

Horti Dept holds Awareness Camp, Plantation Drive at Bhalwal; MLA promotes modern farming

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, JULY 28

The Department of Horticulture, Jammu, on Tuesday organised a large-scale Awareness Camp-cum-Plantation Drive at Bhalwal to educate farmers about government horticulture schemes and promote environmental conservation through tree plantation.

The programme, attended by over 300 farmers, orchardists, Panchayat representatives and local residents, was inaugurated by MLA Jammu North, Sham Lal Sharma, who urged farmers to embrace scientific horticulture practices to enhance productivity and income.

Addressing the gathering, Sharma highlighted the significant role of horticulture in strengthening the rural economy and encouraged farmers to take advantage of welfare schemes offered by the department. He stressed the importance of adopting improved planting material, scientific cultivation techniques and modern orchard management practices while calling for greater public participation in plantation drives to protect the environment.

Chief Horticulture Officer Jammu Rakesh Kotwal informed farmers about various developmental initiatives under the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) and the Jammu & Kashmir Competitiveness Improvement Project (JKCIP). He said these schemes provide financial assistance for orchard establishment, pro-



tected cultivation, irrigation facilities, farm mechanisation, post-harvest infrastructure, quality planting material and other measures aimed at improving productivity and increasing farmers' incomes.

District Level Subject Matter Specialist (Pomology) Vishal Magotra delivered a technical presentation on scientific orchard management, high-density plantation, selection of suitable fruit varieties, pruning, nutrient management, integrated pest and disease management and water conservation.

He encouraged farmers to adopt modern technologies to improve both the quality and yield of horticultural

crops.

The District Panchayat Officer Jammu and the Block Development Officer Bhalwal appreciated the initiative and assured full support in spreading awareness about government schemes through Panchayati Raj Institutions.

During the interactive session, horticulture experts addressed farmers' queries on orchard establishment, crop diversification, financial assistance, quality planting material, marketing opportunities and best horticultural practices. Informative literature on various horticulture schemes was also distributed among the participants.

As part of the programme, a plantation drive was conducted in which fruit saplings were planted by the MLA, officials, farmers and local residents. Participants also pledged to protect the environment by planting and nurturing trees while promoting sustainable horticulture practices.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks, reaffirming the Horticulture Department's commitment to strengthening the horticulture sector through awareness, capacity building and effective implementation of government schemes aimed at improving the socio-economic condition of farmers.

World Nature Conservation Day Marked with Nature Walk, Tree Talk in Siddhra Forests

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World Nature Conservation Day was celebrated with a nature walk, tree plantation drive and the 1706th edition of the Tree Talk programme in the Siddhra forestlands on Tuesday, highlighting the importance of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of forest resources.

The event was organised by the Forest Department in collaboration with the Tree Talk Group and Vibe Tribe Club, Jammu. Conservator of Forests, East Circle, Pradeep Wahule, inaugurated the programme by planting a sapling. Among those present were Divisional Forest Officer Jammu Anurag Arya, Joint Director SFRI Bishan Das Thakur, Tree Talk founder Om Prakash Sharma "Vid-yarthi", herbal innovator Pooja Kapoor Suri, environmentalist Rakesh Abrol, Range Officer Virender Salathia, Kalpna Vinay, Wajid Rafiqi and several forest officials, environmentalists and nature enthusiasts.

Addressing the gathering, Wahule underscored the critical role of forests in sustaining biodiversity and maintaining ecological balance. He cautioned that ex-



cessive exploitation of natural resources results in soil degradation, depletion of water resources and the decline of threatened species, urging people to actively participate in conservation efforts for the benefit of future generations.

During the nature walk, Om Prakash Sharma introduced participants to the rich floral diversity of the Siddhra forests, explaining the edible, medicinal, ornamental and ecological significance of various plant species. He said World Nature Conservation Day serves as a reminder of the collective responsibility to protect forests, conserve biodiversity and promote the sustainable use of natural resources.

A major attraction of the programme was an exhibition curated by herbal innovator Pooja Kapoor Suri, showcasing plant specimens, edible flowers, seasonal leafy vegetables, aromatic and medicinal plants, quality saplings and a range of innovative forest-based food products. The display included Oleaster Sauce, Tinbru Chutney, Gokhru Snacks, Punarnava Pakodas, Commelina Snacks, Trianthema Pakodas, Rhododendron Tea, Arjun Bark Tea, Mango Modak, Vidari Kheer, Parijat Tea and Gwalmanda Dahi, highlighting the potential of value-added products derived from forest biodiversity.

