



Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot meeting workers from the unorganised sector.

Welfare Board, Development Fund announced for gig workers in Rajasthan

Excelsior Correspondent

RAJASTHAN, Mar 2: In a landmark move, Rajasthan has become the first State in India to prioritize the welfare of gig workers.

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot announced the Gig Workers Welfare Act, which will establish a Gig Workers Welfare Board and a Gig Workers Welfare and Development Fund of Rs 200 crore. Gig workers, who are employed on a per-transaction basis by companies such as Ola, Uber, Swiggy, Zomato, and Amazon, are often denied social security benefits and are at risk of exploitation.

Currently, there are around 3-4 lakh gig workers in Rajasthan who do not have any union or institution to represent them. The Welfare Act for Gig Workers aims to provide them with support and protect them from exploitation. The move has been welcomed by gig workers, who have expressed their gratitude for the state government's recognition of their plight.

Pertinently, Rahul Gandhi, during his Bharat Jodo Yatra, had

highlighted the need for social security for gig workers, who drive taxis for Uber and Ola, work for Zomato and Swiggy, and do other small jobs. Gehlot's announcement is a step towards fulfilling that need and providing gig workers with facilities like a pension.

In addition to the Gig Workers Welfare Act, Gehlot also announced the implementation of the 'Mukhyamatri Chiranjeevi Shramik Sambal Yojana' (Chief Minister Chiranjeevi Labourer Support Scheme), worth Rs 100 crore.

Under this scheme, registered labourers and street vendors aged between 25 and 60 years, whose family members are hospitalized and unable to earn their daily wages, will receive Rs 200 per day for seven days through direct benefit transfer (DBT) without any application.

Sanju Kumar, a driver with Uber in Jaipur, expressed his surprise and gratitude for the announcement, stating that the future of gig workers is insecure and the state government's initiative will make the road to social security much easier for them.

Mandatory biometric attendance at CUJ triggers protest

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Mar 2: ABVP here today staged a protest demonstration against the authorities of Central University of Jammu (CUJ) after a notice mandating biometric attendance for research scholars was dispatched last week by the Registrar.

This came in a series of such protests in Government funded universities across the country where such decisions were taken.

Authorities maintained that compulsory and time-bound biometric attendance ensures quality research.

ABVP CUJ president and research scholar, Shubham Raina told reporters that scholars must be evaluated on the quality of research that they deliver and not on the amount of hours they punch-in everyday, which counter-intuitively punishes productive

and efficient research work. ABVP Shodh Shiksha convener and research scholar, Kuljeet Singh said that scholars are intellectuals entrusted by taxpayer of the nation to deliver quality research work and the compulsion of mandated and time-bound biometric attendance takes a toll on their mental health.

"Women scholars who are married find it impossible to maintain such timing because of the remote location of the University and dearth of transport facilities and are being demotivated from pursuing higher education," he maintained.

CUJ Vice Chancellor, Prof. Sanjeev Jain; Registrar, Prof. Yashwant Singh and Dean Research Studies, Prof. Deepak Pathania assured protesting Ph.D candidates that compulsory biometric attendance will be removed with immediate effect.

Three-day Gojri Literary & Cultural Fest commences

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Mar 2: A 3-day long Gojri Literary and Cultural Festival started here today at J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL) after it was inaugurated by Abdul Ghani Kohli, former Minister in the presence of Neha Jalali, Joint Director Publication Division, Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.



Dignitaries releasing a book during Gojri Fest in Jammu on Thursday.

The welcome address was delivered by Dr. Shahnawaz, Head Gojri Wing JKAACL.

The chief guest was Neha Jalali.

Gojri folk songs by renowned artists Bashir Mastana and party, Razia Ashraf, Parveena Choudhary and Rashid Ashraf and party were sung on the occasion and in Short Story session Dr. Mirza Khan Waqar and Sheikh Azad Ahmed presented Gojri

short stories while M. Mansha Khaki presented research paper on 'Life and Contributions of Great Sufi Saint Mian Bashir Ahmad Larvi.'

Biography of Gujjar Saint Sufi Hazrat Baji Alif Din authored by Abdul Hameed Kasana and Baji Khurshid Ahmad, Chief Planning Officer was also released on this occasion.

