

CS takes stock of arrangements for 'Kheer Bhawani' mela

STATE TIMES NEWS

SKRINAGAR: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, on Wednesday chaired a meeting of civil administration and police department to take stock of the preparations being made for smooth conduct of annual 'Kheer Bhawani' mela to be observed on 14th of this month at Tulmulla, Ganderbal.

Divisional Commissioners of Jammu and Kashmir, ACS, Jal Shakti; Principal Secretary, Power; ADGP Headquarters; ADGP L&O; ADGP, Commissioner Secretary, Housing; Commissioner Secretary Tourism; Director F&ES, Secretary RDD; IGP Kashmir; Director Tourism, Kashmir; Director Health, Kashmir; Director ULB, Kashmir and representatives from JKRTC, R&B and other departments attended the meeting in person while Deputy



Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo chairing a meeting on Wednesday.

Commissioners and SSPs along with several outstation officers participated online. The Chief Secretary emphasised upon both the Divisional Commissioners and Relief Commissioner to work in close coordination for pleasant experience of the pilgrims expected to through this festival. He asked them to ensure all the arrangements of transportation, accommodation, power, water, sanitation, medical aid and

security are in place.

Dulloo asked for creating adequate amenities for comfortable stay of pilgrims at the shrine and enroute. He directed the district administration to make on spot assessment of the facilities created besides identifying requirement of any additional services.

The Chief Secretary also took note of arrangement of buses for the journey of devotees besides assessing the condition

of road leading to the Shrine, accommodation for night stay and provision of essential supplies to be made for smooth conduct of Mata Kheer Bhawani Mela this year. He asked about desilting of the canal flowing through the temple complex and other cleanliness

measures to be taken there. The Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, gave an overview of the measures taken by his administration, so far. He detailed out the kind of facilities created for transportation and accommodation facilities made at Central University Campus and other nearby places. He also threw light on the traffic plan, medical aid, power, water, sanitation and disaster management provisions.

Besides other departments including Police, H&UDD, RDD, Tourism, Health and Transport informed the meeting about the arrangements being made by them for smooth conduct of this festival.



Workshop on 'Intellectual Property Rights, Entrepreneurship & Startup Ecosystem' held at IIIM

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: BioNEST Bioincubation Centre (IIIM-TBI) under the aegis of CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine, Jammu today organized one day workshop on "Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), Entrepreneurship & Startup Ecosystem" in which 40 students drawn from Law School, University of Jammu and Dogra Law College, Jammu have participated.

Dr. Zabeer Ahmed, Director, CSIR-IIIM, in his presidential address, highlighted the importance of enhancing awareness of IPR & patents among the students. He also spoke on the significance of acquiring patents, copyrights & trademarks by the scientific establishments.

Further, talking about IIIM initiatives, he underscored the significant role of the IIIM BioNEST



Director CSIR-IIIM, Dr. Zabeer Ahmed posing with faculty and students after the workshop.

incubator in creating awareness among the local community in the UT of Jammu & Kashmir via its roadshows, hackathons, city camps, workshops and similar initiatives. Such workshops are pivotal to achieve the goals of Viksit Bharat, he added.

Earlier Dr. Saurabh Saran, Principal Investigator, IIIM-TBI in his welcome address provided an overview of the workshop organized.

He encouraged participants to take maximum

benefit of one day workshop on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), Entrepreneurship and Startup Ecosystem. He said that these workshops also provide a flavour of enthusiasm to young college students and may encourage them to take up IPR & entrepreneurship as a careers.

The program included a technical session where domain experts, Rajesh Gupta, Administrative Officer CSIR-IIIM delivered a talk on Right to

Information, Dr. Kanehrela Prasad Sr. Scientist, CSIR-IIIM detailed presentation on Intellectual Property Rights and Er. Ankush Varma, Coordinator, IIIM-TBI delivered a talk on Entrepreneurship & Startup Ecosystem. The workshop aimed to empower youth with knowledge and resources, contributing to the IPRs and start-up India initiative in the region. The proceeding of the inauguration session was conducted by Er.

