

Rohit Kansal takes review of NIFT Srinagar

*** Asks for completion by March 31st**

Excelsior Correspondent

BUDGAM, Mar 9: Union Additional Secretary, Ministry of Textiles, Rohit Kansal, who is also Director General (DG)



National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), on Thursday visited NIFT Srinagar to take a review regarding establishment of the campus.

Director General NIFT had a detailed assessment of overall construction works going on at the campus.

Deputy Commissioner, Budgam, S F Hamid, Managing Director, SIDCO, Rakesh Minhas and Director NIFT Srinagar Dr. Javid Ahmad Wani were also present on the occasion.

While reviewing ongoing construction works on NIFT Campus Ompora, Rohit Kansal directed the executing agency to complete all these works by March 31 of 2023.

"Focus should be on the campus landscaping and it should look like a green campus with all aesthetic splendor," he said.

He said that NIFT Srinagar should be a leading institution in the uplift of artisan community. The intervention must range from design development, branding and marketing.

After reviewing the construction, Kansal also interacted with the staff and the students of the institute.

"NIFT Srinagar is one of the most beautiful and well laid out campuses in the entire country. It is my earnest desire that it gets completed as quickly as possible so that we can get it formally inaugurated," Kansal maintained.

"This is the one of the youngest campus among all the 18 campuses and it has a scope to grow as the best institute. All the campuses are close to me but the youngest ones are more dearer," he said.

He said if he has to commit his resources, energies, and affection he would do it much to the younger institutes. "And NIFT Srinagar is the youngest one. You will have my all support and resources won't be a constraint," he added.

He said that NIFT Srinagar should take the support of the district administration Budgam and J&K government to leverage the design strength to the maximum extent possible.

Genuine problems of transporters to be resolved: Advisor

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Mar 9: Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, today addressed the first ever mega meet of All India Transporters at SKICC here.

Advisor Bhatnagar highlighted that there is a need for collaboration and innovation in order to keep up with the changing demands of transportation industry. He urged upon the attendees to embrace new technologies and work together towards creating more efficient, sustainable and safe transportation system and be a significant stakeholder in new J&Ks development story.

"The challenges facing the transportation industry are significant, but so too are the opportunities," Advisor said. He added that by working together and adopting latest technologies, we can create a more resilient and sustainable transportation system that benefits every citizen of our country.

Divulging on different initiatives launched by the LG led administration in Jammu and Kashmir for transport sector, Advisor Bhatnagar said that the UT Government is very responsive towards the concerns of transporters and has been extending various relief measures and schemes for them from time to time.

During the meet, the Advisor also interacted with the transporters and delegates from other states and UTs of the country and applauded them for development of transport industry across the country. He apprised the gathering of vast investments in road and traffic infrastructure.



Advisor Bhatnagar during mega meet of All India Transporters at SKICC.

Advisor, on the occasion, also interacted with transporters of Jammu and Kashmir and gave patient hearing to their issues and grievances.

While interacting with them, Advisor Bhatnagar assured them that their genuine issues and problems will be resolved on priority. He also assured them that the good practices and transport policies of other states will be considered for the betterment of transport sector in Jammu and Kashmir.

Delegates and representatives of All India Auto Taxi Bus Transporters Federation, members of Bhattiya Mazdoor Sangh, other transport union representatives and stakeholders associated with transport sector were present during the meet.



Chairperson J&K Waqf Board Dr Darakhshan Andrabi laying foundation stone for new works at Shahdara Sharief in Rajouri.

-Excelsior/Imran

Will focus on reforms, up-gradation of facilities at shrines: Darakhshan

*** Lays foundation stone of works at Shahdara Sharief**

Excelsior Correspondent

RAJOURI, Mar 9: Chairperson, Jammu & Kashmir Waqf Board, Dr Syed Darakhshan Andrabi today laid foundation stone for new projects of facility upgradation estimated at the cost of around Rs 2.2 crores at Shahdara Sharief and Panjpeer Shrine in Rajouri today.

The new works included new guest house, new kitchen block, new bathroom complex, new security block at Ziyarat Shahdara Sharief and a Masjid area in Panjpeer shrine near Salani bridge in Rajouri.

She was accompanied by CEO of Waqf Board, Dr Syed Majid Jahangir, Waqf Administrator Rajouri Ashiq Rafiq and Administrator Jammu Mudassir Iqbal.

Speaking to media after the foundation laying ceremony, Dr Andrabi said, "After taking some measures to reform/improve system prevailing in Waqf and plug undue wastage of public offerings, it is now time for up-gradation of facilities at shrines. We have begun the process of creating necessary infrastructure at all prominent shrines across J&K. With digital

system of working, we have ensured transparency and accountability within Waqf," she added.

