

Excise Deptt conducts plantation drive at Nagrota



Deputy Excise Commissioner (Executive) Kusum Sharma and other officers with students during a plantation drive at Nagrota.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NAGROTA: The Excise Department conducted a Plantation drive on Friday as a part of the Swachhta Pakhwada-2024 campaign on the directions and under the supervision of Excise Commissioner Pankaj Sharma.

On the occasion, Deputy Excise Commissioner (Executive) Kusum Sharma,

Principal Excise and Taxation Training Institute Nagrota, Renu Bhasin, Deputy Excise commissioner (Accounts) Sukriti Sharma, Deputy Excise Commissioner (Distilleries) Ramkesh Sharma, ETO Anil Chandan, ETO Swati Gupta, ETO Rupali, ETO Munish Bhagat were present along with other Excise Officials.

The students of the Govt. Girls Middle School Nagrota also participated in the drive which began with administering of "Swachhta Pledge" by Principal Training institute.

Under this drive, indigenous plant saplings were planted in the Institute Campus and the senior officer Kusum Sharma emphasized on the importance of

this nationwide campaign laying stress on the responsibilities towards the nation as well as the planet as a whole.

Further, she urged the students to plant more saplings which will eventually contribute in reducing pollution, improving the local ecosystem and overall biodiversity.

Also, she said that increasing the green cover will help

in tackling the ongoing Climate Change crisis.

The students were encouraged to keep their surroundings and environment clean and be harbingers of change in the society so that the vision of clean and green India could be realised.

The event culminated with the distribution of light refreshment among the students.

Induction programme for newly admitted students Skills, knowledge imperative for career advancement: VC



VC JU, Prof. Umesh Rai speaking during induction programme on Friday.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: At a vibrant Induction Programme held at the General Zorawar Singh Auditorium, Prof. Umesh Rai, Vice Chancellor of the University of Jammu, highlighted the crucial role of skill and knowledge in shaping the careers of youth and contributing to national growth. Addressing newly admitted students, Prof. Rai emphasized that education should extend beyond traditional classrooms, advocating for experiential learning that integrates theoretical knowledge with practical application. He encouraged students to follow their passions, aligning their academic and career pursuits with their interests.

Prof. Rai elaborated on the importance of combining both knowledge and skills, noting that while knowledge enriches understanding, skills provide practical application, both being essential for success in today's competitive world.

The event featured distinguished guests, including Padma Shri Balwant

Thakur and Indu Kanwal Chib, Mission Director of the JK Rural Livelihood Mission, both alumni of the University.

Balwant Thakur reminisced about his time at the University, highlighting the value of staying connected to one's roots and engaging positively with the university community. He encouraged students to make the most of their time on campus, reflecting on the encouragement he received during his studies.

Chib spoke on the significance of the Induction Programme as a critical phase for students' personal and academic growth. She advised students to focus on Inner Leadership, Legacy, Time Management, Engaging with Books, and Building Friendships for a successful university experience.

The programme, attended by a large audience including students, faculty, and staff, featured lively performances including a dance/drama on 'Navras' by theatre students and a musical performance

by Andrew and his band. Dean Students Welfare, Prof. Prakash C. Antahal, welcomed the attendees and presented the university's facilities and support systems. Senior faculty members, including Prof. Anju Bhasin and Prof. Meena Sharma, Prof. Neelu Rohmetra, Dean Research Studies; and Prof. Rahul Gupta, Registrar also addressed the students.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Prof. Monika Chadha and was expertly conducted by Prof. Sarika Manhas. The programme was coordinated by Dr. Pritam Singh and his team, along with the Campus Cultural Committee.

The programme was coordinated by Dr. Pritam Singh, Associate Dean SW; Dr. Harleen, Kour and Dr. Ripudaman Parihar, Assistant Deans SW; along with members of the Campus Cultural Committee, Mansi Mantoo, Media Officer SW; Sumeet Sharma, Drama Instructor; and the dedicated staff of the DSW office.

