

'Protecting motherland, interests of people'

Army's resolve to ensure peace, prosperity for all: LG

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Aug 27: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha today attended the flag-in ceremony of the Mountain Expedition-NUN-KUN organised by Jawahar Institute of

conquest but it shows our search for the unknown and pursuit of exploring the unexplored," the Lt Governor said.

He said the exemplary courage and dedication of the expedition team will instill confidence in young generation to

"I am confident the courage, valour and heroic deeds of our mountaineers will continue to motivate us to build a better society and it will inspire generations to come," he said.

The Lt Governor extended his best wishes to the Jawahar Institute of Mountaineering and Winter Sports, Pahalgam and the mountaineers for their future endeavours.

Col Hem Chandra Singh, Principal Jawahar Institute of Mountaineering and Winter Sports, Pahalgam expressed gratitude to the Lt Governor-led UT Administration for the continuous support to the institute.

He said brave hearts of Indian Army took an unconventional route and climbed the peaks in record time. Fastest climb at Mount Kun (23,219 ft) from base camp to summit (7 days) and fastest climb at Mount Nun (23,409 ft) from base camp to summit (4 days).

"Apart from fastest climb, we have created history by successively climbing Mount Nun and Mount Kun in a single attempt by JIM & WS and 19 division," Col Hem Chandra Singh informed.



LG Manoj Sinha at flag-in ceremony of Mountain Expedition in Srinagar on Sunday.

Mountaineering and Winter Sports, Pahalgam.

Interacting with the expedition team at Raj Bhawan, he lauded their grit, determination and accomplishment for creating a history by climbing twin peaks of Mt Nun and Mt Kun.

"This expedition led by Col Hem Chandra Singh has created many records and a proud moment for all mountaineering fraternity, J&K and our nation. It is not an ordinary adventure or a

take up new challenges, new opportunities and contribute to nation building.

"Magnificent mountains with their awe-inspiring presence, tough terrains teach us the timeless wisdom of tackling all challenges and odds in our journey. The expedition also symbolizes the Army's resolve to protect the motherland, protect the interests of the people and to ensure peace and prosperity for all, Sinha observed.

WB-funded maternity block at LD Hospital remains stagnant for 4-yrs

Suhail Bhat

SRINAGAR, Aug 27: Progress on the construction of a 200-bed block at Kashmir's Lal Ded Maternity Hospital, funded by the World Bank, has come to a halt for the past four years due to a design change with officials awaiting approval from the Jhelum and Tawi Flood Recovery Project (JTFRP) to issue a fresh tender.

He added that the retendering process is underway and they are awaiting approval from JTFRP. Once approved, they will issue global tenders. "The floods made a difference in the design parameters, requiring a larger bearing for the base isolators," he said.

He mentioned that the last tenders for the base isolators were awarded to the New Zealand-based company Robinson Seismic Company, and new global tenders for the installation and design of base isolators will be issued once JTFRP approves the variations.

Officials stated that the building also faced initial delays due to a lack of communication between the executing agency, Jammu and Kashmir Project Construction Corporation (JKPCC), and Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar, as well as changes in the location by successive principals, which further delayed the project.

When completed, this facility will stand as the first of its kind in Jammu and Kashmir, a six-story building offering a comprehensive array of amenities, including state-of-the-art operation theatres, well-equipped labour rooms, general wards, an auditorium, a library, and top-tier post-operative care.

Yet, until the bureaucratic tangle is unravelled, the dream of an expanded and enhanced maternity hospital for Kashmiri residents remains frustratingly out of reach.

Several patients informed Excelsior that the hospitals were overburdened and urgently required infrastructural upgrades. They pointed out that this hospital was the only maternity hospital in the Valley, serving patients from across the region, and the current infrastructure was inadequate.

"If we talk about the labour room, there are two to three patients in a single bed, causing great inconvenience to the patients. We cannot blame the hospital administration for this, as they have no other option," a patient said.

