

Rahul's impromptu dinner at Srinagar's 'Ahdoo's' possible because Modi restored peace: Dr Jitendra

STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh on Saturday lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi for restoring stability in Jammu & Kashmir, allowing for the recent impromptu visit of senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to Srinagar's 'Ahdoo's' restaurant.

Speaking at a program hosted by Bharat24 news channel, Dr. Singh emphasized that this visit was a testament to the peace and normalcy achieved under the Modi government.

Dr. Singh criticized the recent alliance between the National Conference (NC) and Congress, calling it a "marriage of convenience" born from political desperation. He condemned the



Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh speaking during an event organised by "Bharat24" news channel at New Delhi.

alliance as a move driven by self-preservation rather than genuine service to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

He argued that this coalition undermines the region's progress by attempting to revive the divisive framework of "two flags, two constitutions," which he believes could jeopardize the

peace and integration accomplished in recent years.

The Union Minister highlighted the abrogation of Article 370 as a landmark decision that brought justice and equal rights to Jammu and Kashmir, a region he noted had been deprived of these rights for seven decades.

Dr. Singh recalled that Jawaharlal Nehru had predicted the eventual end of Article 370, but it continued due to the vested interests of Congress successors. He praised PM Modi for fulfilling this long-delayed promise. Dr. Singh also reflected on the achievements since the abrogation of Article 370, marking significant progress in democratic processes, governance, development, and security.

He criticized the Congress and NC for prioritizing political survival over national interest, citing the delay in the Shahpur Kandi National Project, which had deprived Jammu of essential water resources and economic benefits until PM Modi's intervention. Furthermore, Dr. Singh

noted the Congress government's failure to apply the 73rd and 74th Amendments of the Panchayat Act in Jammu and Kashmir, which hindered democratic decentralization and local governance before 2019.

As the 5th anniversary of Article 370's abrogation approaches, Dr. Singh highlighted it, alongside the resolution of the Ram Jannabhoomi dispute, as monumental achievements in the BJP's commitment to decisive governance. He concluded by crediting PM Modi for fostering peace and development in Jammu and Kashmir, asserting that under his leadership, the region will play a pivotal role in the country's future development and emerge as a "crown jewel."

Polls in J&K Soon



Excise Commissioner conducts visit to Lakhanpur Reviews operations on curbing illicit trafficking of liquor



Excise Commissioner Subash C Chibber, talking to a reporter during visit to Lakhanpur.

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In a significant move to ensure a fair and transparent electoral process in the upcoming General Elections to the Legislative Assembly of UT of J&K, Excise Commissioner Subash C Chibber, on Saturday conducted an extensive visit to Lakhanpur, the main entry point to the UT and the adjoining areas bordering Punjab and Himachal Pradesh.

The visit aimed to review the preparedness and operations of the Excise Department, focusing on curbing the illicit trafficking of liquor, which poses a potential threat to the integrity of the election environment.

Accompanying the Excise Commissioner were Deputy

Excise Commissioner (Executive) Jammu, Sanjay K Bhat, Deputy Excise Commissioner (Distillery) Jammu, Ramkesh Sharma, ETO Kathua, and other officials.

The team conducted an in-depth assessment of the readiness of the deployed units tasked with monitoring and intercepting illegal liquor activities in these sensitive border regions.

Additionally, the meeting underscored the importance of implementing strict dry days within a 3-kilometer radius from the polling areas during the assembly elections to maintain the sanctity of the electoral process.

During the visit, Subash Chibber chaired a meeting with the Nodal officers of the Punjab and Himachal

Excise Departments.

The meeting was also attended by senior officials from the CISF, and Jammu & Kashmir Police.

The discussions emphasized the necessity for coordinated efforts between the states to prevent any cross-border smuggling activities.

Key points included sharing information regarding hotspots of illicit liquor distillation, verification of permits before dispatching ENA, and setting up joint nakas at porous points along the interstate borders that could influence the electoral process.

He along with his team also visited various check posts on the bordering states.

He encouraged the teams to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activities promptly, assuring them of full support from the Excise Department in their efforts to safeguard the integrity of the elections.

This visit and the subsequent meetings underscore the commitment of the Excise Department to upholding the law and ensuring that no illegal activities compromise the democratic process in Jammu and Kashmir.