J&K BJP Manifesto Committee reaches out to people to shape party's vision

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Senior BJP leader Devender Singh Rana on Friday said the party's Manifesto Committee today engaged with a cross section of people in a bid to seek their suggestions and valuable inputs in shaping the vision for upcoming elections to the Legislative Assembly.

Comprising Narinder Singh, Devender Singh Rana, Bharat Bhushan, Chairman DDC, Jammu, Advocate, Sunil Sethi, Lt. Gen. (Retd) RK Sharma, and YV Sharma the Committee held detailed interaction with Chamber of Commerce, Industry Associations, Confederation of All India Trade Associations, All J&K Transport Association, Warehouse Association and All J&K Sikh Coordination Committee and sought suggestions to draw a roadmap for the BJP in Jammu and Kashmir.

The reach out programme reflects the BJP's deep commitment to engage with citizens and have their views of



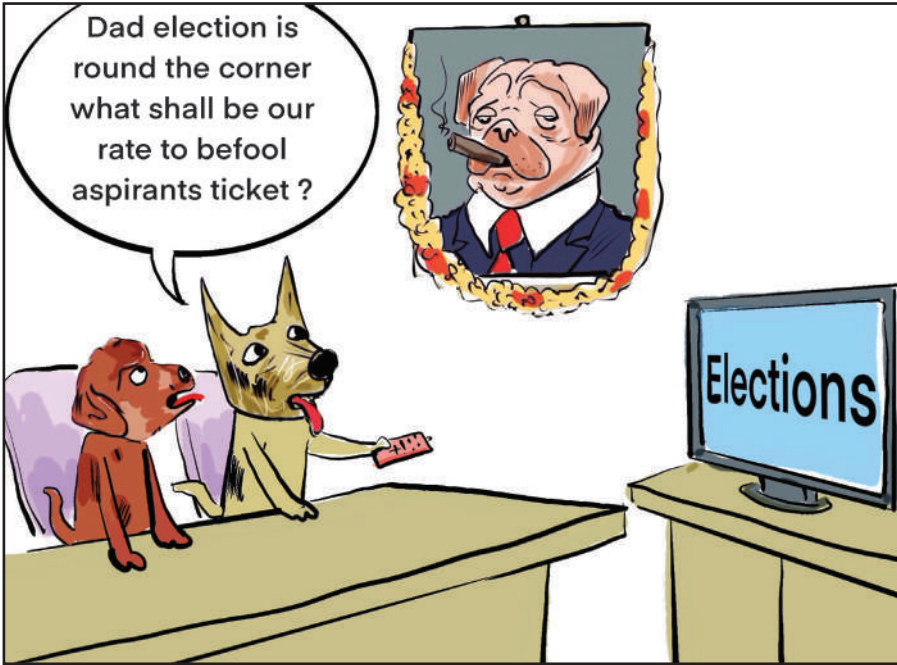
J&K BJP Manifesto Committee members interacting with people.

the party's vision document.

The Committee will reach out to all segments of society including youth groups, farmers, women's organizations, members of civil society, representatives of weaker sections especially Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, Displaced Persons of West Pakistan and Displaced Persons of 1965, socio-religious organizations, Kashmiri Migrants with an avowed objective of seeking their views on formulating policies and programmes for inclusive development and public participation in the implementation of various schemes.

The Committee will also hold group discussions and Nukad meetings to seek the views of the general public.

Believing in formulating a cohesive vision document, the BJP Manifesto Committee will also seek suggestions from the general public through online platforms, social media, and dedicated helplines to be set up for the purpose.



IIM Jammu's second batch of ToT program culminates



Director IIM Jammu, Prof. B.S. Sahay posing with faculty and participants.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu, under the leadership of Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, concluded a five-day Training of Trainers (ToT) program on Small Business Development Units (SBDUs) on Friday at its Srinagar Campus. This initiative, a collaborative effort with the Dalit Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DICC) and the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE), aims to bolster entrepreneurship and skill development at the grassroots level. The ToT program, which commenced on August 5, 2024, was designed to equip trainers from various Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and Government Polytechnics with essential skills and knowledge for training local entrepreneurs. The primary objective is to establish 22 SBDUs in the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, which will act as district hubs for fostering entrepreneurship.

