

## !! Continuations from Page 1 !!

### India showed its...

and referred to images social media of the Mother India sending its Rakhi in the form of Chandrayaan-3 and the Moon embracing it.

India has become the first country to land its mission on the "dark" zone - the south pole of the Moon - he said.

"Wherever you may be, your hearts beat for India," he said, adding the Indian community mixes with local populations in different countries like sugar with milk and contribute productively.

The Indian economy, he asserted, is going from strength to strength with top global bodies such as the World Bank and the IMF praising it. Leading companies are vying with each other to invest in India, he said, asserting that the country's role is changing fast in the post-COVID-19 world order.

The prime minister invoked ancient ties between the civilisations of India and Greece and praised the role of Sikh gurus in strengthening their relations.

His government had worked with dedication in commemorating events related to Sikhs, he added. Guru Nanak had visited many places in Greece, fostering his message of harmony and brotherhood.

Modi said his birthplace, Vadnagar in Gujarat, as well as his Lok Sabha constituency, Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, have been vibrant since ancient times like Athens.

Noting that more than 13.5 crore people have been lifted out of poverty under his government, he said that with growing size of the country's economy, the income of people are also rising, leading to more investment from them.

India has prioritised the safety of its citizens during different crises, be it the Russia-Ukraine conflict or the strife in Afghanistan, he said.

The Indian government also brought back Sikh 'sarop' (physical copies of Sri Guru Granth Sahib) from Afghanistan with full respect, he added.

Promoting tourism in India, Modi said the way Indians visit Greece, Greeks would soon start travelling to India to witness its rich heritage and bio-diversity.

He asked the Indian diaspora members to tell their friends in Greece about various attractions in India like the country having over eight per cent of global bio-diversity and 75 per cent of tiger population despite having only 2.5 per cent of the landmass, he said. "Today's India is celebrating its heritage and also linking it with development," he said.

### Govt keen to...

the progress made by Techno and Envil, the two certified companies responsible for the installations.

Clarifying the reasons for occasional high bills, he clarified that any discrepancies in bills were due to past pending amounts and he assured the public that the new system's bill cycle has been rectified.

"A dedicated grievance redressal cell has also been established, with an impressive 90 per cent complaint resolution rate. Additionally, flexibility has been introduced in Smart Meter installation heights, making it possible to install them on the wall of consumers if suitable conditions are met", he explained.

It was informed that a committee headed by Additional Deputy Commissioner Jammu consisting of Officials from Revenue Department, volunteers from Red Cross Society, Civil Society has also been constituted to receive grievances and redress the same at the earliest.

Responding to the issue of prepaid meters, the Div Com clarified that in the phase 1st only Smart meters would install. Prepaid meters are not yet started.

"To facilitate a seamless and transparent installation process, the JPDCL officials will accompany the vendors at the time of meter installation to dispel doubts of consumers", Div Com said.

Managing Director JPDCL, Shivanant Tayal, also cleared the queries raised by the media persons.

The ADGP briefed the media about the concerns related to Toll Plaza. He highlighted the proactive approach of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, who engaged with the Government of India to address grievances. As a result of these efforts, a team from the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) is set to visit the affected areas within the next two days.

Divisional Commissioner elaborated on the Toll Plaza matter, revealing that Chief Secretary-led discussions with NHAI officials has resulted in swift actions.

The Divisional Commissioner expressed confidence that the upcoming NHAI team visit, accompanied by local officials, will assess the condition of the road, will provide valuable insights and solutions.

### Detained YRS activists...

said that a high-level meeting was conducted over the issue of the toll plaza. "All grievances which came up with LG were taken with the Centre for resolution. A team of NHAI will come here and a ground visit will be conducted to examine all the issues", he said.

On the detention of the YRS activists, Singh said that some people have been detained for "breach of peace" and anybody else doing the same will be sternly dealt with. The ADGP said that the protesters would be released once any prominent person comes forward to provide a guarantee in a bid to release them. "They will be released the moment someone takes the guarantee," he said.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Jammu (CCCIJ) on Thursday gave a call for a bandh on August 26 to protest against the installation of smart meters in the city. Regarding Saturday's strike, the ADGP said all issues have been addressed, adding, "We will request them to call off the bandh as all issues have been resolved", he said.

### SC seeks replies...

for transgender people in government employment and education, the bench initially told him "Why don't you move the high court? Why does everybody come under (Article) 32? You move the high court."

