Birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev to be celebrated in all educational institutions as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav: LG

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Sunday met a delegation of Sikh community of Kashmir under the banner of "United Kashmiri Sikhs Progressive Forum" led by its Chairman, Baldev Singh Raina here.

The delegation comprising of Religious leaders, Civil Society members, Educators, Professionals from the Sikh community apprised the Lt Governor about the concerning issues and demands of Sikhs living in the UT.

UKSP Forum members presenting a sward to Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha.

The Lt Governor, while interacting with the delegation observed that the present Government is committed towards inclusive development and welfare of all sections of the society. He assured the delegation that all their genuine issues would be taken up for redressal expeditiously.

Speaking on the occasion, the Lt Governor observed that Sikhism binds people in the thread of unity and the community is selflessly serving humanity for ages.

"The supreme sacrifices of people from the Sikh community in the freedom struggle can never be forgotten. They have always led from the front and encouraged others with their unity and strength", he added.

Responding to the demands put forth by the delegation, the Lt Governor said that the UT administration will take immediate and appropriate action to address them. "Government is working for the promotion of Punjabi language in the UT in a well-planned manner", he added.

Referring to the recent launch of Kashmir Migrant portal, the Lt Governor said to the members of the delegation that all possible assistance will be provided to bring the Kashmiri migrants who want to return to their native land.

The Lt Governor observed that the government is adopting an integrated approach to establish sustained peace in J&K.

While speaking on the employment opportunities for Youth, the Lt Governor urged the members of the delegation to connect the youngsters from the community with various schemes of Mission Youth launched by the UT administration.

The Lt Governor assured the delegation that government would provide assistance in the modernization of all religious institutions in the UT of J&K. He also conveyed that the issues regarding reservation will be discussed with the concerned authorities in the central government. Several representatives of the Sikh communities from various districts also spoke on the occasion and apprised the Lt Governor about their issues and aspirations.

Earlier, the delegation submitted an 11 point charter of demands to the Lt Governor.

JPPF organises meeting of all social, commercial bodies, discusses issues of Jammu

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Jammu Province People's Forum (JPPF), an organisation advocating cause of Dogras, on Sunday convened a meeting of all social and commercial bodies to find out a solution to end the miseries of the masses of Jammu Province.

Various heads of the Social and commercial organizations raised serious concerns leading to deterioration of overall situation of the Province.

"All financial activities managed by the private sector is shrinking day by day and is being gradually going into the hands of big fishes operating in the rest part of the country," they said adding that the trade activities such as liquor trade, hotel industry, transport, FMCG products and even healthcare and education are also at the verge of closure due to bad policies and inefficient working of the Government functionary.

The JPPF urged Govt to declare holiday on Maharaja Hari Singh's birth anniversary and also to liberate Jammu Province and grant either statehood or regional council so that equitable development could take place in every domain.

The newly elected Presidents of various organizations were honoured by giving them a Certificate of Honour who include President (J&K BAR Association), President (Brahmin Sabha), President (Megh Sudhar Sabha), President (Mahajan Sabha), President (Salyara Sabha), President (Various Transport Association).

Others members present were Pavitar Singh, M.S Katoch, Avinash Bhatia, M L Sharma, Resham Singh, Inderjeet Khajuria, Surender Veer, Pritam Sharma, Gurmit Singh, Balwan Singh, Kamla Sharma, Sunita Sharma, Rajiv Mahajan and Ram Rattan Sharma.

Chugh asks Sonia Gandhi to come clean on 'anti-national' Navjot Sidhu

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

CHANDIGARH: Expressing grave concerns over PCC president Navjot Sidhu being dubbed as anti-national by former Punjab chief Minister Amarinder Singh, the BJP on Sunday demanded clarification from AICC president Sonia Gandhi to explain her stand on it.

BJP National General Secretary Tarun Chugh said Capt Amarinder describing Sidhu as a " man having close links with Pakistan " was an alarming statement.

"If Sidhu is threat to the nation why is AICC high command including Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi supporting Sidhu as PCC chief of a border state," Chugh asked.

While underlining that Amarinder Singh had made very serious allegations against Navjot Sidhu by calling him anti-national, the Congress high command needs to come clean on the matter, Chugh demanded.

After resigning as the Chief Minister of Punjab on Saturday, Amarinder Singh had lashed out at Navjot Singh Sidhu over his Pakistan connection and had raised questions about Sidhu's praise of Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan and General Bajwa, and even called him anti-national.

Congress District Jammu Rural organises workers meeting

India paying price for BJP Govt's failure making them hapless: Bhalla

Congress leaders during a rally at Suchetgarh in Jammu.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SUCHETGARH: Congress District Jammu Rural on Sunday organized workers meeting amidst anti-people policies and decisions by BJP Govt in J&K at Panchayat Kotli Arjun Singh of Suchetgarh constituency.

