

# Shat Chandi Maha Yagya begins at Vaishno Devi Shrine

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KATRA: Shat Chandi Maha Yagya began with onset of auspicious nine-day long 'Sharad Navratras' on Monday at the Holy Cave Shrine of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi, amidst grand decorations organized by Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board.

The Maha Yagya which is being performed by chanting of Vedic hymns with other religious ceremonies at the holy cave shrine for peace, prosperity, health, safety and well being of mankind, will conclude with Purna Ahuti on Mahanavami.

It is being telecast on Shraddha MH One channel from 11: 30 AM to 1:00 PM daily during Navratras.

K K Sharma, Member Shrine Board; Anshul Garg, CEO of the Board; Sudhir Bali, SDM Bhawan; Ajay Salaan, Assett. CEO, besides, other senior officers of Board and a large number of pilgrims were present on the occasion.

On this festive occasion, as per the directions of Chairman (Lt. Governor, JK-UT), Shrine Board has been providing free pony and battery car services to 'Divyang' devotees with special arrangements for their priority Darshans at sanctum sanctorum by setting up of help desks for their convenience at various locations.

## J&K Bank MD & CEO meets CEC LAHDC Leh, top officials of Ladakh UT Admn

Committed to contribute to unfolding growth story of Ladakh: Baldev Prakash

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Reiterating J&K Bank's unflinching commitment to the Ladakh UT's economic growth and prosperity, MD & CEO Baldev Prakash called upon top public representatives including Chairman/CEC Ladakh Autonomous hill Development Council (LAHDC) Leh, senior administration officials including Advisor to Lieutenant Governor besides interacting with the customers and the Bank staff during his four-day extensive visit of the Union territory. Accompanied by Bank's General manager Sudhir Gupta and other senior officers of the Bank, Baldev Prakash travelled all the way from Srinagar to Leh. During his meeting with Chairman & CEC, LAHDC Advocate Tashi Gyalson, Badev Prakash said, "People of Ladakh remain very dear to us and we remain committed to their financial empowerment and economic development by maintaining an extensive network of branches, Easy Banking Units and ATMs across the UT to serve them well." "Recently, we concluded a special recruitment drive for Ladakh wherein sufficient number of locals were employed and we plan to roll-out digital initiatives like phone pe loan, insurance coverage to government employees soon in the UT", he informed CEC, while requesting the council to strengthen the relations further between the people and the Bank. MD & CEO asserted, "We contribute major share in pri-



CEO, Shrine Board, Anshul Garg and others participating in Shat Chandi Maha Yagya.

rum by setting up of help desks for their convenience at various locations.

Noteworthy, RFID-based tracking and dispatching pilgrims in batches, a focused initiative of Shrine Board for Yatra Management to ensure their safety, comfort and ease of commutation has already been rolled out by the Shrine Board well before commencement of Navratras.

In addition, erecting welcome gates,

the Shrine Board has unveiled special selfie-points for the first time enroute the Holy shrine for the pilgrims to capture fond memories of their visit during Navratras.

Like in the past, the Board has also made elaborate arrangements to facilitate a much larger number of pilgrims who are likely to visit Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine during Navratras.

These arrangements include round

the clock water and power supply, sanitation and cleanliness, medicare and availability of special "fast related" food at the catering outlets of the Shrine Board.

Grand decorations are made at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Bhawan, Atka and the area surrounding it with indigenous-foreign fruits and flowers, as well as huge reception doors and pandals are installed in the Bhawan Area. Likewise, the illumination of the Bhawan area with attractive and colorful lights has also been done. The breathtaking and festive decorations are a special visual delight for pilgrims who trek about 12km from Katra to Bhawan.

