

EPCH marks presence at Index Fair in Dubai

Indian handicrafts pavilion attracts premium buyers

STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The Index Fair from June 4 to 6, 2024 got underway at Dubai World Trade Centre, United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The EPCH India Pavilion was inaugurated by K. Kalimuthu, Consul Commerce, Consulate General of India, Dubai in the presence of R.K. Verma, Executive Director - EPCH and other member exporters.

This fair offers several opportunities to Indian exporters to display their unparalleled handicrafts products to the premium buyers of Middle East region. Various member exporters from different parts of country are showcasing their exclusive range of products this year informed Rajesh Rawat, Addl. Executive Director - EPCH.

K. Kalimuthu, Consul Commerce, Consulate General of India, Dubai while inaugu-



EPCH India Pavilion being inaugurated by K. Kalimuthu, Consul Commerce, Consulate General of India, Dubai in the presence of R. K. Verma, Executive Director at Index Fair, Dubai.

rating appreciated the continuous efforts of the Council for bringing Indian Handicrafts to the world markets and promotion of handicrafts exports from the country. The CGI interacted with Indian exhibitors and offered necessary support for business promotion in UAE. Dileep Baid, Chairman

EPCH shared that the Council regularly exhibits at Index Fair, Dubai, UAE which provides insight into the UAE's market's versatility. Index Dubai is the West Asia & North Africa's (WANA's) largest trade fair for design led products for home and hotels. EPCH has organised this participation at Index

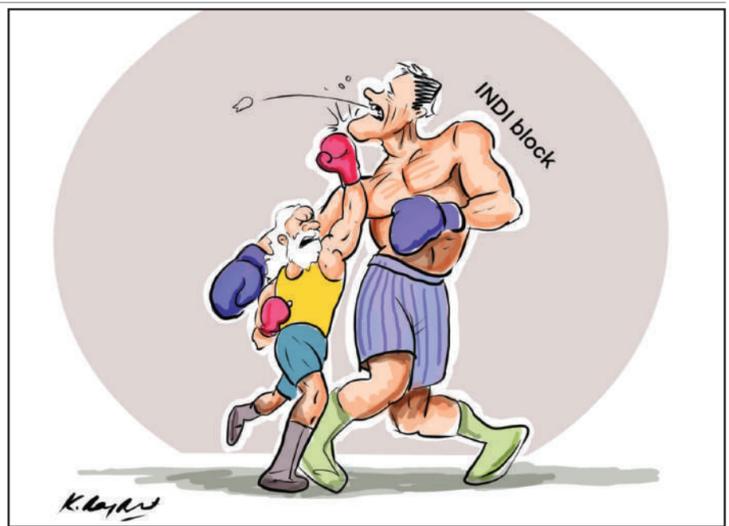
fair for the handicrafts exporters with the support of Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Govt. of India.

R. K. Verma, Executive Director - EPCH said exhibitors from Ahmedabad, Karur, Bangalore, Chennai, Panipat, Saharanpur, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Moradabad and Delhi NCR are exhibiting in EPCH India pavilion and showcasing their exclusive home décor, lifestyle, home textiles, furniture and accessories to the premium buyers at the fair.

Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts is a nodal organisation for promotion of exports of handicrafts from the

country and create brand image of magic of the gifted hands of millions of artisans and craftspersons engaged in production of home, lifestyle, textiles, furniture and fashion jewellery & accessories products in different craft clusters of the country.

The Handicrafts exports during the year 2023-24 was Rs. 32,759 Crores and US \$ 3,956 Million. The exports of handicrafts to UAE during the year 2023-24 was Rs. 2049 Crores (US \$ 247 Million) registering a growth of 15.91% in rupee term and 12.60% in dollar term over the previous year, informed R. K. Verma, Executive Director - EPCH.



IEI Jammu Centre celebrates World Environment Day

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Institution of Engineers (India), Jammu Centre celebrated the World Environment Day with the theme "Land Restoration, Desertification and Drought Resilience".

The event was attended by Engineers from various Departments, Organizations and Senior Engineers along with Members of the Committee of IEI, Jammu Local Centre. The day is celebrated every year on 5th June every year since 1973 to mark the importance of nature and the environment and it also gives out a message to the global population that nature should not be undervalued and it should not be taken for granted at any cost. World Environment Day is the biggest international day for the environment. On this occasion, Lal Chand, IFS



Lal Chand, IFS (Retd. PCCF) J&K and others at a programme.

(Retd. PCCF) J&K and chairman Environment Impact Assessment Authority, (GOI) was the Chief Guest, whereas Prof. (Dr.) Bhawna Sharma, Chairman, IEI, Jammu Centre presided over the function, Er. Sachin Tickoo, Honorary Secretary, IEI Jammu were among distinguished audience in attendance.

