

LG Mathur meets Union Minister

India's first-ever 'Night Sky Sanctuary' in Ladakh: Dr Jitendra

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: In a unique and first-of-its-kind initiative, the Department of Science & Technology (DST), Govt of India, has undertaken to set up India's first-ever "Night Sky Sanctuary" in Ladakh, which will be completed within the next three months.

The proposed Dark Sky Reserve will be located at Hanle in Ladakh as a part of Changthang Wildlife Sanctuary. It will boost Astro tourism in India and will be one of the world's highest-located sites for optical, infra-red, and gamma-ray telescopes.

This was disclosed by 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 after meeting Lt. Governor Ladakh, R.K. Mathur, who called on him at the national capital today.

The Union Minister informed that a tripartite MoU was signed recently among the UT administration, Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) Leh and the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) for launching the Dark Space Reserve. He said, the site will have activities to help in building and boosting local



Lt Governor Ladakh, R.K. Mathur calling on Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh at New Delhi on Saturday.

tourism and economy through interventions of Science and Technology.

Dr Jitendra Singh said that all the stakeholders will jointly work towards the preservation of the night sky from unwanted light pollution and illumination, which is a serious threat to the scientific observations and natural sky conditions. It may be noted that Hanle is best suited for the project as it is located in Ladakh's cold desert region, away from any form of human disturbance and clear sky conditions and dry weather exist throughout the year, the Minister added.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, a high level delegation of scientists and officials from Central Leather Research Institute, Chennai will visit Ladakh by the end of this year

to explore the possibility of setting up a regional branch of CLRI, as the UT has a very rich and wide variety of animals for leather research and industry and to promote bio-economy of animal skin-derived products. He added that Charthang in Ladakh has over 4 lakh animals mainly pashmina goats, besides Sheep and Yak. He also complimented CSIR for organising 4 training workshops, two each at Leh and Kargil for treatment of diseases of famous Pashmina Goats.

Dr Jitendra Singh also thanked the Ladakh Administration for taking a decision to start the commercial plantation of "Leh Berry", which is gaining popularity in the entire region. The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) under the aegis of Union

Ministry of Science & Technology is promoting "Leh Berry" which is an exclusive food product of the cold desert and also a means of wide-ranging entrepreneurship as well as self-livelihood.

The Minister said, as per the vision of Prime Minister Modi's Ladakh visit in 2018, the local entrepreneurs will be provided gainful employment through farming, processing and marketing of about 100 odd products from sea buckthorn plant like jams, juices, herbal tea, vitamin C supplements, healthy drinks, cream, oils, and soaps in a completely organic manner. Shri Mathur informed that commercial cultivation of three medicinal plants will begin this spring season at the height of above 15,000 feet. This also includes "Sanjeevani Booty", locally known as "Sola" which has a very high life saving and therapeutic properties.

Dr Jitendra Singh conveyed to LG, Ladakh that from next year, the Department of Science and Technology will establish a distinct and huge pavilion for Ladakh Education Fair, which will be an annual feature as announced by Shri Mathur. The Minister said, DST will actively participate in correct subject choice, scholarships, career guidance, skills development and apprenticeship with prime focus of employability of youth.



Yasha Mudgal visits CCBL Jammu, reviews working

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Secretary to Cooperative Department of the Jammu & Kashmir, Yasha Mudgal on Saturday visited the Administrative Office of Citizens Cooperative Bank Ltd (CCBL), Jammu.

The Chairman of the Bank, Parveen Sharma along with his elected team of Directors of the Bank welcomed the Secretary, Cooperative Department.

On the occasion of her visit, the Chairman apprised and gave updates about the constitution and working of the Bank.

Chairman stated that it is the first and largest Urban Cooperative Bank of Jammu & Kashmir and catering to the financial needs of traders and public of Jammu Division.

The Bank having eleven branches and four extension counters provides banking services to its clients based on Core Banking Solutions.

The clients of the Bank enjoy facilities like RuPay Debit cards, PoS Machines facilities, RTGS/NEFT services for money transfers, locker facility, SMS alerts etc. For small traders the



Secretary Cooperatives Department, Yasha Mudgal during visit to Administrative Office of CCBL Jammu.

bank is also doing its best in micro-banking and has opened approximately 3000 saving accounts of such traders.

The Chairman apprised that Bank has submitted a revised Action Plan to the Cooperative Department through the Registrar, Cooperative Societies, J&K and urged for infusion of Rs.20.00 crores by the Government of J&K to enable the Bank to achieve CRAR level of 9% to make the bank functional in usual manner.

Board of Directors of the Bank appealed to the Secretary to take up with

the government the issue of capital infusion so that Bank is able to extend all the banking services freely to its clients and public of Jammu.

Ravi Kant, Managing Director expressed gratitude to the Secretary to Govt. Cooperative Department for having paid her visit to take stock of the affairs of the Bank.