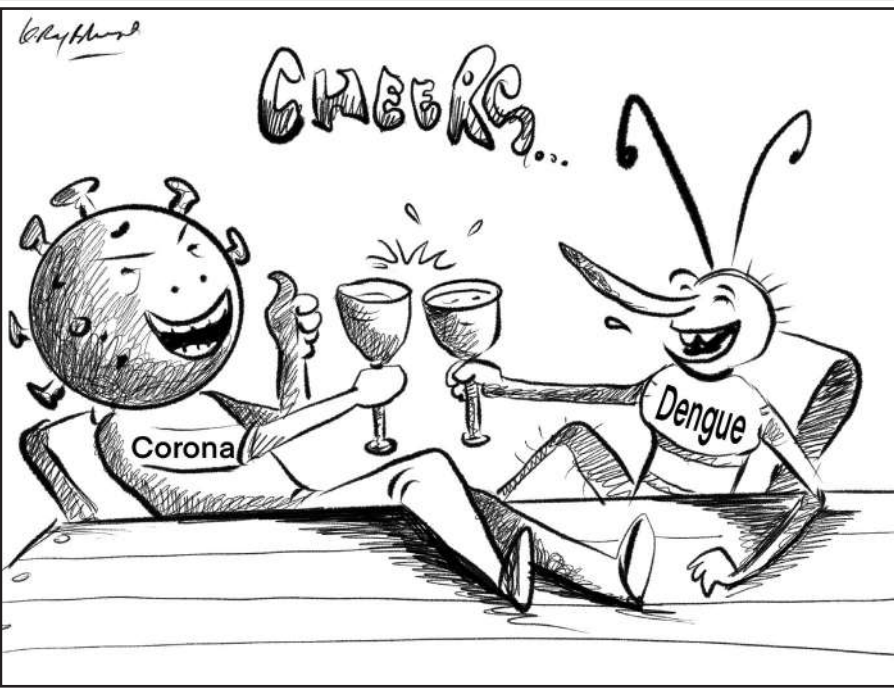
Also, as was done in last year's Shardiya Navratras, this year's other special features of arrangements included Bhajan and Bhaint performances during morning and evening Atka Aarti by the renowned artists.

The CEO interacted with the pilgrims and enquired about the arrangements made by the board to facilitate them. He expressed satisfaction at the arrangements put in place for the pilgrims at Bhawan and Katra.

## HC refuses to quash preliminary enquiry against Revenue official

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Justice Sanjay Dhar of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court while refusing to quash preliminary enquiry against revenue official, observed that purpose of verification of the complaints and holding of preliminary enquiry is to ascertain the veracity of the allegations made in the complaint, otherwise a public servant would be susceptible to reckless prosecution and no public servant would be able to take decisions in a free and fair manner. It is for this reason that before registration of an FIR against a public servant, in matters relating to corruption, the case is examined and verified by adopting any of the modes provided in clause 3.7 of the aforesaid Chapter. Thus, holding of a preliminary enquiry into the allegations made in the complaint is in the interest of the public servant, otherwise, if an FIR is registered straightway without undertaking any verification, there is every chance that the public servant may be exposed to reckless prosecution," the Court observed. Justice Sanjay Dhar while dismissing the petition, observed that the petitioner, in the instant, without waiting for the result of the preliminary enquiry, has rushed to this Court and filed the instant petition challenging the process adopted by the ACB, Jammu, which apparently is for safeguarding the interest of the petitioner.



## CAT stays selection process for Foresters (Jammu Div)

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Central Administrative Tribunal stayed selection process in pursuance to Advertisement Notice No. 04.2022 dated 27.07.2022 to the extent of filling up of posts of Foresters (Jammu Division) figuring at serial no. 193. Court further ordered that in meantime, the respondents are at liberty to conclude pending recruitment rules amendment process.

This significant order has been passed in a petition filed Pardeep Singh for setting aside the impugned Advertisement notification No. 04.22 dated 27.07.2022 issued by the Service Selection Board and also seeking direction to the Service Selection Board to provide minimum qualification for direct recruitment to the post of Forester as 'Bachelors degree in Science or Equivalent qualification with at least one of subject in Forestry, Botany, Zoology, Agriculture, Bio-Technology, Environmental Science, Horticulture, Science Subject'. During the course of hearing Sr. Adv Sunil Sethi assisted by Adv Ravi Abrol submitted that vide Advertisement Notification No. 4 of 2022 dated 27.07.2022, various posts, including that of Forester at Serial No. 9/Item No. 193 have been issued. The qualification prescribed for the post of Forester was 10+2 or equivalent qualification with science subject. The Rule providing minimum qualification for the direct recruitment to the post of Forester as 10+2 or equivalent with science subject was challenged by some candidates possessing professional qualification of Forestry before High Court of Jammu and Kashmir at Srinagar by way of filing SWP No. 2332 of 2017 titled Mohd Yousuf Ganai & Ors. Vs. State of Jammu and Kashmir and Others. The High Court vide order dated 14.12.2017 while tak-

ing the statement of Senior Additional Advocate General on record has directed the respondents to conclude the process initiated for amending the recruitment rules for the post of Forester in terms of communication dated 15.11.2017 by not later than six months. It was also directed by the Court that since the respondents are in the process of amending the recruitment rules for the post of Forester (Direct Recruitment), they shall also ensure that the concern, as projected by petitioners in the writ petition, is well registered and addressed to. The Writ Petition was accordingly disposed of by High Court.

