

# DHJ discusses National Action Plan for snakebite envenoming

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: A meeting to discuss National Action Plan for Snakebite Envenoming (NAPSE) and preparedness on Monkeypox (Mpx), was on Saturday chaired by Director Health Services Jammu Dr. Rakesh Magotra.

The meeting was attended by all the key stakeholders including the Officers/Officials from Director Health Services, Jammu, and Chief Medical Officers, Medical Superintendents of Govt. Medical Colleges, District Hospitals and Sub-District Hospitals of Jammu Division.

The meeting began with a detailed presentation by Dr. Shehnaaz Chowdhary, Medical Officer Epidemiology, DHS Jammu giving an overview of NAPSE, which is designed to reduce mortality and morbidity due to snake bites across the country. She further emphasized the need for coordinated efforts at the State, and district levels to effectively implement the plan.

Dr. Harjeet Rai, SSO IDSP/Epidemiologist, highlighted the various steps for implementing NAPSE, especially in rural and remote



Director Health Services Jammu Dr. Rakesh Magotra chairing a meeting.

areas where snakebite incidents are more common. He further emphasized on strengthening the surveillance mechanism regarding snakebite cases and any death due to it by reporting any such incident on IHIP-IDSP portal on real-time basis. He pointed out the importance of timely death audit of any death due to snakebite in achieving the SDG goal of reducing the deaths due to snakebite to halves by 2030.

Dr. Rakesh Magotra underscored the importance of NAPSE in saving lives. He discussed the constraints faced at the field level, such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of trained personnel, and the need for better coordination between various health

departments. Dr. Rakesh Magotra called for a collaborative approach to overcome these challenges and ensure that the objectives of NAPSE are met.

Dr. Prem Lata, Medical Officer Epidemiology, DHS Jammu, gave a presentation on Mpx preparedness. She provided an update on the current status of Monkeypox cases worldwide, emphasizing the importance of preparedness and response given the recent declaration of Mpx as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) by the World Health Organization (WHO).

She further discussed the measures being taken to monitor and control the spread of Mpx, including the identification

and isolation of cases and public education campaigns to prevent transmission. She stressed the need for ongoing vigilance and coordination efforts to manage potential outbreaks effectively.

Dr. Rakesh Magotra, Director Health Services Jammu also spoke about the significance of the WHO's declaration in light of the global context. He urged all the stakeholders to work together to manage and mitigate the risks associated with both snakebite envenoming and Monkeypox. Dr. Magotra emphasized that the success of these public health initiatives depends on the collective efforts of the entire community.

# KK Gandhi to judge 7th Srijanyam-Art and Design Festival 2024



**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: K.K. Gandhi, the globally acclaimed artist, and son of the soil has been invited to be a judge and a chief guest

for the opening ceremony of the 7th edition of the Srijanyam - Art and Design Festival 2024 to be hosted by Assam Valley School, Assam from August 26 to 28, 2024.

The organizing committee unanimously invited Gandhi as a chief guest by acknowledging his mastery artistic acumen in creating live historical, ethnic, heritage, and landscape of the area wherever he engraved his masterpiece on the canvas. His quality of articulation and intimate interaction also connect everyone present in the

event. The school which was founded in 1995 by the Williamson Magor Education Trust is a co-education and fully residential school with a five-star rating as the best boarding school in the country.

The school has been organizing this annual festival with the motive of imparting artistic skills to the students and inculcating a sense of competition among the eight most prestigious schools in the country that are likely to participate in the festival.

# Doordarshan Jammu signs MoU with CEO J&K



Regional News Unit, Doordarshan Kendra, Jammu and the Office of CEO UT of J&K signing MoU.

disseminating information, work collaboratively to promote electoral awareness and both parties committed to

participation. The MOU outlined the roles and responsibilities of both the CEO Office and RNU, Doordarshan Jammu, in the implementation and promotion of SVVEEP activities.

The partnership aimed to ensure comprehensive coverage of SVVEEP activities, facilitate public engagement and ultimately contribute to higher voter turnout and informed participation in the electoral process.

Vivek Pathak, Assistant Director, Doordarshan signed the MoU from the side of Doordarshan,

Jammu and Akhtar Qazi, Deputy Director (Information) signed the MoU from the side of CEO J&K.

Both the officers signed the MoU in the presence of the Chief Electoral Officer, J&K, Pandurang K Pole. The CEO J&K instructed to implement the activities under MoU with full dedication and with the aim of promoting voter awareness.