Prof. Jabir Ali, Dean Academics and Program Director, emphasized the significance of this foundational course in building a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem in the region. He urged participants to promote the initiative

across ITIs and Polytechnics and prepare for upcoming Hackathons and Capacity Building Programs.

Dr. Mahesh Gadekar, Chairperson of the Centre for Small Business Development Units at IIM Jammu, highlighted the necessity of creating a supportive environment for budding entrepreneurs. He stressed the importance of mentoring and mobilizing support for future programs to ensure a sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem in Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

Dr. Niti Shekhar, Program Director, expressed her hope for many success stories to emerge from these regions. The valedictory ceremony featured certificate distribution, a group photo with Prof. Sahay, and the national anthem, symbolizing unity and collective aspiration. The event was coordinated by the Small Business Development Unit Team of IIM Jammu, with notable attendees including Dr. Vivek Sharma, Chief Innovation Officer, and Shri Naren Karunakaran, Consultant.

The ToT program has prepared participants to effectively establish and manage SBDUs, contributing significantly to local entrepreneurship and skill development.

ICC delegation calls on LG



■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: A delegation of Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) led by its President Ameya Prabhu called on Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha at Raj

Bhawan on Friday. The members of the delegation discussed with the Lt Governor about the promotion and growth of startups and entrepreneurship in Jammu Kashmir.

Educational empowerment of socially-Administratively 'Depressed Citizens' can only reduce their exploitation

Reservation enshrined in COI have surely less benefitted those who were kept in Focus in 1950 Are only the Governments responsible? Are not community leaders too responsible?

■ DAYA SAGAR

After the 1st August 2024 judgment (permitting sub classification in Schedule Caste category for the purposes of reservations) a 7 judge constitution bench of Supreme Court of India different people (mostly politicians) have made many statements. Less has been said by the people out of political streams. Need is more for non political people to apply mind in this direction so that no one is able to stretch the issues concerning reservations less to benefit the communities and objectives that our elders had kept in view while drafting the constitution of India.

It cannot be denied that the political leadership (some even from amongst the targeted beneficiary from the EC/ST) in India that has been in power or out of power has been reacting to/ raising reservation issues more for vote bank politics and very less for improving the intellectual/ educational and physical health of youth of their class/ caste/ tribe people who have remained/ or are materially/socially/administratively/politically placed distantly. Provisions could be created for special support to socially & backward individuals (financial backwardness/ low income jobs over the generations could be named for resulting into educational and social backwardness) but to enable them take the advantage of reservations in educational institutions / professional institutions and superior services they have to be adequately equipped with secondary education as

well as minimum timely health cover which can be provided only by the public institutions since due to poor economic level a large majority of the socially and educationally backward citizens in India would not be able buy even minimal education / health to compete with even some from their class for laying hands on competitive education or conduct their traditional skill with more efficiency. This has been the case in India where the forefathers had targeted to undo most of social and educational backwardness in 10 years (Art 334 of COI) but constitution has been amended about 7 times to increase the same to 80 years. Even many from the unreserved classes these days are falling back from entering professional colleges and government services mostly due to lack of financial resources since the faith of people have fallen in the government schools (most important is basic education upto senior secondary school and after that in higher education one can conduct with not much difficulty) and those with money taken to extra coaching during school days as well as after schooling. The culture of coaching institutions has grown fast and some estimates see the business of coaching institutions for professional institution entrance / services entrance to swell to the tune of over Rs 1 crore by 2030. In very simple words the reason for even many reserved posts in government remaining unfilled / there being very few officers in superior services from a very very large number of families among the SC/ SC. One would see that the