The lawyer then told the bench he has moved the apex court since all states have been made parties to the petition, following which the court relented and issued notices. Article 32 of the Constitution empowers Indian citizens to move the apex court directly for enforcement of their fundamental rights through appropriate proceedings.

### CJI declares Sep...

8 as a holiday for the top court considering the office memorandum of August 24 issued by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions.

According to an order issued by the Personnel Ministry on Thursday, all central government offices in the national capital will be closed from September 8 to 10 in view of the G20 summit.

"Invoking the provision of sub-rule (3) of Rule 4 of Order II of the Supreme Court Rules, 2013, the Chief Justice of India has declared September 8, 2023 as holiday for the Supreme Court of India and its registry and September 9, 2023 as holiday for the registry of the Supreme Court considering the OM issued by the Government of India, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions (DoP&T)," read the notification issued by the apex court.

The order issued by the Personnel Ministry on Thursday said, "Recognising the magnitude of this event and the substantial logistical arrangements involved, it has been decided to keep the central government offices located in Delhi closed from September 8, 2023, to September 10, 2023, on the occasion of G20 summit to be held in Delhi." The summit will be attended by a number of heads of state and governments and heads of international organisations, it had added.

### JDA issues fresh...

same had already been constructed prior to coming into force of Jammu Master Plan, 2032 notified vide SRO-90 of 2017 dated March 3, 2017.

On the other hand, Advocate Anchit H. Sharma appearing for JDA vehemently argued that appellant Mamta Singh constructed the building without seeking any permission from JDA which is in contravention of building bye-Laws and Jammu Master Plan 2032. Advocate Sharma further submitted that area in question is a Green Zone and as such the violation is 'major' in nature and the appeal filed by Mamta Singh is not maintainable.

After considering the heated arguments from both the sides, the J&K Special Tribunal directed the appellant Mamta Singh to produce the record in support of her claim alongwith geo-tagged photographs of construction in question by or before the next date of hearing.

The Special Tribunal in the meanwhile directed the parties to maintain status quo on spot till the next date of hearing on October 17, 2023.

It may be recalled that the alleged controversial unauthorized construction of a palatial residential house at Village Ban (Nagrota) was exposed through RTI by a whistleblower Advocate Muzzaffar Ali Shah as in response to his RTI Application, the JDA admitted that then Khilafwarzi Officer had reported the alleged illegal construction but action was not taken by the Senior Officers of the JDA.

The JDA on July 28, 2023 issued a fresh demolition notice to Mamta Singh wife of Dr. Nirmal Singh as earlier demolition notice dated November 8, 2021 had been set aside on technical grounds by the J&K Special Tribunal with a liberty to JDA to proceed afresh in the matter in accordance with law.

## Jammu Bar, other...

against the toll collection at Sarore Toll Plaza and the installation of smart meters.

Rattan Lal Gupta, Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC) Provincial President Jammu along with Abdul Gani Malik former Minister and Zone President

Udhampur Reasi, Surinder Choudhary Ex-MLC, Abdul Gani Teli Chairman OBC Cell, Vijay Lochan SC Cell, Zeeshan Rana and Th Yashu Vardhan Singh, Additional Spokesperson JKNC unanimously decided to extend their full support to the CCI Jammu.

Rattan Lal said that the CCI Jammu has been protesting in support of their genuine demands and he urged the LG Govt to give favorable consideration to their demands and be accepted at the earliest without further delay.

Congress announced to support tomorrow's bandh call to seek unconditional release of detained YRS leaders, abolishing of Sarore toll plaza, besides on the issue of smart meters and property tax. This was announced on behalf of the party by JKPC Chief Spokesperson Ravinder Sharma in a press briefing at party HQ in the afternoon.

Extending whole hearted support to the Bandh call Ravinder Sharma termed the arrest and detention of Youth leaders as illegal and arbitrary reflecting the hostile attitude of the LG administration towards the people's protests on genuine issues.

He said the Congress is continuously protesting on these issues but now it has become a "Jan Andolan" and it should culminate into withdrawal of frivolous cases and unconditional release of all detained leaders, abolishing of toll plaza at Sarore, and withdrawal of orders of installation of smart meters and property tax.

The party appealed to the general public to fully support the bandh call and further strengthen the Jan Andolan, till all these genuine demands of public general are conceded.

Expressing anger over the adamant attitude adopted by the BJP-controlled administration to solve pressing issues like illegal collection of toll and installation of pre-paid electric smart meters, the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) supported the bandh call given by Chamber of Commerce and Industries (CCI) on Saturday.