Dr Darakhshan also chaired Ulema conclave at Dak Bungalow, Rajouri which was attended by all prominent religious preachers and scholars of the district. The religious leaders lauded the Waqf Board decision of 30 percent enhancement in remuneration of Imams, Khateeb and Muazzins.

Addressing the conclave, Dr Andrabi said that it was the responsibility of religious preachers and scholars to refresh the Sufi legacy of this land in people's minds and to inform public about the universal peaceful message of Islam.

Waqf Board Chairperson also chaired Waqf employees meeting and awarded certificates of excellence to the employees with great working records during the past one year. She emphasized on Waqf Board staff to dedicate themselves to the service of the society with more zeal and honesty.

Dr Andrabi inspected Eidgah Masjid Complex and Old City Purani Masjid Complex also.

She met the BJP Rajouri leaders delegation and had a detailed discussion about initiatives for expansion of party's outreach to the untouched areas and people. Dr Andrabi met many other public delegations at Rajouri town.

Rajouri gets its first fully functional Drug De-Addiction Centre

Excelsior Correspondent

RAJOURI, Mar 9: The Drug De-Addiction Centre in Rajouri has finally opened its doors for the patients, thanks to the Department of Social Welfare and district administration for putting extra efforts in making it functional.

The inauguration ceremony



DC and SSP Rajouri inaugurating Drug De-addiction Centre on Thursday.

was attended by several officials and members of the NGO, including Deputy Commissioner, Vikas Kundal and Senior Superintendent of Police Rajouri, Mohd Aslam.

The centre has a total capacity of 15 patients at a time and during the inspection, the Deputy Commissioner and the Senior Superintendent of Police reviewed the facilities and interacted with the staff. They expressed their satisfaction with the facilities and commended the NGO for their efforts in providing support to drug addicts.

The specialist doctor at the drug de-addiction centre will start an OPD from Monday, providing an opportunity for individuals struggling with addiction to seek help and support. This is a much-needed facility for individuals struggling with addiction in the region and the centre will provide much-needed support and rehabilitation services to those struggling with drug addiction.

The Deputy Commissioner and

the Senior Superintendent of Police also discussed the challenges of drug addiction and strategies to address them. They emphasized the need to increase awareness about the harmful effects of drug addiction and to encourage the youth to adopt healthy lifestyles.

The launch of the Drug de-Addiction Centre in Rajouri is a significant step in addressing the drug abuse problem in the region. The Deputy Commissioner and the Senior Superintendent of Police interacted with the patients and advised them to shun the use of drugs and play their part in the nation's development. This centre will undoubtedly make a positive impact on the

lives of those struggling with addiction and their families. During his visit, Deputy Commissioner, Vikas Kundal, took the time to interact with patients and offer them valuable advice. He urged them to steer clear of drugs and instead, play an active role in the nation's development. Kundal emphasized the importance of seeking help for addiction and spreading awareness about the harmful effects of drugs on one's health and wellbeing.

During the inauguration of the centre, Senior Superintendent of Police Rajouri, Mohd Aslam highlighted the need for a collective effort to fight drug addiction and emphasized the importance of community participation in addressing the issue. Aslam appreciated the efforts of the NGO NSSWO in establishing the centre and providing much-needed support to those struggling with addiction.

"Construction of ramps for

Dr Jitendra announces exclusive women's portal for research grants, funds

Excelsior Correspondent

NEW DELHI, Mar 9: To mark the International Women's Day, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; Minister of State (Independent Charge) Earth Sciences; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh today announced an exclusive women's portal for research grants and funds. The portal will become functional with effect from 1st of April.



Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh, as chief guest, addressing the International Women's Day programme organised by the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) at New Delhi, on Thursday.

The Minister was addressing the International Women's Day celebration programme organised by the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) here. He informed that the CSIR has decided to start exclusive Research Grants for Women Scientists under CSIR-ASPIRE and an exclusive portal in this regard will be available from April 1, 2023. The Special Call inviting proposals from Women Scientists will open the same day.

Pertinent to mention that the proposal for inviting research grant proposals from Women Scientists under Extramural Research Scheme, was approved during the 200th meeting of the Governing Body of CSIR on 17th December, 2022 under the chairmanship of Dr Jitendra Singh.

Only women scientists across the country will be eligible to apply for research grants to carry out R&D in major disciplines of science and engineering viz Life Sciences, Chemical Sciences, Physical Sciences, Engineering Sciences and inter/trans disciplinary sciences.

The funds will be provided for staff (JRF/SRF/RA), contingency and minor equipment. The total budget of a research proposal including research fellow's stipend should generally not exceed the limit of 25-30 lacs.

Dr. Jitendra Singh said, this initiative is aligned to the Government of India's initiative to empower women and promote 'Nari Shakti' in the country.

"As we move towards Amrit Kal, this is another visionary step towards the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's efforts to put Nari Shakti at the forefront of India's development journey," he said.