She added that expectant mothers needed extra care, but the lack of space at the hospital made it extremely challenging for them during an already testing time. "The government has placed the best doctors here who treat patients really well, but the lack of space and other facilities forces patients to seek care at private hospitals that charge exorbitant fees. I hope the government understands this and takes measures to upgrade the infrastructure," she said.

Medical Superintendent of LD Hospital, Muzaffar Sherwani, stated that the new building would hold great significance, as it would not only provide much-needed infrastructure but also significantly enhance patient care. "It will be of great help, especially for those patients who require additional maternal or childcare services, as a whole unit for investigative procedures will be set up along with a high-end labour room," he explained.

He added that the building would be constructed using modern technology, allowing it to withstand earthquakes of up to a magnitude of 10, which is crucial due to the Valley's high seismic activity.

The ambitious project, intended to boost the hospital's capacity from 500 to 900 beds, was approved in 2017 under the Jhelum and Tawi Flood Recovery Project (JTFRP). This state-of-the-art, earthquake-resistant multi-story building, utilising base isolation technology, is a groundbreaking endeavour in a region categorised as seismic zone V. The project is one of only three such projects in India, with the Kashmir initiative being the largest.

Officials privy to the details told Excelsior that nearly 97 per cent of the foundation work is complete, but changes in the design have halted the project. "The next step was to set up the base isolation, but a change in design has led to cost escalation, which is beyond the financial guidelines. This forced us to go for retendering," an official working with the Jammu and Kashmir Construction Corporation Limited told Excelsior.

AJKTWA urges LG to resolve Toll Plaza issue

\*Thanks adm for releasing YRS activists

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Aug 27: All J&K Transport Welfare Association (AJKTWA) has extended gratitude to the LG's Administration to release Yuva Rajput Sabha activists from Jail and strongly demanded that Sarore Toll Plaza issue be solved without wasting more time.

installed within 60 kms and there is no proper road available to the people in view of construction of Express Way and closure of Tamah bridge.

Choudhary said transporters on August 25 declared to launch indefinite strike from August 31 and also took out strong protest rally up to Bikram Chowk and Press Club Jammu on that day. The transporters are fully support



AJKTWA chief patron Devinder Choudhary flanked by others addressing a press conference in Jammu. —Excelsior/Rakesh

ference here today. Devinder Choudhary chief patron of the AJKTWA said that since Association Chairman and president are out of station, he is convening the press conference and extend gratitude to the UT Administration for releasing Yuva Rajput Sabha leaders and other activists during last night from Kathua Jail. But the main issue for which they were put to jail remained unresolved.

He said for the common cause all the social, political, trade, transport, youth and other organizations are one. There is strong resentment among the people of Jammu over Sarore Toll Plaza as it is illegal. This is strong demand of the people that it should be lifted without any more delay. Since it has been

While addressing a press conference here today, Devinder Choudhary chief patron of the AJKTWA said that since Association Chairman and president are out of station, he is convening the press conference and extend gratitude to the UT Administration for releasing Yuva Rajput Sabha leaders and other activists during last night from Kathua Jail. But the main issue for which they were put to jail remained unresolved.

He advised the HC Bar Association to file a PIL in the court in the interest of Jammu people over Sarore Toll Plaza and challenge its legality, if any. He claimed that AJKTWA was ready to bear the cost of litigation.

Banihal Route Bus Union president Gurddeep Singh Pappu, Poonch Route Bus Union president Mohinder Singh, Autorikshaw Union president Shanti Saroop, Ranjit Singh, Sanjay Sharma, besides heads of various Bus/ Taxi/ truck Unions were also present during conference here today. Devinder Choudhary chief patron of the AJKTWA said that since Association Chairman and president are out of station, he is convening the press conference and extend gratitude to the UT Administration for releasing Yuva Rajput Sabha leaders and other activists during last night from Kathua Jail. But the main issue for which they were put to jail remained unresolved.



