

Ladakh aero festival, pre paragliding accuracy World Cup kick off with enthusiasm

STATE TIMES NEWS

LEH: The Ladakh Aero Festival and Pre-Paragliding Accuracy World Cup officially began, marking a significant milestone in the region's adventure tourism landscape. The world's highest paragliding accuracy competition, held at 14,400 feet, is taking place from August 25-28. The Ladakh Aero Festival aims to position the region as a global hub for aero sports enthusiasts. Ladakh's status as the world's highest eco-friendly paragliding site was highlighted, with the region offering a range of adventure activities including paragliding, rafting, bungee jumping, zip-lining, mountain biking, trekking, and wildlife tours.

The festival was officially flagged off by CEC Tashi Gyalson. The five-day event, which commenced with registration yesterday, promises to be a groundbreaking celebration of aero sports and adventure. The competition features 45 pilots across



Participant at paragliding accuracy competition in Leh.

three categories: Overall Men, Overall Women, and Overall Team. Winners in each category will receive gold, silver, and bronze medals, along with cash

prizes. The team category includes ten competing teams. CEC Tashi Gyalson, in his address, emphasized the historic nature of this event

despite its initial scale. He highlighted the potential for Ladakh to become a premier destination for adventure tourism and hinted at future expansions, including local

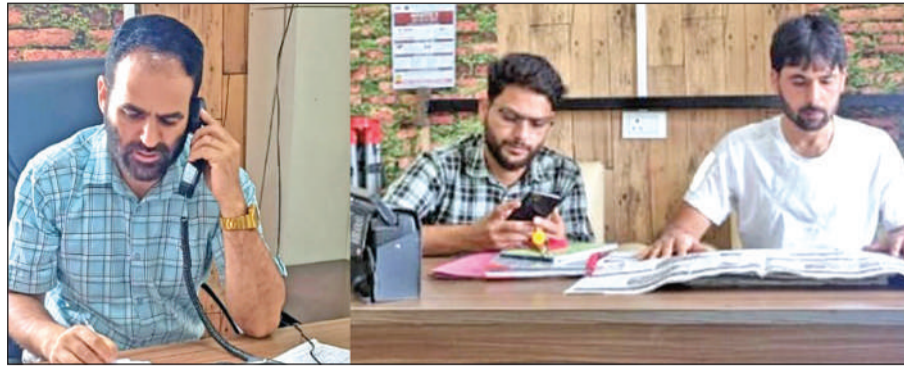
paragliding accuracy competitions. CEC Gyalson also highlighted the need for increased investment in adventure activities to promote rural tourism.

Chief Judge Raju Rai from Sikkim acknowledged the efforts of the UT administration and Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) in making the event possible and extended his sincere gratitude. He expressed confidence in the exponential growth of paragliding and announced that all participants will receive FAI awards.

The event also saw the launch of official festival T-shirts, symbolizing the spirit and energy of the festival.

The event's inauguration was graced by Mahavir Chakra Col. Sonam Wangchuk, former CEC Gyal Wangyal, Councillor Sakti Tsering Rigzin, SDM Sonam Dorjey, AD Tourism Fesal Iqbal Tantray and personnel from the Indian Air Force.

MCMC & DECR established to monitor paid news, pre-certify political advertisements in Shopian



STATE TIMES NEWS

SHOPIAN: In view of the General Elections to Legislative Assembly 2024, the Media Certification and Monitoring Committee (MCMC) and District Election Control Room (DECR) have been established at Shopian as mandated by the Election Commission of India (ECI), marking a significant step to ensure a transparent and fair electoral process in the District.

The district level MCMC has been set up to ensure that all media content com-

plies with ECI guidelines besides it will monitor paid news in the print media.

The MCMC shall certify all kinds of political advertisements to be telecasted or broadcast on electronic media. Also, it will certify the political advertisements to be published in print media on Poll day and Pre-poll day.

The District MCMC is headed by DEO and has members including ROS, DIO, Social Media Expert and a Journalist.

Meanwhile, the Election Control Room is currently in operation and has been

functioning round the clock to manage various aspects of the electoral process and facilitate the electorate of the district with the relevant information. The control room is acting as a communication link between different electoral teams and agencies, ensuring efficient information flow. The establishment of MCMC and District Election Control Room demonstrates the District election authority's commitment to uphold the integrity and fairness of the entire electoral process.