Ankush Varma and Dr. Saurabh Saran presented the formal vote of thanks.

Forty students & faculty members from Law School, University of Jammu and Dogra Law College, Jammu participated with huge enthusiasm. Prominent Dr. Bala Thakur, Principal, Dogra Degree College, Dr. Nitin Sharma, Dr. Palvi Mathavan Puri, Dr. Kartika Bakshi, Dr. Afya Malik and Shazia Kousar participated in the workshop.

Pertinently, the one day workshop was conducted under the patronage of Dr. Zabeer Ahmed, Director, CSIR-IIIM & Chairman, BioNEST Bioincubation Centre (IIIM-TBI) and under the overall supervision of Er. Abdul Rahim, Chief Scientist and Vice Chairman, BioNEST Bioincubation Centre (IIIM-TBI).

JU launches plantation drive to enhance biodiversity

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Department of Environmental Sciences, and Green Campus Task Force (GCTF-JU), University of Jammu organized a Plantation Drive in the University Campus to celebrate "World Environment Day 2024".

The purpose of this event was to encourage students' participation in plantation activities in the campus to make them environmentally conscious and responsible. Chief Guest, Prof. Anju Basin, Dean Academic Affairs, JU inaugurated the drive by planting a Mango sapling in the lawns of the Department. She emphasized that such events should be undertaken frequently as it is the duty of every individual to revive the natural processes and ecological relationships that sustain life. "More and more trees should be planted on the campus as they help in temperature and pollution reduction", she added. She also



Prof. Anju Basin, Dean Academic Affairs, JU planting a sapling.

stressed that education is the most important tool to accelerate the ecosystem restoration efforts and we can build a harmonious future when humans and nature thrive together. Among others who planted saplings included Prof. Piyush Malaviya, Head, Department of Environmental Sciences, and Convener, Green Campus Task Force (GCTF-JU), Dr. Deepika Slathia, Member Secretary, GCTF-JU, Dr. Rakesh Kumar Atri, Dr.

Meenakshi Khajuria, Dr. Ranjan Sharma, Dr. Ravinder Kumar and Ms. Rozi, faculty members of the department.

Later, a 'Comprehensive Poster on the Green Initiatives by the JU' was also released in which the university has appealed to other educational institutions including off-site campuses and affiliated colleges in the UT of J&K to undertake similar green initiatives in their respective campuses.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY: Awareness functions, cleanliness drives held across Kashmir

MASROOR AHMAD

GULMARG: To raise awareness about environment and ecology among the masses, various functions were held across Kashmir on the 'World Environment Day'.

Every year, this day is observed as the day dedicated to educate about environment, plant trees and clean surroundings.

First held in 1974, it has been a platform for raising awareness on environmental issues such as human over population, wildlife crime, global warming, marine pollution, and sustainable consumption.

World Environment Day is a global platform for public outreach, with participation from over 143 countries annually. Each year, the programme provides a theme and forum for different non-governmental organisations. This year's theme is, 'Land restoration, desertification and drought resilience'.

In a significant initiative to preserve the natural beauty and cleanliness of world famous destination Gulmarg, a mega cleanliness drive was conducted on Wednesday at the scenic locations of Gulmarg, organised by Department of Forest in collaboration with Gulmarg Development Authority. The drive commenced with signif-



icant participation from both organizations and school students, ponywalas, tourist guides, security forces and police personnel. The Forest Department urged people and tourist to co-operate in efforts to make Gulmarg the World-famous Ski and Gandola destination plastic and polythene free. He said the government has already banned the polythene in Gulmarg, as it is a place of natural beauty so people should follow guidelines.

Officials of the Gulmarg Development Authority appealed to parents and teachers to educate their children and students to try to make these destinations plastic and polythene free whenever they visit a tourist spot. "We are welcoming every visitor but there should be proper guidelines for school children on how

to cooperate with authorities," he said.