Members of a delegation in a meeting with LG Ladakh Brigadier (Dr) BD Mishra (Retired), at Raj Niwas, Kargil.

Various delegations call on LG Ladakh

Excelsior Correspondent

KARGIL, Aug 27: A delegation from Ladakh Taekwondo Association, led by its general secretary Anayat Ali Shotopa, called on Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Brigadier (Dr) BD Mishra (Retired), at Raj Niwas, here today.

Anayat informed the LG that Tashi Tundup and Shahnaz Parveen were part of the Indian team which won gold in the All-India University Games and also reached the Quarter Finals in the World University Games. He requested the LG to give Government job to outstanding sportsperson Mohammad Ali under sports quota.

The LG congratulated international Taekwondo players Tashi Tundup and Shahnaz Parveen for representing India at the World University Games, also known as University Olympiad World University Games, held in

Chengdu, China. He praised their achievements and wished them the best for their future endeavours. The LG instructed Secretary, Sports, UT Ladakh, to look into the matter of Muhammad Ali.

Meanwhile, Ghulam Raza, a person with disability, called on the LG at Raj Niwas. Raza apprised the LG of the issue of delay in the allotment of land by the local administration. The LG assured Raza to discuss his issue with DC Kargil.

Likewise, Zaheer Bagh, a hotelier from Kargil, called on the Mishra. Zaheer informed the LG about the construction of an electricity tower for the transmission line situated at Rangdum glacier. He requested the LG to consider diverting the location of the tower. The LG assured Zaheer that he would visit the location and take the necessary steps to address the issue.



Leaders of JCCI and High Court Bar Association addressing a joint press conference in Jammu. —Excelsior/Rakesh

'Resolve Sarore Toll Plaza issue' JCCI, Bar extend gratitude to Adm for releasing YRS leaders

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Aug 27: The Jammu Chamber of Commerce and Industries (JCCI) and J&K High Court Bar Association (Jammu) today extended gratitude to the JK UT Administration for releasing Yuva Rajput Sabha leaders/activists unconditionally from Kathua Jail last night and stressed upon the Lt Governor, Manoj Sinha to resolve Sarore Toll Plaza issue as early as possible.

Addressing joint press conference here today the Jammu Chamber president, Arun Gupta, High Court Bar Association president Vikram Sharma in presence of Young Lawyers Association chief Rohit Sharma and four heads of Transport Unions, expressed satisfaction over the complete and peaceful bandh in the region on Saturday and thanked civil society of Jammu, several political parties, social, youth and trade organizations for their massive support for the Jammu cause.

Arun Gupta also thanked four transport unions for their support and said that about 80 percent transport remained off

the road during Jammu bandh on Saturday voluntarily despite the fact that AJKTWA had decided to go on strike from August 31. He said all the markets/ Bazaars not in Jammu only, but in most of the places including Kathua, Samba, R S Pura, Bishnah, Vijaypur, Bari Brahmana, Reasi, Katra and many other places remained closed and people held protest demonstrations across the region. He said many opposition political parties extended full support and joined them for the common cause of Jammu.

Vikram Sharma said that YRS leaders were protesting peacefully not on the road but on one side without disrupting traffic. Moreover, they were protesting for the right cause. Imposing Toll on the people at Sarore within 43 kms is illegal and it should be abolished for ever. He also thanked people of Jammu civil society and youth, students, trade and politically organisations for their support. Sharma demanded that Toll Plaza issue still remains unresolved and the LG Administration must resolve this deadlock without wasting more time.

Matador Union Jammu president Niranjn Singh, Truck Union president Gagan Singh, Oil Tankers Union president Anan Sharma, besides Kathua and R S Pura Union heads were also present during the press conference and said that they will always walk shoulder to shoulder for the common cause of Jammu.

All the office bearers of Jammu Chamber, several office bearers of Jammu HC Bar and Young Lawyers Association president Rohit Sharma and vice president Ganagdeep Singh were also present.