Dr. Rattan Basotra, Editor Dogri, JKAACL presented vote of thanks.

The inaugural session was conducted by Dr. Shahnawaz, Editor cum Cultural Officer, Gojri JKAACL.

Poetry session with poets Abdul Ghani Pardasi, Bashrat Ahmed Nazak,

Shakeel Ahmed Rahi, Mohd Aslam Kathana, M. Rafi Shabnam, Shabaz Waseem, Talib Hussain Talib, M. Farooq Kalas, Nissar Hussain, Tayab Raza Jalani, Maqsood Ahmed, Naqashband, Naseem Akhtar, Zafar Iqbal, Mumtaz Ahmed Mumtaz and Tariq Faheem was also held.

The programme concluded with vote of thanks by Dr. Shahnawaz.

10 hurt as bus-trailer collide

Excelsior Correspondent

UDHAMPUR, Mar 2: Ten passengers were injured when a bus collided with a trailer (Tralla) on Jammu-Srinagar National Highway near Udhampur today.

Police sources said that a speeding trailer bearing registration number HP12F-9249 collided with a

* Watch video on www.excelsiornews.com

passenger bus bearing registration number JK14D-1183, which was on way from Jammu to Ramban.

Local people of the area and police rushed to the spot and shifted the injured persons to District Hospital, Udhampur.

The injured persons were iden-

tified as Ankush (22), son of Bharat Singh of Ramban; Tariq Hussein (20), son of Mushtaq Ahmed of Chandkerot in Ramban; Lakhvinder (20), son of Frangi Lal of Ramban; Paramjeet Singh (21), son of Bodhi Singh of Rajgarh in Ramban; Dilshad Begum (34), wife of Manjoor Ahmed of Ramban; Angeet Singh (22), son of Sadhu Ram of Ramban; Bageshwar Sharma (30), son of Des Raj of Housing Colony Udhampur; Duni Chand (42), son of Farangi Ram of Jammu; Suraj Singh (18), son of Bhim Singh of Ramban and Jeevan Lal (30), son of Bichitru Ram of Battal Ballian. Bageshwar Sharma was referred to GMC Jammu in view of serious condition. Rehmbal Police registered a case in this connection.

Senior police officers of northern states discuss menace of drugs

CHANDIGARH, Mar 2:

Senior police officials of northern states and Union territories on Thursday held a detailed discussion on the menace of drugs and laid emphasis on coordinated action to deal with it.

The meeting was attended by officials from Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi, besides the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB).

Haryana Director General of Police P K Agrawal, Chandigarh DGP Praveer Ranjan and Punjab's Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order) Arpit Shukla were among those present in the meeting.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Haryana DGP Agrawal, who chaired it, informed that a detailed discussion among officers was held on several issues related to the drug problem and what more steps need to be taken to more effectively deal with the scourge.

"Several issues related to the drug problem which is a very serious issue were discussed. A detailed discussion took place on what we are doing and what more should be done," he said.

Several suggestions emerged during the meeting with regard to dealing with this problem more effectively, he added.

"Such a mechanism be implemented so that strict action be taken against drug smugglers and peddlers in this area," he said.

During the meeting, financial proceeds from drugs were also discussed, he said. "You all know there is a huge generation (in proceeds from drugs) and what should we do in this regard," he said.

There is a need to strengthen the mechanism of sharing information pertaining to drugs with each other, he noted.

A working group will be set up so that field officials can regularly share information and take efforts

against the drug problem in a coordinated way, he added.

The Haryana DGP said the good practices against the drug problem adopted by the participating states will be assimilated on one platform so as to replicate them.

He said there were many other related issues which were also discussed. He stressed on taking action against some unscrupulous pharma companies in Himachal Pradesh.

Replying to a question on the flow of drugs from Pakistan, Agrawal said the fight against the problem of drugs is a continuous one and it has to be fought.

He said that in several incidents, the Punjab Police and the Border Security Force stopped smuggling of drugs and arms which came through drones from across the border in the last few days.

"If we say that it is completely stopped... We will be living in a fool's paradise, if we think that we have ended it completely... We have to be alert," he said.

