

HEC discusses innovative initiatives: "Design Your Degree Program" ,"College on Wheels"

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Professor Dinesh Singh, Vice-Chairman of the Higher Education Council in the Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory, on Sunday assessed the readiness of universities in the UT of J&K for the implementation of the 4-year undergraduate program, "Design Your Degree," and the forthcoming "College on Wheels" initiative.

The meeting convened Vice-Chancellors from various universities in the UT of J&K and principals to address critical issues and chart the future course of higher education .Professor Dinesh Singh expressed the Higher Education Council's commitment to supporting universities in the seamless implementation of the "Design Your Degree Program."

He highlighted that this innovative program focuses on project-based learning and will employ a constructive teaching approach, with a strong emphasis on experimental and practical learning.

He emphasized that these initiatives are poised to revolutionize the higher education landscape, fostering creativity, critical thinking, and a deeper sense of ownership in students' education.



Prof Dinesh Singh, Vice-Chairman of Higher Education Council J&K posing with other dignitaries at a programme.

All Vice-Chancellors assured to initiate the "Design Your Degree Program" in the current academic session. Prof. Singh stressed the need to establish a common pool of resources for the effective implementation of the "Design Your Degree Program." He extended his gratitude to the Honorable Lieutenant Governor and Chancellor of Universities in the UT of J&K for his unwavering support and guidance.

Another ambitious project discussed during the meeting is the "College on Wheels" (JK Gyanudhay Express).

This innovative concept involves to journey on a fully-equipped train taken from the Indian Railways to transform learning into a

project-based, problem-solving exercise, effectively treating the world as a university. This train will host 800 students and faculty members from across Jammu and Kashmir, earning academic credits based on their project work. This concept draws inspiration from the role that trains and journeys played in the life of Mahatma Gandhi.

Prof Dinesh Singh highlighted the importance of breaking down educational boundaries, emphasizing that "College on Wheels" signifies the Higher Education Council's commitment to inclusive and equitable access to higher education. He underscored the significance of maintaining professionalism in organizing this grand expedition. The main objective is to encourage

students to interact with peers from diverse backgrounds to exchange ideas. Students will not be charged any expenses during this journey, which is scheduled for mid-November.

A dynamic portal/app will be developed for the efficient sharing of information with all stakeholders. Professor Umesh Rai, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Jammu, provided an update on the recognition and support garnered for their educational initiatives. He mentioned that a Parliamentary Board visited Jammu and Kashmir, where he a presentation about these initiatives. The board expressed appreciation for the initiatives and the University's efforts, and they requested a detailed note about the programs.

Furthermore, they assured that they would recommend these programs to the University Grants Commission (UGC) for nationwide implementation. Additionally, Professor Rai noted that the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) had also shown interest in these programs by seeking information from the University. He further said that the first batch of four year undergraduate program in the University of Jammu has already commenced and recently their induction programme was organised for the students enrolled in the said program.

In addition to these developments, Professor Rai proposed the establishment of a faculty exchange program among universities within the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Dr. Yasmeen Ashai, Director of Colleges at the Higher Education Department in the UT of J&K, confirmed that faculty for the "Design Your Degree Program" has been identified, and the remaining processes will be completed soon. She highlighted that this innovative program will empower students to choose subjects according to their preferences.

Modi-led govt committed to strengthening democratic institutions at grassroots levels: Randhawa

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Former Legislator and senior Bharatiya Janata Party leader Vikram Randhawa today said that Narendra Modi-led Government is committed to strengthening democratic institutions at grassroots levels and expanding their orbit to empower people to draw the blueprints of development.

"The three-tier and fully empowered Panchayati Raj system became a reality during the Modi-led government. It was during his tenure that these bodies were rejuvenated by giving decision-making and financial powers to them. Good governance demands respect for human rights, rule of law, strengthening of democracy, promoting transparency and capacity in public administration. The vehicle that was most ideal to initiate both political and economic democracy at the grassroots level is the Panchayat Raj system. Revitalization of the Panchayati system remains a top priority on the Modi's to-do list", Randhawa said while addressing preparation meeting for the upcoming Panchayat elections in Panchayat Dharap of RS Pura Jammu South Assembly Segment, here today. Farmers are the back bone of a country and their efforts are being hailed as they work towards the country to make it hunger free,



Former Legislator Vikram Randhawa chairing preparation meeting for upcoming Panchayat elections.

Randhawa said and applauded the Prime Minister for launching Pradhan Mantri Kissan Samman Nidhi for the benefit of the farmers.

"Apart from exercising their franchise in elections, the young voters should encourage others around them to participate in the process. They should join hands with the administration to spread electoral awareness among the people and persuade their friends who have completed 18 years to get their names included in the electoral rolls," Randhawa said.

"For political systems to be representative, all parts of society must be included. When young people are disenfranchised or disengaged from political processes, a significant portion of the population has little or no voice or influence in decisions that affect group members' lives. A key consequence is the undermining of political systems' representativeness", Former Legislator stated.