Yasha Mudgal gave an assurance to the management of the Bank to take up the issue with the Government on priority and assured every cooperation from the Department of Cooperatives.

Kashmir to get GI registration of 5 more crafts

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Taking the GI of Kashmir Handicrafts to the next level, the Director Handicrafts & Handloom Kashmir on Saturday held a detailed discussion with the authorities of Intellectual Property India; Patents, Designs, Trade Marks, Geographical Indications, Chennai to speed up the process of GI registration of five crafts viz., Kashmir Namda, Wagguv, Shikara, Gabba and Kashmir Willow Bat.

The dossier for registration of these crafts has already been submitted to the Intellectual Property

India, Chennai which is the apex level organization for the registration and better protection of geographical indications relating to goods in India.

The Assistant Registrar of Trade Marks & GI and Examiner of Trade Marks & GI who were representing Intellectual Property India, Chennai assured that the GI shall be conferred to these five crafts very soon.

Director H&H also led the discussion regarding submission of three more dossiers for Copperware, Willow Wicker and Chain Stitch crafts of the valley which are already under consideration of the

department for GI registration.

Geographical indication tagging has acquired a greater significance ever since the focus has shifted towards Vocal for Local.

The Handicrafts and Handloom Department has been facilitating the promotion of GI tagged products symbolizing empowerment of the artisans. These initiatives are aimed to help recognize and promote age-old crafts and methods that are otherwise in danger of being lost due to urbanization and industrialization.

Pertinently, Kani Shawl, Pashmina, Sozni, Paper-

Machie, Walnut Wood Carving, Khatamband, and Hand Knotted Carpets crafts from Kashmir have already been GI certified.

The testing and labelling of Pashmina has ramped up from last year and a half besides the department has also introduced the testing and labelling of Hand Knotted Carpets; a significant number of artisans, manufacturers and exporters are approaching the department for testing and labelling of the GI certified products. Moreover, the visitors have also shown much interest in purchasing exclusive GI

certified crafts post these efforts of promoting Geographical Indication throughout the country and away.

The department is presently in the final stage of purchasing the Optical-based Fibre Diameter Analyser (OFDA) for accurate measurement of diameter, length, curvature (crimp), mean and distribution of different fibre types with thousands of fibre measurements per minute to speed up the testing process. The Quick Response (QR) based labelling of the GI crafts is also nearing the adaptation in the certified crafts.

Public grievances redressal camp held at Tehsil Bahu



Naib Tehsildar Bahu, Mohd Salim listening to public grievance.

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JAMMU: A public grievance redressal camp was organised at Panchayat Ghar Chowadi by Naib Tehsildar Bahu, Mohd Salim, Girdawar and Patwari of Tehsil Bahu.

In the camp, Narinser Singh Corporator Ward 70 (Ex Chairman Health and Sanitation Committee), Sarpanch

Arshad Bibi Panchayat Chowadi and other prominent citizens were also present.

Mutations were attested on spot and other miscellaneous services were provided to the applicants present in the camp.

Such camps are being organised on the directions of the UT government.

BJP for impetus to Cooperatives, Trade, Industry & Transport sectors in J&K: Rana

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: BJP is committed to give impetus to Cooperatives, Trade, Industry and Transport Sector in J&K to be a part of the transformed growth story of the country under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Speaking to the convenors and co-convenors of co-convenors of the Cooperatives, Transport and Industries and Traders Cells of the BJP, here this afternoon, senior BJP leader and ex legislator, Devender Singh Rana said we must all work to revive the Cooperative sector in J&K and fast track growth Industry, Trade & Transport sector in J&K to work towards Naya Jammu & Kashmir.

He highlighted the crucial importance of the cooperatives, saying this sector can be a game changer in transforming



BJP Cells members felicitating senior BJP leader and ex-legislator, Devender Singh Rana.

rural and urban economy.

The outreach of the cooperatives is equally vital for growth and employment generation, he added.

Cooperative Cell Convenor Sanjeev Sharma, Co Conveners Omkar Padha, Ravi Bakshi, Sham Gupta, Transport Cell Convenor Ashu Mahajan, Co Conveners Roshan Sharma, Parvesh Bali, Industries and Traders Cell Convenor Shyam Langer, Co conveners Indu

Bhushan, Sanjay Mahajan, Rajinder Pinki Jain and Chamel Singh were present in the meeting.

Rana said due to relentless efforts of the Prime Minister, Jammu and Kashmir is on transformational mode with the industry and services sectors getting fivefold increase in investments, which is itself a record during the past 75 years.

He said the transport, trade and commerce have held the

economy in most testing times and promotion of these sectors is top on the agenda of the BJP especially as these generate a lot of jobs to skilled and unskilled workforce. He said the Cell will endeavour for seeking timely interventions of all concerned for addressing the issues confronting these sectors. For this purpose, a close coordination with the stakeholders will be ensured, he said.