He further said that it was important to establish backward and forward linkages of drug networks so as to demolish the entire supply chain.

To a question on the source of drugs, he said there are border areas such as Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir, besides Mundra port and some areas in Delhi and against which effective action was needed.

To another question, Agrawal said there was a need for a coordinated action against the drug problem and a detailed discussion took place on this issue.

He further said that officials of Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan will also be involved in such meetings in future.

Punjab's ADGP Shukla said some drug smugglers have developed nexus with gangsters and terrorist organisations also. (PTI)

India at cusp of S&T revolution: Tata Electronics Head

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Mar 2: India is at the cusp of a huge science & technology revolution driven by various mission-mode policies.

This was stated by Tata Electronics Head, Dr. Charan Gurumurthy while presenting National Science Day Awards at SASTRA University in Thanjavur.

He stressed on the importance of basic sciences in semiconductor value chain and said how India's leap with its recent PLI is a technology transformation for the nation.

The SASTRA-Obaid Siddiqi Award was bestowed upon Prof.

Award for their contributions and excellence in Chemistry & Material Science and SAS-TRA-Mahamana Award was presented to Prof. M. Valliathan, National Research Professor, MAHE, Manipal for his contributions to Indian Knowledge System.

Each award included a citation and Rs. 5 lakh cash prize.

The SASTRA-Saroj Chandrasekar Award, instituted to encourage women Ph.D scholars, was conferred to three Ph.D scholars from IIT Kanpur, JNCARSAR, Bangalore & IISER, Mohali for their commendable research work. In addition to honouring the



Scientists posing for a group photograph after getting awards at SASTRA University in Thanjavur.

Samir K. Maji, Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai, for his astounding contributions to Life Sciences; SASTRA-GN Ramachandran Award was given to Prof. S. Ramaswamy, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore for his excellence in Physics; Prof. S. Natarajan, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore and Prof. T. Pradeep, Indian Institute of Technology, Chennai were recipients of SASTRA-C.N.R Rao

great scientists, SASTRA also donated STEM Lab training kits to 10 schools from different parts of Tamil Nadu.

Each kit costs Rs. 5 lakh and is designed & developed at SASTRA TBI.

"Around 30 schools have been awarded this kit in the last 3 years with a target of 100 schools," said Dr. S. Swaminathan, Dean - Planning & Development in his welcome address.

Patwaris stage protest, reiterate demands

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Mar 2: Patwaris today held a protest in the office complex of Deputy Commissioner Jammu demanding fulfillment of their already agreed demands.

A large number of patwaris drawn from various parts of Jammu today assembled at DC

the Patwar Khanas and basic facilities for running the Patwar offices. The agitating patwaris also sought ban on direct recruitment of Naib-Tehsildars and demanded creation of GQ circles and transfers of GQs out of the district.

Speaking on the occasion, the protesting patwaris said they were forced to resort to the path of agitation time and again by the authorities as despite assurance given by the Revenue Secretary in March 2022 that all their demands will be fulfilled within a month, nothing was done after a lapse of about one year.



Patwaris staging protest in DC office complex, Jammu on Thursday. —Excelsior/Rakesh

office complex and staged dharna from morning to evening while raising slogans in support of their

Similar protests of patwaris were also held in other districts of Jammu province. They said that Government had promised to fulfill their demands last year in March but nothing has been done yet in that regard.

They demanded the Government to hike Grade pay of patwaris from Rs 2400 to 2800, bifurcate patwar halqas and grant 75 percent Naib Tehsildar quota to patwaris through promotion.

* Watch video on www.excelsiornews.com

demands which include increase in the grade pay of graduate patwaris and timely departmental promotion. They also demanded Government accommodation for



Principal Secretary Jal Shakti reviewing progress on development works at Jammu.

Principal Secretary Jal Shakti reviews progress on development works

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Mar 2: Principal Secretary, Jal Shakti Department, Shaleen Kabra, today reviewed progress on development works being executed under the jurisdiction of Irrigation Division number 1, Jammu.

He inspected the construction work on Tawi Barrage and issued instructions for expediting the work to ensure its completion within the fixed date.

Principal Secretary also inspected the desilting works on Ranbir Canal and expressed satisfaction over the progress and quality of these works being executed by the Irrigation & Flood Control Department Jammu.