The workers' meeting was organized by Hari Singh Chib, President DCC Jammu Rural at Suetchgarh through Ch Mohan Singh Vice President DCC Jammu Rural in presence of former Minister and JKPCC Vice President Raman Bhalla.

Bhalla claimed that in the last seven years, BJP Govt has failed on several fronts and we hope and pray that God gives them the wisdom to realise that this is what they have led the country to. This is where, you have failed and today as a result, India is paying a heavy price for it," he said.

"Still, you have put India on sale for a few friends of yours and which is why, it is important that we are calling it the 'Punjipati Poojan divas' (crony capitalist friends day)," he said.

Bhalla targeted the government, claiming that its 19-month rule was marked by perpetual confrontation with the Opposition, unaccountable centralisation of power and authoritarian style of functioning. It projected the government as a "failure" on all fronts - from economy to foreign policy.

As far as the foreign policy is concerned, Bhalla said, "Knee-jerk responses and abrupt changes with regard to many countries have caused setbacks leading to belittling of issues and India's response thereto, both at regional and international level."

He alleged that the 19 months of Modi government have been marked by unaccountable centralisation of power, policy making and administrative decisions in J&K.

Alleging that the political atmosphere in J&K has been "vitiated by design and default in furtherance of BJP divisive agenda", he said that an orchestrated campaign was unleashed, which undermined social unity and created turbulence, disharmony and distrust.

Terming Congress Party as a dependable political platform for the people of J&K, Bhalla said assuaging socio-economic and political aspirations of the people and undertaking development on a massive scale holds key to steer J&K to peace and prosperity.

He stressed on the urgent demands of the people calling for confidence building political measures that will set in motion a genuine democratic exercise in Jammu and Kashmir.

District Jammu Rural President Hari Singh Chib deliberated upon various day to day problems being faced by the public in the absence of any elected Govt said that the onus is on the BJP which got huge mandate in the last Assembly and Lok Sabha elections as well as the current Lok Sabha elections besides being the ruling party at the Centre and J&K being under direct Central rule.

He said that it is most unfortunate that the common people have no medium to raise their voice for their basic necessities like water, power, healthcare and education due to the neglect of the BJP representatives.

Asserting that the BJP Government in J&K proved disastrous and ominous in every aspect, Chib said that amid the administrative disarray, the BJP was only indulging in flip flops and opportunist politics.

Among others who were present include Karan Bhagat Chairman Congress S.C Cell, Advocate Suresh Dogra Chairman Congress OBC Cell, Ravinder Singh Sarpanch and Sr Vice President DCC Jammu Rural, Amit Bali Vice Chairman Congress Refugee Cell, office bearers of DCC Jammu Rural and Block Congress Committee and party activists.

Dr Jitendra inaugurates workshop on CSIR initiatives for Science & Technology led development in J&K UT

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Union Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office (PMO), Science and Technology, Earth Sciences and Space Technology, Dr Jitendra Singh on Sunday said that as every sector is increasingly becoming dependent on technology, awareness among stakeholders is essential for optimum outcomes.

He made these suggestions while inaugurating a one-day workshop on CSIR (Council of Scientific and Industrial Research) initiatives for science & technology led development in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir at Sher-e-Kashmir International Convention Center here.

Union Minister PMO, Dr Jitendra Singh during inauguration of workshop on CSIR at Srinagar.

Science & Technology is the priority sector of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and under his dynamic leadership there is a visible change for the past many years in this field, Dr Singh said.

While complimenting the organizers of the workshop, Dr Singh said that such workshops are the need of the hour as awareness is a must for optimum outcomes as the dependency of several sectors on technology is increasing day-by-day.

He underscored that there is a need to commit ourselves to technological tools as there is no other option to compete without it.

"Indians have had a strong scientific temper for ages and we have talent in abundance and with this talent India is bound to be the world leader in the technological sector. We ought to be the frontline leader of space technology and India is far ahead of many developed countries in this field," the Minister said.

While commenting on the technological interventions in J&K, Dr Singh said the region can reap maximum benefits out of the technological interventions in different fields.

He said after the 2019 constitutional arrangements, Jammu and Kashmir has been able to successfully implement programmes, schemes and other good practices of governance.

He said that J&K has become pioneer of the purple (lavender) revolution in India after taking lead in the production of lavender in different parts of the UT.

Dr Singh said that CSIR also provided support to J&K during the COVID-19 pandemic with respect to the infrastructure of RT-PCR machine, biosafety and also trained manpower. He said that two Industrial Biotech Parks are being established in J&K while giving details about the ongoing activities of CSIR in J&K.

On the occasion, Secretary, DSIR and Director General, CSIR, Dr Shekhar C Mande delivered a presentation on science & technology led developmental initiatives of J&K.

In his presentation, Dr Mande talked about the success story of CSIR Aroma Mission transforming lives in J&K and gave a detailed summary of the several activities under Aroma Mission. He gave a brief about the support to infrastructure development in J&K under the Purple (lavender) Revolution in J&K through floriculture activities.