"We extended our full support to the CCI call of Jammu bandh on Saturday. PDP workers would take out peaceful demonstration across the Jammu region against anti-people policies of the BJP-controlled administration", spokesperson of PDP Varinder Singh Sonu said while addressing a press conference at Jammu.

J&K High Court Bar Association (JKHCBA) Jammu also extended support to Jammu Bandh call of CCI.

Declaring its support, J&K High Court Bar Association, Jammu President Sr. Advocate Vikram Sharma, in a press conference, said that the association is backing a Bandh scheduled for August 26, in response to escalating concerns surrounding the Sarore Toll Plaza and Smart Meters. Vikram Sharma called on the public and civil society to strengthen the Bandh's impact by participating wholeheartedly. he also urged government for early resolution of grievances of civil society with respect to Sarore Toll Plaza and smart electric meters and also sought release of detained civil society members.

Various Sikh Organizations of J&K with one voice under the Chairmanship of Mohinder Singh Chief Organizer Bhai Kanahiya Nishkam Sewa Society J&K and Ex-member DGPC Jammu decided to support the Jammu Bandh call on 26th August to strengthen the voice of people and participate the protest demonstration against the 'callous attitude' of the central government as well as UT administration.

Kashmiri Pandit Sabha Ambphalla Jammu unanimously decided to extend full support to the Bandh call given by the CCI which has already been endorsed by the Bar association Jammu and other civil society organizations.

Dogra Sadar Sabha (DSS), Jammu and Kashmir, Jammu extended full support to the call for Jammu Bandh on August 26 given by the different organizations of Jammu, in solidarity with Yuva Rajput Sabha in particular and other people of Jammu region in general against the irrational and illegal collection of Toll Tax at Sarore Toll Plaza, despite of the claim by the Union Home Minister in Parliament and assurance by the UT government and the Lt Governor that the Toll Plaza will not be operationalised.

Jammu Province Peoples Forum (JPPF) an amalgam of various social commercial and other organizations in its recent meeting held unanimously decided to extend its support in favour of Jammu Bandh call given by different organizations.

M.S Katoch, Working President, said that in continuation to the conference held couple of days back regarding illegal Sarore Toll Plaza and removal of the same with immediate effect but nothing as of is done by the government so far.

### DPAP to ensure...

ignoring Kishtwar's remotest areas, the former Chief Minister assured people that two more blocks and higher secondary schools for Deharna, Changer, Gumri would be sanctioned by the DPAP government if elected to power.

"The valleys of Marwah and Warwan stand testimony to the majestic beauty, which remains untapped and If elected the DPAP government would create jobs for unemployed youth by promoting tourism here and the tunnels would ensure round the clock connectivity with Kashmir from where tourists could flock these areas," said Ghulam Nabi Azad.

He also promised to conduct special police recruitment drive for youth of Marwah and Warwan.

Expressing surprise that even in the 21st century, the people of Marwah, Warwan and other far-flung areas live without electricity, mobile connectivity, no roads and bridges, Azad criticised successive governments for ignoring remote villages of Kishtwar where development remains on paper only.

"During my three-day tour I assessed and experienced myself your problems of no electricity, zero mobile connectivity and absolutely poor road infrastructure which pains me most as these areas have been totally left to fend for themselves over the years," Azad said amidst applause from the residents who gathered in large number to listen to his speech.

The residents of Sukhnai in Warwan recalled his efforts as Rajya Sabha MP in providing MPLAD assistance to 120 fire affected families in 2016 when the entire village was engulfed in devastating fire.

Chairman DPAP was accompanied by Vice-Chairman G M Saroori, General Secretary Chaudary Haroon Khatana, Chief Spokesperson Salman Nizami, Provincial General secretary Shafiq Shabnam, District President Shabir Lone, Spokesperson Sharif Saroori, Block President Marwah Ghulam Mohd Wani, Block President Warwan Gh Rasool Wani and other leaders during his three-day tour of distant Marwah and Warwan areas of Kishtwar district.

### PCI extends entry...

the applicants who have already submitted their entries need not apply again. It adds that intending applicants may refer the Council's website [www.presscouncil.nic.in](http://www.presscouncil.nic.in) for modalities and rules (including entry form).