Prof. Dr. Bhawna Sharma, PTE in her Welcome Address introduced the day's theme to the

audience. She emphasized the importance of the day, reminding everyone of collective responsibility to safeguard our planet. She highlighted critical issues such as land degradation, desertification, and the increasing frequency and severity of droughts, which not only threaten our environment but also the very fabric of our societies.

These challenges affect food security, water availability, and the livelihoods of

millions worldwide. Dr. Sharma advocated for the development of robust frameworks that integrate science, technology, and policy to ensure a sustainable and resilient future for all.

Lal Chand in his address welcomed the initiatives of Institution of Engineers (India), Jammu Local Centre for celebrating this day and creating awareness among masses on the sensitivity towards environment protection. He urged the populace of Jammu and

Kashmir to conserve environment and take measures urgently to safeguard the interest of our and future generations.

During the seminar, Er. B. L. Rawal, MIE; Er. Vijay Kumar Sharma, MIE; Er. Joy Ganjoo, AM Technologist; & Er. Akash Dasgotra, AMIE also presented their papers on the theme of the World Environment Day.

Er. Sachin Tickoo, MIE, Honorary Secretary conducted the proceedings of the event, while speaking on the occasion he said we cannot turn back time, but we can grow forest, revive water bodies, and bring back soils. We are the generation that has to make peace with land. He further presented the vote of thanks to the gathering and media personnel for active participation.

GMC Jammu becomes 1st J&K college to start MD Biochemistry

NMC grants permission of enhancement of MD seats of Pediatrics & Medicine

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Administrative Secretary Health & Medical Education Dr. Syed Abid Rashid shared that Government Medical College (GMC), Jammu has achieved another milestone by starting MD Biochemistry course from current session (2024).

"National Medical Council has allotted 4 MD seats of Biochemistry to GMC Jammu. This is for the first time in UT of Jammu & Kashmir that MD course in Biochemistry is being started in any Govt institution, as till now no Government institution is imparting this degree in J&K," Dr. Syed Abid Rashid said. Dr. Rachna Sabharwal Prof & Head of Biochemistry had spearheaded the efforts to start MD Biochemistry ever since she took over as HOD Biochemistry in Aug 2023. She had defined this as first goal for Biochemistry Department on the very first day she took over as HOD.

Under the leadership of Dr. Ashutosh Gupta as Principal & Dean, academic section of GMC Jammu had applied to National Medical Commission (NMC) for starting MD Biochemistry Course and for Enhancement of MD seats in Medicine and Pediatrics Departments.

Medical Assessment & Rating Board (MARB) of NMC had found the applications of GMC Jammu in order and now there-

fore, as per the notification received from National Medical Commission (NMC) dated June 3, 2024, a total of 16 seats have been allotted to GMC Jammu. With this the total number of Post-Graduate MD/MS seats in GMC Jammu has been enhanced from 198 to 214.

With the untiring efforts and hard work of Prof & Head Department of Pediatrics Dr. Ghanshyam Saini & other Faculty of Pediatrics, National Medical Commission has given permission to enhance 6 more MD seats in the Department of Pediatrics GMC Jammu from

current session. Similarly with the efforts and hard work of Prof & Head Department of Medicine Dr. Fayaz Wani & other Faculty of Medicine, National Medical Commission has given permission to enhance 6 more MD seats in the Department of Medicine GMC Jammu from current session.

Heads of Department of Pediatrics, Medicine & Biochemistry appreciated the hard work, efforts and support provided by Dr. Ashutosh Gupta, Principal & Dean, Govt Medical College, Jammu in this regard.

RDD organizes capacity building training workshop on VRPR, GPDP

STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD) and Panchayati Raj, Dr. Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, on Thursday had an interactive session with Self Help Group (SHGs) and other participants of two day UT level capacity building and training workshop on Village Poverty Reduction Plan (VPRP) and Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) at TRC Srinagar.

Dr. Shahid, while interacting with the participants, emphasized the importance of understanding their duties besides learning and proper training from master trainers. He urged upon the SHGs and other par-



Secretary RDD&PR, Dr. Shahid Iqbal Choudhary during interactive session with Self Help Groups.

ticipants to actively take part in formulation of Gram Panchayat Development Plan and help in poverty reduction in their areas.

Dr. Shahid highlighted that the main aim of these capacity building programs is to train those who work on ground and can contribute towards betterment of the department and the

villages as well. He underscored the necessity for field functionaries to actively participate and engage in the training programs to effectively contribute towards development and betterment of their respective villages and departments.

