

Reliable road connectivity imperative for strengthening bond between regions: Bukhari

*** Urges construction of Sadhna, Razdan Pass Tunnels**

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 11: Apni Party president Altaf Bukhari today emphasized the need for improved road connectivity between the different regions of Jammu and Kashmir and said that such connectivity is vital to

been a long-standing demand of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, and a promise made by the Central Government in 2015," Bukhari added. He highlighted the significance of the Jammu-Srinagar Highway, which is currently the only surface link connecting the



Apni Party president Altaf Bukhari addressing press conference in Jammu on Tuesday. — Excelsior/Rakesh

fostering stronger bonds among the people from different regions and creating new avenues for economic growth and development.

Bukhari made these remarks while addressing a press conference at the party office in Gandhi Nagar, Jammu today. He expressed his gratitude to Nitin Gadkari, the Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH), and praised him for his dedication to building a strong network of roads and highways to connect India from Kanyakumari to Kashmir.

"Gadkari's mission has been a resounding success, and he will be remembered for his significant contributions to the country as the Minister for Road Transport & Highways," he said.

"We are grateful to him for providing timelines for several ongoing projects. Most importantly, we applaud his announcement about the construction of the long-awaited Peer Ki Gali tunnel on historic Mughal Road. The construction of this important tunnel has

valley to the rest of the country. He stressed the need to establish a task force to monitor the progress of the work on this crucial road.

"Although Gadkari has been focusing on the Srinagar-Jammu Highway, I request the establishment of a task force to monitor the pace of work on a weekly basis, ensuring the project's swift completion," he said.

Regarding the importance of the ongoing construction of the Zojila Tunnel, the Apni Party president said, "The Zojila tunnel holds great significance in terms of defense requirements. However, for the common people, this tunnel will be a historic accomplishment, as the tunnel will play a crucial role in fostering strong bonds and ensuring continuous connectivity between the people of both regions, regardless of weather conditions."

Bukhari also put forward some demands to the Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways urging him to prioritize the completion of pending projects as well.

Soz slams Azad for 'extreme act of disloyalty'

NEW DELHI, Apr 11:

In the wake of Gulam Nabi Azad's strident criticism of the Congress, party veteran Saifuddin Soz today said Azad cannot convince the people that he was justified in his "extreme act of disloyalty" to the party.

Azad is seen moving closer to the BJP to cause division of votes when elections take place, he said. Coinciding with the launch of his autobiography, Azad has been giving a series of interviews, slamming the Congress leadership and the party.

In a statement, Soz, a Congress veteran from Kashmir, said he feels sad about Azad showing himself in poor light at the age end of his political career.

"The feeling is widespread that Gulam Nabi Azad deserted the Congress party, at last, which had bestowed upon him so many

honours, all through his career. The general run of people, especially the people in Jammu and Kashmir, assert the fact that Azad cannot convince the people that he was justified for this extreme act of disloyalty to the Congress," Soz said.

The other public reaction is that Azad is seen moving closer to the BJP and his participation in electoral politics will cause division of votes, particularly in Jammu province, which will result in indirect support to the BJP, the former Union minister said. "This seems to be an organized effort."

Soz said ultimately the Congress will not suffer any setback as the people think that Azad's action constitutes "extreme disloyalty" to the party which had accorded dignified positions to him all through his political career. (PTI)



Prof Jasbir Singh (Head, Department of Philosophy, JU) and other guests releasing News Letter of NSS Campus Unit -IV, JU.

JU's NSS Campus Unit-4 releases News Letter, annual calendar

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 11: NSS Campus Unit -IV, University of Jammu (JU) today organized a programme to release its News Letter and annual calendar.

The Programme was conducted under the mentorship of Prof Umesh Rai, Vice-Chancellor and Chairman NSS, University of Jammu.

Prof Jasbir Singh, Head, Department of Philosophy, JU was the chief guest of the Programme while Prof Vishva Raksha, Head, Department of Sociology, JU and Dr Daud Iqbal Baba were guests of honour. Prof Mohd Reyaz Ahmad (Head, Department of Urdu) and Dr Hema Gandotra (Program Coordinator, NSS, JU) were special guests. Jasvir Singh, District Council, DDC Udhampur was the Resource Person.

The News Letter and annual calendar of the NSS Unit-4 was released in a colourful manner by the guests. The occasion was also marked by an induction cum orientation program for newly enrolled NSS volunteers. More than 100 volunteers partic-

ipated in this induction cum orientation program. They performed different types of cultural activities. Singing was performed by Ranju Rani and Group dance was executed by Neha Rani, Preety and Versha from Physical Education Department of JU.

Prof Jasbir Singh interacted with the students and motivated them for coming out to help the society and assured his full support to them while Prof Vishva Raksha discussed with the students the importance of NSS and its real value for the society.

Jasbir Singh delivered motivational lecture and guided the NSS volunteers for the future prospects whereas Dr Hema Gandotra focussed on the need to work with dedication, honesty and truth for the welfare of society.

