



Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Finance Minister Abdul Rahim Rather and Agriculture Minister Ghulam Hassan Mir visiting the cold chain storage after inaugurating the same at Lassipora on Sunday. -Excelsior/Sajad Dar

Nurturing horticulture means nurturing economy: Omar

*** Inaugurates Controlled Atmosphere Store**

Excelsior Correspondent

LASSIPORA (SHOPIAN),

Sept 1: Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah today emphasized the need of nurturing horticulture industry and the growers associated with it to nurture State's economy. He said horticulture, handicrafts and tourism are the resourceful sectors in Jammu and Kashmir which can catapult financial status of the State and uplift the lot of the people associated with these sectors.

Addressing a function after laying foundation of a Controlled Atmosphere Storage and inaugurating a similar one established in private sector at Lassipora Industrial Estate, the Chief Minister said that Controlled Atmosphere Storage facility would help regulating the market and ensuring remunerative price for Kashmir horticulture produce.

The Chief Minister said that the glut created in the terminal markets by the bulk supply of fruit from the Valley in the fruit season reduces the prices causing economic losses to the fruit growers. He said setting up of infrastructure like Controlled Atmosphere Storages in the Valley and regulating the market by dispatching fruit as per the demand in the terminal markets would

benefit growers in a larger extent. "This will also check the sudden fall in prices of fruit in the markets due to the glut", he said.

Omar Abdullah also laid stress on increasing per hectare production and productivity and said that as per present analysis report per hectare production of apple in the Valley is 9.5 tones as compared to 70 tones per hectare in Austria. He said the growers and Horticulture Department have to work together to work out a strategy of enhancing productivity. He said, if the per hectare production of fruit is raised up to 25 tones per hectare in the State, Jammu and Kashmir would be able to produce 35 lakh tones of apple annually. He said this would not only generate economic activities and jobs but help to strengthen the economy.

The Chief Minister said that Kashmir is famous throughout the world for its handicrafts, fruit and natural beauty. "But we lack in scientific marketing of fruit", he added. He said packaging, grading and quality maintaining are must to sell the produce in terminal markets on reasonable prices. He said Kashmir Apple could be exported anywhere in the world if its quality, packaging and presentation

is up to the mark and at par with the international standards. He stressed the need of focusing on this aspect.

Omar Abdullah said that Government has made agriculture sector all most tax free and various facilities and concessions are being provided to the growers to strengthen their economic activity. He said lift irrigation introduced by his Government on full subsidy to help growers to increase production is of significant importance. He asked the growers to take advantage of the scheme.

The Chief Minister said that local entrepreneurs are the persons who can revolutionize State's economy, adding that outside industrialists only come here to take benefits of concessions and subsidies, and when these end up the outside investors end up their units and leave the State. He said his Government has focused on nurturing locals to invest in the feasible fields and play an important part in the growth and development of the State's economy.

Minister for Finance, Abdul Rahim Rather, Minister for Agriculture, Ghulam Hassan Mir, Minister of State for Animal Husbandry, Nazir Ahmad Gurezi and MLA, Aga Syed Ruhulla also addressed the function.

PDP's roadmap for resolution of Kashmir issue is workable: Mehbooba

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Sept 1: People's Democratic Party (PDP) president, Mehbooba Mufti today said that the party's roadmap for the resolution of Jammu & Kashmir issue, under the leadership of Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, was clear, practicable and achievable in the present geo-political scenario.

Addressing a public meeting at Kilam in Devsar Constituency, she said the action in this regard was, in fact, started in 2002 itself, even the party having only 16 members in the Legislative Assembly, and it is under implementation. If the party gets a decisive mandate, it will carry forward its policies and agenda for resolution, reconciliation and reconstruction with the help of people only and hopefully leaving no role for discredited politicians who enriched themselves for decades over miseries of people.

She said it is PDP's vision to get the state out of this morass without indulging in hoax slogans and blood-bath. The party stands for what is practically possible without emotionally black mailing people with the lofty promises of plebiscite and autonomy which were ultimately sold out for power. To bring Jammu & Kashmir out of the uncertainty and resultant darkness that has

engulfed it for the last 65 years was the Party's core agenda, and we had attempted this during our brief tenure in the Government and achieved a breakthrough, she said and added this process will be carried forward with support from people.