Chief Secretary J&K, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta; Director CSIR - Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine, Jammu; Principal Secretary Science & Technology, J&K, Alok Kumar also spoke on the occasion while as Vice-Chancellors of J&K Universities, senior scientists, professors among others were in attendance during the workshop.

Women entrepreneurship exhibition culminates at Kashmir Haat

■ SHAKEELA ANDRABI

SRINAGAR: The five-day long women entrepreneurship exhibition, held at Kashmir Haat, Srinagar concluded here on Sunday. During the exhibition, organised by Ereiginis Event management Pvt Ltd in collaboration with Saifco Cements, Directorate of Handlooms & Handicrafts Kashmir with support from Srinagar SMC and Srinagar Smart City Mission Ltd, scores of women entrepreneurs from different fields showcased their products for five days, but the public participation was not so encouraging.

In the exhibition, numerous female entrepreneurs had set-up stalls for a range of products like clothing, food, art and other things. It was the maiden exclusive exhibition for women entrepreneurs of Kashmir, the inaugural ceremony of which was attended by a number of dignitaries including Mayor of Srinagar city, Junaid Mattu besides officials from Handicraft & Handlooms Department. During the event, SMC Mayor visited various stalls and interacted with the entrepreneurs. Congratulating the organisers for holding the event, he assured them that many more exhibitions would be organised in coming days to promote women entrepreneurship in J&K.

Mehreen Bakshi, one of the organisers, had high hopes that the exclusive event for women entrepreneurs would prove to be a major step to boost the businesses. "Various women entrepreneurs set-up more than 40 stalls regarding clothing, decoration, food, imported beauty and art products etc. Past years were tough due to COVID and other odd situations but now we hope that the event will give female entrepreneurs an opportunity and good platform to boost their businesses," Bakshi added.

STATE TIMES correspondent visited Kashmir Haat and interacted with various women entrepreneurs, who said that the event was the worst experience of their life due to issues like mismanagement, lack of visiting people & publicity etc. "I have participated in various exhibitions in Noida, SKICC and other parts of Jammu & Kashmir but the experience I experienced here was the worst. It was a complete waste of time," said Asiya Amin, an entrepreneur. Asma Saleem Bhat, another female entrepreneur, who is just 19 years old and hails from Babademb area of Srinagar, had set-up a stall providing Kashmiri Kehwa and traditional 'Roat' or bread in the exhibition, said, "No doubt, such events are source of encouragement as it increases hope, which will help in expansion of business. But in Kashmir Haat this time, it was not a well arranged and managed event."

Seerat Javid, another entrepreneur, also expressed resentment over poor conduct of the event. "It was my first experience. I am of the opinion that organisers were unable to hold such a public event properly, due to which very few people visited the exhibition. Further, due to ongoing COVID times, it was not appropriate time to hold the event," she asserted.

Sukhnandan convenes grievances redressal camp

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A grievance redressal camp was organized at village Rathua in Marh constituency where former Minister & Chairman Panchyati Raj Cell BJP JKUT Ch. Sukhnandan Kumar listened to problems of the people of the area.

People of different villages including Panchyat Rathua put-forth various problems and appealed former Minister for their redressal.

Former Minister listened to the demands of the people and assured them that all issues will be resolved shortly.

He also informed and congratulated people of Panchyat Rathua for getting 45 meter span bridge under NABARAD for Rs.5.64 crore, which has been sanctioned after a long struggled by him.

"The tendering process of the said bridge has been completed and very shortly the construction of the bridge will be started", he informed.

Former Minister, Ch. Sukhnandan Kumar addressing a public meeting.

He also asked people to take maximum benefits of centrally sponsored schemes launched by Modi led Govt at the centre.

A Langar was also organised while celebrating Modi's birth "Pakhwada".

Sarpanch Panchyat Souhagani Advocate Daljeet Singh said that unprecedented development has been witnessed by the people of Marh Constituency from very first day when Sukhnansan Kumar took oath as Member Legislative since 2008.

He said people of Marh Constituency are lucky enough as they have mass leader like Sukhnandan Kumar who is available to public by 24×7.

Sarpanch Panchyat Rathua Lal Singh thanked former Minister for getting sanctioned the bridge in his Panchyat which was a burning issue of the Panchyat as in rainy season people feel lot of problems while crossing it.

DDC member Marh Balbir Lal, Sarpanch Panchyat Saharan Sham Lal, Sarpanch Chattha Gujjran Harjeet Singh, Sarpanch Galwaday Chak Vikramjeet Singh, Sarpanch Rajpura Dhananrtar Singh Bittu, Chairman Municipal Committee Ghou Manhasan Jatinder Singh, Vice Chairman Krishan Lal, Panch Bawa Ram, Panch Satpal, ex-Sarpanch Rathua Kuldeep Kumar and a large number of political activists present on the occasion.