It has been further been submitted by Sr. Counsel that as the respondents had themselves committed in the aforesaid judgement that they would amend the recruitment rules for the post of Forester in terms of communication dated 15.11.2017, they were duty bound to implement the same. The respondents had sought and were granted six month's time to bring the requisite change, however, even after a lapse of more than five years, they have not done the needful. On the contrary, they issued fresh advertisement notification no. 04 of 2022 dated 27.07.2022 prescribing the same qualification of 10+2 which was there in the earlier notification, which is a clear violation of judgement passed by High Court of J&K. On the otherside Rajesh Thappa AAG appearing for the respondents submitted that as the process of amendment of recruitment rules has not yet been completed, Advertisement Notification No. 04 of 2022 dated 27.07.2022 has been issued on basis of existing recruitment rules. The said notification does not preclude applicants from applying, even if they have qualification higher than 10 + 2. He

prayed for some time to verify the status of amendment process of recruitment rules pertaining to post of Forester.

Suresh Kumar Batra, Judicial Member of Centra Administrative Tribunal after hearing both the sides, observed that from perusal of Order dated 04.12.2017 (supra), it is seen that the respondents had themselves placed on record the communication bearing no. PCCF/LO/2522 dated 15-11-2017 of Additional Principal Chief Conservator, before the High Court and apprised the High Court that they would amend the recruitment rules for the post of Forester in terms of communication dated 15.11.2017, therefore the respondents were legally bound to complete the amendment process in time bound manner. "The respondents had sought and were granted six month's time to bring the requisite change, however, even after a lapse of more than five years, they have not done the needful rather they have chosen to proceed further with fresh advertisement notification no.04 of 2022 dated 27.07.2022 requisitioning the same qualification of 10 + 2 as par old rules," the CAT observed and looking into the facts and circumstances of the case, a prima facie case for grant of interim relief is made out. Accordingly, interim relief is granted and issued notice to respondents returnable within four weeks also directed respondents to file counter affidavit within three weeks and ordered that the selection process in pursuance to Advertisement Notice No. 04.2022 dated 27.07.2022 to the extent of filling up of posts of Forester (Jammu Division) figuring at serial no. 193 is stayed. However, in meantime respondents are at liberty to conclude the pending recruitment rules amendment process, the CAT directed.

## ANTF Kashmir arrests 3 drug-peddlers, recovers huge quantity of contraband substances

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Continuing its efforts to eradicate the menace of drug trafficking from its gross root level under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan, The Anti-Narcotic Task Force (ANTF) Kashmir arrested three drug peddlers and recovered huge quantity of contraband substances from their possession. "ANTF Kashmir (a specialised unit to check rising menace of drugs) has

recovered commercial quantity of one quintal and 93 Kgs of Poppy Straw in two back-to-back operations from three accused persons," SSP ANTF Vinay sharma said adding that they have been identified as Satnam Singh, Shiv Kumar both residents of Ludhiana Punjab and Arif Rashid Bhat resident of Yaripora in District Anantnag.

The vehicles used in the commission of crime have

also been seized, he added.

Preliminary investigation revealed that the arrested drug peddlers were going to sell the same contraband among the youth and other drug peddlers in and outside the UT of J&K, Vinay said.

Accordingly, cases under relevant sections of law have been registered at Police Station ANTF Kashmir and investigation has been initiated.

SSP Vinay Sharma

requested community members to come forward with any information regarding drug peddlers in their neighbourhood.

Persons found indulging in drug peddling will be dealt as per law, he said adding that our consistent actions against drug peddlers should reassure the community members that we are making efforts to keep our society free from the scourge of drug menace.

## Dr Jitendra announces countrywide 'One Week One Lab' campaign

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Soon after his return to the national capital after a 5-day visit to the USA, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; Minister of State (Independent Charge) Earth Sciences; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh, who is also the Vice President of CSIR (Council of Scientific & Industrial Research), announced countrywide "One Week One Lab" theme-based campaign to showcase the technological breakthroughs and innovations in each of the 37 CSIR laboratories/institutes spread across India.