Chief Engineer, Irrigation & Flood Control Department Jammu, Manoj Gupta, explained that the Ranbir Canal has been designed to carry a discharge of 1400 cusecs, out of which, 1000 cusecs is being used for irrigation purpose to cater to the command area of 38608 hectare spread over 489 villages of Jammu district.

DC Jammu reviews implementation of Lakhpati Didi Yojna

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Mar 2: Deputy Commissioner Jammu, Avny Lavasa today reviewed the implementation of Lakh Pati Didi yojna of NRLM here at meeting with concerned officers.

The Deputy Commissioner asked the concerned officials to spread awareness about the scheme to register a maximum number of women. She also discussed the initiatives which can be taken to enhance the earning of women.

For effective implementation of the scheme, the DC called upon the concerned officers to widen and intensify public outreach program under Lakhpati Didi yojna.

The Deputy Commissioner

asked the concerned officials to impart the training to eligible women in various fields like tailoring, floriculture, exotic vegetables, dairy products etc so that they can avail benefits through this scheme with immediate effect.

She entrusted upon the concerned officers to work in synergy so that the needy people could get the maximum benefits from several welfare schemes.

It is a scheme to empower the women, especially in rural areas by enhancing their earning over one lakh rupees per year.

Along with other, CPO Yoginder Katoch, BDOs besides senior officers from concerned departments were present in the meeting.

Dr Langer reviews UT Capex works, CSS with Planning heads of all deptts

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Mar 2: Secretary Planning, Development and Monitoring Department, Dr Raghav Langer today chaired a meeting to review expenditure under Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS),

physical/financial progress under UT Capex, physical verification of completed works and projects identified for monitoring on UT PMG portal.

The Planning Officers of all Administrative Departments participated in the meeting. Secretary Planning directed all concerned officers to do daily departmental review in view of approaching closure of the

Capex Budget; which is in addition to projects which have been completed under the District Capex. The departments assured in the meeting to achieve the target of 22000 plus works under UT Capex as per the directions already conveyed by the office of Chief Secretary.

Further, it was conveyed by Director General E&S that during the current year, 49899 works/projects were identified for physical verification and 45524 works/projects have already been physically verified (91%) by the field officers & data entered on the PV portal. Wherever certain deficiencies are observed, the verifica-



Secretary PD&M Deptt Dr Raghav Langer chairing a meeting.

Financial Year 22-23 and to ensure that the budget released gets fully utilised before 31st March.

The meeting started with the review of fund availability & expenditure position under Centrally Sponsored & Central Sector Schemes. Single Nodal Account (SNA) has been operationalised in the UT for implementing various CSS. It was apprised that the off-take of funds under CSS has improved by about Rs 900 crore compared to last year for the period ending January from Rs 9423 crore to Rs 10303 crore.

The expenditure has also improved from Rs 5224 crore to Rs 6222 crore; an increase of 9% till 31st Jan, 2023 over the corresponding period of the previous Financial Year.

Substantial progress will further get reported when MPR's for the month of February are received by 5th of this month. Upto January 2023, an amount of Rs 2867.86 crore have been utilized under UT sector, Rs 288.81 crore under Negotiated Loans and approx Rs 1100 crores under PMDD.

So far 10920 works/projects have been completed during the current year under UT

reports are being shared with the concerned districts/departments. With regard to PMG, it was informed that State Project Monitoring Group is an institutional mechanism that helps to expedite issue resolution, fast-tracking of approvals/clearances for infrastructure projects. The participating officers were directed to upload about 10 projects of each Sector for being monitored under UT PMG Portal.

The Secretary directed the Planning Heads of the departments to take all possible steps in order to accelerate the pace of development so that maximum works are completed well in time.

The meeting was attended by DG Economics & Statistics Satvir K. Soodan, DG Planning PD&MD Shahzada Bilal Ahmad, DG Development Expenditure Division-II Parvez Ahmad Kakroo, DG Agriculture Production Department Harjeet Rai, DG Planning Kashmir Directorate Athar Hussain Qadri; besides Directors, Joint Directors & Deputy Directors Planning of all Administrative Departments.

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