Multi-Departmental Symposium on Mpox Virus held at AIIMS Jammu: A step forward in tackling emerging infectious threats

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Jammu hosted a significant Multi-Departmental Symposium on Mpox Virus Disease at the Convention Centre.

This event underscored the institution's commitment to addressing emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases.

The symposium brought together a diverse audience, including distinguished faculty, senior and junior residents, nursing officers, and MBBS students from various departments.

The Executive Director & CEO of AIIMS Jammu, Prof. Dr. Shakti Kumar Gupta, along with Medical Superintendent Lt. Gen. Dr. Sunil Kant (Retd) and Dean of Examinations Prof. Saurabh Gupta, graced the event.

The symposium was organized by the Departments of Microbiology, Community Medicine, Biochemistry, and General Medicine, aiming to explore the complexities of Mpox, an infectious disease that challenges global health systems.

Dr. Manish Ranjan, Assistant Professor of Microbiology, opened the symposium with a comprehensive introduction to Mpox, emphasizing its significance in the context of his-



AIIMS Jammu doctors at Multi-Departmental Symposium on Mpox Virus Disease at the Convention Centre.

torical and emerging diseases.

Dr. Prateek Bobhate, Additional Professor of Community Medicine, detailed the epidemiology and current status of Mpox, noting its spread to over 100 countries and highlighting the need for effective communication to manage the disease.

Dr. Swati Rajput, Assistant Professor of Biochemistry, delved into the molecular basis of Mpox, exploring how the virus interacts with

the host and discussing research opportunities to advance understanding and treatment.

Dr. Gaurav Gupta, Associate Professor of General Medicine, provided a thorough overview of managing suspected Mpox cases, including recent advances in treatment and preventive strategies.

Dr. V. S. Priya, Assistant Professor of Microbiology, addressed the importance of laboratory diagnosis and

infection prevention and control (IPC). Her talk emphasized the need for strong surveillance, genetic sequencing, and IPC measures to prevent the spread of Mpox in healthcare settings.

A key take away from the symposium was the importance of vigilance and high suspicion for imported Mpox cases.

The discussions highlighted the need for accurate information dissemination, stigma reduction, and the equipping of healthcare providers with necessary tools.

Prof. Dr. Shakti Kumar Gupta concluded the event by stressing the need for ongoing educational events to stay ahead of infectious threats. He affirmed AIIMS Jammu's readiness to lead in combating Mpox and other emerging diseases, reinforcing the institution's role in public health and safety.

The symposium ended with a Q&A session moderated by Dr. Manish Ranjan, fostering engaging discussions and reaffirming the commitment to proactive involvement in public health challenges.

AIIMS Jammu continues to lead in medical education and healthcare, showcasing its dedication through collaborative efforts and knowledge sharing.

Congress joins hands with NC to scrap reservation for SCs, STs, Paharis, Gujjars, OBCs in J&K: Rana "Changing nomenclature of Shankaracharya Hills as Takht-e-Suleman, Hari Parbat as Koh-e-Maraan is assault on our faith"

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Bharatiya Janata Party on Saturday lambasted the Congress for joining hands with the National Conference to scrap the reservation for SCs, STs, Gujjar Bakewals, Paharis and OBCs in Jammu and Kashmir to disempower these marginalized communities.

"The Congress has joined hands with the National Conference to further its agenda, which is reflected in the NC's pro-Pakistan, pro-separatist, anti-J&K people and anti national manifesto, to repeal the reservation guaranteed to the SC, ST, Gujjars, Paharis and OBCs in Jammu and Kashmir after the abrogation of Article 370 as per Babasaheb Dr Ambedkar's Constitution", Senior BJP leader Devender Singh Rana said while addressing a press conference at the party headquarters here this morning.

He said the BJP will not allow to succeed this dubious design of the National Conference and its ally the Congress to disempower these segments in employment, education and space in politics, asserting vehemently: "The BJP will protect the reservation to SCs, STs, Gujjars, Paharis and OBCs in Jammu and Kashmir".

Rana took the Congress head



Senior BJP leader Devender Rana addressing a press conference at Jammu on Saturday.

on for aligning with the National Conference in the anti-reservation plank, so much so that its national President Malakarjun Kharge and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi specially flew from New Delhi to Srinagar to ink alliance with the forces inimical to the Constitution.

"Soon after unveiling of the divisive and anti people manifesto of the National Conference, the Congress leadership led by Gandhi seion took a sense of pride in endorsing the anti-reservation document by forging alliance with the party that has all along discriminated against the marginalized segments of society", Devender Rana said while assailing the National Conference for attempting to trample the time tested mechanism provided in the Babasaheb's Constitution,

guaranteeing equitable and fair share to the marginalized communities in jobs, education and political spectrum.

He reiterated that the BJP will foil all the machinations of the Congress and the National Conference to play with the rights of the reserved categories and will not hesitate in offering any sacrifice in upholding the constitutional guarantees to the members of SC, ST and OBC sections of the society.

He described the move to scrap reservation as a step towards rolling back the progress registered over the years in the upliftment of these segments and undermining the social fabric across the country.

Rana said that achieving of "Ek Nishan, Ek Vidhan, Ek Pradhan", as per the true spirit of Babasaheb's Constitution has remained an eyecore for the NC and the Congress,

which is why they are targeting the marginalized communities.

Rana strongly criticized the NC and the Congress for polarizing the society and creating divisions for securing political mileage.

He said whenever the two parties have come together, the marginalized people have remained at the receiving end. During their coalition governments in J&K from time to time, the Jammu region has always been discriminated against; he said and vowed that the BJP has been all along fighting discrimination with any segment of the society or any region. Devender Rana also referred to change in the nomenclature of the world-famous Shankaracharya Hills in Srinagar as 'Takht-e-Suleman and Hari Parbat as Koh-e-Maraan in the National Conference manifesto, and described this as direct assault on the faith and identity of a community.

"NC is playing with our identity, as Shankaracharya and Hari Parbat are matters of faith for Sanatanis", Devender Rana said, questioning whether this move was to placate radicalized elements. The Congress should clear its stand on renaming of the most revered religious landmarks as Takht-e-Suleman and Koh-e-Marran, he added.

Justice Tashi Rabstan inaugurates Legal Literacy Club at Sudhmahadev

STATE TIMES NEWS

UDHAMPUR: In order to give thrust and significance to the legal education and increase awareness about the legal services activities in district Udhampur; Justice Tashi Rabstan, Chief Justice (A) of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, and Patron-in-Chief of the J&K Legal Services Authority, inaugurated a Legal Literacy Club at Government Higher Secondary School, Sudhmahadev, a historic institution established in 1923. This event was held in a remote area of District Udhampur; approximately 60 kilometers from the district headquarters.

Justice Tashi, accompanied by M.K. Sharma, Principal Secretary, and Amit Kumar Gupta, Member Secretary of the J&K Legal Services Authority, was warmly received by Haq Nawaz Zargar, Chairman of the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Udhampur; along with other dignitaries including Amod Ashok Nagpure, SSP Udhampur; Ajay Kumar Sharma, Secretary DLSA Udhampur; Vishal Bharti, District Mobile Magistrate, and Prem Singh, Additional Deputy Commissioner. The Chief Justice was honored with a ceremonial guard of honor upon arrival.

Following the inauguration, Justice Tashi interacted with Menakshi Sharma, the Teacher-in-Charge, and the 32 students who became members of the newly established Legal Literacy Club, comprising students from classes 9 to 11. He urged them to become ambassadors of legal services and spread legal awareness within their peer groups and the broader community, reinforcing the Legal Services Authority's motto of "Access to Justice for All."

The inauguration was marked by an impactful awareness program featuring a Saraswati Vandana performed by the students, setting a reverent tone for the proceedings. In his inaugural address, Justice Tashi praised the school's century-old educational legacy and the efforts of the Principal and staff in blending traditional values with modern advancements. He highlighted the significant role of women in national progress, expressing admiration for the school's female students. Justice Tashi



Justice Tashi Rabstan, Chief Justice (A) of HC of J&K and Ladakh speaking at a programme.

emphasized the potential of the students, noting that their capabilities were comparable to or even exceeded those from elite institutions elsewhere in India. He stressed that empowering young women with legal knowledge could drive social change, as they are likely to positively influence their families and communities. He underscored the importance of Legal Literacy Clubs in providing students with knowledge about their legal rights and responsibilities, crucial for fostering a just and fair society. Som Raj, Principal of the school, extended heartfelt thanks to the dignitaries, highlighting the pressing need for legal literacy in rural areas where access to legal resources is limited. He described the Legal Literacy Club as a milestone in integrating legal education into the school's curriculum, ensuring students are both academically and legally informed.