The meeting discussed various issues pertaining to these sectors and decided to take them up with the Government at various levels to address them. "Every compatriot has to play their pivotal role in realising the PM's vision of Naya Jammu and Kashmir, with opportunities of progress to all, irrespective of region, religion or caste", he said, hoping that the BJP cadre will be a facilitator in achieving this objective.

Lawyers' agitation continue, to abstain from work on Monday

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The J&K High Court Bar Association, Jammu has continued its agitation for the demand of construction of multi stored building in the Janipur Court premises for housing various judicial and quasi-judicial institutions like CAT, Registration authorities, Consumer Courts, AFT, DRT and similar other Tribunals and similar facilities in other Districts of Jammu province.

The lawyers abstained from work in all the courts including District Courts, Tribunals, Commissions and in all Revenue Courts today also.

General House meeting of the Bar Association is

convened on Monday the 5th of September to take a review of the ongoing agitation and to have suggestions of the members for future course of action. In the meanwhile, President of the Bar Association M.K. Bhardwaj asked the LG administration to concede the very genuine demands projected by the Association which has been supported by the entire people of Jammu province without wastage of further time. The Bar Association shall abstain from work on 5th of September (Monday) in all the Courts including High Court of J&K, District Courts, Tribunals, Commissions and in all Revenue Courts, he said.

Team EPFO volunteers to work in flexi hours to manage work efficiently

Around 700 claims processed

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JAMMU: EPFO, being a high stake Organisation of Government of India under Ministry of Labour, has embarked upon its journey in J&K and Ladakh from November, 2019, where initially, the first team comprising of six Enforcement Officers, one Regional P F Commissioner-II and one Regional Commissioner-I laid the foundation of the institution.

The team had to educate Employers and Employees about filing ECRs and manners/methods of seeking withdrawals and activation of UAN, seeding KYC. The Second team of EPFO took over charge in July, 2021 onwards when all the members of first team except one RPPC-II - Shri Ramesh in Jammu and one EO in Srinagar stayed back. The real service delivery in terms of claim settlement started from July, 2021. It was a



EPFO employees working in flexi hours at Jammu.

daunting task as the Computer systems were supposed to be aligned with National Data Centre on Central Server and roles had to be allotted in hierarchy. Entire accounts related work fell upon the team that remained in Jammu. Claims started landing up in the system successively.

Work in Kashmir and Ladakh was also being processed from Jammu. There was an imminent need for a strong team to work in

such an environment. Initially SSAs were processing 40 claims per person. Considering the work load and to repose confidence of stakeholders who were not satisfied the services of J K EPFO, owing inherent systemic impediments of that Organization. Some front runners and volunteers were imminent in such a situation. A small team of SSAs and few Accounts Officers took the lead and raised per capita settlement through

their dedication Owing to Covid, flexi hours was a preferred option which was supported by most of the dealing hands.

The workload was managed reasonably, barring a few individuals, the majority of Officials started working sincerely. Flexi hours helps the Office in speedier settlement of claims. Many dealing with the morning shift attend Office before seven AM.

On Saturday almost all SSAs attended the Office.

Member Swarn Singh had visited the office to submit his offline physical claim. On enquiry by PRO, it was found that the member can submit the form online through Member - e - Seva Portal and he was guided the same. Shri Suraj had visited to enquire about his PF Balance. The member was guided to update his Bank and Pan KYC with his UAN. Jyoti Bala was guided to

update her missing details through Joint Declaration. Ganesh Jha visited the office to submit his spouse Joint Declaration and he also wanted to know whether his own UAN is updated or not. On checking it was found that his father's name was missing and he was guided to submit the Joint Declaration Form.

Employer from M/s Gupta Hardware Store Udhampur was unable to file ECR. He raised his grievance over telephone and official what's app. The Employer was felicitated through telephone about how to file ECR.

More than 200 Joint Declarations were updated today in RO Jammu and about 100 in RO Srinagar. Ketan Saxena, SSSA came to Office today from Delhi at 12 noon and almost all SSSA level came to office and did about 700 claims along with processing of death cases, joint declaration, etc.



Ex-Congress leader, Vishal Chopra talking to reporters.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A number of Youth Congress leaders and workers led by Vishal Chopra, Chief Spokesperson and Chief Media Incharge J&K resigned from prime membership of Congress to support Ghulam Nabi Azad.

While addressing media persons in Jammu on Saturday, Chopra said that

he along with others have submitted their resignation in support of Azad. "We had been endeavouring for the betterment of Jammu & Kashmir and its people but in prevailing circumstances, Congress party has lost its momentum in contributing anything positive towards future of this fragile Union Territory leaving not only party cadre in a quandary

but also leaving people of UT on mercy of God," said Vishal, adding that J&K direly needs a determined and decisive leader like Ghulam Nabi Azad to lead the UT towards a safe, secure and better future, which Congress has miserably failed to do due to its internal dynastic dictatorship and absence of internal democracy in party.