Dr Meghna Dhar, NSS Programme Officer, Campus Unit-II, JU was also present to grace the occasion along with the prominent NSS Unit-IV volunteers. The program was over-all coordinated by Dr Mandeep Singh (NSS Programme Officer, Campus Unit-IV, JU).

People from Kashmir, Jammu united for their rights: Farooq

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Apr 11: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference president Dr Farooq Abdullah met number of party functionaries at the party head-



NC president Dr Farooq Abdullah addressing party functionaries at Srinagar on Tuesday.

quarters on second consecutive day, impressing upon them to take a lead in shouldering critical responsibilities to meet various challenges ahead with a sense of belongingness and commitment towards the party and the people.

General secretary Ali Mohd Sagar, senior leader Mohammad Shafi Uri, chief spokesperson Tanvir Sadiq, vice president Ahsan Pardesi, District presi-

dent YNC Bilal Ganaic, other office bearers were also present on the occasion.

Interacting with the party functionaries at party office here Dr Farooq focussed his attention on responsibilities of the party

issues concerning the organization. The party president heard their grievances and talked about possible solutions.

Farooq added that the trajectory of J&K's pluralistic identity has been fashioned by the National Conference and the party will defend it with all its might. "The real object of powers that be is to push the real representative voices to the background and denude its plural and unique identity."

"The people of Jammu and Kashmir, Kashmiris, Dogras, Gujjars, and Paharis will not allow this to happen. The mood and sentiment of the people in Chenab, Pir Panjal and everywhere else is the same. People of J&K, no matter which region, religion and division, they belong to, have made it a point to stand up for their rights," Dr Farooq asserted.

office bearers asking them to intensify their efforts to highlight the historical role of the party in the socio-political emancipation of the people of J&K. The functionaries, who were present on the occasion raised very perti-



JKPC leaders chanting slogans against BJP Govt. during the 'Mashal Rally' in RS Pura on Tuesday.

Cong takes out Satyagrah 'Mashal Rally' at RS Pura

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 11: Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPC) organized 'Jai Bharat Satyagrah Mashal Rally' in RS Pura by chanting slogans against the BJP Government, near here today.

Former MLA Thakur Balwan Singh, Chief Spokesperson and in-charge Jammu rural and urban, Ravinder Sharma, General Secretary JKPC Pawan Raina, senior Congress leader Rajinder Singh Nathu, Block presidents Gurmeet Singh and Sunil Dutt led the 'Mashal Rally', which was organized by senior Congress leaders Karan Bhagat and Sarpanch Badrinath Sharma from RS Pura to Suchetgarh.

Speaking on the occasion, Balwan Singh accused the BJP Government of targeting Rahul Gandhi to stop him from exposing the corruption of the Narendra Modi Government. "The BJP Government had been shielding economic offenders like Nirav Modi, Lalit Modi, and Mehul Choksi," he said, adding that instead of addressing Rahul Gandhi's questions regarding Modi-Adani nexus, the BJP is counter attacking Congress by accusing Rahul Gandhi of having insulted OBCs.

He said that the All India Congress Committee (AICC) has launched a pan India and month-long 'Jai Bharat Satyagrah' to extend solidarity to Rahul Gandhi who has been 'removed from being a Lok Sabha member by the BJP forcefully.' "Rahul Gandhi was

targeted for highlighting the nexus between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and business tycoon Gautam Adani," he claimed.

The Congress leaders alleged that Rahul Gandhi was singled out mainly for demanding a probe into the Adani issue by a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC). The chief spokesperson accused the BJP Government of being a fascist. "Indian democracy is in danger, if a person raises voice and questions the Government, they will slap different charges to silence him or her," he claimed.

"Every right thinking citizen of the country must come together irrespective of their political affiliation and safeguard democracy," the chief spokesperson appealed. He maintained that the conviction and disqualification of Rahul Gandhi is nothing but an intentional target and a sinister ploy to save Adani.

Karan Bhagat said, "Rahul Gandhi is a true crusader against corruption. He has been advocating for the people without fear of repercussions. Despite having had three Prime Ministers from their family, today, Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi do not own a home. BJP Government by serving an eviction notice to Rahul Gandhi wanted to render him homeless," he said.

Badrinath Sharma said that time has come to raise voice against an 'Arrogant Government' as barring Rahul Gandhi from contesting elections does not bode well for the country and its democracy.



ACR Anantnag Shoaib Noor presenting certificates to newly elected office bearers of AWJA.

Sajad Dar elected AWJA president as Association holds general elections

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Apr 11: Anantnag Working Journalists Association (AWJA) today held its general elections at Town Hall in Anantnag with Sajad Ahmed Dar (Muniwadi) elected as new president of the Association while Hilal Ahmed Shah was elected as vice president and Fida Hussain as general secretary.