Mehbooba said any headway in Jammu and Kashmir issue is impossible without people being fully empowered; who have faced the maximum brunt of tumultuous times and of the present repressive regime, and PDP believes it is possible to do in an environment, where there is no fear, threat to life and unnecessary intimidation from the state.

Urging people to make it a point that they elect the politicians based on their performance only, she said, in the given circumstances, it is necessary to pave a way for the honorable resolution of political problem. She said a decisive mandate will provide legitimacy to the party's resolution efforts.

Besides Mehbooba, those who spoke on the occasion include Mohammad Sartaj Madni, Deputy Speaker State Assembly, Nazir Ahmad Laway, district president Kulgam; Zaffarullah Wani, zonal president Kulgam; Sheeraz Ahmad, youth district president; Riyaz Ahmad, Jvaid Ahmad Sheikh; Abdul Salam Reshi and G. A. Thakur.

Kashmir-Kabul nexus in making: Dr Jitendra

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Sept 1: BJP National Executive Member & Chief Spokesperson of the State, Dr Jitendra Singh said today that there is an ominous Kashmir-Kabul militancy nexus in the making at the behest of ISI and that Pakistan is trying to push in Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) cadre into the provinces of Kunar and Nuristan in expectation of the US troop withdrawal from Afghanistan next year while simultaneously transferring militant cadre recruited from its Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province to boost militant ranks in the Kashmir Valley. This has also been confirmed by the US Intelligence, he claimed.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, in recent times, Islamabad was constrained to divert as many as 150,000 troops to the Pakistan-Afghan border but with the US troop withdrawal approaching and Pakistan sensing that it may soon have a friendly regime ensconced in Kabul, the Pakistani army and LeT are once more concentrating on destabilizing Kashmir. He cited

LeT chief Hafiz Sayeed who had in a recent interview said "Full-scale armed Jihad will begin soon in Kashmir after American forces withdraw from Afghanistan."

Dr Jitendra Singh warned, Kashmir is starting to simmer again and as a well-calculated design, attacks by Lashkar's Border Action Team (BAT) to ambush Indian Army patrols have gone up.

He said, the Pakistan game-plan is quite clear "infiltrate militants eastward and westward, across the Durand and Radcliffe lines". Rawalpindi's men in khaki want to turn the clock back to the 1980s when Afghanistan was a Pakistani colony and Kashmir was in flames, he added.

He urged Government to send out strong deterrent signals to Pakistan instead of engaging in soft diplomacy and the Chief Minister of J & K be asked to stop creating confusion by harping on strategically incorrect demand to revoke AFSPA or by showing selective bias in favour of Pak friendly elements within the State in a bid to appease the separatist-centric constituency.



PoK refugees staging protest dharna outside MP's residence at Muthi on Sunday. -Excelsior/Rakesh

PoK DPs stage protest outside MP's house

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Sept 1: Displaced persons from Pak occupied Kashmir today held protest demonstration outside the house of Member Parliament from Congress Party Madan Lal Sharma at Muthi here today.

A large number of refugees under the banner of PoK DPs Front 1947, 1965 & 1971 led by Capt Yudhvir Singh, president, and accompanied by woman and elderly members assembled at Canal bridge near the office of Director School Education, Jammu and took out a protest

rally towards the residence of Congress MP from Jammu-Poonch Lok Sabha constituency. They were carrying banners and placards in hands depicting their demands.

Raising slogans in support of their demands, these displaced persons reached the residence of MP Madan Lal Sharma and staged dharna. They continued their protest demanding one time settlement of the pending demands of the PoK refugees. They pointed out that despite commitment by the Congress leadership at the Centre their issues could not be resolved.

Several leaders also addressed the gathering there.

Later, a deputation of the DPs met the MP and discussed the issues with him. He pointed out that during recent meeting with the PCC president and him in Jammu, they had sought time up to August 15 but even then nothing has been done in this regard. They said Centre has agreed to settle the issue and asked State Government to recommend package but it failed to do so. They gave 60 days time to Government failing which they would launch intensified agitation.

Court passes strictures against IO, SHO, PP

2 brothers acquitted of murder charges

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Sept 1: Principal Sessions Judge Jammu, Kartar Singh has acquitted Rajesh Kumar alias Bittu and Surinder Kumar alias Pappu, sons of Puran Chand of the murder charges and passed strictures against Investigating Officer, the then SHO and Public Prosecutor.