Govt announces Unified Pension Scheme: A historic move for Govt. employee welfare

STATE TIMES NEWS

LEH: The Union Cabinet, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved a landmark decision in the form of the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) for central government employees. This progressive initiative is set to significantly enhance the pension benefits for 23 lakh central government employees and potentially extend to around 90 lakh beneficiaries if state governments opt in.

The Chairman/CEC Adv. Tashi Gyalson, LAHDC, Leh extended heartfelt gratitude to Union Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for their dedication and decisive action in bringing this crucial initiative to fruition.

Information and

Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw highlighted the key features of the new scheme, which will be effective from April 1, 2025.

The scheme assures a pension of 50% of the average basic pay drawn over the last 12 months prior to superannuation for employees with a minimum of 25 years of service. For service between 10-25 years, the pension is proportionate.

Besides, the UPS provides a guaranteed family pension equivalent to 60% of pension of the employee immediately before his/her demise.

The UPS also assures minimum pension of Rs 10,000 per month on superannuation, provided the employee has completed at least 10 years of service.

The scheme also includes inflation indexation and a lump-sum payment upon superannuation, reinforcing the government's commitment to employee welfare.

The Cabinet's decision marks a significant step forward in improving the financial stability and quality of life for government employees and their families.

The government extends its gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and all Cabinet members for their dedication and support in realizing this crucial initiative.

This scheme highlights the government's ongoing efforts to modernise and enhance the benefits for its workforce, ensuring a more secure and dignified retirement for its employees.

STATE TIMES NEWS

KISHTWAR/JAMMU: Battle-hardened by the loss of her father and uncle in a terrorist attack five years ago, Shagun Parihar is set to fight the battle of ballots with the confidence of her people's support and expressed gratitude to the BJP leadership for fielding her as a candidate from the Kishtwar Assembly constituency, which is set to go to polls in the first phase of the elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

She emphasized security and employment as her primary issues for the upcoming elections.

Shagun is among the 15 candidates announced by the BJP for the assembly elections, with eight seats in south Kashmir set for polling

in the first phase on September 18. The last date to file the nomination papers for this phase is Tuesday.

"I feel deeply grateful to the BJP leadership, from the state to the Centre, for entrusting me with this opportunity to serve the people of the region. I am particularly thankful to Prime Minister Modi. I am confident that the people of Kishtwar will embrace this daughter of Kishtwar wholeheartedly. They will not let down their own daughter," she said.

Shagun, who lost her father Ajit Parihar and her uncle senior BJP leader Anil Parihar, in a terrorist attack in Kishtwar, emphasized that these elections are not just about her or her family but about all families who have

sacrificed for the nation.

"It is a tribute to all those who have laid down their lives fighting terrorism and safeguarding the country," she said.

BJP's Jammu and Kashmir secretary Anil Parihar and his brother Ajit Parihar were shot dead by the terrorists in Kishtwar in Jammu division on November 1, 2018.

Shagun highlighted peace and security as her top priorities for the upcoming elections. "Security is my foremost concern. Ensuring safety, security and peace is essential for development and progress. Therefore, my focus will be on ensuring peace, security and progress in the region," she said.

With a Master of Technology degree in

Electronics, young Shagun underscored employment as a major issue, stressing the need to provide jobs to the educated youth.

"Given the ongoing major projects in Kishtwar, which are creating job opportunities for many youths in the district, it is crucial to ensure employment for the unemployed youth here," she explained.

As the only woman in the BJP's list of candidates, Shagun expressed confidence that the people of Kishtwar would support her journey towards empowering the region.

"Every resident of Kishtwar will guide and support me in advancing the area's development. This is an emotional moment. The BJP is a large party that

cares for all its members as family," she added.

She also highlighted women's empowerment as a core focus of her work, especially in the remote areas of the district.

Party's general secretary Sunil Sharma, who had contested and won the polls from Kishtwar Assembly in the 2014 elections, has been shifted and fielded from Paddar Nagseni constituency.