merit difference in UPSC/PSC examinations is not very much amongst the GC and SC category candidates which is due to the fact that from the reserved category families some can afford private schooling / special coachings. The Supreme Court opinion should be taken in truthful sense in view of some observations made here since the judgment calls the governments/ states to make any changes after very intimate / logical studies / analysis/ justifications and not just on some personal whims/ political considerations. Very regretful it is being said here that the political leaderships/ social associates have all these years more worked for continuing reservations and very less for strengthening the educational / trade quality levels & standards of the distantly placed members of their classes/ castes to take the advantage of reservation provisions / special financial supports kept for them..Chandar Shekhar Azad President Azad Samaj Party (Kanshiram) too has made some statements after the Apex court Judgment where in one of the prime/ reasons for fall back in the provision of reservations reaching the larger mass of the SC/ST target beneficiaries has been seen by him in poor quality education and health cover available from public sector institutions to have not reached the 'have not' members of SC/ST who are form a large majority and has requested the Governments to provide the communities competitive educa-



A Look through the Mist Part-III

tion/ health cover to enable them compete even with the 'few' betterers amongst them to enable more people share the benefits and provide more suitable applicants for superior position in Government services and professional institutions. He has asked government to make all the public servants (including all officers / government employees/MLA/MP/ Judges / and like to send their wards to only government schools / government hospitals that way quality of school education would improve. Suggestion from the 1st time MP in 18th Lok Sabha has merit. He should have started the work on these lines earlier when he was President of Bhim Army, any how it is appreciable even now. Presently due to poor health the socially and educationally backward people who are economically also weak would be having more time to increase their earning / for studies in case government schools where teachers are paid comparatively much higher salary (See Table - A drawn in Jan 2024) are made to deliver since that would reasonably reduce the financial burden on the masses.

Even after 75 years of independence a very big segment of the Indian people is living under crushing economic backwardness which well reflects from the official disclosures that India have about 81 Cr (81,00,000,00) Indian citizens who still need to be provided / are being provided / will be needing atleast for another 4 to 5 years just 5 kg of food grains free of cost per month for their

TABLE- A Basis .> (1.) Dearness Allowance @ 46% of basic pay wef 01 July 2023 (2.) TA- Transport Allowance/PM G.O No. 472-F of 2019 Of 28.11.2019 Cities like Jammu (3) HRA-House Rent Allowance @16% of basic pay (4) CHA- ***Child Education Allowance @Rs.2250/pm /per child Max 4500 G.O No. 473-F 28.11.2019 (5) CHSA ***Child Hostel Subsidy Allowance 6750 per child Max 13500/pm G.O No. 473-F 28.11.2019									
Level of staff	Pay Scale	Min Basic	DA	T. Allowance	HR 16%	Child EA	Child HSA	Total Min Salary/ pm	
Driver Level 2	19900-63200	1990 0	915 4	900x1.46=1314	3184	4500	13500	Rs. 33552/pm	
Teacher (UG) L 4	25500-81100	2550 0	117 30	1350x1.46=1971	4080	***45 00	***135 00	Rs 43281 plus ***18000 max	
Teacher (G) L 5	29200-92300	2920 0	134 32	1800x1.46=2880	4672	***45 00	***135 00	Rs 50184 plus ***18000 max	
Master Level 6	35400 - 112400								
Dir School Edu / IAS or KAS L 12	78800-209200	7880 0	362 78	3600x1.46=5256	1260 8	***45 00	***135 00	Rs.13294 2 plus ***18000 max	
Dir School Edu IAS or KAS L 13	123100 - 215900 /	1231 00	566 26	3600x1.46=5256	1969 6	***45 00	***135 00	Rs.20467 8 plus18000 max	

survival, and surely a very large population in that consists of SC/ST/OBC living even in cities like Jammu/ Srinagar/ Delhi/ Mumbai Not only that one would hardly find a senior officer, Director / Secretary Education sending his / her children to government schools even where they are posted in Cities.

To be continued (The writer is a Sr Journalist, analyst J&K affairs and Social Activist).

