

World Nature Conservation Day Celebrated with Nature Walk, 1706th Tree Talk in Siddhra Forests

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JAMMU: World Nature Conservation Day was observed with great enthusiasm through a Nature Walk and the 1706th Tree Talk programme organised in the Siddhra forestlands by the Forest Department in collaboration with the Tree Talk Group and Vibe Tribe Club, Jammu.

The programme commenced with a ceremonial tree plantation led by Conservator of Forests, East Circle, Pradeep Wahule. Among those present were Divisional Forest Officer, Jammu, Anurag Arya; Joint Director, SFRI, Bishan Das Thakur; Om Prakash Sharma "Vidyarthi", founder of Tree Talk; herbal innovator Pooja Kapoor Suri; environmentalist Rakesh Abrol; Range Officer Virender Salathia; Kalpna Vinay; Wajid Rafiqi; and several other distinguished participants, environmental enthusiasts and forest officials.

Addressing the gathering, Conservator of Forests Pradeep Wahule emphasised that forests are vital ecosystems supporting an extraordinary diversity of plants



and wildlife. He cautioned that overexploitation of natural resources leads to soil degradation, depletion of water resources and the decline of threatened species, ultimately

resulting in biodiversity loss.

He urged citizens to actively participate in conservation initiatives and work collectively to preserve forests for future generations.

During the nature walk, Om Prakash Sharma "Vidyarthi" introduced participants to the rich diversity of flora found in the Siddhra forests and explained the

edible, medicinal, ornamental and ecological significance of several important plant species. He also highlighted the importance of World Nature Conservation Day, stating that the occasion serves as a reminder of the collective responsibility to protect forests, conserve biodiversity and encourage sustainable utilisation of natural resources for future generations.

A major attraction of the event was an exhibition curated by herbal innovator Pooja Kapoor Suri who along with forest field staff showcased plant specimens, edible flowers, seasonal leafy vegetables, aromatic and medicinal plants, quality saplings and an impressive range of innovative forest-based food products.

The exhibition featured Oleaster Sauce, Tinbru Chutney, Gokhru Snacks, Punarnava Pakodas, Commelina Snacks, Trianthema Pakodas, Rhododendron Tea, Arjun Bark Tea, Mango Modak, Vidari Kheer, Parijat Tea, Gwalmanda Dahi and several other value-added forest products, demonstrating the immense potential of sustainable utilisation of forest biodiversity.

Speaking on the occasion, Pooja Kapoor Suri highlighted the immense medicinal value of indigenous herbs and plants, emphasising that traditional knowledge combined with scientific innovation can transform forest resources into nutritious foods and effective herbal products. She stressed the need to conserve these valuable species while promoting their sustainable use for improving public health, livelihoods and biodiversity conservation.

The programme aimed to familiarise forest field staff, wilderness explorers, herbal innovators, botany experts and nature lovers with the remarkable biodiversity of the neighbourhood forests while promoting awareness about conservation and sustainable forest management.

The programme concluded with an interactive discussion on biodiversity conservation, sustainable utilisation of forest resources and the role of community participation in protecting the region's natural heritage, reaffirming the shared commitment of all stakeholders towards environmental conservation.

‘India’s rising exports reflect PM Modi’s vision for globally competitive Economy’

NEW DELHI: Senior BJP leader and Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament (Nominated) Er. Gulam Ali Khatana Tuesday said that India's sustained growth in exports and strong economic performance across multiple sectors demonstrate the success of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership and the government's policies aimed at transforming India into a global manufacturing and export hub.

The Rajya Sabha MP said that despite global economic uncertainties, supply chain disruptions, and geopolitical challenges, India has continued to register impressive growth in exports, industrial production, and brand value, reflecting the resilience of the Indian economy and the confidence of global markets in India.

Highlighting recent economic indicators, the MP noted that the Tata Group retained its position as

India's most valuable brand for the eighteenth consecutive year with a brand value of US\$33.6 billion, while the combined value of India's top 100 brands increased by 7 per cent to US\$252.8 billion.

He said this reflects the growing global reputation of Indian companies and the country's expanding economic influence.

He further pointed out that India Post achieved its highest-ever first-quarter revenue of ₹4,008 crore, registering a 22.2 per cent increase over the previous year. According to him, the sharp rise in parcel services, mail revenue and citizen-centric services demonstrates the successful modernisation of public institutions and the expanding reach of digital governance.

The MP said that India's automobile industry has achieved another milestone, with passenger vehicle sales reaching a record 12.74 lakh units during the first quarter of

FY 2026-27.

He added that exports of passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles, two-wheelers and three-wheelers have also grown significantly, reinforcing India's position as one of the world's leading automobile manufacturing centres.

Referring to agricultural exports, he said that India's whole cardamom exports have more than tripled in just two years to cross US\$436 million, with strong demand from the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Bangladesh. He added that the remarkable growth reflects the increasing global acceptance of Indian agricultural products.

The Rajya Sabha MP also highlighted the impressive performance of the gems and jewellery sector, where exports increased by 26 per cent in June, driven by strong demand for gold jewellery, studded jewellery and

lab-grown diamonds. He said this demonstrates the competitiveness of Indian craftsmanship and manufacturing in international markets.

Speaking about India's traditional food industry, he said Indian sweets and namkeen are increasingly becoming household favourites across global markets. With exports growing by more than 10 per cent annually, products such as gulab jamun, motichoor laddus and a wide range of Indian snacks are strengthening India's cultural and commercial presence worldwide.

He also noted that fertiliser exports have increased by more than 50 per cent over the past three years, particularly to countries such as Brazil and Sri Lanka, while emphasising the government's continued efforts to strengthen domestic manufacturing and reduce import dependence.