Two found dead

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Aug 27: Two persons were found dead under mysterious circumstances from different areas of Jammu District, police said.

They said a decomposed body of an unidentified male, aged around 50, was recovered from Hamirpur Kona Village of Pargwal. Another person identified as Kamal Kumar (35) son of Yashpal of Khandwal Kothey, Chatha, Jammu, was found under mysterious circumstances at Sajadpur area, police said.

He was taken to Government Medical College Jammu where doctors declared him as dead on arrival, police further said. Bodies of both the deceased have been shifted to the mortuary of the Government Medical College Jammu for conducting post-mortems while as inquest proceedings have been initiated at the concerned police stations to ascertain the reasons behind the mysterious deaths of the individuals.

'Nation yearning for big change'

Restore democracy in J&K: Rajni Patil

Excelsior Correspondent

SOPORE, Aug 27: While pleading for restoration of democratic rights of the people in Jammu and Kashmir, All India Congress Committee general secretary and Incharge J&K affairs of the party, Rajni Patil (MP) today said that Nation is yearning for 'big change'.

Addressing party convention at Sopore town in district Baramulla today, Patil said that people should unite to defeat deceitful and divisive policies of BJP in 2024 Lok Sabha elections, as BJP is ruling the country in a dictatorial way while making every effort to assault and erode the authority of the democratic institutions, which stand guarantee to safeguarding people's rights.

She said the democratic institutions reflect the beauty of our great Nation and it will always remain paramount for the Congress to safeguard these in the larger interests of the public. Patil asserted that safeguarding democratic institutions are paramount for the Congress Party, which is fully credited of creating these to benefit people directly without any discrimination, but the BJP Govt at the Centre has adopted the policy of assaulting and eroding the authority of these institutions for the lust of power.

Patil castigated the BJP for divisive and hate politics terming both these misadventures unacceptable and intolerable not only to Congress Party but to all those who believe in Indian democracy and its values. This is the right time for all Indians to wake up to defeat the designs of BJP and extend full support to Congress Party. The Party feels the pain and anguish amongst the public and is vigorously fighting against BJP's divide and hate politics.

AICC Incharge also reiterated that Congress Party shall continue to fight for restoration of democratic rights in J&K and asked the BJP Govt to restore statehood to J&K with all constitutional guarantees, without any further loss of time.

JKPC president Vikar Rasool Wani laid emphasis over launching door to door campaigns and seeking people's full support to defeat the BJP and its offshoots who have been assigned the task to mislead and divert the attention of the people from the real issues. BJPs stands exposed on every front, Wani said.

Former JKPC president and CWC Member GA Mir highlighted the services and sacrifices of the Congress Party and Gandhi family for the Nation and told the convention to take the message of BJY to every household, which is based on

Trucker drowns in Ranbir Canal at Gadigarh

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Aug 27: A truck driver died after he accidentally slipped into Ranbir Canal here in Gadigarh area, police said. They said Gurnam Singh (24) son of Jaswant Singh of Sector-2, Gangyal, was riding a motorcycle when he accidentally slipped into Ranbir Canal at Dharap Village in Gadigarh area around 5 PM on Saturday.

"Soon after the incident, an SDRF team was called in to locate the missing trucker. After hectic efforts, his body was finally fished out from the bank of the Canal around 10 PM on Saturday," said police.

While the body of the deceased has been shifted to the mortuary of the hospital for conducting the post-mortem police have launched inquest proceedings to further probe the matter.

Man found hanging

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Aug 27: A 35-year-old man was found hanging at his residence in Channi Himmat area here today, police said. They said Amit Gupta son of late Parshotam Lal Gupta of House number 162/B, Sector-7, South Extension, Channi Himmat, Jammu, was spotted hanging with the help of a fan and bed sheet at his residence around 7:15 am.