Earlier, the RDD conducted a two day UT level capacity building and training workshop

focused on master trainers for the Village Poverty Reduction Plan (VPRP) and Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP). The workshop aimed to equip participants with essential skills and knowledge for effective implementation of these plans at various levels.

The workshop trained over 200 participants including SHG members, cluster coordinators, account assistants, Panchayat secretaries, NRLM staff, CIS and data operators who have now become master trainers. The session was conducted by Resource Person, Shibabtra Kar besides thematic experts from Rural Development Department and

Panchayati Raj. During the workshop, hands-on training on VPRP components, steps and process cycles including preparation of entitlement plans, livelihood plans, social development plans and public goods, services and resource development plans was imparted to the participants.

In addition to the structured sessions, the workshop featured group presentations and a feedback and open house session, allowing the participants to share insights and discuss challenges. The training was designed to orient the participants on the concept and importance of VPRP and GPDP convergence, familiarize

them with the process and necessary components of VPRP and provide knowledge required to prepare the VPRP plan. The target groups for this initiative included PRI functionaries, Gram Panchayat elected representatives and officials, other line departments' field-level officials and Community Based Organizations (CBOs).

The workshop employed interactive methods such as lectures, brainstorming sessions, subgroup discussions, guided reading, case studies, group activities and multimedia presentations to engage the participants effectively. A significant component of

the training was focused on Self Help Groups (SHGs), a pivotal initiative aimed at empowering grassroots organizations and fostering community led development in rural areas.

The training manual provided to SHG members is intended to equip them with essential skills in participatory planning and governance. This enabled the SHG members to actively formulate and implement development plans at the Gram Panchayat level. The participants learned about how to conduct needs assessments, prioritize development goals, and advocate for community interests within the framework of local governance structures.

J&K Bank donates four Electric Vehicles to AIIMS Jammu

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In a significant move towards fostering an eco-conscious society, J&K Bank has donated four electric vehicles to AIIMS Jammu under the initiative "Parikrama Seva-AIIMS Jammu."

The handover ceremony took place on Thursday in the presence of dignitaries including the President-AIIMS Jammu, Prof (Dr) YK Gupta, Executive Director and CEO, Prof (Dr) Shakti Kumar Gupta, all Deans, Medical Superintendent and Associate Deans.

The presence of the President, AIIMS Jammu, highlighted the importance of this occasion, underscor-



GM J&K Bank, Sunit Kumar Gupta handing over symbolic key of four electric vehicles to AIIMS Jammu officials.

ing the institution's commitment to sustainability and innovation.

This initiative marks a notable milestone as the first of its kind at Jammu, reflecting the institution's dedication to adopting green practices. The electric vehicles, equipped with

advanced features for efficient performance, will significantly enhance the internal mobility for patients, attendants, and staff, ensuring efficient and eco-friendly transportation within the premises. This effort aligns with

AIIMS Jammu's broader mission of reducing its carbon footprint and promoting environmental sustainability.

The "Parikrama Seva - AIIMS Jammu" initiative aims to streamline transportation within the hospital, making it easier and more comfortable for

patients and their attendants to navigate the facility. Additionally, the staff will benefit from quicker and more efficient movement across the hospital grounds, thereby improving overall operational efficiency.

AIIMS Jammu has been a pioneer in green initiatives

right from its inception, earning a GRIHA 4-star rating for its sustainable design and construction. This accolade underscores the institution's long-standing commitment to environmental stewardship and its proactive approach to integrating green solutions in healthcare.

In his address, the President of AIIMS Jammu, Prof (Dr) YK Gupta, emphasized the institution's on-going commitment to environmental sustainability and its proactive approach to integrating green solutions in healthcare.

AIIMS Jammu has been a pioneer in green initiatives

Jammu plans to expand this fleet of electric vehicles in response to the growing patient load, ensuring that the benefits of this green initiative continue to reach more individuals.

The founder Executive Director of AIIMS Jammu, Prof (Dr) Shakti Kumar Gupta, also shared his thoughts on this momentous occasion, stating, "This generous donation by J&K Bank is a significant step towards our vision of a green and sustainable healthcare environment. 'Parikrama Seva' will not only enhance the convenience for our patients and staff but also set a benchmark for other institutions to follow."

Sunit Kumar Gupta,

General Manager from J&K Bank remarked, "We are proud to support AIIMS Jammu in their mission towards sustainability. This donation is part of our ongoing commitment to community development and environmental responsibility."