The BJP announced its first list of 15 candidates for the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir on Monday, withholding nine seats in south Kashmir for the first phase of polling on September 18. The deadline for filing the nomination papers for this phase is Tuesday.

Shiv Sena (UBT) second list released, candidates announced from Doda, Nowshera, Jammu North



Shiv Sena (UBT) J&K chief Manish Sahni releasing assembly candidates list.

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Shiv Sena (UBT) Jammu-Kashmir unit today released its second list for the declared assembly elections of Jammu-Kashmir and announced its candidates from Jammu North, Doda and Nowshera (Rajouri) assembly seats.

While announced the sec-

ond list by state chief Manish Sahni in the party's state central office here today, Anchal Sharma has been declared the candidate from Nowshera (Rajouri), Tilak Shaan, Doda and Rajesh Zandayal from Jammu North assembly constituency.

Sahni said that candidates

are being announced only after getting the green signal from the high command.

He said that our resolution is to make Jammu and Kashmir the crown of the country once again and to restore the rights of the local people of Jammu and Kashmir. Our every candidate will contest the elections with

the oath of 25 promises including full statehood status to Jammu and Kashmir, special rights to Jammu and Kashmir under Article 371, free electricity and water, unemployment allowance, official status to Punjabi language. On this occasion

Tilak Shan, candidate from Doda (West), Jammu, today left Shiv Sena (Shinde Group) and returned to Shiv Sena (UBT) along with dozens of his supporters.

On Women's Equality Day today, Sahni promised to implement women empowerment at the grassroots level in Jammu and Kashmir.

He also wished the people on Shri Krishna Janmashtami. Gen Secretary Vikas Bakshi, Vice President Sanjeev Kohli, Balwant Singh, President Kamghar wing Raj Singh were present.

Jammu bids adieu to Sama-Vaya artists; art retreat concludes with exhibition

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Skyview by Empyrean, a 22-acre premium mountain harbour that seamlessly blends premium hospitality, adventure, nature, and luxury in the Sangat-Patnitop region, successfully concluded the second edition of the Sama-Vaya art retreat that hosted eight artists and craftspeople from across India.

Prominent artlovers and collectors from around the country and abroad, as well as over 80 art students from Institute of Music and Fine Arts, Jammu University, also attended the exhibition that displayed the individual and collaborative artworks of the eight participating artists - Lado Bai (Bhil art), Kritika Joshi (Phad painting), Saroj Shyam (Gond painting), Rachita Dutta, Rachna Badrakia, Neha Lavangia, Suman Gupta, and



Participating artists posing for a photograph.

Sohan Singh Billawaria.

Ace and renowned movie and theatre personalities such as Rajit Kapur, Shernaz Patel, Anahita Uberoi and Sohrab Ardeshtir graced the art event with their presence.

These artists spent four days in residence at Skyview by Empyrean to collaborate, exchange ideas, and produce masterpieces inspired by their surroundings. The artists worked individually as well as in pairs to create their impressions of Jammu, the environment, and Skyview by Empyrean. All their artworks were displayed at an exhibition held at Skyview by Empyrean

on August 25, 2024.

"We at Skyview by Empyrean are so proud to have hosted the second edition of Sama-Vaya that allowed us to see the different shades of Jammu through the eyes of this very talented and observant group of artists. They enriched the exhibition by bringing their diverse and interesting perspectives from both urban as well as indigenous backgrounds. Both Anupa and Anu have elevated the standard of the art retreat this year with their expertise and keen eye for detail. We look forward to continuing our support for such enriching cultural

initiatives going forward," said Owais Altaf Syed, Director of Skyview by Empyrean.

"As we wrap up the second edition of Sama-Vaya, I'm left in awe at the beauty we've been surrounded by at Skyview by Empyrean and the stunning inspirations that these eight artists have splashed across their canvases! To see these talents from across India work so well individually with their unique interpretations of their environment while also collaborating so beautifully with their partners, merging their two worlds, skills, and forms of expression, all for the love of art has been truly rewarding for me as a curator! Jammu and its cultural landscape, as seen through the eyes of these artists, will remain forever etched in my memory," said Anupa Mehra, Art Curator for Sama-Vaya. The property is located at one of the most scenic spots of the Sangat-Patnitop region that offers unfiltered views of the majestic Pir Panjal range and only is an hour's drive from the famous Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Temple at Katra.

