

Sadhotra reviews ongoing, proposed mega projects for Jammu



Minister for Planning, Ajay Sadhotra chairing a meeting at Jammu on Thursday.

Excelsior Correspondent JAMMU, July 11: Minister for Planning, Labour & Employment Department Ajay Sadhotra on Thursday convened a high level meeting of officers and reviewed the pace of progress on various ongoing and proposed mega projects in Jammu region.

The meeting was attended by senior officers of all developmental departments, besides the divisional and district administration functionaries.

The Minister reviewed and sought detailed status report on the sewerage projects Jammu, modernization of Ranbir Canal, extension of Ravi Tawi Canal, Seed Multiplication Centre Chakrohi, progress on the second phase of 4th Bridge on Tawi, four laning of Satwari-Kunjwani Road, Convention Centre Jammu, Legislative Complex Jammu, Sidhra Golf Course, development of Tawi Front, conservation/restoration of Mubarak Mandi, Jammu Ropeway project, construction of barrage at Sidhra, R-APDRP project, Industrial Estates Jammu, Super Specialty Hospital Jammu and new 200-bedded Maternity Hospital at Jammu.

The Minister also sought the details about the proposed projects like multi storey parking at Bus Stand, lifting of water from Chenab River, Ropeway Project from Mubarak Mandi to Bahu Fort and others.

The Minister discussed in

detail the status of work on these mega projects and asked the concerned departments to remove bottlenecks if any to ensure time bound completion.

He asked for expediting the procedure for seeking all clearances wherever required for the construction of Ropeway Project from Mubarak Mandi to Bahu Fort.

The Minister stressed that different agencies involved in the development projects should coordinate their working to avoid delay in the completion of the projects. Among others, Principal Secretary Planning B. R. Sharma, Divisional Commissioner Jammu Pardeep Gupta, Deputy Commissioner Jammu A. K. Sahu, Director Area Planning Shabir Ahmad Bhat, Director CSS, S.S. Jamwal, Director Planning A. K. Gandotra, CEO ERA Saurabh Bhagat, JCD VDA Satesh Nehru, Commissioner JMC K. L. Khajuria, CE R&B, T. Mustafa, CE EM&RE Shahne Goni, CE Irrigation & FC, V. Badial, Director Tourism Soujanya Sharma, Director Local Bodies Arun Kumar, Director ERA Alok Mengi, Director Industries G. A. Qureshi, Director Agriculture Ajay Khajuria, Principal GMC Dr. Shashi Gupta, MD JKPC T. R. Bhagat, Special Secy Summer Sect Rev. Rev. Kumari, MD JKPC T. R. Bhagat, other senior officers of concerned departments.

Tributes paid to Madr-e-Meharban NC to emerge stronger in 2014 polls: Kamaal, Rana

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, July 11: Senior National Conference leaders today sought massive mandate for the party in 2014 elections to transform Jammu and Kashmir as per the dreams of Sher-e-Kashmir Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah and Madr-e-Meharban, Begum Akbar Jahan.

"Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has already laid a solid foundation for transforming the developmental landscape of the State by dint of hard work and a sense of commitment", additional general secretary Dr Sheikh Mustafa Kamaal and provincial president Devender Singh Rana said while paying tributes to Madr-e-Meharban on her 13th death anniversary at Sher-e-Kashmir Bhavan here today.

"The confidence and element of dedication with which Omar Abdullah is serving his people, there is no reason why National Conference will not emerge as a strong party in the ensuing elections", they maintained.

A large number of people, especially women participated in the function where Dr Kamaal and Mr Rana and Bimla Luthra (MLA), led the party leaders and workers in paying floral tributes to Madr-e-Meharban.

Dr Kamaal said a strong and stable National Conference was guarantee to satiate political, economic and developmental aspirations of the people of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, the agenda which has already been set in motion by the grandson of visionary leaders.

Dr Mustafa recalled the contribution of Madr-e-Meharban in upliftment of people, especially women and weaker sections of the society and said that her role in female literacy, empowerment of women, welfare of Gujjar, Bakerwals, SC/ST communities will be remembered for all times to come. He also referred to the role played by his mother in generating political awakening at a crucial time when Sher-e-Kashmir was in prison. "She kept the movement of massive alive and worked tirelessly for mitigating the sufferings of suppressed people of the State", he said, adding that Madr-e-Meharban was an embodiment of sacrifice who shared the pain and agony of the masses.

Paying tributes, Mr Rana said that people of Jammu and Kashmir will always remain indebted to Madr-e-Meharban for keeping the great mission of Sher-e-Kashmir alive during his lone



NC provincial president Devender Singh Rana and other leaders paying tributes to Madr-e-Meharban at a function held at Jammu on Thursday.

spell of imprisonment. "Whenever historians will write on Sher-e-Kashmir, they cannot afford to ignore Madr-e-Meharban, as the persona of the tallest among the towering leaders of the time was incomplete without this great lady", he said.

"Madr-e-Meharban stood like a rock against the conspirators of National Conference and infused a new vigour to the movement launched by Sher-e-Kashmir to seek a dignified life for the people, irrespective of caste, creed, region or religion", he said while asking the party cadre to introspect where they have faltered in carrying forward their mission. He said the best tribute to Madr-e-Meharban will be to strive for a strong, united, vibrant, peaceful and prosperous Jammu and Kashmir.

Those who were present on the occasion included provincial secretary Sheikh Bashir Ahmad, senior party leaders Babu Ram Paul, Th. Kashmir Singh, Satpal Lakhotra, Gurdeep Singh Sasan, Jugal Mahajan, Mohinder Gupta, Taranjit Singh Tony, Tanvir Ahmad Kitchloo, Bhushan Lal Bhat, Chander Mohan Sharma, Dr.

Kamal Arora, Dharamveer Singh Jamwal, Surinder Singh Bunty, Ch. Haroon, Som Nath Khajuria, Smt. Veena Oberoi, Rashida Begum, Dilshad Begum, Rita Gupta, Satwant Kaur Dogra, Rekha Manhas, Suman, Zarina Begum and others.

Meanwhile, connection with death anniversary of Madr-e-Meharban Begum Akbar Jahan function was organized at SOS Home Channi Rama, Jammu. Gurdeep Singh Sasan, Chairman CWS & Senior leader of National Conference presided over.

Later, free stationery items were distributed to children and lunch was also served.

New Millennium National College of Education, Sarore (Jammu) organized a programme to pay tributes to Begum Abdullah on her 13th Death Anniversary. Ram Paul, Former Minister was also present on the occasion.

Mr Paul along with the principal of the college, Puja Gupta, members of the college management committee and staff members garlanded the portrait of Madr-e-Meharban and paid rich tribute.

State accountable for Central funds: Dr Jitendra

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, July 11: Commenting on the plan size for Jammu and Kashmir which was finalized following the meeting between the State Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah and Planning Commission Deputy Chairman, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, BJP National Executive Member and State chief spokesperson, Dr Jitendra Singh said here today that there ought to be a mechanism in place to account for the utilization by the State Government of this liberal financial assistance flowing in to the State from the Center every year.

Dr Jitendra Singh said the common people are often unable to read between the lines that although the approved plan size per se for Jammu and Kashmir is Rs 7,300 crore for 2013-14, there is in addition for example an amount of Rs 3,500 crore expected to flow from the Centre to the border state through various Centrally-sponsored schemes, Rs 710 crore available from the Central plan for Prime Minister Gram Sadak Yojana projects and Rs 600 crore that would be considered for PMPR (State sector) ventures. Hence, overall, the total plan assistance from the Centre to the State is expected to be about 12,110 crore during the current fiscal, he explained.

According to Dr Jitendra Singh, the N C led coalition Government owes it to the people of the State to explain as to where this huge amount obtained from Government of India is going every year even as the current inflation rate in J&K stands at 8.64 % which is higher than

All India rate of 8.33 %. What is more, during the first seven months 2012-2013, J&K recorded an inflation of 11.63 % compared to All India figure of 9.9 % for the same period, he elaborated.

Dr Jitendra Singh also pointed out that the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) growth rate of the State during 11th Five Year Plan was only 6%, which is lower than the national average of 8%.

Dr Jitendra Singh said there is a popular perception that Central funds are being callously swindled or misused by the powers-that-be on the pretext of militancy. He demanded the government must come out with precise details to prove its claim that these huge Central funds are being allocated equitably among the three regions of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh.