This donation is a testament to the collaborative efforts between J&K Bank and AIIMS Jammu, showcasing a shared vision of a greener and healthier future. The initiative not only supports eco-friendly transportation but also sets a precedent for other institutions to follow, reinforcing the importance of sustainable practices in the healthcare sector.

Why revenue against J&K State Lands (Vesting of Ownership to Occupants) Act of 2001 has been Low? How fair was it to name the "Roshni Act 2001" as amended upto 2007 a Rs 25000 Cr Scam? Not fair to fix Low revenue recovery in the name of bad intentions of then Cabinet/ Legislators /all Revenue Officers

DAYA SAGAR

During the times of PDP-Congress Government J&K Assembly passed the amendment to The Jammu and Kashmir State Lands (Vesting of Ownership to the Occupants) Act of 2001 after 2004 amendment was once again amended on February 9th, 2007 observing that Bill will provide free of cost ownership of 16.6 lakh kanals (benefitting 19 lakh permanent resident of J&K holding unauthorized possession of state lands and doing cultivation there on) to farmers as agricultural land with the condition that land will not be allowed to be changed. It was also provided in the Act that rules will be made by government and rules were not required to be approved by the legislature reference of which was also made in the CAG report on J&K for period ending 31 Mar 2013 para 2.7.2.1 on

page 38 . The Jammu and Kashmir State Lands (Vesting of Ownership to the Occupants) Act of 2001 as amended on February 9th, 2007 had come under more controversies after a CAG report on J&K was tabled in the Legislature in march 2014 .

When the said act was passed by Legislature in 2002 the government had set the objective for generation of revenue out of grant of ownership rights of encroached state lands estimated around 20Lakh Kanal (CAG on J&K report for period ending 31 Mar 2013 in para 2.7 on page 38 says Government had estimated, Nov 2006, estimated total state land was 12503973 Kanals of which 2064972 kanals, estimated value Rs.25448Cr) was under encroachment) for use



A Look through the Mist PART VI

changed the end objective in a way more as 'welfare' of the rural population where it was expected by government that large mass (say 85 percent) out of app 20 Lakh Kanal of the encroached lands was under agriculture use, average land per capita may be just one Kanal or so, which will be given for agriculture at zero cost with the condition that in case any time land use is changed the owner will have to pay the market price. So the revenue estimated in 2006 was surely to be reduced drastically in 2007 to as low as less than max Rs. 4000 - 5000Cr only and the Permanent Residents of J&K to be benefitted included thousands of com-

moners and only a influential politicians/ local people/ bureaucrats.

Accountant General Audit (PAG) J&K Subhash Chander Pandey had told media on 8th March 2014 that the 'Roshni Act 2001' was amended in 2004 and a clause, which had maintained that the land was not allotted to those who have encroached from 1990, was deleted and benefit of this amendment could be taken by law knowing people and 'insiders' and it lead to more encroachment on the land. Yes The cutoff date for encroachment had been changed from 1990 to 2004. The audit had expressed serious concern for the low generation of the revenue in comparison to what was targeted in 2001, No doubt the revenue generated upto 2013 was much less as compared to what was targeted in 2001-02 (Rs.25000 Cr. The Audit had ignored the facts like (i) the objective had

been changed by the government /legislature in 2007 more as something like 'land to tiller' there by the total expected revenue would have fallen to around Rs.4000 Cr (ii) the cases for grant of ownership had been upto 2013 only for around 16 to 17 percent of the estimated encroached state lands and over 97.7 percent of which was given at zero cost (3.4 Lakh Kanal out of 3.48 Lakh Kanal (iii) The 0.8 Lakh Kanal of non agri land included even the lands given of long lease like 40/50 yr residential/ other lease in 1950s/1960s and even some beneficiaries had represented against the price demanded for converting the lease to ownership (the Audit report in Table 2.7.1 page 48 mentions that average rate of land per kanal fixed by committees in Lakhs per kanal has been Rs.48.86 per kanal on State basis, Rs.56-09 Lakh per kanal in Jammu District and Rs.57-76 Lakh

Per kanal in Srinagar) in comparison to price being charged in 2001/2007 by JK Housing Board for giving freehold rights to 20 yr housing lease holders or extension of lease. (iv) Similarly though the Audit had said that with change of cutoff date more lands could have been encroached but Audit had not particularly pointed in the report that how much land had been given ownership rights that had been shown by Revenue department encroached from 1990 to 2004.(v) Further since more land (almost all) was given as Agri land free of cost in rural areas there could be cases for wrong verification of title so need was more for test check audit for Agri Lands but Audit had only gone for particular test check on non Agri lands . To be continued, (The writer is Sr Journalist, social activist and analyst J&K affairs).