

Homestay Policy a bedrock to boost Sustainable Tourism in J&K: CS

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Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, chaired a meeting of the Tourism Department to review the renewed Homestay Policy aimed at expanding homestay infrastructure across Jammu & Kashmir, promoting tourism in unexplored destinations and creating sustainable livelihood opportunities for local communities.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Tourism; Commissioner Secretary, GAD; Director, I&C, Jammu; Director, Tourism, Kashmir/Jammu; representatives of J&K Bank and other concerned officers.

Describing homestays as the bedrock of tourism in unexplored destinations, the Chief Secretary observed that these offer an environmentally sustainable model particularly suited to an ecologically fragile region like J&K.

He emphasised that promotion of homestays would not only expand tourism beyond established destinations but also make local residents active stakeholders in tourism development, generating employment and income opportunities across different strata of society and contributing to an overall improvement in their standard of living.

The Chief Secretary directed the Tourism Department to undertake greater handholding and intensive capacity-building initiatives for prospective and existing homestay owners so that local communities are adequately equipped to provide quality services to visitors.

He further called upon financial institutions to extend necessary financial support for augmentation, renovation and improvement of homestay facilities under the renewed policy framework, observing that easier access to finance would encourage more



households to participate in the initiative.

During the meeting, the Tourism Department gave a detailed presentation on the existing homestay ecosystem and the provisions incorporated under the renewed policy.

The ACS, Tourism, Dr Ashish Chandra Verma divulged that a homestay, under the policy framework, refers to a residential property where the owner/promoter and family reside on the premises, with a provision for a minimum of one and maximum of six guest rooms, subject to prescribed standards relating to safety, hygiene, water supply and electricity. Adding that Jammu & Kashmir presently has a total accommodation capacity of 20,514 beds across 2,802 homestay units.

He also highlighted that the policy provides homestay owners with a range of benefits, besides an additional source of household income. It was given out that the same includes official recognition by the Tourism Department, promotion through J&K Tourism platforms, access to training and capacity-building programmes, facilitation of financial assistance through Government schemes and banking institutions, participation in tourism promotion campaigns and enhanced visibility among domestic and international tourists.

The meeting was also informed about the introduction of the Bed & Breakfast

(B&B) model, under which secondary residential properties can now be registered for tourist accommodations too. Under the model, owners can offer between one and six rooms for accommodation, thereby providing an opportunity to generate income from vacant or underutilised residential properties while simultaneously increasing the availability of tourist accommodation across the UT.

The renewed framework also provides for a simplified online registration process through the J&K Tourism portal. Applicants can upload property details, photographs and requisite documents online, enabling greater visibility among tourists through official digital platforms.

The initiative also envisages easier discovery of registered properties through digital integration and geotagging, besides providing a dedicated platform for promotion of homestays across Jammu & Kashmir.

The meeting further discussed the financial inclusion component of the initiative being facilitated through J&K Bank. Under the financing arrangement, loans for converting a residential house into a homestay can be extended up to ₹25 lakh per room, subject to a maximum of ₹30 lakh per homestay, depending upon the average conversion requirements. The Department also highlighted the digital integration carried out under Mission YUVA, through which the J&K

Government has partnered with OYO for the “Crown of Incredible India” Homestay Initiative.

The initiative seeks to promote village-based entrepreneurship and self-employment opportunities for youth through the establishment and promotion of homestays, thereby creating new avenues for local livelihood generation while taking tourism deeper into rural and lesser-explored areas.

One more feature of this framework incorporates a simplified and time-bound inspection mechanism. An Inspection Committee will assess registered applicants on the basis of a prescribed checklist and assign Silver or Gold category based on compliance with the stipulated standards.

Applicants uploading all requisite documents as per the prescribed checklist will be granted provisional registration under the Silver Category for a period of six months. Further, if verification is not completed within 15 days, the registration shall be deemed to have been automatically approved, thereby reducing procedural delays and providing greater certainty to applicants. The renewed Homestay Policy is aimed at creating a more inclusive, digitally enabled and financially supported tourism ecosystem, with local households and youth positioned at the centre of tourism-led economic development across Jammu & Kashmir.