Vivek Pathak said that this collaborative effort will lead to a positive uptick in voter awareness about their democratic rights during the elections.

# Dr. Samanta appointed as Senior Adviser to President of National Transition Council Guinea



**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
B H U B A N E S W A R : Eminent educationist and philanthropist Dr. Ahyuta Samanta has been appointed as the Senior Adviser to the President of the National Council Transition (Conseil

National de Transition-CNT) of Guinea, Dr. Dansa Kourouma. This appointment was approved by the cabinet of the National Transitional Council of the Republic of Guinea.

Dr. Kourouma had previously visited KIIT & KISS in January this year. He was impressed by the wide range of activities, including education, health, and social initiatives, carried out by Dr. Samanta through KIIT & KISS. During his visit, he requested Dr. Samanta to become his adviser. After receiving Dr. Samanta's consent, Dr. Kourouma presented the proposal to the

Guinean cabinet. Guinea is a country in West Africa.

Dr. Samanta will provide guidance on education, health, and economic development as an honorary adviser for Guinea. Dr. Kourouma has submitted the necessary documents to Dr. Samanta's representative in Guinea. Previously, Dr. Samanta served as a senior adviser to the Government of Manipur. He is the first Odia to become adviser to any country. He thanked the Guinean government and assured he would advise on best practices in education, health, and economic development.

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: The University of Jammu (JU) commemorated India's maiden National Space Day with a one-day workshop titled "Advances in Space Technology - India's Success." This workshop celebrated India's historic achievement of becoming the fourth nation to land on the moon and the first to reach the lunar south pole on August 23, 2023.

In recognition of this momentous event, Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared



VC, JU, Prof. Umesh Rai, honouring Dr. Jagannath Das, Deputy Director of the Safety, Reliability, and Quality Area at U. R. Rao Satellite Centre, ISRO Bangalore.

August 23 as "National Space Day." Prof. Umesh Rai, Vice Chancellor, JU presided over the event. Dr. Jagannath Das, Deputy Director of the Safety, Reliability, and Quality Area at U. R. Rao Satellite Centre, ISRO Bangalore, was the Chief Guest and Dr. Anshuman Sharma, Manager of D 32/IDSN at ISTRAC-ISRO, Bangalore, was the invited speaker for the occasion.

Prof. Umesh Rai highlighted the critical role of such workshops in sparking curiosity and passion in young minds. Prof. Rai urged the teachers to break down traditional disciplinary boundaries and promote a more integrated approach to education.

He also stressed the importance of aligning curricula with industry and societal needs, advocating for long-term collaborations with institutions of national significance. "By inviting institutions of national significance to contribute to our curriculum, we can ensure that our students are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the demands of the space industry," said Prof. Rai.

Prof. Anju Bhassin, in her remarks, appreciated the efforts of ISRO and the contributions of the University of Jammu in encouraging a culture of scientific inquiry and innovation. Dr. Jagannath Das reflected

on the challenges faced after the Chandrayaan-2 mission and how the team drew inspiration from their leader and the support of the nation to achieve the successful landing of Chandrayaan-3.

Dr. Jagannath Das conveyed the importance of relentless dedication and hard work as the foundations of success. He encouraged students to remain steadfast in their pursuit of dreams.

Dr. Das underscored ISRO's commitment to community engagement through outreach programs that bring thousands of students to ISRO facilities each month and mobile exhibitions that spread knowledge of space technology to rural areas.

Dr. Sharma also emphasized on the collaboration of various technologies working together to achieve these remarkable feats. Addressing the students, he encouraged them to pursue their passion for science and technology, emphasizing the importance of continuous learning and innovation in driving the future of space exploration.

Prof. Arun Bharti, Head, Department of Physics and Convener of the workshop, provided an overview of the programs and research activities of the Department of Physics.

Earlier, the formal welcome address was delivered by Prof. Ramni Gupta, organizing secretary of the workshop. Dr. Sandeep Arya, Co-organizing Secretary delivered a formal vote of thanks.