He said that to make a difference in the longer term, it is

essential that young people are engaged in formal political processes and have a say in formulating today's and tomorrow's politics, adding that inclusive political participation is not only a fundamental political and democratic right but also is crucial to building stable and peaceful societies and developing policies that respond to the specific needs of younger generations. "For young people to be adequately represented in political institutions, processes, and decision-making, and in particular in elections, they must know their rights and be given the necessary knowledge and capacity to participate in a meaningful way at all levels", he stated.

"In new and emerging democracies, the inclusion of young people in formal political processes is important from the start. Young people's active contributions can bring democratic values to life, leading to the overturning of authoritarian practices", Former Legislator added.

Nation remains indebted to martyrs, warriors: Ch. Manmohan

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Ch. Manmohan Singh, President of All India Jat Maha Sabha and former Mayor paid homage to the martyrs and warriors who defended the integrity and sovereignty of their motherland, stating that the nation will forever be indebted to their supreme sacrifices.

During the commemoration of Naib Subedar Lekhraj's 36th martyrdom anniversary at the Martyr's Memorial in Village Dabbad, Ch. Manmohan Singh expressed pride in the brave warrior's commitment to national pride, stating, "The brave give their today for our safe and secure tomorrow."

It is worth mentioning that Naib Subedar Lekhraj lost his life on the India-Pakistan border in the Siachen Glacier in 1987, and his body has unfortunately not been located to this



President AIJMS, Ch. Manmohan Singh paying tributes to martyr Naib Subedar Lekhraj.

day. Ch. Manmohan Singh emphasized that the sacrifices made by these heroes in defending the nation's integrity and sovereignty will not be in vain. The nation deeply respects and esteems these sacrifices, and the martyrs will serve as an inspiration for future generations to serve the motherland in any capacity they can, he added. The former Mayor highlighted that the martyrdom of these brave-hearts reminds us of the crucial need to work towards peace and strive for a

better future for humanity. The greatest tribute to these great heroes is to create a world where people live in peace and harmony, he added.

The event witnessed the participation of army officials and local community members, who paid their respects by offering floral tributes at the martyr's statue. On this day in 1987, Naib Subedar Lekhraj attained martyrdom in the Siachen Glacier and was posthumously honored with the Vir Chakra by the army.

Cong finding excuses for impending defeat in ULB polls to save face: Kavinder

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Senior BJP leader and former Deputy Chief Minister Kavinder Gupta on Sunday said that Congress party is trying to find excuses for face saving, looking at its dwindling position in forthcoming ULB polls in J&K.

In a statement issued to media, the BJP stalwart said that foreseeing crushing defeat in the ULB polls, Congress leader Vikar Rasool Wani has started working on making Bandobast for face saving as he demanded holding of Municipal Corporations and other ULBs elections under the State Election Commission (SEC) like those of Panchayats.

Kavinder said that people have understood that Congress has nothing in offering for them and this



Senior BJP leader Kavinder Gupta posing with delegation members at Jammu.

reality of losing people's faith has been understood by the Congress leadership, and that is the reason, the PCC chief is making ground for finding alibi in advance so that no one could challenge his leadership post his party's debacle in ensuing ULB polls.

Kavinder said that BJP is all set to make inroads in places which were once considered as bastions of

other parties as its performance and people-friendly policies in J&K has won the hearts of people and they are in no mood to even listen the name of any other party whether regional or mainstream.

Meanwhile, several delegations called on Kavinder and assured wholehearted support to the saffron party in all the ensuing political contests to be

held in J&K. The members of delegations reposed full faith in the leadership of BJP asserting that no other party took so much pain in mitigating the problems of people. They particularly lauded the BJP leadership for reaching out to public in need without any hesitation. They were of the opinion that the achievements of BJP in the last over nine years were fantastic espe-

cially in case of J&K, which has been freed by the party from the clutches of Article 370, which snarled the development and progress for decades together.

Later, Kavinder visited the Lord Ganesha Stall in Gandhi Nagar area and paid obeisance. He said that BJP government has opened up vistas of opportunities for the people in J&K and today people have been prospering as never before whether it is Jammu region, or Kashmir. He said that to continue with the same pace of achieving progress and prosperity, it is necessary that people in J&K should vote for BJP as it is only this party which has the potential to bring about desirable changes as it did in the cases of Article 370 and other issues.

Radha Ashtami celebrated with religious fervor at Raghunathji Temple

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: J&K Dharmarth Trust celebrated Radha Ashtami with religious fervor at Shri Raghunath ji Temple in Jammu.

On the occasion, Brig R.S. Langeh (Retd), President J&K Dharmarth Trust along with Ashok Kumar Sharma (IPS Retd), Secretary and Temple priests performed Pooja with traditional rituals. The temple of Radha and Krishna was decorated with flowers. The devotees chanted Bhajans and many observed fast on the occasion. Hundreds of women residing in adjoining areas of Raghunathji Temple assembled in temple premises and performed their traditional rituals.

The temple premises resonated with Shlokas and Mantras when the Pooja started in the temple



J&K Dharmarth Trust officials paying obeisance to Radha Krishan on Radha Ashtami.

premises. The day is celebrated 15 days after Krishna's birth as Janmashtami.