While the world is facing global warming and other environmental challenges, Kashmir is also facing severe heat conditions and many glaciers are nearing extinction, so keeping this situation in mind we need to be more careful about the environment, he added.

GDA officials asserted that with the collaboration of Forest Department the initiative focused on ensuring a green, clean and plastic-polythene-free Gulmarg. They emphasized the GDA's commitment to such cleanliness drives, affirming that these efforts will be sustained for the continuous upkeep of Gulmarg. Tourists and locals alike expressed their gratitude for the efforts of the Forest Department. Many highlight-

ed the importance of maintaining cleanliness in these pristine environments and commended the authorities for their proactive measures.

This initiative reflects the ongoing dedication of GDA and Forest Department to promote sustainable tourism in the region, ensuring that Gulmarg remains a beautiful and welcoming destination for all tourists.

"We should take all measures where we can restore the ecosystem so that we have a healthy society and healthy nation."

The officials in their message appealed to the people to maintain a healthy and eco-friendly environment and instructed all the officials that they should take measures to ensure a healthy environment all around.

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In a bid to promote environmental sustainability and contribute to a greener planet, the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu under the visionary leadership of Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu organized a plantation drive on Wednesday marking the celebration of World Environment Day. The event took place across the Jagti and Jammu campuses. Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu in his address, emphasized the significance of such initiatives in combating climate change and preserving biodiversity. He remarked, "At IIM Jammu, we are deeply committed to contributing to the global efforts of environmental conservation. Quality education is incomplete without instilling the values of sustainability and environmental care. Today's event is a testament to our commitment to these values. Today's plantation drive is a step towards creating a sustainable and green future. I applaud the collective efforts of our faculty, staff, and students in this initiative."

Dr. Ashish Kumar, Chairperson, Student Affairs, IIM Jammu, high-



IIM Jammu students planting sapling during plantation drive in the campus.

lighted the role of educational institutions in nurturing environmental consciousness among future leaders. He stated, "Engaging our students in such activities not only sensitizes them to environmental issues but also instills in them a sense of responsibility towards the planet."

The plantation drive was graced by the presence of Dr. Ashish Kumar, Chairperson, Student Affairs, IIM Jammu (Jagti Campus) and Dr. Vaseem Akram, Chairperson, Internal Quality Control Cell, IIM Jammu, (Jagti Campus) Dr. Bijoy Rakshit, Co-Chairperson, Corporate Communication, IIM Jammu (Canal Road City Campus). Their participation underscored the importance of the event and the

Institute's dedication to fostering an eco-friendly campus culture. The initiative saw enthusiastic participation from the IIM Jammu community, including faculty members, officers, staff, and students. This collective effort highlights the Institute's commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable practices.

The event concluded with the plantation of a variety of saplings, symbolizing growth, hope, and a commitment to a sustainable future. The participants expressed their satisfaction and pride in contributing to this noble cause, pledging to continue such efforts in their personal and professional lives.

IIM Jammu remains dedicated to its mission of fostering sustainable develop-

ment and continues to lead by example in promoting environmental awareness and action. The event was coordinated by Student Affairs Office, IIM Jammu.

Power shutdown

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Superintending Engineer (Distribution) JPDCL, O&M Circle Kathua has informed that the power supply to Chanera, Palan, Parnalla, PHE installations of Billawar and adjoining areas will remain affected on June 06 from 5 am to 10 am.

Similarly, the power supply to Vijaypur-3rd, Patti, Dadyal, Nanga, Mahal and its adjoining areas will remain affected on June 06, 08 and 10 from 5 am to 10 am.

Court cannot interfere with administrative decision merely on premise that any other decision would have been fairer, wiser, or more logical especially, when it relates to Excise policy: HC

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court on Wednesday held that the Court cannot interfere with an administrative decision, merely on the premise that any other decision would have been fairer, wiser, or more logical especially, when it relates to the Excise policy. This significant judgment has been passed in bunch of petitions filed by petitioners aggrieved of the order whereby respondent No.2 has arbitrarily withdrawn the bid and Cancelled the auction result with regard to liquor vend situated at Excise Range.

Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal after hearing both the sides observed that in transactions of commercial nature, like in the present case, the

Government/State is at liberty to fix the terms of the bid document or notice inviting tender as they are motivated by commercial considerations, which are beyond the pale of judicial review. Therefore, the challenge made by the petitioners to the insertion of such a clause in the bid document is ill-founded as it is based on commercial considerations and is well within the power of the Government in such like matters. The Court can examine the decision making process and interfere if it is found to be vitiated by the vice of mala fides, unreasonableness and arbitrariness, which is not the case in the present matter.

Importantly, even if a case for interference is made out, the Supreme Court has sounded a caveat that courts should

always keep the larger public interest in mind in order to decide whether an intervention is called for or not. Only when it comes to the conclusion that overwhelming public interest requires interference, the Court should intervene. Public interest, if at all, appears to be in fostering healthy competition amongst the bidders which was the rationale behind the decision of cancelling the auction and not in the cause projected by the petitioners. Thus, the challenge thrown by the petitioners to the order impugned is ill founded and devoid of any merit.

Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal further observed that holistic view of the reply makes it clear that the Government has not sought to supplement existing reasons with completely fresh

reasons. What the Government has mentioned in its reply is nothing but a necessary and logical corollary of poor response and less competition in the bidding process. It only logically follows that once there is poor response and less competition in the bidding process, it would have the propensity of causing loss to the State exchequer. It does not appear to this Court that by taking such a stand, the Government has sought to defend its stand on the basis of completely fresh reasons. In any event, even if it were to be assumed that this constitutes a fresh reason, it would be immaterial as this Court, while adjudicating on the validity of the Governmental action has only based its conclusion on the basis of reasons, explicitly men-

tioned in the order, namely the lack of competition and the poor response to the bids.

Resultantly, the aforesaid submission of the learned counsels for the petitioners does not come to the aid of the petitioners, Court said.

Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal further observed that this Court hereby summarizes its conclusions and findings as follows In view of the exclusive privilege of the Government in sale/manufacture of liquor, the scope of judicial review in administrative decisions concerning same is extremely limited. II. No vested right is accrued to a bidder simply by virtue of the fact that he/she has been declared as the highest bidder provisionally and subject to fulfillment of certain conditions in a given

auction. Bearing in mind the nature of the liquor trade, this Court, being a constitutional court, should be slow in interfering with the executive decisions taken by the State as they are essentially a matter of economic policy in which the Government must be afforded a greater latitude and fair play in the joints. The mere existence of a provision for Minimum Guaranteed Revenue or Minimum Reserve Bid Price in the Excise policy 202425, vide SO 85, does not disentitle the Government from cancelling the auction/re-auctioning on germane considerations having a logical nexus with the policy objectives. The decision to cancel the auction and the subsequent order for re-auctioning cannot be termed as arbitrary, discriminatory, or mala fide so

as to warrant judicial interference. In any event, this Court cannot interfere with an administrative decision, merely on the premise that any other decision would have been fairer, wiser, or more logical especially, when it relates to the Excise policy. The cause projected by the petitioners does not subservise an overwhelming public interest, which must be borne in mind to decide whether judicial intervention is called for or not. The petitioners, being fully aware of the said auction conditions participated in the same without any demur and after having participated in the auction, cannot turn around and challenge or impugn an auction condition unless there is a foundation of manifest arbitrariness or mala fide, which is conspicuously absent in the

instant case. IX. The reasoning provided by the Government for cancelling the auction cannot be termed as unreasonable or arbitrary and, after examining the original record, it appears to be an informed decision based upon germane considerations.

Court further observed that in conclusion, this bunch of writ petitions, which are devoid of any merit, fail and are dismissed along with all connected applications. As a necessary corollary, the interim orders passed by this Court stand vacated in all these petitions. Accordingly, the Government is at liberty to proceed with the re-auction of various liquor vendors, which are subject matter of the instant petitions pertaining to different ranges, in accordance with law.