He was taken to Government Medical College Jammu where doctors declared him as dead on arrival, said police. The body of the deceased has been shifted to the mortuary of the hospital for conducting the post-mortem while as inquest proceedings have been initiated at Police Station Channi to ascertain the reasons as to why the man took such an extreme step to end his life.



Senior Cong leaders Rajni Patil, V R Wani, Raman Bhalla and others during party convention at Sopore in Kashmir on Sunday.

love, peace and unity. Serving people irrespective of caste or colour is the core of Congress and it will continue to vigorously work for the development of the people

CWC Member Tariq Hameed Karra referred to the denial of democratic rights in J&K and slammed the BJP govt at Centre for abandoning people of their democratic rights to hide its utter failures. He said while BJP has made huge claims with regard to development in J&K after downgrading erstwhile State into two UTs, what happened after that is visible on the ground, Karra said.

Working president Raman Bhalla blamed BJP for punishing people especially youth who are feeling frustrated due to the extreme joblessness and lack of avenues, besides the tax terror unleashed and many other misadventures are responsible for pushing people to wall. There is

restlessness and economic distress, besides the mis-governance has added woes to the public despite all these failures and misuse, BJP is making tall claims, the matter of fact is, BJP stands exposed and its days are numbered.

AICC Jt Secretary Manoj Yadav also addressed the convention. Senior party leader and former Legislator Haji Abdul Rashid Dar organized the convention.

Senior Congress leaders Mohd Muzaffar Parray, Surinder Singh Channi, DCC presidents Fayaz Ahmad Mir, Sahil Farooq, Prof Ismail Ashna, BDC Chairmen Bilal Ahmad, Sheikh Amir, BDC and various other leaders addressed the convention.

ST leader and Ex-Board Member Ch Muneem Ahmad Kalas from Baramulla joined Congress on the occasion.

Altaf Bukhari resents Waqf Board intention to recruit degree-holding Imams

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Aug 27: Lashing out at the Chairperson of the Waqf Board, Darkshan Andrabai for her recent announcement that the Board is preparing to start recruiting degree-holding Imams, Mubalighs and Muazins in Kashmir, Apni Party Chief Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari, today said that "if the recruitment of Imams and Muazins must be based on qualifications and degrees, then let's commence with assessing the qualifications of the Waqf Board Chairperson herself first."

To make his opposition more clear and forceful, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari named Prime Minister Modi, Home Minister and J&K's LG Manoj Sinha and posed a question to these dignitaries: "How would you react if someone suggested appointing degree-holding priests in revered places like the Ram Mandir?"

While addressing a public rally in Tilsara of Charar-e-Sharief in Central Kashmir's Budgam district, he stressed that such actions amount to direct interference in religious affairs and are absolutely unacceptable. "Don't try to pain our hearts by such moves, and don't try to play with our religious sentiments," he warned.

Bukhari urged the people to remain united when it comes to protecting their fundamental

and religious rights guaranteed by the Constitution. He said, "I feel sorry for the politicians who are divided to the extent that they can't even unite on religious matters. However, I urge the people to stand united to safeguard their Constitutional rights and not allow anyone to meddle in religious affairs beyond limits, just like the Waqf Board is attempting to do by recruiting Imams and Muazins based on qualifications and degrees."

During his speech, Altaf Bukhari yet again reiterated his demand for the release of jailed religious leaders and said, "Time and again, I urge authorities to release the Valley's prominent religious leaders like Mirwais Umar Farooq, Maulana Abdul Rasheed Dawoodi, Maulana Mushtaq Ahmad Veeri, Maulana Manzoor, and others. These religious leaders have a huge following in the Valley and they have a remarkable influence over the people; thus, they can play an imperative role in helping eradicate drug abuse in the Valley."

Altaf Bukhari urged people to join hands with the Apni Party to strengthen it further so that the party can play its role more powerfully.

Chairman of the party's Parliamentary Affairs Committee (PAC) Mohammad Dilawar Mir and others also spoke on the occasion.

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