pay scale of 15600-39100 GP6600 REVISED TO 67770-208700). True after 2018 some activity regarding clearing cases of Retired engineers had

been initiated with the representations even through other sources (including media) and notice must have been taken by some senior officer in Administration and bulk orders in favour of retired PDD engineers were issued in 2022 where after in recent years some cases of I/C promotions of some working Engineers like I/C AEE/ EE /SE have also been regularized in wings like PWD(hyd) but the position as regards regular promotions to AE after 2yrs as AEE, after 8 yrs as EE, 17 yrs as SE and 20 Yrs as CE in regular grade have not started yet. There have been complaints that some officers even after working for 30 years could not get regularized as SE before retirement because they were promoted as EE after 28 years of service or someone could not be regularized as EE even after 20 year service since one was promoted as AEE only after 18 yrs. So much has to be still done for stream lining the service progress of Engineering (Gazetted) cadres in J&K. Not only that in some other J&K departments regular posts/ avenues are there to reach to the levels of L-13A (131100=216600) and L-14 post (equivalent to super time scale of IAS) but not in Engineering services.. A newly recruited IAS officer starts in Junior Time Scale in 1st yr: as trainee in Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, his 2nd year is as probationer in cadre state/region ending with posting at levels like SDO /SDM getting promoted to Senior Time Scale (with two extra increments) just after 4 years (a screening Committee consisting of the Chief Secretary and two officers of at least Super Time Scale level) for rising to levels like Additional DM followed by District Collector; then to Junior Administrative Grade (This grade is non-functional and shall be admissible without any screening, as a matter of course) on completing 9 years of service; followed by Selection Grade on completion of 13 years (level of DM / Special Secretary); after 16 years of service gets in the Super Time Scale worth posting as Secretary / Div commissioner in State; after completion of 25 years gets 1st Above Super Time for posting as Principle Secretary / Additional Secretary GOI and can be Promoted to the Rank of CHIEF SECRETARY (fixed scale) after com-

pletion of 30 years of service and the Screening Committee here too shall consist only of the Chief Secretary concerned, one officer working in the grade in the cadre and another officer of the cadre serving in Government of India in the same grade; then it is Apex Scale Fixed salary Secretaries to GOI level with a minimum experience of 30 years and then to Cabinet Secretary Scale (fixed basic pay). So far the IAS officers have not in general been the victim of irregular / delayed handling of their service related matters like have been the cases with other Gazetted services in erstwhile state of J&K / UT of J&K. At occasions IAS officers still in Level-10/ Level -11 of the Grade Matrix could be found posted as Deputy Commissioner just on length of service basis. That could be answer to those who ask why the IAS officers are mostly found assertive and performing. Where as one would very very remotely see a Chief Engineer heading even a committee constituted to promote Assistant Engineer to the level of AEE. No doubt presently the IIR affairs for the Gazetted Engineering Services are handled by the Administrative departments in J&K which are mostly headed by IAS officer who have well set process for their own timely promotions. Nobody should doubt the capacity and sincerity of IAS officers in general but surely the people working under them for sharing the load have to be in adequate numbers and of adequate status but that is not the case and may be due to this the Administrative Secretary/ Commissioner/ Principal Secretary/ Financial Commissioner who is IAS officer is over loaded. We may find instances where a department is headed by Principal Secretary or Additional Chief Secretary but there is no Commissioner/ Principal Secretary there under in the department. Ofcourse a good number of IAS officers are Engineers (even post graduate engineers) so one should expect that they would not treat the personal affairs of their engineering fraternity family members without intimate compassion. Had the career progress in services like IAS not been that smooth & superior as is in J&K Gazetted Engineering services may be many from Engineering Degree from Government

Engineering Collegess would not have rushed with that much curiosity for appearing in UPSC CSE exam targeting IAS/IPS.

TABLE A Have a view of relative service regulation for the JK Gazetted Engineering Service Engineers over the years				
LEVEL	Pay scale	IAS	KAS SRO 386 01 Dec 2008 SRO 198 of 25 /04/2018.	Gazetted Engg Service SRO 297 of 14-09-2006
LEVEL 8	7500-250-12000 /47600-151100		1 st yr Enter in Jr Scale through PSC Level 8	
Level 8A	8000- 275-12950/ 50700-160600			1 st yr Enter as AE through PSC / Level 8A
Level-9	9300-34800 +GP 5200/50700-160600			
Level 10	New 8000-275-13500 (Group A Entry), /56100-177500	1 st yr Enter through UPSC Level10 Probationer 1		
Level 10A	9000-300-14100/ 56100-177500?			3 rd year AEE L 10A
Level-11	10000-325-15200/ 67700-208700	Fifth Yr Level 11	Time Scale Eligible in 5 th year / or 11 th Yr in L11 Non Functional (NF)	9 th yr Engr Level11
Level-12	12000-375-16500 /78800-209200	10 th yr Jr Adm Grade	Selection Grade Addl Sect I/ or after 4 yrs in Time Scale to L12 (NF)	*18 th yr SE L 12 / L13*
Level 13	14300-400-	14 th Yr	Special Scale Spl Sect to State Govt / A	21 st yr C.E
13	18300/123100 215900	Selection Grade Sect in State	officer with 8 yr service in Time scale eligible for L 13 (NF)	*Presently SE & C E both in Level13
Level 13A	37400-67000 8900/131100 - 216600			
Level-14	18400-22400 /144200-218200	17 th Yr Super Time Scale	Super Time scale . Secretary to State Govt	
Level-15	67000/79000182200-224100	26 th yr Above Super Time Scale Principal Sec		
Level-17	26000 (Fixed) /2,25,000/-	31 st yr Addl C.S Financial		

Not only that in some other J&K departments regular posts/ avenues are there to reach to the levels of L-13A (131100=216600) and L-14 post (equivalent to super time scale of IAS) but not in Engineering services.. A newly recruited IAS officer starts in Junior Time Scale in 1st yr: as trainee in Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, his 2nd year is as probationer in cadre state/region ending with posting at levels like SDO /SDM getting promoted to Senior Time Scale (with two extra increments) just after 4 years (a screening Committee consisting of the Chief Secretary and two officers of at least Super Time Scale level) for rising to levels like Additional DM followed by District Collector; then to Junior Administrative Grade (This grade is non-functional and shall be admissible without any screening, as a matter of course) on completing 9 years of service; followed by Selection Grade on completion of