Dr. Jitendra Singh said Prime Minister Modi considers women-led development a central dimension of India's progress and necessary for strengthening India.

"In the last nine years, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Government has launched numerous welfare schemes that have aimed to empower women and make them lead India's development journey. His efforts are enabling women to overcome social barriers and fulfil their aspirations," he said.

Dr. Jitendra Singh said 68% of 2 crore PM Awas-Gramin beneficiaries are women and over 23 crore MUDRA loans have been granted to Women beneficiaries. For the first

time, sex ratio in India has improved to 1,020 women per 1,000 men, according to the NFHS-5 survey, he said.

Dr. Jitendra Singh said, in the last 9 years, there has been a massive increase in Women Police Personnel. In 2018, PM Modi announced a landmark decision to allow Permanent Commission for Women in the Armed Forces. There are more than 10,000 Women Officers serving in the Medical Services.

"Now Women are breaking the glass ceiling in every sphere. Only recently, the Indian Air Force posted Group Captain Shalizi Dhami as the first woman officer to command a missile squadron in the Western sector facing Pakistan. Women CRPF combatants have been inducted into the elite anti-Maoist COBRA Unit. Women officers have also started taking command of various Army units. The Navy has also started inducting Women Officers on frontline warships," he said.

J&K Bank launches AI-enabled Chatbot

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Mar 9: J&K Bank today launched JIA (J&K Bank Intelligent Assistant) - an AI-enabled Chatbot that will improve customer-experience digitally by providing personalized services to its clients in the form of instant information and relevant assistance.

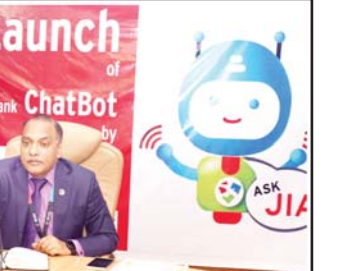


J&K Bank CEO Baldev Prakesh during launching of AI-enabled Chatbot at Srinagar on Thursday.

MD and CEO Baldev Prakesh inaugurated Chatbot JIA and its associated WhatsApp Banking Service in presence of Bank's Executive Director Sudhir Gupta, General Managers and other senior officers here at Bank's Corporate Headquarters.

Speaking on the occasion, MD & CEO said, "Today's launch is part of our commitment to improve customer-journeys and enhance client-experience across our available channels of banking and

finance." It's a small but very significant first-step that will soon transform



J&K Bank CEO Baldev Prakesh during launching of AI-enabled Chatbot at Srinagar on Thursday.

the digital-services landscape of the Bank, ensuring enhanced ease and safety of our valuable customers, he said.

"JIA will instantly respond to the queries of customers while remaining available round the clock for our clients and people at large. Moreover, equipped with tools of Natural Language Processing (NLP), Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Predictive Intelligence and Analytics, JIA will learn and evolve fast as it gathers and processes information to deliver increasing levels of personalized services to our customers", he said.

Notably, powered by Cogno AI, Bank's Chatbot (JIA) is available on the homepage of Corporate website, while as, to avail the Bank's WhatsApp-based services, consumers just need to send 'hi' to 990663937 - a dedicated WhatsApp Business Account Number.

Meanwhile, in the first phase, JIA will guide people visiting the bank's website in exploring information about the bank's all products ranging from digital channels, deposits, loans, cards, rewards, insurance and NRI services besides helping to locate nearby branches/ATMs of the Bank.

JIA will also educate visitors about various offers issued by the Bank from time to time, besides assisting them to raise the complaints/know the status of their disputed digital transactions.

MIER College of Education holds seminar

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Mar 9: On International Women's Day, MIER College of Education organized a one-day seminar on "Achieving Gender Equality for Transformative Change by 2030".

As per a statement, the seminar aimed at bringing together educationists, administrators, entrepreneurs, and social workers to deliberate upon gender equality, challenges, and measures needed to remove gender inequality.

It said that the seminar was inaugurated by the Chief Guest, Dr Ritu Singh, Founding Chairperson of FICCI FLO J&K and Ladakh.

Dr Adit Gupta, Director and Principal of MIER College, welcomed the guests and attendees and congratulated the Centre for Women's Studies for organizing the seminar. Dr Renu Gupta, Chairperson MIER and patron of SSGCWS, spoke about the importance of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls at the heart of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals as envisaged by the UN 2015.

The keynote address was delivered by Dr Rekha Koul,

Associate Professor and Deputy Head, School of Education, Curtin University, Perth, Australia, on the theme "Safe to Speak: Women Empowerment and SDG 5". She highlighted the need for women to voice their presence and opinions and emphasized the journey of women's empowerment from the right to vote to becoming the head of the State.

The second session was a panel discussion on the theme of the seminar. The panelists candidly shared their views about gender equality, challenges, and the integration of goal 5 in achieving other UN development goals. It was followed by an interactive Q&A session.

The keynote speaker for the third session was Dr Pushpa Singh, Associate Professor, Marinda House, University of Delhi. She deliberated on the theme "Achieving Gender Equality: Prospects and Challenges" and explained the concept of gender and the different forms of gender discrimination and its consequences.

The seminar ended with a formal vote of thanks by Dr Bharti Tandon, Associate Professor, and Dr Bindu Dua, Assistant Professor, MIER College.

DB directive in PIL seeking modern slaughter houses

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Mar 9: A Division Bench of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court comprising Chief Justice N Kottiswar Singh and Justice Sindhu Sharma has directed SS Nanda, Senior Additional Advocate General and Advocate Harshwardhan Gupta to apprise the court about the completion and modernization of the slaughter houses in Srinagar and Jammu.

The direction was passed in the much publicized Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by an NGO working for the welfare of animals (SAVE) through its Chairperson Devinder Kaur Madaan alias Rumpy Madaan seeking closure of un-regulated and un-registered/un-licensed slaughter houses/meat shops in the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir including Jammu/Srinagar Cities.

The PIL further seeks directions to the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir/ JMC/SMC to establish modern slaughter houses in both capital cities and the slaughter houses already existing in the various Districts/Tehsil Headquarters be modernized as per the directions of the Apex Court in the case of Laxmi Narayan Modi V/s Union of India & Ors.

When the PIL came-up for hearing, DB after hearing Advocate Sheikh Shakeel Ahmed for the PIL, observed, "in terms of order dated 14.02.2023, the Deputy Commissioner, Jammu and Srinagar, were directed to file a composite compliance report by the next date in terms of earlier order dated 13.12.2022, but the same has not been filed till date".

The DB directed that the same be filed by or before the next date of hearing with an advance copy thereof to the other side. DB further directed S Nanda, Senior Additional Advocate General shall also apprise the court about the completion of the slaughter house(s) in Srinagar and Harshwardhan Gupta, counsel on behalf of the Jammu Municipal Corporation also may apprise the court of the latest stage of upgradation of the slaughter house(s) which are under construction at Jammu.

DB further directed DSGI Vishal Sharma to file status report in respect to UT of Ladakh pursuant to order dated 13.12.2022. "We expect the authorities to submit the report by the next date of hearing and list this PIL on 24.04.2023", the DB added.

The Deputy Commissioner and

Div Com Kashmir conducts late night tour of Srinagar

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Mar 9: The Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri accompanied by Commissioner SMC/CEO Smart City, Athar Amir Khan Wednesday late night took a tour of the city to review the night shift work on the ongoing works under Smart City Project.

The Div Com carried out on the spot review of various works being executed in city parts in the night shifts. Srinagar Smart City has made it mandatory that work is conducted both during the day and in night shifts to ensure

speedy completion of works.

He also took a detailed review of works at Northern Foreshore, Shalimar Canal, Nishat Precinct, Boulevard Walkway, Chuntkul, Chinar Bagh, Residency Road, M.A Road, Ghanta Ghar, Batamaloq, Qamarwari Mominabad, and Rajbagh Riverfront.

The Div Com impressed upon the concerned officials to ensure the timely execution of all the works being carried out in Srinagar under Smart City Project.

He was accompanied by officials from R&B, SMC, Smart City and other allied departments.

Parks, Gardens in Jammu being regularly maintained: Div Com to HC

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Mar 9: The Divisional Commissioner Jammu in his status report before High Court has stated that the parks and gardens in the division are being regularly

disabled and physically challenged persons sufficient number of benches and washrooms, toilets at appropriate places to be earmarked by some experts in each of the parks and to construct proper pathways wherever feasible. Ensure removal of all encroachments or unauthorized construction from all parks and green spaces and ensure that no construction in the vicinity is raised without the proper permission and sanction of the map by the competent authority.

Deputy Commissioner, Jammu and Senior Superintendent of Police Jammu shall provide necessary assistance for removal of encroachments to the concerned department", Div Com directed. Jammu Municipal Corporation in consultation with different departments have been directed to prepare a road map for maintenance to parks and gardens in Jammu City with the further director Floriculture, Jammu was to convene meeting of Divisional Level Committee constituted vide Government Order No.276-GAD of 2018 dated 20.02.2018 on monthly basis for improvement and up gradation of parks and garden in Jammu City and furnish the report accordingly.

The Director Floriculture in his action report to the Div. Com has submitted the department is presently maintaining 64 Parks/Gardens in the Jammu Division having area of 1898.74 Kanals and single use plastic and other plastic material is strictly prohibited in all the existing Parks & Gardens maintained by the Department & Signage.

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