The elections were conducted in a free and fair manner via secret ballot, under the strict vigil of DC Anantnag, Dr Basharat Qayoom. The ACR Anantnag Shoaib Noor was appointed as Chief Election Observer by the DC Anantnag for smooth and fair conduct of

polls. Similarly, the Election Committee of AWJA headed by senior journalist Mudisar Qadri and other members viz. Zahoor Rizvi, Prince Altaf and Amir Ali Shah played a vital role in the smooth conduct of the elections.

On the occasion, the oath ceremony was also organized under the chairmanship of ACR Anantnag. Newly elected president, vice president and general secretary took oath to work under the constitution and frame work of AWJA. They also gave assurance to work for the benefit of Press fraternity and society on the whole. They assured of implementation of free, fair and fearless journalism and pledged to end yellow and pseudo journalism.



LG Ladakh, Brig. (Retd) BD Mishra chairing a meeting with the Departmental Secretaries in Leh on Tuesday.

LG Ladakh holds meet with Deptt Secretaries

Excelsior Correspondent

LEH, Apr 11: Lt Governor Brig (Dr) BD Mishra (Retd) conducted a meeting with departmental secretaries to review their progress and the issues faced by citizens of Ladakh.

The LG inquired about the minor rape victim's condition and instructed the Social Welfare Department to extend all possible assistance to the victim and her family members.

The Commissioner Secretary of Social and Tribal Welfare, Padma Angmo, provided information about the counselling and support being provided to the child and the family.

The LG also discussed the security arrangements for delegates visiting Leh for the Y-20 Pre-Summit, scheduled from April 26-28 under the aegis of the G20 India Summit.

He inquired about the measures taken by Ladakh Police to sensitize parents of juveniles who engage in weak beating, affray, and assaults, and urged the department to send a strong message to such juveniles and their families.

The LG also reviewed the

Juvenile Observation Centers, De-addiction and Rehabilitation centers in Ladakh, and instructed the Ladakh Police and Social Welfare Department to make the Juvenile Observation Home fully functional with adequate staff and security arrangements.

He also instructed the Social Welfare Department to expedite the construction of De-addiction and Disability Rehabilitation Centers in Ladakh, ensuring that they are completed as soon as possible.

He also raised several other issues, including tourists' inconvenience due to the road blockage in Nubra caused by the road widening work, damage caused by snow leopard attacks in Shey village, and issues related to Ward & Watch/Mali and laborers.

Departmental secretaries provided information about their respective departments' progress and pending works.

Officials present at the meeting included Principal Secretary, Pawan Kotwal; ADGP Ladakh Police, Satish Khandare; Commissioner Secretaries, Ajeet Kumar Sahu, Padma Angmo among other officers.



Senior officers of J&K Bank and CIMSME office bearers during signing of an MoU in Srinagar.

J&K Bank signs MoU with CIMSME to accelerate MSME growth

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Apr 11: Forging partnership with Chamber of Indian Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (CIMSME) to accelerate growth of manufacturing enterprises, J&K Bank today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the country's apex chamber of MSMEs that represents their interests and issues with the Government and various regulators while being active participant in MSME related policy making.

General Manager (Corporate Banking/MSME/Agriculture) Ashutosh Sareen signed the MoU on behalf of the Bank, while as President Mukesh Mohan Gupta put in his signatures representing CIMSME in presence of MD and CEO Baldev Prakash, Executive Director Sudhir Gupta, General Manager Narjaj Gupta, Director (CIMSME) Subhash Joinwal, DGMs and other senior Bank officials. Bank's Divisional Heads also joined the function through VC

Mode. Speaking on the occasion, Baldev Prakash said, "We need to translate this MoU into solid business growth especially in the rest of India because this is the sector which complements the large industries in the form of subsidiary units that are vital to the entire ecosystem." He said J&K Bank has always been on the forefront of creating employment opportunities and we have robust numbers to back our commitment towards encouraging the MSME growth in the country.

President CIMSME said, "Having J&K Bank on board is great boost for us that will eventually help MSME Sector a great deal." Citing the lack of awareness about various MSME schemes and processes to avail the facilities, he stressed upon the need to educate lenders particularly at operational levels and borrowers of this sector. He further added, "We will soon be coming up with a web portal for ease of both MSME lenders and borrowers."

Shiv Sena demands early Assembly elections in J&K

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 11: Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) J&K unit today submitted a memorandum to Chief Electoral Officer of J&K, demanding early Assembly elections in the Union Territory through ballot paper.

A deputation of Shiv Sena led by Manish Sahni, Shiv Sena J&K president met the Chief Electoral Officer, Pandurang K. Pole and submitted him a memorandum demanding early Assembly elections in J&K.

Sahni said that a request has been made before the Chief Electoral Officer to restore the democratic process in J&K and to conduct the first Assembly elections of the UT through ballot paper.

The Shiv Sena leader said that if Union Home Minister and all the central leaders of BJP have claimed 'all is well' in J&K then why BJP is shying away from announcing elections in the Union Territory. Vikas Bakshi, Sanjeev Kohli and Rakesh Kumar also present in the deputation.

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