Speaking on the occasion,

Pooja Kapoor Suri stressed the medicinal importance of indigenous herbs and plants, saying that blending traditional knowledge with scientific innovation can create nutritious food products and effective herbal remedies while supporting livelihoods and biodiversity conservation.

The programme concluded with an interactive discussion on biodiversity conservation, sustainable utilisation of forest resources and the importance of community participation in safeguarding the region's natural heritage.

Participants reaffirmed their commitment to environmental protection and sustainable forest management.

Congress only secular, democratic force to save democracy: AICC Secretary

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, JULY 28

AICC Secretary Co-In-charge J&K Affairs Ms Divya Mahipal Maderna Ex-MLA Rajasthan today cautioned the people about the threat to democracy and religious harmony in the Country and said that Congress is the only secular, democratic force which can defeat the communal, divisive and anti-democratic forces & lead the country on the path of peace, progress and all round development.

Addressing a gathering of Congress workers at Samba today, AICC Secretary said that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has proved that non-violence and satyagrah are the strongest weapons against authoritarianism as a result Modi government has to bow before the youth but regretted that young boys and girls, seeking justice and fighting against corruption in the system, were subjected to atrocities and use of pellet guns.

She said it was LOP Rahul Gandhi who is fighting the authoritarian policies of BJP government for more than twelve years and now the outbursts of Gen Z is the result of strong arms methods of Modi Government against all just and peaceful protests in the country.

She regretted that hundreds of students were injured and hospitalized due to the use of pellet guns, and other excesses by the police.

Referring to the demand of statehood to J&K, AICC Secretary said that it is the



betrayal of BJP, which is refusing to fulfill the promise to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, after getting huge mandate on te promise of restoration of statehood. She said Congress is fighting for the rights, dignity, status and identityof the people of J&K.

Addressing the gathering working President Shri Raman Bhalla launched a scathing attack on BJP for their neglect and betrayal of people of Jammu region after making tall promises to the people especially the youths.

The BJP wants to rule from Delhi through remote control under UT and does not want to grant statehood and transfer power to the people of J&K, like in other states of the country. The local BJP MLAs and MPs are dancing to the tunes of central leadership and maintaining silence over the issue of statehood, unemployment and regularisation of the daily wagers, contractual and temporary employees for

decades besides developmental issues.

The BJP is responsible for the lack of adequate developmental activities in Jammu region due to lack of adequate funds and sanction of major projects of various kinds including the tourism sector.

Former Minister Yash Paul Kundal lashed out at the centre government and BJP leadership for the hardships faced by the common man and the youth on various fronts due to unprecedented price hike, large scale unemployment, joblessness and bunglings in recruitments and examinations. The youth are getting frustrated a lot and asserting for reforms and streamlining the education and recruitment system for which our dynamic leadership of Shri Rahul Gandhi Ji has been fighting.

DCC President Samba Sanjeev Sharma referred to the party activities to expose the BJP on NEET paper leakage, Chanda Chori, Vote Chori and large scale

corruption and unemployment. The people are fed up with the Modi Government and want to bring change in future. He referred to the problems faced by farmers, labourers and border people and unemployed youth. In the absence of statehood there is no accountability in the administration and bureaucracy in J&K, so statehood is foremost demand.

Several others senior leaders of District and Blocks spoke on the occasion were S/Shri Babal Gupta- District Working President; Vinod Kumar- District Chairman SC Dept.; Tirth Ram Bhagat; Advocate Satish Dutta; Block President, Subash Singh; Raj Khajuria; Partap Singh; Priyam Singh; Uttam Chand; Janak Raj; Tanvir Singh, Mahaesh Sharma, Rajesh Kumar; Dinesh Singh- Ex sarpanch; Jangbir Singh; Ismile Choudhary- ST President; Jang Bahadur; Priyam lal; Darshan Lal Choudhary; Darshan Lal Sharma and Maheep Choudhary.

BJP holds meeting to review preparations for Guru Ravidasji celebrations

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J&K BJP led by senior leaders reviewed preparations for the upcoming programmes commemorating the 650th Birth Anniversary of Sant Shiromani Guru Ravidas Maharaj Ji and the nationwide 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign at the party headquarters, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu.

BJP J&K General Secretary (Organization) Ashok Koul and Leader of Opposition in the J&K Legislative Assembly Sunil Sharma, chiefly addressed the meeting, which was attended by BJP National Secretary & MLA Dr. Narinder Singh, J&K BJP General Secretary Gopal Mahajan, and MLAs Sham Lal Sharma, Ch. Vikram Randhawa, Prof. Gharu Ram, Yudhvir Sethi, and Rajiv Bhagat, district presidents, and other senior leaders.

Ashok Koul, while addressing the meeting, said



that both programmes are mass movements aimed at connecting people, especially the youth, with India's cultural heritage, social values, and patriotic spirit. He said the birth anniversary celebrations of Sant Shiromani Guru Ravidas Maharaj Ji would spread the saint's timeless message of equality, harmony, and social justice, while the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign would strengthen the spirit of nationalism and respect for the Tricolour. He asked the party leaders and legislators to ensure maximum

public participation through coordinated efforts at every organizational level.

Sunil Sharma said that every BJP activist works dedicatedly on social issues while serving political responsibilities on a mission mode. He said that the party's elected representatives and organizational network must work in complete coordination to take these programmes to every village, ward, and booth. He said such initiatives reinforce national unity and inspire citizens to remain con-

nected with the country's glorious traditions while strengthening the spirit of patriotism.

Dr. Narinder Singh said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has transformed both these initiatives into people's movements by encouraging active public participation. He said the responsibility of the party workers is to reach every section of society and motivate the youth to become active participants in preserving India's cultural legacy and celebrating the nation's pride.

Gopal Mahajan said that BJP has always worked to strengthen social harmony and national unity through public participation. He called upon party workers to organize impactful programmes at the grassroots level so that the messages of Sant Guru Ravidas Ji and the spirit of Har Ghar Tiranga reach every household across Jammu and Kashmir.

Sainik School Nagrota cadets pays tributes to Flt Lt Aditya Bal on 4th anniversary

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
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Sainik School Nagrota paid tribute to its brave alumnus, Flight Lieutenant Advitiya Bal, during a commemorative programme organised by his parents and the Nagrota Ex-Students Association (NEXAS) at M.A.M. Sports Club, Jammu, marking the fourth anniversary of his supreme sacrifice.

The event celebrated the life and legacy of the young fighter pilot while recognising the achievements of Sainik School Nagrota cadets in academics and sports. The cadets were felicitated for their dedication, discipline and pursuit of excellence.



The programme was attended by the Principal of Sainik School Nagrota, Capt (IN) Shibu Devasia, members of NEXAS, alumni, parents and other distinguished guests.

Adding a special touch to the occasion, Cadet Mahir Panjoor presented a soulful flute recital, while the girl cadets performed a melodious group song. Both per-

formances were warmly appreciated by the audience.

Flt Lt Advitiya Bal joined Sainik School Nagrota in 2007 and passed out in 2014 before joining the National Defence Academy. Commissioned into the Indian Air Force in 2018, he fulfilled his dream of becoming a fighter pilot. On 28 July 2022, he made the supreme sacrifice while

serving the nation during a MiG-21 trainer aircraft sortie. Speakers at the event remembered him as a courageous officer, an inspiring alumnus and a role model for young cadets aspiring to serve the nation. They called upon the cadets to uphold the ideals of courage, discipline and selfless service that defined his life.

DC Kulgam reviews PMAY-G 2.0

KULGAM, JULY 28: A review meeting regarding the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana–Gramin (PMAY-G) 2.0 was held today under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC), Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, in his office chamber.

During the meeting, a detailed review was conducted of the applications received under PMAY-G 2.0. It was informed that a total of 21,533 applications had been received across the district, of which 17,701 applicants were found eligible.

The Deputy Commissioner directed all concerned officers to publish the gradation list of eligible applicants for wide publicity to ensure transparency. He stated that public disclosure of the priority list would enable applicants to verify their status and facili-

tate timely correction of any discrepancies.

The DC further directed all BDOs to conduct Gram Sabhas from August 9 to August 12, 2026, for public verification of the gradation lists. The schedule of Gram Sabhas, along with the Panchayat-wise dates and gradation lists, shall be widely publicized through media and displayed at other prominent public locations to ensure maximum public participation.

It was also decided that each Block shall separately publish Panchayat-wise Gram Sabha schedules along with the respective gradation lists. All Gram Sabha proceedings must be videographed, with the recordings to be properly preserved for future reference and for addressing any grievances, if required, said the DC.

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