After hearing Public Prosecutor Choudhary Shabir for the State whereas Advocate Vishal Kapur for the accused persons, Principal Sessions Judge took serious note of the functioning of the then Investigating Officer ASI Mohan, Public Prosecutor and the then SHO Kuldeep Khajuria.

The court observed, "the criminal silence on the part of the PP and ASI Mohan Lal speaks volumes that both these material pieces of evidence have not been intentionally brought on the record by them in order to give benefit to the accused".

"How these material facts on which the foundation of the prosecution case was built, have been ignored is not understandable. The FIR alleged to have been registered by the then SHO Kuldeep

Khajuria is also based on the statement of the deceased but it has not been proved by the prosecution", the court said, adding "this is sheer negligence on the part of ASI Mohan Lal, the then SHO Kuldeep Khajuria and the PP, which is quite reprehensible".

"The prosecutor who does not act fairly and acts more like a counsel for defence is a liability to the fair judicial system. The public prosecutors are generally appointed on political considerations and they are accountable to none and the casualty is criminal justice system in Sessions Court where serious and important case are tried and any lapse can result in great miscarriage of justice", Principal Sessions Judge said.

"The conclusion is apparent that the prosecution has miserably failed to prove its case against the accused beyond any reasonable shadow of doubt", the court said while acquitting the accused of the charges framed against them.

"A copy of this judgment be sent to Director General Police for his information and necessary action which shall be conveyed to the court", Principal Sessions Judge said.

Sindhurakshak Navy Sailor cremated with military honour

Excelsior Correspondent

UDHAMPUR, Sept 1: Mortal remains of Navy Sailor Kewal Singh of village Khee Vee in Ramnagar, who was among 18 on board

Udhampur today with full military honour. Besides the family members, a large number of locals, Army, Navy and Police officers attended the cremation.



Army officer paying tribute to deceased Navy Sailor Kewal Singh before cremation at Udhampur.

Sindhurakshak submarine, when it exploded in deep sea resulting into their tragic death on August 14, were consigned to flames at

The officers laid wreath on mortal remains of Kewal Singh and paid him rich tributes.

BJP Ladakh submits memorandum to Rajnath, demands UT status

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Sept 1: On behalf of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Ladakh region, Jamyang Tsering Namgyal, State spokesperson & Incharge of the region's BJP Youth Wing called on National President of the party, Rajnath Singh during his visit to Winter Capital on Saturday.

State president of the party, Jugal Kishore Sharma and Incharge J&K State and MP, Avinash Rai Khanna were also present on the occasion. He submitted a memorandum to Mr Singh and sought party's support for mitigating the sufferings of the people of Ladakh region and solution to their genuine demands.

The memorandum expressed hope in BJP leadership to fulfill both socio-economic as well as geo-political aspirations of people of Ladakh region by granting Union Territory status to it which is a long cherished demand of the people of the region. He turned the attention of the BJP leaders about the situation prevailing in the Ladakh region as continuously being targeted by both China and Pakistan. He said as Chinese are continuously intruding in Indian territory in Ladakh and harassing the local population there. Besides, Pakistan firing is still going on in Kargil-Drass sector and Government of India is doing nothing.

The BJP leader from Ladakh reiterated the demand for grant of

UT status to the region so that it will totally merge with rest of India and be freed from secessionist politics in the State.



Ladakh BJP leader during meeting with Rajnath Singh.

He also stressed on inclusion of Bhoti Language in the 8th Schedule of Indian Constitution and providing of scholarships sanctioned by the Social Welfare Department and Ministry of Tribal Affairs through the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Leh & Kargil.

Among other demand he stressed on establishment of a Central University in Ladakh region, setting up of examination center of JKPCS, UPSC and BOPEE in Leh-Ladakh and need of a full-fledge Medical College in SNM Hospital Leh.

He has also demanded early completion of Nimoo-Padum-Darcha road, removal of JK police from Zanskar and deployment of CRPF in Zanskar Sub Division before upcoming winter.

Meanwhile, BJP leader and former Corporator, Sheela Handoo also met Mr Singh and submitted a memorandum to him highlighting various problems of displaced people from Kashmir.

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