Divyangjan's Tiranga Rally & Rangoli contest mark Tiranga Mahotsav

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The Central Government Pensioners' Welfare Association (CGPWA) Jammu, alongside the N K Jain Foundation and Pharose Remedies Ltd, today celebrated Tiranga Mahotsav-26 with the specially-abled (Divyangjan) students of the School for Hearing Handicapped, run by J&K Samaj Kalyan Kendra (SKK).

The Additional Dy Commissioner, Jammu Ms Anusya Jamwal was the chief Guest while former DGP Dr Ashok Bhan, a life member of SKK was the Guest of Honour. Dr Bhan flagged off the Tiranga Rally from the school premises in which about one hundred Divyangjan took part besides teachers and staff. Principal Roshan Bhan led the Rally. Donning tricolor caps and holding Tiranga in their hands, the hearing-impaired students' silent march passing through the Residency Road, sent across a strong message to the people to always remember the freedom fighters who by their supreme sacrifices, brought independence to our country and to protect it at every cost. Colorful as it looked around noon, many people on the road stopped and cheered the Divyangjan as they passed by. It was a sight to see.

In the second event, a Tiranga-themed Rangoli contest was organised in which 12 students participated. Using rangoli, they



created different pictures of India's advancement in different fields, including space, secular traditions, cultural heritage and other symbols of progress achieved since independence. Rangoli depicting ISRO's advancement by sending rockets into space, made by 12th class Divyang Rohit Boloria was adjudged the best while 10th class Lakshmi Devi bagged the 2nd prize for a beautiful peacock made in tricolor, conveying a message of peace. Another divyang of 10th class Poonam was adjudged third for rangoli of a lady with tricolor representing freedom. The selection was made by a committee comprising former Executive Director NTPC, V P Padma & former IGP. Nisar Ahmad, both members of the Executive Committee of SKK. Anusya Jamwal pre-

sented the awards and certificates.

Earlier, as part of Tiranga Mahotsav, the divyang students also presented three patriotic song-based dances by sign language on pre-recorded songs.

Speaking on the occasion, Anusya Jamwal congratulated all Divyangjan for their outstanding talent depicted through the academic and co-curricular activities. She explained the objective of Tiranga Mahotsav and said all of us must celebrate Independence Day with national fervor and gaiety. She referred to Rangolis made by them and said that these were excellent and more important is their they have comprehension of India development made in all most all sectors. She complimented the management of the SKK and teachers for grooming hearing-impaired

students to this remarkable level. N K Jain, proprietor of Pharose Remedies Ltd donated Rs 31000/- to the school and provided food packets from N K Jain Foundation for the students.

President of the SKK K B Jandial expressed profound gratitude to Ms. Anusya Jamwal and Smt & Shri N K Jain for associating with the NGO and Divyangjan to celebrate India's 80th Independence Day. He specially thanked N K & his wife for their liberal contributions for the welfare of the Divyangjan.

Principal presented a formal vote of thanks. Seema Madan translated the speeches in sign language for the Divyangjan.

Present on the occasion included Secretary CGPWA BB Magotra & Treasurer, O P Sharma.

Tiranga Rally taken out in Jammu ahead of Independence Day

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The District Administration Jammu today organized a Tiranga Rally, reinforcing the message of Har Ghar Tiranga campaign and encouraging citizens to proudly display the National Flag at their homes and actively participate in the Independence Day celebrations.

The Rally started from Gulshan Ground and concluded at Shri Maharaja Hari Singh Ji Park, coming via Tawi Bridge.

The mega procession comprising hundreds of students and general public was graced by Member of Parliament (MP) Lok Sabha Jugal Kishore Sharma; MLA Bahu, Vikram Randhawa; MLA Nagrota, Devyani Rana; Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Ramesh Kumar; Inspector General of Police, Jammu Zone, Bhim Sen Tuti; DIG J-S-K Range; Deputy Commissioner Jammu; Commissioner Jammu Municipal Corporation; SSPs, HODs, ADCs and other senior officers and officials from the Civil and Police Departments.