Army conduct search for missing person in flash-flood debris at Bharot, Rajouri

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RAJOURI: Following reports that Mr Abdul Ghani was missing after a flash flood at Bharot village in Rajouri district, the Indian Army promptly deployed a specialised search team, supported by a trained tracker dog, to assist in locating him.

The team carried out a systematic and extensive search of the flood-affected area, carefully examining debris, rubble and difficult stretches of terrain.

The tracker dog was employed to identify possible traces and support the search effort in areas where access was limited due to mud, stones and accumulated wreckage.

The operation was conducted under challenging terrain and



weather-related conditions, with troops maintaining close coordination with local authorities and other agencies involved in the search. Every accessible location in the affected area was checked meticulously to improve the chances of locating the missing person. The Indian Army remains committed

to supporting the civil administration and local population during natural disasters and emergencies.

Search efforts will continue in coordination with the concerned authorities, with all possible assistance being extended to the affected family and residents of Bharot village alike.

Awareness program on Branding & Marketing for PM Vishwakarma beneficiaries held in Udhampur

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UDHAMPUR: The Ministry of MSME, Government of India, through the MSME-Development & Facilitation Office Jammu, in collaboration with the district administration Udhampur today organised a one-day awareness programme on branding and marketing for beneficiaries of the PM Vishwakarma Scheme.

Additional District Commissioner Udhampur Jugal Kishore was the chief guest on the occasion.

While addressing the participants, the ADDC said that the PM Vishwakarma Scheme is aimed at promoting self-employment, entrepreneurship development and skill enhancement among traditional artisans



and young aspirants. He stated that the scheme enables beneficiaries to avail themselves of government support in the form of skill upgradation, toolkit incentives, credit assistance and other benefits, thereby creating sustainable livelihood opportunities. He emphasised the

importance of branding and market outreach, the ADDC highlighted that effective branding and marketing play a vital role in enhancing the visibility, competitiveness and income of traditional artisans.

He urged the beneficiaries to adopt innovative marketing

practices and build strong brand identities to expand their customer base and improve the market value of their products.

During the programme, experts sensitised the artisans on the importance of product branding, packaging, digital marketing and customer engagement.

Army extend medical, veterinary and humanitarian assistance in remote areas of Ramban And Kishtwar

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KISHTWAR: Reaffirming its commitment to the welfare of people living in remote and inaccessible areas, the Indian Army conducted a Khairiyat Patrol at Harah village in Gool Tehsil of Ramban district and organised a medical and veterinary camp at Chewar village in Palmar, Kishtwar.

During the Khairiyat Patrol at Harah, Army personnel interacted with local residents to assess their well-being and understand their immediate concerns.

Basic medical assistance, health check-ups and essential medicines were provided, particularly to elderly residents and other vulnerable members of the community who have limited access to healthcare facilities.

At Chewar village, the Army organised a medical and veterinary camp to address the healthcare



needs of residents and their livestock.

A total of 82 men, 97 women and 43 children received medical consultations, free medicines and guidance on maintaining good health and hygiene.

Veterinary assistance was also provided to 104 cattle, helping livestock owners address animal health-related concerns.

The local communities expressed their appreciation for the Army's sustained

efforts to improve the quality of life in isolated areas. These initiatives strengthened the enduring bond of trust and mutual confidence between the Indian Army and the local population.

NCORD meeting reviews anti-drug measures in Doda

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DODA: District Magistrate Doda Krishan Lal and Senior Superintendent of Police Kartik Shrotiyya Tuesday chaired a meeting of the District Level Narcotics Coordination (NCORD) Committee to review measures for preventing drug abuse and strengthening rehabilitation efforts in the district.

The meeting reviewed the functioning of the Drug De-addiction Centre, including the status of helpline calls, response to cases and the availability of counsellors. The District Magistrate directed the

officers concerned to strengthen counselling and rehabilitation services.

He directed the departments concerned to identify and destroy illegal poppy cultivation in coordination with law enforcement agencies and instructed the officers to ensure that no tobacco shops operate within 500 metres of educational institutions, with strict action against violators. He also directed the installation of CCTV cameras at identified drug hotspots and other vulnerable locations, with regular monitoring to deter illegal activities.

The District Magistrate

reviewed the rehabilitation of recovering addicts and directed the departments concerned to facilitate their employment and livelihood through government schemes. He stressed the need to make Youth Clubs functional across the district and involve them in awareness efforts.

The Senior Superintendent of Police called for strict action against drug peddlers. The District Social Welfare Officer (DSWO) informed the meeting that several awareness activities have been conducted to educate people, especially youth, about the harmful effects of drug abuse.

Army organised medical camp to commemorate Kargil Vijay Diwas

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UDHAMPUR: As part of the Kargil Vijay Diwas commemorations, The Indian Army organised a medical camp for the residents of Dudu and adjoining villages, reaffirming the Indian Army's commitment to the welfare of the local populace while paying homage to the valiant heroes of the 1999 Kargil War.

Despite the prevailing monsoon conditions, the camp witnessed an encouraging response from the local population.

Army medical teams

provided free medical consultations, health screening and essential medicines to the beneficiaries. The initiative was aimed at extending quality healthcare services for populace of remote locations and strengthening the bond between the Indian Army and the local community.

During the interaction, Army personnel highlighted the significance of Kargil Vijay Diwas and paid rich tributes to the brave soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice in safeguarding the nation's sovereignty and territorial

integrity.

The occasion served as a reminder of the values of courage, selfless service, and patriotism that continue to inspire every Indian.

The local populace expressed their appreciation for the initiative and conveyed gratitude to Indian Army for its continued support and outreach, particularly during the ongoing monsoon season.

The Indian Army remains steadfast in its commitment to serving the nation and fostering peace, harmony and the well-being of the people.

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