Pr Secy Culture reviews preparations for Basohli Festival

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Principal Secretary, Culture, Suresh Kumar Gupta, conducted an extensive visit to Basohli as part of the comprehensive preparations for the forthcoming Basohli Festival scheduled to take place from October 10 to 12, 2024.

He was accompanied by senior officials, including Harvinder Kour, Secretary, J&K Academy of Art, Culture, and Languages; Sanjeev Rana, Additional Secretary, JKAACL; Sangeeta Sharma, Assistant Director, Archives, Archaeology and Museums and Shruti Awasti, Regional Director, IGNC, J&K.

During his visit, the Principal Secretary held a meeting with the local administration and public representatives. The meeting was attended by Ajeet Singh, CEO, Bani Sarthal Development Authority; Anil Thakur, ADC, Basohli and other officers and officials of different departments of the Basohli Sub-District



Prpl Secy Culture, Suresh Kumar Gupta at a meeting.

Administration. The Principal Secretary actively sought inputs from the attendees, emphasizing the significance of community involvement in the festival's success.

He inspected the arrangements at the Ram Lila Ground and Purthu, the designated venues for the festival, and engaged in detailed discussions with the officers regarding the installation of stalls, parking arrangements, decoration, stage setup, and sanitation measures and provided guidance on enhancing the infrastructure and facilities to accommodate the

anticipated influx of visitors as the event is expected to draw significant attraction of public, not only from the region but also from the adjoining states of H.P and Punjab.

This festival will feature an array of cultural programs, including traditional music and dance performances, art exhibitions, craft displays, and culinary experiences, all designed to provide an immersive cultural experience.

The festival will also offer a platform for local artisans and artists to display their talents, thus contributing to

the economic development of the region.

Suresh Kumar also inspected the historic Basohli Mint, which has been earmarked for restoration in the second phase of the "Revival, Restoration, and Maintenance of Heritage" scheme. During the visit, he provided clear instructions to the concerned officers, emphasizing the need to expedite the restoration process and ensure that all necessary steps are taken to preserve and restore this significant heritage structure at the earliest.

During the tour, Principal Secretary visited the Basohli Art Gallery, where he engaged with students being trained in the traditional Basohli painting style. He commended the students for their dedication and praised the gallery's management for their efforts in preserving and promoting this unique cultural art form.

Principal Secretary highlighted the importance of passing down such traditions to future generations, stress-

ing that maintaining these artistic practices is vital to preserving the region's cultural vibrancy.

J&K Bank shines at ICC Emerging Asia Banking Conclave & Awards 2024 Bags award for "Best Performance on Profitability"

STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: J&K Bank has once again proven its mettle in the banking industry by securing the prestigious "Best Performance on Profitability" award in the category of Private Sector Bank (Mid Size) at the 2nd ICC Emerging Asia Banking Conclave & Awards 2024. The conclave themed "Leading in the Digital Paradigm", organized by the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC), took place in Delhi, and brought together thought leaders, regulators, and banking professionals from across the BIMSTEC region.

On behalf of the Bank, General Manager (Rest of India) Rajesh Gupta received the award, which recognizes the Bank's outstanding perform-



General Manager (Rest of India) Rajesh Gupta receiving the "Best Performance on Profitability" award.

ance in profitability among mid-sized private sector banks in the country.

Expressing his gratitude, MD & CEO Baldev Prakash, said, "We are deeply honored to receive this prestigious award, which honours the unwavering dedication and commitment of

our staff. Their relentless pursuit of excellence has enabled us to achieve this milestone and emerge as a leader in this particular category in the industry."

He further added, "This recognition not only celebrates our past achievements but also

aligns with our strategic vision to transform J&K Bank into an institution that serves the needs of all generations. We are committed to our journey of innovation, customer-centricity, and sustainable growth, which will continue to drive our success in the years to come."

Notably, the Bank earned its highest-ever net profit of Rs 1767 Cr for the financial year 2024 thereby registering the record profit consecutively for second year. The Conclave featured international speakers discussing the impact of technological advancements on the banking industry while providing a platform for knowledge sharing and the exchange of best practices among delegates and regulators participating in the conclave.