Carrying the Tricolour and raising patriotic slogans, the participants marched along the designated route, creating an at-



mosphere of national pride, unity and enthusiasm.

Speaking on the occasion, the Divisional Commissioner Ramesh Kumar said that the Tiranga Rally was organized to set the tone for spirited celebration of Independence Day, reinforce the message of Har Ghar Tiranga campaign and venerate the 150 years of National Song Vande Mataram. He said that the timeless spirit of Vande Mataram continues to inspire every citizen and represents the values of patriotism, sacrifice, unity and devotion to the nation.

The Divisional Commissioner urged youth to draw inspiration from the patriotic values of Vande

people from all sections of society and said that such initiatives strengthen the spirit of national unity, brotherhood and collective responsibility. He also appreciated the districts of Jammu Division for their active participation and concerted efforts in organizing programmes as part of the 150th year celebrations of Vande Mataram. He appreciated the coordinated efforts of the civil administration, police, educational institutions and the public in making the celebrations meaningful and successful.

The Divisional Commissioner urged youth to draw inspiration from the patriotic values of Vande

Mataram and contribute positively towards nation building. He called upon the young generation to uphold the ideals of unity, social harmony, discipline and responsible citizenship and play an active role in the progress and development of the nation.

The Tiranga Rally concluded at Maharaja Hari Singh Ji Park with participants reaffirming their commitment to the unity, integrity and progress of the nation. The event also amplified the message of Har Ghar Tiranga, inspiring citizens to celebrate Independence Day with pride and to keep the spirit of patriotism alive in every citizen.

DC leads Mega Bike & E-Auto Rally in Kishtwar

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As part of the ongoing Vande Mataram Phase-III Campaign and 'Har Ghar Tiranga' programme, a mega Tiranga Bike and E-Auto Rally was today organised in Kishtwar.

The rally was flagged off by Deputy Commissioner Pankaj Kumar Sharma amid the enthusiastic participation from officers and officials of the civil and police administrations, CRPF, Assam Rifles, students of Government Degree College and locals.

The rally commenced from Welcome Gate-Malipath and after Passing through Main Market and Kuleed Chowk, it culminated at the New DC Office Complex.

Addressing the participants, the Deputy Commissioner appreciated the efforts of all departments and stakeholders involved in making the rally a grand success. He highlighted the significance of the “Har Ghar Tiranga” campaign in strengthening the emotional connect of citizens with the National Flag and in encouraging every household to proudly display the Tricolour.

The entire route reverberated with patriotic slogans and the sight of countless Tricolours, creating an electrifying atmosphere across the town. The rally served as a powerful moving message of unity, patriotism and respect for the values enshrined in the Indian Constitution.



With the collective spirit of the people of Kishtwar, the event echoed the powerful message, “Let Every Heart Beat for the Tiranga.”

Similar bike rallies were taken out at the Sub-Division, Tehsil and Block levels across the district.

Later, the district administration, led by Deputy Commissioner, met in the Conference Hall of the New DC

Office and observed 2 minute silence to mark Partition Horrors Remembrance Day. The 2-minute silence was observed in all government offices and educational institutions across the district.

SSP Naresh Singh; ADCC Vinod Kumar Behnal, ADC Pawan Kotwal; PO ICDS Rishi Kumar Sharma; CEO, KDA Kaiser Bhawani;

ACD/ACP Neeraj Sharma; ASP Pardeep Singh; DIO Dr. Kuldeep Kumar, EO MC Mirza Mumtaz Iqbal, Dy. SP Hqrs, Dr. Ishan Gupta, DYSSO Jaffer Haider Sheikh, Executive Engineer JPDCL Abdul Hamid, DNO Ayush Dr. Vikram Singh Jamwal besides other officers and concerned staff were present on the occasion.