# NC-Cong Alliance doesn't mean 'INDI Alliance': Shiv Sena (UBT) Appeals to extend date of filing nominations

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: Shiv Sena (UBT) Jammu-Kashmir unit has appealed not to name NC-Congress alliance as INDI Alliance in the assembly elections of Jammu-Kashmir. Along with this, it has advised to refrain from politics on the names of the Holy religious places of Hindus (Shankaracharya and Hari Parvat) located in Kashmir. In a press conference held today at the party's state central office, state chief Manish Sahni said that the alliance of only 2-3 parties in the Jammu-Kashmir assembly elections should not be called 'INDI Alliance'. He said that the INDI Alliance is a big family of 39 parties including Shiv Sena (UBT). Congress



Shiv Sena J&K chief Manish Sahni talking to reporters.

and NC alliance in the assembly elections of Jammu-Kashmir should not mislead the public by naming it India Alliance.

Along with this, he has strongly objected to the mention of ancient Hindu religious places (Shankaracharya Temple, Hari Parvat) as 'Takht-e-Sulaiman, Koh-e-Maran' in the manifesto of the National Conference. Sahni has advised the parties who

make a living out of this dirty politics that breaks the mutual brotherhood to refrain from doing so. Sahni has also advocated strict action from the Election Commission against the leaders and parties who do politics that breaks the religion and mutual brotherhood.

Sahni has also appealed to the voters to teach these parties a lesson. On this occasion Gen Secretary Vikas Bakshi, Vice president Sanjeev

Kohli, City president Rohan Malwal, Rajesh Jandyal were present.

Meanwhile, Shiv Sena (UBT) Jammu and Kashmir unit has appealed to the Election Commission to extend the date for filing nomination papers of candidates for the first phase of Jammu and Kashmir assembly elections. Party state chief Manish Sahni said that due to bank holidays on August 24 and public holidays on 25 and 26, candidates are facing a lot of problems in completing the formalities. He said that after three consecutive holidays, August 27 is the last date for filing nominations. He has appealed to the Election Commission to extend it for at least two days.

# Urbanization affects almond production in Budgam, Pulwama districts

**MASROOR AHMAD**  
BUDGAM: Almond production in Kashmir has declined in recent years, with the area under cultivation dropping from 16,374 hectares in 2006-07 to 4,177 hectares in 2019-20. Production also declined, from 15,183 tonnes in 2006-07 to 9,898 tonnes in 2019-20. In 2015 the district Budgam lost 5,665 hectares of land that was once used for growing almonds.

Budgam district was once on the top of almond production not too long ago, when the road from Budgam to Srinagar International Airport was used to be lined by almond orchards, recalls farmer from Chadoora Syed Ahsaanul Haq.

Massive urbanisation over the years has caused the orchards to disappear, said Abid, a resident of Chadoora. In Budgam itself, many almond growers have started growing apples and plums instead. Urbanization apart, poor prices for local varieties and competition from imports have contributed to dwindling production of almond in Kashmir. In South Kashmir's Pulwama district, almond production has also significantly declined as farmers increasingly switch to apple cultivation, which offers higher profitability. Over the years, the land dedicated to almond cultivation has drastically shrunk due to the widespread felling of



almond trees and the conversion of almond orchards into apple orchards. Farmers blame the Horticulture Department's failure to introduce high-yielding almond varieties as a major reason for this shift. They contend that the department provides ample attention and better marketing support to apples, but neglects almonds, resulting in higher returns from apple production. Pulwama was once the largest area under almond cultivation, but many farmers have now transitioned to apple farming, while others have abandoned fruit cultivation entirely. Areas such as Wahibung, Ruhmoo, Newa and Koel are the most affected, where growers are uprooting almond trees at an alarming rate. Younis Ahmed, a resident of Parigam Pulwama, who switched to apple farming after struggling to sell his almonds, said, "The department barely supports almond growers. All

the focus is on apples and plums. The income from almonds is far less than what we invest. There is no proper market for local almonds, and the department has not introduced any high-yielding varieties that could improve almond quality," he said. He also noted that the lack of expert guidance and poor marketing strategies have crippled the almond industry. "Experts rarely visit our orchards, and there is no proper marketing for almonds. We do not even have a single almond mandi in Kashmir," he said.

Officials of the Horticulture Department acknowledged that while the department has launched a scheme for high-density almond plantations, it will take at least a year to see results due to a shortage of planting materials. "Our almond industry has been hit hard by free trade agreements, as our almonds struggle to compete in the market due to inconsistent sizing," he explained. He added that, besides introducing new almond varieties, the department regularly monitors orchards and provides expert advice to farmers. On the issue of widespread conversion to apple farming, he said, "Apple is the most profitable crop, and with the introduction of high-yielding varieties, farmers are opting for apples purely for better returns," he said.