### CS holds deliberations...

Chief Secretary said that HMVs lower than 3-axes should not be halted anywhere during its travel on the road. He asked for keeping an eye on chronically slow moving vehicles and enquire from each of them about the reasons behind the same. He also advised for penalizing those erratically moving vehicles under law causing inconvenience to others traveling on this road.

Dr Mehta impressed upon the concerned highway authorities along with the Deputy Commissioners to designate no halt zones in their respective jurisdictions and strictly adhere to same under all circumstances. He asked them to take measures for improvement of the road surface near the slide-prone stretches at Dalvas, Mehad, Cafeteria Morh and Sher-Bibi. He further instructed for designating the halting areas for trucks especially in the Ramban District where the widening of road is still in progress.

The Chief Secretary insisted on having better coordination between the traffic and District police. He told them to provide the best gear to the traffic personnel manning the traffic on these stretches where work is going on. He asked for putting extra men into service for effective monitoring and management of the traffic plying on the highway.

Regarding the movement of fruit trucks from valley the Chief Secretary stressed on taking onboard the Fruit Associations while devising the traffic plan. He asked for marking the fruit laden trucks with specially designed stickers for their identification and giving unhindered access to reach the Mandis outside. He directed the Deputy Commissioners of valley to establish District Control Rooms in their offices for giving real time updates to the fruit growers about the road and other issues.

While making his remarks the ACS, Home, RK Goyal stressed on finding out



JKPC Chief Spokesperson Ravinder Sharma addressing media.

ground realities which are hindering the movement of HMVs in certain portions. He also told them to utilize the alternate assets like Mughal Road and Jawahar tunnel optimally to reduce congestion of traffic on NH-44. He also asked for enhancing the level of enforcement especially on the critical stretches of the road.

The Principal Secretary, PWD, Shailendra Kumar observed that efforts should be made by the concerned to reduce the gap between minimum and maximum time taken by the vehicles to cross the Chenani-Banihal stretch. He also advised for making vehicles to move continuously without any halts and use of lean window (between 1:00 am to 5:00 am) optimally by diverting most of the heavy vehicles to cross the 2-lane stretch during the underutilized time period.

In his presentation the IG Traffic, Bhim Sen Tuti highlighted the pattern of traffic on the highway through various studies and algorithms. He presented the day wise and seasonal behavior of traffic along with the analysis of time taken by each class and size of vehicle. He also dwelt upon the causal analysis of each aspect of this traffic behavior and put forth certain remedial measures also.

The meeting discussed about Passenger Car Unit (PCU) analysis of traffic on this road besides hourly and daily rush of traffic using google data of previous years also. The meeting also took note of the data of vehicles traversing the Navyug and Chenani-Nashri Tunnels besides examining speed of vehicles throughout their journey between them.

It was inferred that by taking measures like enhancing the time window for plying of heavy vehicles (above 4-axle) during night and letting the rest of the traffic to move continuously would greatly reduce their travel time. It was also enjoined that by dedicating the infrastructure projects like 2nd tubes of Kunfer tunnel, Chanderkot tunnel and Ramban flyover by the month of September would bring huge respite to all the travelers in the days to come.

### SIA Jammu arrests...

ongoing at SIA Jammu, so also aspects of amassing disproportionate wealth in short periods of time as is seen in the instant case is being investigated.

Team of SIA involved in the arrest - Rafiq Manhas DySP, Insp Lakhvir, Insp Vinod, Insp Anil Sharma, HC Ilyas and Vikas Razdan assisted by other staff of SIA, Jammu.

### Congress leader Sonia...

for a brief interaction with the people.

Rahul reached Ladakh on August 17, his first visit to the region since it was granted UT status after being carved out from Jammu and Kashmir in August 2019. The erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir was also turned into a Union Territory with its special status under Article 370 revoked.

Over the past one week, Rahul has gone round almost all famous places including Pangong lake, Nubra valley, Khardungla top, Lamayuru and Zaskar on his motorcycle before reaching Kargil on Thursday.

Another Congress leader said Rahul will be reaching Sonamarg in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district from Kargil in the afternoon before moving to Srinagar where he will be staying for two nights at a houseboat and a hotel.