Brig R.S. Langeh (Retd), President J&K Dharmarth Trust, in a statement issued today, said "Let us seek blessings of Radha Rani and Lord Krishna to bless us with knowledge and wisdom in life."

He emphasized that the

Radha Ashtami festival offers a profound opportunity for devotees to connect with the divine and seek divine guidance. It is a time to reflect on the teachings and virtues of Radha Rani and Lord Krishna, who are considered to be embodiments of unconditional love, devotion, and wisdom, he added.

A Head Priest of Raghunath ji Temple said "Radha Ashtami is the birth anniversary of 'Shri Radha Rani.

She is an incarnation of Goddess Lakshmi. Radha Ashtami falls on the eighth day of the Shukla Paksha during the month of 'Bhadrapada. Radha Ashtami is also known as 'Radha Jayanti.' Devotees

worship Goddess Radha with utmost devotion. The day also honors the selfless bond of Lord Krishna and Radha, a unique relationship between human and God."

"The observer of the Radha Ashtami fast will be blessed with a prosperous life and the devotees will overcome all the obstacles, attain happiness and salvation. It is believed that observing the Radha Ashtami Fast and worshipping Goddess Durga, helps to get rid of all the sins," he added.

A Langar of Kheer was also organized for the devotees, he added.

Earlier, the Trust's President, Secretary and Temple priests paid tributes to Maharaja Hari Singh on his 128th Birth anniversary in a function held at Raghunath ji Temple, Jammu.

Kashmiri Muslim Migrant demands restart of monthly relief

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: All Kashmiri Muslim Migrant Committee on Sunday continued its protest against the stoppage of their monthly relief under the category of migrants.

Muslim migrants men and women together today protest at Maharaja Hari Singh Park relief about stop of the monthly relief. The association president Nazir Ahmed Lone said let govt do his inquiry of the cards issued to the muslim migrants but cant stop till the inquiry z being fulfilled. He said there is no order

To stop relief ration cards and relief amount of poor migrants who are dependent on this meager amount of the relief for their daily needs and medicines. Nazir Ahmed Lone demanded immediate release of relief



Kashmiri Muslim Migrants raising slogans during a protest.

of muslim migrants so that they will be able to meet the ends of their family leaders who are present at the meeting condemn the relief commissioner undue action and demand to the Lt Governor Manoj Sinha to interfere in this matter and release the relief amount as soon as possible president of the association Nazir Ahmed Lone condemn this harsh decision taken by

relief commissioner about Kashmiri migrants particularly about one community.

The other leaders and chairman of the association Fida Hussain Shaikh, vice president Chaudhari Mohammed Akbar, general secretary Shaukat Ahmad Ganie, Sajad Ahmad Reshi, Sarjee Ah Bhat ,Sajad Ah Khatana & Farooq Khan were present at the meeting.

ICDS celebrates '6th Poshan Maah'; Dr Himani delivers lecture on home remedies



Dr Himani Bhutyal being felicitated by CDPO and others.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: "6th Poshan Maah" was celebrated at Ardhani Aanganwari

Center in collaboration with Department of Ayush, Jamm. On the occasion, lecture on "bal-

anced diet" was delivered by Dr Himani Bhutyal on awareness on home remedies for common ailments.

A Skit on nutrition was presented by Anganwari workers while free Ayush medicines were distributed among the beneficiaries and the general health check up of children was conducted. Later, Dr Himani Bhutyal was felicitated by CDPO and others for her dedication to duty and hard work. The program was conducted by Supinder Kaur.

Ex-CPFWA advocates for their rights ,benefits

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Ex-Central Paramilitary Forces Welfare Association in the Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory highlighted the challenges and demands of ex-Central Paramilitary Forces personnel and advocate for their rights and benefits.

Speaking to media here, Shashi Sharma, President of the Association and DK Chauhan, General Secretary, highlighted that ex-Central Paramilitary Forces personnel face similar challenges and risks as the Defense Forces.

However, they do not



Ex-CPFWA members addressing a press conference.

receive the same benefits and concessions as the Armed Forces under the Ministry of Defence (MoD), which raises concerns about fairness and justice, they said.

"The service conditions of

Paramilitary Forces are similar to those of Defense Forces, including provisions for court martial. However, their pay, perks, and post-retirement benefits, including pensions, are regulated by rules from

1972, providing benefits equivalent only to Central Government Civilian Employees," Shashi Sharma said. The Association also raised concerns about the exemption of GST on Central Paramilitary Forces pensioners.

"While the Central Pay Commission (CPC) rates are high, pensioners are not exempted from GST. Letters have been written to the government on this issue, and the matter falls under the purview of the Central Government," Shashi Sharma said. He added that cooperation from Paramilitary Force

Organizations in annual welfare meetings has been lacking, affecting the well-being of personnel and their families. The Association strongly advocated for the implementation of "One Rank One Pension" (OROP) for Paramilitary Forces, similar to the benefits provided to the Defense Forces.

This includes forces like the Border Security Force (BSF), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), and Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP).