

Finland Minister calls on Dr Jitendra, seeks enhanced bilateral cooperation

Excelsior Correspondent

NEW DELHI, Nov 14 : Finland Minister of Education and Culture, Petri Honkonen called on Union Minister of



Finland Minister of Education and Culture, Petri Honkonen calling on Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh at North Block, New Delhi on Monday.

Science and Technology Dr Jitendra Singh at North Block here today to seek enhanced bilateral cooperation between the two countries in the field of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI). He was accompanied by a high level delegation which later held a separate meeting with the Indian delegation in the presence of the two Ministers.

While Dr Jitendra Singh reiterated India's focus on collaboration in StartUps, the Finland Minister was full of praise for Prime Minister Narendra Modi for management of Covid pandemic and also the efforts of the Union Government of India in ensuring development of vaccines and vaccination for all the countrymen.

India and Finland agreed to carry mutual cooperation between the two countries to a new level in a number of areas of bilateral as well as global interests. Two nations decided

to enhance cooperation in areas such as Digital Partnership in Future ICT, Future Mobile Technologies and Digital Education. The two countries also emphasised on

having institutionalised joint working groups on areas of mutual interest. This was reiterated by Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh and the visiting Finland Minister Petri Honkonen. The visit comes in the wake of the announcement made by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Finnish counterpart Ms. Sanna Marin during a Summit meeting on 16 March 2021.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, the bilateral STI collaboration between the two countries is an attempt to stimulate innovative R&D projects that address a specific need or challenge; demonstrate high industrial relevance and commercial potential; and aim to deliver benefit to all participants, and more broadly, to both nations.

Dr Jitendra Singh also recalled that following the signing of the Joint declaration during the visit of Mika Lintilä, Minister of Economic

Affairs, Finland on 18th April 2022, both sides have initiated collaboration in Quantum Technologies. The Indian side has already identified four premier institutes viz IISER, Pune, IIT Madras, TIFR Mumbai and C-DAC Pune to work with Finnish institutions on joint development of Quantum Computer. The Minister expressed satisfaction that experts from both sides are working out detailed plan for establishment of the Indo-Finnish Virtual Network Centre on Quantum Computing and targeting to develop 20 qubits superconducting based Quantum Computer in 1st phase and further scale it up to 54 qubits in second phase.

Dr Jitendra Singh conveyed to the Finland Minister that India is keen to develop research collaborations with Finnish R&D institutions and technology collaboration with Finnish Industry especially focusing on the application of Quantum Computing in areas such as: Sustainable Energy Technologies (generation, conversion, storage and conservation), Environment and Clean Technologies, Bio-based Economy, BioBanks and Bio based materials for different applications of water and Marine Technologies, Food & Agri Technologies, Affordable Healthcare (including Pharmaceuticals and Biomedical Instrumentation) and Technologies for Advanced Manufacturing/Integration of AI and Machine Learning in all domains.



Secy H&ME, Bhupinder Kumar chairing a meeting in Jammu.

Bhupinder reviews progress on ongoing projects of Health & Medical Education Deptt

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Nov 14: Secretary, Health and Medical Education, Bhupinder Kumar, today reviewed progress on various ongoing projects of Health and Medical Education Department being executed under CAPEX, NABARD and PMDP.

Managing Director, JKPC, Chief Engineer, PWD Jammu and Kashmir, Managing Director J&K Housing Board and Managing Director J&K Police Housing Corporation were present in the meeting.

Secretary directed all the HoDs and the executing agencies to expedite execution of these vital works so that these are completed during the current financial year. He asked for ensuring booking of expenditure against the work done claims before 31.12.2022, as clause of expenditure restriction shall be invoked as per the standing instructions of the Finance Department for maintaining financial discipline. He also instructed the executing agencies to fast track the execution of mega projects under Prime Minister Development Package (PMDP) and NABARD so that intended objectives are realized on ground through improved delivery mechanism.

He impressed upon the executing agencies to complete the

tendering process, technical evaluation, allotments within next one week. He also emphasized to ensure that the allocated funds are fully utilized within the financial year itself to avoid lapsing of funds.

While reviewing the physical and financial progress on works under various schemes, Secretary impressed upon the need for adopting a holistic approach towards selection of projects. The new projects should be conceived objectively on output-oriented based approach, he said adding that only those projects should be taken up which can be completed within two to three financial years.

He instructed the HoDs and the executing agencies to work in a coordinated manner with a focused approach towards execution and completion of the projects in a timely manner. In this regard, HoDs were asked to review progress with the executing agencies on regular basis to remove bottlenecks.

The meeting was also attended by Principal Government Medical Colleges, Director, Health Services Kashmir, Director, AYUSH J&K, Controller Drug and Food Organization J&K, Director Finance, H&ME, Joint Director Planning H&ME, Deputy Director Planning H&ME among others officers of the department.

Govt providing new opportunities, interventions for youth to make sheep, goat rearing lucrative

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Nov 14: Jammu and Kashmir Government is providing new opportunities, and identifying necessary interventions to make the sheep, goat rearing more lucrative for the farmers.

The aim of the Government is to increase livestock productivity and production in a sustainable manner and focus on untapped potential for the export and value added products.

High genetic potential breeds of sheep, exotic breeds for cross-breeding, marketing facilities and preventive mechanism of endemic disease problems is bringing overall improvement in sheep rearing sector and improving socio-economic status of a vast majority of livestock producers.

Various reforms and initiatives like Integrated Sheep Development Scheme (ISDS) was introduced by the Government for modernization and promotion of the sheep farming sector and strengthening of commercial activities and output of the sector which provides the means of livelihood to about 12 lakh families in the UT.

The launch of Integrated Sheep Development Scheme (ISDS) has achieved major strides in supplementing livestock production and building entrepreneurship in this sector across Jammu and Kashmir.

The scheme aims to promote the establishment of sheep and goat units in the union territory. Sheep sector makes a valuable contribution to the economically weaker sections of the society by their multifaceted utility of producing wool, meat, skin, manure, among others. Under this scheme, financial assistance from the banks has been made available along

with other incentives and subsidies. ISDS is one of the schemes of Sheep Husbandry Department aimed at not only achieving breakthrough in wool and mutton production but also addressing the problems of unemployment across Jammu and Kashmir. Any individual /group of individuals/self-help group/cooperative society/farmers producer organization is eligible to apply for the scheme.

The scheme also has the provision of procurement of shearing units (comprising of one shearing machine, one Genset and shearing accessories/spares), 50% of the unit cost as total eligible subsidy with a ceiling of Rs 75,000/unit whichever is less. Any individual (trained in MSS or intending to undergo training in MSS) is eligible for the scheme.

The scheme is majorly contributing towards achieving Prime Minister's vision of doubling farmers' income as it augments the income of farmers that they generate by practising agriculture.

The Department also provides breeders with all kinds of assistance during disease outbreaks to minimize the loss. The structural changes and consolidation of different programmes for farm and non-farm population in the rural areas is nothing short of a revolution for rural J&K.

Advisor Bhatnagar inaugurates 'Photo Exhibition' of CBC

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Nov 14: Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar today inaugurated a 'Photo Exhibition' organized by Central Bureau of Communication, Jammu, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India on 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mohatsav' alongside 48th Junior Volleyball Championship for Boys and Girls at MA Stadium, Jammu.

The Advisor was accompanied by Secretary J&K Sports Council, Nuzhat Gul. The exhibition showcases the freedom struggle of India through a series of 'Photo Exhibits' as well as audio visual medium.

Apart from this, special section in the exhibition has been dedicated to 8 years of Seva Sushasan- Garib Kalyan, wherein the achievements of the Government across various sectors in the last 8 years including in Jammu and Kashmir have been highlighted. Separate corner for Azadi Quest- recently launched online educational video games and Swaraj- 75 episodic mega serial portraying stories of unsung heroes of India's freedom struggle is also part of the Exhibition display.

Haryana CM felicitates Tarun Vijay for his Banda Singh work

Excelsior Correspondent

HARYANA, Nov 14: Chief Minister of Haryana Manohar Lal felicitated Tarun Vijay, former MP Uttarakhand for his seminal work on the martyrdom of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur, who along with his 740 Sikh warriors was the first to free Punjab from Mughal control and killed Subedar of Sirhind Wazir Khan who had martyred two Sahibzadas of Guru Gobind Singh by bricking them alive in fort's wall.

Later, Mughal King Farrukhsiyar captured Banda Singh and his 740 Sikh warriors who were cruelly tortured to death in Delhi on 9th June 1716. His eyes were gouged out, he was skinned, his four year old son Ajay Singh was killed in his lap and child's heart was inserted in father's mouth. Still Banda Singh refused to accept Islam.

Tarun Vijay researched on places connected with his martyr-

dom along with Sikh historians and his book was published by the Culture Ministry.

Haryana CM Manohar Lal appreciated Tarun Vijay's dedication to unearth lesser known facts about



Haryana CM Manohar Lal felicitating Tarun Vijay.

the great Sikh warrior and felicitated him in a massive Sikh congregation held in Hansi by Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Sikh Sampraday in benign presence of the 10th direct descendant of Banda Singh, Baba Jatinderpal Singh Sodhi.

Tall claims of good road connectivity in J&K merely a paper horse: Farooqi

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Nov 14: Terming tall claims of good road connectivity in Jammu and Kashmir rural areas as a paper horse of Government, state spokesperson of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Sheema Farooqi said that recent incident of Handwara is an eye opener for all and it shows that people in our rural areas are still deprived of basic developmental facilities.

In a press statement, Sheema Farooqi said that connectivity and development of an area are interdependent and many areas in J&K are still devoid of surface connectivity putting life of people living there in miseries.

She mentioned about a recent unfortunate incident in which a pregnant lady in Handwara in Kashmir valley was to be carried on the shoulder by her relatives so that she could reach a hospital to give birth but due to non connectivity of

their village, she had to give birth on the way and could never reach the hospital.

Exposing tall claims of development being made by present J&K Government and by previous successive Governments, Farooqi asked "Where is the basic amenity that any village deserves and road is a basic unit of development and unfortunately Governments in J&K have failed to provide this basic unit of development to many areas and are busy making false claims only."

Farooqi asked J&K LG administration to conduct an audit on availability and non availability of roads in rural areas and to bring in a special policy for overcoming the shortcomings.

"We assure to provide proper road connectivity to every rural area in J&K after AAP Government comes into office and entire country knows that our slogans are put to reality and implemented without any fail," she said.

Arjun, Pixie to conduct auditions for 'Pixie in Wonderland'

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Nov 14: Bollywood actors including Arjun and Pixie to conduct auditions for their upcoming movie 'Pixie in Wonderland' in Jammu, soon.

"Through the movie-Pixie in Wonderland, we want to convey certain important social and moral messages to our target audience i.e parents, teachers and children. The story revolves around the children," said Mahajan in a handout, issued here.

Arjun Mahajan also appealed to Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha to provide every administrative help for the smooth functioning during the shooting.

Arjun Mahajan said, "She has special love for her birth place Jammu and wants to give a message to the young generation through school kids," adding that it is a children oriented movie which is one of its kind and directly touches your hearts.

She appealed to the locals to watch the upcoming movie. For auditions, the aspirants can contact on this number (8899960607) as well as haremahajankrishnaproductions@gmail.com.

main cast and highlight of the movie is children of Jammu. The auditions are being held in some of the main schools of Jammu and the entire location of movie shoot will be in Jammu.

"Through the movie-Pixie in Wonderland, we want to convey certain important social and moral messages to our target audience i.e parents, teachers and children. The story revolves around the children," said Mahajan in a handout, issued here.

Arjun Mahajan also appealed to Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha to provide every administrative help for the smooth functioning during the shooting.

Arjun Mahajan said, "She has special love for her birth place Jammu and wants to give a message to the young generation through school kids," adding that it is a children oriented movie which is one of its kind and directly touches your hearts.

She appealed to the locals to watch the upcoming movie. For auditions, the aspirants can contact on this number (8899960607) as well as haremahajankrishnaproductions@gmail.com.



Two-day mental health counselling program begins at IUST

Excelsior Correspondent

AWANTIPORA, Nov 14: A two-day mental health counselling program organized by the Dean Outreach Office, Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) commenced today.

The resource person of the session was Dr Harshdeep Joshi, Associate Professor, Department of Community Medicine, Maharishi Medical College and Hospital.

The program aimed to offer a platform for the students to discuss their social or psychological problems and educate them about mental well-being. The program will primarily focus on the identification of mental stress and initiatives to mitigate impact of the stress on the physical as well as psychological health of the students.

Talking about relevance of counselling for the students, Dr Joshi said: "Mental health

counselling isn't for people who face psychological disorders, but for anyone who has concerns about mental health at any given time. The counseling process provides an opportunity for self-exploration, where we understand our stress levels and learn more about self-acceptance and self-esteem."

Encouraging the students to discuss their psychological problems, Prof Lily Want, Dean Outreach, IUST said, "studies have proved that one

reason why students are not able to reach their full potential is because of their mental health problems. Students need not feel ashamed if they are experiencing anxiety and depression. In fact, seeking help to come out of their mental health issues is a sign of strength rather than weakness.



Students participating in mental health counselling programme by IUST.

Retired personnel of Paramilitary Forces raise demands

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Nov 14: Ex-Central Paramilitary Forces (CPMFs) Welfare Association here today urged the Central Government to restore the pension benefit scheme and martyr status to the personnel of paramilitary forces.

Addressing a press conference, D.K Chauhan, general secretary of the Association of Retired Personnel of Central Paramilitary Forces Welfare Association (ARPCPFWA) said, "The Government had introduced New Pension Scheme (NPS) to the civil employees joining Government service after January 2004 and BSF was also combined with civil employees," he said, adding that the duty of BSF is very tough and BSF personnel deserve benefits at par with defense personnel.

He also demanded exemption of GST and functioning of Welfare and Rehabilitation Board (WARB) at district level under supervision of Registered

Pensioners Associations. "Presently WARB is formed which is not effective since the services of the WARB are not properly beneficial for pensioners. The duties of the WARB and proposals for pensioners are required to be examined," he added.

He further said: "Martyr status is not being given to CPMFs so far. All facilities should be provided to CPMFs at par with



CPMFs addressing a press conference at Jammu on Monday.

Army and equal incentives." Chauhan also demanded OROP for BSF personnel as the BSF personnel are performing their duties for the security of nation at par with other security forces.

Noor Mohd, general secretary Samba; Harbans Lal Sharma, vice president J&K; Chamal Singh, ITBP member; Hans Raj, Yash Pal and Puran Chand, CPMF members were also present in the press conference.

Snail's pace development due to lack of funds

Only 40 pc works on lanes-drains done in Ward 67, Nallahs cause havoc every year

Sanjeev K. Sharma

JAMMU, Nov 14: The big deep drains (Nallahs) turn violent in rainy season and cause devastating floods after which water enters residential houses causing damage and this happens every year in Ward 67.

This was revealed by Suraj Prakash Padha, elected Councilor of Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) from Ward 67.

Padha, who is from BJP and is a first time Councilor, in an exclusive interaction with the Excelsior said his Ward consists of main Muthi, Lower Muthi, Kalika Colony, Udhaiwala (old), Netar Kothey (Lower Bamai), Nanak Vihar, Geeta Colony, some portion of Akalpur, Chander Vihar, Laxmi Nagar and Baisakhi Colony.

"Two Nallahs in my Ward-one flowing from Muthi to Nai Basti and the other from Lale Da Bagh, needs immediate repair while two culverts at Kalika Colony also need repair but nothing has been done in this regard so far due to paucity of

funds resulting which the flood water enters residential houses causing damages in rainy season every year," he informed.

The Councilor further said that at Kaliaka Colony, Nallahs from Rop Nagar, Santra Morh and Dream City meet causing massive flood and concrete work on these Nallahs is yet to be done there though there was a project for that with an estimated expenditure of Rs. 5 crore but the money has not been released so far due to which about 300 families remain victimized every year.

It is pertinent to mention here that the elected body of JMC responsible for developments in JMC Wards has completed over four years of its mandated tenure of five, but developments still are miles away from completion while certain works have not even started yet.

He claimed that many new areas have been added to the Ward after its extension but funds were not hiked. "It is a big Ward with no drains in many areas as the waste water there used to go to agricultural fields but now an amount of Rs. 15 lakh is required for putting the things in

order in this regard while the overall work of lanes and drains in my Ward is only 40 per cent complete due to shortage of funds," Padha said adding that his Ward got 2300 street lights of which only 1500 are working and none from the company concerned pays any heed to repair the damaged ones while 700 more such lights may be given to the Ward as poles for them have been fixed.

He informed that work on a community hall at an expenditure of Rs. 60 lakh is underway at Amit Nagar, Muthi while there are three crematoriums at Muthi, Lower Bamai and Nai Basti of which only the one at Muthi is properly developed while work on the two others is underway.

"A Shishu Samadhi (graveyard for children) is also in the Ward at Chandan Vihar, Muthi and it is properly developed with facility of ladies bathroom," the JMC Councilor claimed.

He also said that an open air gym has been given in the park along Ranbir Canal along with facilities like shed and seats.

"About 60 per cent blacktopping work in the Ward has been completed and the remaining is

underway and the Ward lacks place for vehicle parking and a playground," Padha maintained adding: "Number of Safai Karamcharis in the Ward is 52 but 10 more are required for proper cleanliness as the Ward is very big in area."

The Councilor said that autos for door-to-door garbage collection are doing a good job and have solved the problem of garbage disposal but problems due to stray animals especially due to dogs are still there as these dogs litter everywhere and panic children and elders.

"About 95 per cent of my Ward residents have made their Ayushman Cards while we keep on organizing camps for Voter and Aadhar Cards for the left-over population," he said.

He informed that all the eligible people in the Ward have received vaccination for COVID-19 and he has helped about 300 people in getting old age pension.

A Primary Health Centre for the Ward for which Rs. 2 crore were sanctioned is yet to see clearance for the land from I&FC Department.

He informed that the Ward has one public toilet and many addicts and peddlers are also active there for which the police should take a cognizance.

India Intl Trade Fair

J&K Pavilion promotes

Handicrafts, Handloom products

Excelsior Correspondent

NEW DELHI, Nov 14: The 41st India International Trade Fair (IITF) was thrown open today at Pragati Maidan here.

The J&K Pavilion was jointly inaugurated by Director Handicrafts and Handloom Kashmir, Mahmood Ahmad Shah and Director Handicrafts and Handloom Jammu, Vikas Gupta.

Pertinently, the Department of Handicrafts and Handloom Kashmir has set up a pavilion in the fair to showcase the artifacts of handicraft and handloom sectors. IITF offers an ideal platform to showcase the Handicrafts and Handloom products of J&K under the 'Vocal for Local' campaign thus giving a fillip to economy of the UT.

As many as, eleven Government departments and corporations including Agricultural, Horticulture, Agro Industries, JKI, JK Minerals and others have set up their stalls in the fair to showcase their products.

The India International Trade Fair has evolved as a major event for the business community. It is a premier event being organized by the India Trade Promotion

Organization, the nodal trade promotion agency of the Government. The event is held every year between 14 and 27 November at Pragati Maidan. The fair attracts a huge audience of general visitors and businessmen from across the globe which helps the artisans showcase their arts and crafts besides contributing towards UT's economy. The JK Pavilion is the perfect epitome of diversity, culture, heritage and tourism potential of the UT.

The Department of Handicrafts and Handloom Kashmir has put a special focus on GI certified products and is creating huge awareness on the same. The special feature of the JK Pavilion is the live demonstration of crafts from Kashmir through the master crafts men from School of Designs Kashmir.

Director Handicrafts & Handloom Kashmir, while urging the artisans to ensure that only authentic products of the UT are displayed during the exhibition, said that the department has taken several initiatives to provide a stimulus to the handicraft industry for extending enhanced business opportunities to the artisans and weavers which shall in turn lead to their employment generation.