3rd Islamabad Dialogue for improvement in bilateral relations between India, Pak

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, July 11: The 3rd Islamabad Dialogue, which concluded in the capital of neighboring country the other day, has outlined recommendations for Indian and Pakistan Governments to improve bilateral relations and address outstanding issues.

The dialogue was the result of collaboration between the Jinnah Institute and New Delhi's Center for Dialogue and Reconciliation (CDR) and brought together senior parliamentarians, former military officers, former diplomats, media persons and police experts, who adopted the joint statement after two days of intense deliberations.

"Increase in India-Pakistan bilateral trade is encouraging despite the escalation of tensions on the LoC in January this year", the joint statement said, adding "the implementation of commitments made on bilateral trade should be expedited by both the countries".

The participants recommended that travel be made easier and the number of entry points on the

land routes increased so as to facilitate people to people contact. Welcoming the resumption of back channel diplomacy by the two countries, they stressed the need of intelligence sharing at the highest level keeping in view the common threat from terrorism.

Emphasizing that both the countries should not allow Afghanistan to become another contentious bilateral issue, the joint statement said, "both India and Pakistan should take each other into confidence regarding their concerns about the post-2014 Afghanistan", adding both the countries should explore opportunities to collaborate in the fields of IT, communication, health care, education and banking to help reconstruct Afghanistan".

They urged that Pakistan should consider allowing overland transit through the Wagha-Attari border for trade between India and Afghanistan.

"We urge that there should be no reluctance in keeping the dialogue on Kashmir on the forefront of bilateral discussions and all channels in this regard must

be kept open", they said, adding "the leadership in both the countries should issue directive to the concerned authorities for proper implementation of the agreed CBMs on cross-LoC travel".

Stating that cross-LoC travel should not be restricted to divided families, they stressed that this should be made permissible for all residents of J&K and the authority to issue travel permits should rest with the local administration on both sides.

They have recommended a joint India-Pakistan watchdog to monitor human rights abuses and suggest mechanisms to prevent state violations, completion of nationality verification of prisoners/detained fishermen within three months and implementation of the recommendations made by India-Pakistan Judicial Committee on Prisoners.

The Indian delegation was comprised of Sushobha Barve, H K Dua, Jatin Desai, C Rajamohan, Siddharth Vardarajan, Kalpana Sharma, Sayeed Malik, Masood Hussain, Kavita Srivastava and Omair Ahmed.

Niyas rejects reports about melting of ice lingam

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, July 11: Maintaining that ice lingam at holy cave of Swami Amarnath is in full size, the Baba Amarnath

Amar Katha to Goddess Parvati is as sacred as Ice Lingam itself.

While highlighting the various problems being faced by the Amarnath yatri, he said that



Surinder Aggarwal talking to reporters at Jammu on Thursday.

these yatri are subjected to lot of harassment and humiliation.

He said the yatri are put to many hardships due to inadequate arrangements and non cooperation by the administration.

He said the authorities have also added to the woes of langar organizations while the yatri are also harassed by transporters.

Mr Aggarwal said that the yatri have noticed the non cooperation of Government agencies in providing subsidized ration to langar organizations as the rates of almost all the essential ration items have increased which has led to their problems. The State Government was supposed to come forward and bear the extra cost of langars which it failed to do, he added.

While lauding the role of security agencies in making fool proof security arrangements for Amarnath pilgrims right from Lakhnampur to holy cave, he cautioned them not to be complacent and remain more vigilant in view of recent terrorist strike at Bodhi Gaya in Bihar.

He expressed concern over the unscheduled power cuts and inadequate water supply in some Jammu areas which houses the base camp.

He also accused the transporters of overcharging from devotees and criticized the police for harassing the yatri who come for darshan from hundreds of kms away.

The Niyas convener also appealed the yatri to come for darshan as per schedule of registration to avoid any inconvenience.

Mr Aggarwal informed that this year's yatra for Buda Amarnath will start on August 1 and all arrangements in this regard will be made by the Niyas. He said the observations made by him were on the basis of a team of the Niyas including Karan Singh Charak, Surinder Mishra and Sudershan Khajuria who returned after visiting the holy cave to assess the problems of the yatri.

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