Haq Nawaz Zargar, Chairman DLSA Udhampur,

detailed the objectives of the Legal Literacy Club, which include enhancing students' understanding of legal rights and responsibilities, encouraging active participation in legal matters, and fostering community-wide legal awareness. Adv. Balwan Singh, a panel lawyer with DLSA Udhampur, provided an insightful presentation on how Legal Literacy Clubs can serve as catalysts for social change, citing successful initiatives where these clubs have addressed local legal issues and educated the public. The program also featured a musical performance by students addressing the dowry system, emphasizing the need for its eradication and reinforcing the event's focus on legal awareness as a tool for combating societal injustices.

The event concluded with a plantation drive, where dignitaries planted various trees within the school premises. Amit Kumar Gupta, Member Secretary, emphasized that initiatives like the Legal Literacy Club reflect the commitment of J&K Legal Services Institutions to empower the younger generation with legal knowledge, fostering a future of informed and responsible citizens.

The proceedings were conducted by Meenakshi Sharma, with a formal vote of thanks delivered by Ajay Sharma, Secretary DLSA Udhampur.

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Efforts on to give voters better experience on poll days: CEO

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The J&K Election Department conducted a meeting of the Director level officers under the chairmanship of Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) J&K, Pandurang K Pole on Saturday at Nirvachan Bhawan, Rail Head Complex, Jammu.

The CEO reviewed the overall preparations of the Polling Stations to ensure the smooth and hassle free conduct of the

Assembly Election 2024 which are going to be held in 3 phases across the Jammu and Kashmir beginning 18 September 2024.

The officers from School Education Higher Education Public Works Department, Jal Shakti Department, Social Welfare, Forest, Agriculture Departments, JPDL and KPDCCL and others were present in the meeting which was held to discuss the Assured

Minimum Facilities to be made available at the Polling Stations. CEO exhorted upon the officers present in the meeting to ensure the Assured Minimum Facilities (AMFs) across all the Polling Stations. He also directed the officers to send an Action Taken Report along with the Geo-tagged photos of the polling stations to the office of CEO in a week's time. Pertinently, there are 11,838 total Polling Stations

including 2332 in urban and 9506 in rural areas with each polling station averaging 735 electorates. The officers were also directed to ensure continuous drinking water and power supply including lighting facilities should be provided by the concerned department across all the Polling Stations which are going to poll on 18 September 2024 in Phase-I. The availability of accessible approach roads at

various Polling Stations located in remote areas and at the tough terrain and snow bound areas across J&K also came under the discussion and it was directed that both J&K RDD and J&K Housing and Urban Development Department will take required steps in this regard. Additionally, the officers must take care of ramp construction leading to a particular Polling Station to facilitate the

Persons with Disability (PwDs) in voting, the statement reads. The availability of Booth Awareness Groups (BAGs), Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs) and Voter Awareness Forums and their roles in attracting various voter groups in a particular Assembly Constituency were also discussed and deliberations were held to strengthen them at the Booth Level. In the first phase, 24 Assembly

Constituencies both in Jammu and Kashmir divisions are going to election on 18 September, 2024. The notification has been issued for Anantnag, Pulwama, Shopian, Kulgam districts in Kashmir Division; and Doda, Ramban and Kishtwar districts in Jammu Division. In Kashmir Division, 16 Assembly Constituencies comprising Pampore, Tral, Pulwama, Rajpora, Zainapora, Shopian,

DH Pora, Kulgam, Devsar, Dooru, Kokernag (ST), Anantnag West, Anantnag, Srigufwara-Bijbehara, Shangus-Anantnag East, Pahalgam; whereas in Jammu Division, 8 Assembly Constituencies including, Indermal, Kishtwar, Padder-Nagseni, Bhadarwah, Doda, Doda West, Ramban and Banihal are scheduled to go for polls in the Phase-I of the Assembly Election.