Addressing the first-ever CSIR Leadership Meet attended by the Directors and Head of Departments of all the 37 CSIR labs across the country, Dr Jitendra said, the legacy of CSIR is built on the cumulative contribution of its several national laboratories and institutes. He said, each laboratory of CSIR is unique and specialising in as diverse



Union Minister and Vice President CSIR, Dr Jitendra Singh addressing the first-ever CSIR Leadership Meet attended by the Directors of all the 37 CSIR institutes from across India, at New Delhi on Monday.

areas as genomics to geology, material technology to microbial technology and food to fuel.

The Minister also recalled how the laboratories came together during the COVID pandemic last year and developed several technologies that helped India's fight against COVID. The Minister said, the success stories of each lab must be brought to the fore of the country through a massive mass media campaign.

Dr Jitendra said, CSIR breakthroughs in areas like Drone, Heliborne technology, state of the art Sewage cleaning machines, Aroma Mission has opened up huge opportunities for developing

meaningful and equal stake partnership among Research, Academia and Industry. The Minister said, the state-of-the-art Heliborne survey technology with cooperation from Jal Shakti Ministry was applied last year in States of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Punjab and Haryana and this could play an important role in positively contributing to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Vision and Mission of "Har Ghar Nal Se Jal". Similarly, the mechanized sewage cleaning system developed by CSIR for wider dissemination will help in achieving the target of Swachh Bharat Mission, he added.

Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, said the Minister who is also Vice President CSIR, that Science & Technology has got enhanced budget and a very special impetus in the last 8 years and the scientific pursuits and endeavours are now being assigned special importance. He said, the ultimate goal of all Scientific Innovations is to bring "Ease of Living" for the common man.

Dr Singh called upon a pool of over 4,500 CSIR scientists to reorient and revitalise the organization to emerge as Global Centres of Innovations in the Amrit Kaal. He said, they must focus on emerg-

ing innovations in areas like Hydrogen in the energy transition, Carbon capture and storage, Accessible solar power, Plastic recycling and Cheap energy storage.

Dr Jitendra Singh said that there should be a Science Pavilion on the lines of DST and DBT at Pragati Maidan. He also urged the DG, CSIR to organize CSIR-Expos in various parts of the country to showcase its technological prowess to various states and industries, besides other stakeholders.

In conclusion, Dr Jitendra asked CSIR and all the science departments to explore S&T innovations needed in the next ten years to make India globally a frontline state in technological achievements and innovations. The Minister said, "We should not restrict our ambition to be the best in India but be the best in the world as India is blessed with the demographic dividend of youth and they can take up any challenge with the right training and motivation".

## Congress will sweep upcoming Assembly polls in J&K: Rajni Patil



AICC Incharge J&K, Rajni Patil and other senior leaders welcoming new entrants into party fold.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Rajni Patil AICC Incharge for Jammu & Kashmir said that Congress party will sweep upcoming Assembly polls in J&K as people are fed-up of series of lies and false promises made by BJP leadership in the Union Territory. She was speaking during a joining programme at Katra wherein scores of political worker embraced Congress. The main face, who joined Congress was renowned social activist Bhupinder Singh, who along with scores of people came into Congress with a mission to make it a force to reckon with. Besides Rajni Patil, JKPC

President Vikar Rasool Wani, Working President Raman Bhalla, Uday Bhanu Chib, President J&K PYC, Mula Ram senior Congress leader and former minister also spoke on the occasion. Prominent among others present on the occasion include Shahmawaz Choudhary, Vijay Sharma Babbji, Rajesh Sadotra, Krishan Lal Bhagat, Pranav Shagotra, Rakesh Wazir, Jahanzaib Sirwal, Bilal Rashid, Pawan Raina, Charanjeet Bhagat, Shakeel Shah and Latish Sharma.

Welcoming Bhupinder Singh, she said that the responsibility on his shoulders is quite big as he has to fight

with bogus promises made by BJP and other parties' leadership and educate electorate about sincerity and dedication of Congress, which has a long and vibrant track record. Vikar Rasool Wani also welcomed Bhupinder Singh and his supporters in party and expressed confidence that his entry will strengthen the party at grass-root level.

Speaking on the occasion, JKPC Working President Raman Bhalla accused the government of indulging in self-congratulatory rhetoric over Jammu and Kashmir. He said that UT Government has failed on all fronts in providing relief to the common people.