# Jammu Kashmir Angel Network hosts Investor Awareness Programs

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: Jammu Kashmir Angel Network (JKAN) recently concluded a series of investor awareness programs that garnered enthusiastic participation from the business community in Jammu & Kashmir. The programs were aimed at educating potential investors on the nuances of startup investments, with a focus on legal processes, risk management, and ensuring transparency in investment practices. Over the past month, these sessions provided valuable insights into the critical aspects of startup investing. Attendees learned how to assess business plans, gauge market potential, and navigate the complexities of investment risks. Experts also delved into the regulatory landscape, highlighting the importance of due diligence and investor rights, with an emphasis on safeguarding investor

interests through robust security and transparency measures. The programs were supported by key figures such as Sh. Rahul Sahai, Chairman of Sahai Industries and Chairperson of PHD Chamber of Commerce, Dr. Vivek Sharma, CIO of IIM Jammu, and Suraj Malik, a prominent angel investor, among others. Their involvement underscored the growing interest in startup investments within the Union Territory. Tushar Gandotra, Founder of JKAN, stressed the significance of these initiatives in developing a strong investment culture in the region. "There's a growing appetite among investors to diversify into startup investments, but the lack of awareness has been a significant hurdle. The success of these sessions has shown us that the business community in Jammu

and Kashmir is ready to take a leading role in the startup ecosystem, potentially positioning the region as a national hub for startups," Gandotra remarked. Participants expressed appreciation for the practical advice and insights gained during the sessions.

"The program was incredibly informative and has given me the confidence to explore startup investments and build a diversified portfolio," noted a local business owner who attended the event. Building on the success of these programs, JKAN plans to host further sessions that will focus on specific industries and advanced investment strategies. By fostering a network of well-informed investors, JKAN aims to drive innovation and contribute to the economic growth of Jammu & Kashmir.

organizational skills will contribute greatly to the Trust's efforts to fulfill its mission of serving humanity. The Om Parmarth Jai Parmarth Trust remains steadfast in its mission to work for the betterment of society, offering support and services to those in need regardless of background or belief. The Trust is committed to spreading the message of compassion and humanity, and these appointments reflect its ongoing commitment to achieving these noble goals.

# Om Parmarth Jai Parmarth Trust announces key appointments to leadership team

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: The Om Parmarth Jai Parmarth Trust, a distinguished religious organization dedicated to promoting humanity and serving people from all walks of life, is proud to announce the appointment of several key individuals to its leadership team. Chairman Sandeep Singh Manhas has appointed Kamla Sharma as Vice President of the Trust. Her extensive experience and deep commitment to social welfare make her an ideal



Om Parmarth Jai Parmarth Trust Chairman Sandeep Singh Manhas appointing Kamla Sharma as Vice President.

choice for this role. Sindu Jyoti Sharma has been appointed as Convener, where she will be instrumental in coordinating the Trust's activities and ensuring that its humani-

tarian missions are carried out effectively. In addition, Nittin Rana and Mohit Sharma have been appointed as Joint Secretaries. Their shared dedication and

# Gaurav raises serious concern over non-functioning of Registration Software in J&K UT Urges LG Sinha to take immediate steps to streamline registration process

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: Gaurav Gupta, former General Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Jammu, has expressed grave concern over the ongoing non-functioning of the registration software in the region. In a statement on Saturday, Gaurav Gupta said that since January 2024, the software has been malfunctioning, causing significant inconvenience to the public, especially those dealing with land and immovable property transactions through powers of attorney. He pointed out that more than 1500 individuals in Jammu, holding powers of attorney related to land, have paid stamp duties as required, but their transactions are being stalled. He explained that the software lacks the necessary provision to reflect the attachment of stamp duties with the corresponding sale

deeds, leading to delays in registration processes. He mentioned that the aggrieved applicants have been raised multiple times with concerned authorities, including the Sub-Registrar, Inspector General of Registration (IGR), and the Special Secretary Revenue, but no effective resolution has been achieved. "Despite numerous meetings, the matter remains unresolved, leaving people with no option but to face continued delays in property registration," he said. Gaurav urged the LG to intervene and ensure that the necessary instructions are imparted to the concerned software handling agencies. "The delay is causing distress to thousands of citizens, and I urge the administration to take steps to streamline the registration process. Only then can we hope to resolve this long-standing issue and provide relief to the aggrieved public," he added.