## Congress leaders protest outside Kathua Jail, demand release of detained YRS members

#### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KATHUA: A deputation of congress leaders from Jammu including Pranav Shagotra, Jatin K Raina, Th Hoshiar Singh, Rajan Sharma, Anoop Gupta, Ricky Dalotra, Atul Sharma, Vijay Shashtri, Ankit Sood along with other members were on Friday restrained by police from meeting the detained members of Yuva Rajput Sabha in Kathua jail. Accompanied by Kathua congress leaders Naresh Sharma, Pankaj Sharma, Praveesh Sharma, K B Jasrotia, Nikhil Sharma, and Jeevan Kumar sought their unconditional release. The massive protest in support of the detained leaders demanded their immediate unconditional release, abolishing of Sarore toll plaza and raised strong slogans against BJP, accusing it of cheating the common people through toll tax and multiple other taxes like property tax, smart meters etc. "The government is crushing the voice of common people



Congress leaders staging protest at Kathua.

for every genuine cause as the BJP has utterly failed to protect the rights & interests of the common, especially youth who are facing harassment at their hands' protesters said adding that Administration is ignoring genuine demands of the Jammu people and said that the people would not accept the authoritarian strategy of the government. Charging tax on a dilapidated road from Jammu to Kathua, which distance is covered in three & half hours due to the existing situation.

## SC directs ASG to file affidavit regarding progress so far as appointments of CAT members are concerned

#### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A Bench of Supreme Court Comprising Justice Sanjay Kishan Koul and Justice Sudhanshu Dulia while hearing a petition filed by Advocate Achal Sharma regarding appointment of CAT members in J&K, directed ASG to file an affidavit in respect of the aforesaid case as also the progress so far as the appointments are concerned.

Court further directed the J&K Govt to file an affidavit insofar as the location of the requisite spaces for housing the two Tribunals are concerned.

When this petition came up for hearing, Supreme Court observed that Additional Solicitor General had produced the copies of records to submit that the sanctioned strength of the Members of the CAT across the country is 70, consisting of 35 Judicial Members and 35 Administrative Members.

At present, the occupation position is 23 and 22 respectively, including extensions granted and the vacant positions thus, across the country is 12 judicial Members and 13 administrative members. In the Central Administrative Tribunal, Jammu Bench the strength is of two each while one position is vacant for the Judicial Member and in Srinagar also it is an identical position.

However, the figures would be deceptive as it is also stated that the matters are being attended to virtually from other Benches except for one person physically being there in each of the two Tribunals.

It is further stated that insofar as the status of filling up of existing expected vacancies up to 31.12.2023 is concerned, the search and selection Committee has completed the task and proposal has been submitted for approval of the competent authority i.e. the ACC in the last week of June, 2023 and the response is still awaited. In so far as the status of the infrastructure is concerned, it is stated that the Government of UT of J & K which was requested to provide additional spaces as per the norms of the Directorate of Estate, CAT Jammu is stated to be located in Wajarat, Jammu but it is accepted fact that the accommodation is inadequate.

CAT, Srinagar Bench is at the Old Assembly Complex in Shergari, Srinagar where two Courtrooms have been completed and four Chambers for Members are complete as also the office staff. The Supreme Court noticed one more aspect that a Tribunal is created for expeditious disposal of cases, it must be appreciated that the ground work must be done beforehand i.e. the Tribunal will require not only Members, but also space, support staff etc. If this process is started afterwards, it is like putting a cart before the horse. In fact a legal impact study of even such aspects must be carried out beforehand. The note also suggests that land they have proposed is at the site of the High Court of J & K at Bemia in Kashmir. Suffice for us to say that these infrastructure aspects must be attended to urgently as Tribunals cannot function without adequate infrastructure. The Supreme Court further observed that now coming to the third aspect of pendency status in cases. One of aspects flagged by the petitioner on the last date was that the disposal of cases which have been returned to the High Court is to be dealt with by the Tribunal is included.

Supreme Court observed that the data shows that the returned cases are only 1429 but the pending cases instituted in Tribunal amounts to more than 11,000 and the total pendency is about 16,000.

The process can only be speeded up if the Tribunal Members are appointed, as at present, out of eight Members, only two Members are effectively functioning while some other Members are operating with dual charge.

The petitioner has sought to flag as per RTI information received by him that the personnel are much less than the sanctioned strength. In this behalf, learned ASG submits on instructions that some of them have been employed through outsourcing. We are not concerned with whether they are engaged through outsourcing process or otherwise so long as the requisite number of persons at different levels become available.

ASG seeks some time to file an affidavit in respect of the aforesaid as also the progress so far as the appointments are concerned, Court said.

Court further ordered that the State will also file an affidavit insofar as the location of the requisite spaces for housing the two Tribunals are concerned.