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SC bans fire...

permitted to infringe the right to health of others, guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution of India and nobody can be allowed to play with the life of the others, more particularly the senior citizens and the children", it said.

"It is made clear that there is no total ban on use of firecrackers. Only those firecrackers are banned which are found to be injurious to health and affecting the health of the citizens, more particularly the senior citizens and the children", the bench said.

It further noted that under the guise of 'green crackers' banned chemicals firecrackers are being sold and there is a mislabelling on the boxes and even the QR codes provided on the boxes of 'green crackers' are alleged to be fake.

"There is a report submitted by the CBI submitted pursuant to the earlier directions/orders passed by this Court and it prima facie appears that there is a blatant violation of the directions issued by this Court by the respective manufacturers and the banned firecrackers are being sold and used in the markets. The allegations, if found to be true, are very serious and cannot be tolerated," the apex court said.

The court reiterated the directions issued by it earlier including banning the use of Barium Salts in the firecrackers and manufacturing and selling joined firecrackers. "Court had an occasion to consider the prayer made on behalf of the Fireworks Manufacturers to permit manufacture of fireworks With Barium substitute, i.e., Barium Nitrate. However, the same has not been Permitted till date and use of Barium Salts in the fireworks is continued to be Banned", it said.

It directed all the states/Union Territories to see that the directions issued earlier by it as also today are strictly complied with in true spirit and in toto.

"Any lapse on the part of the State Governments/ State Agencies and UTs shall be viewed very seriously and if it is found that any banned firecrackers are manufactured, sold and used in any particular area, the Chief Secretary of the concerned State(s), the Secretary (Homes) of the concerned State(s) and the Commissioner of Police and DSP of the concerned area and the SHO/Police Officer in-charge of the concerned police station shall be held personally liable," the bench said.

Nobody can be permitted to flout and disobey the directions issued by the top court, it said, adding that any wilful and deliberate disobedience shall have to be viewed very seriously.

90 new COVID...

13 cases in Baramulla district.

There are 872 active cases in the union territory, while the number of recoveries stands at 3,26,749, the officials said.

The death toll from the pandemic remained unchanged at 4,432 as no fatality was reported in the past 24 hours. The officials said the mucormycosis (black fungus) case count too remained unchanged at 49 as no fresh infection was reported in the UT.

Anti-terror search...

with Surankote forest in Poonch and Thanamandi in Rajouri continued for the 19th day to flush out a group of terrorists who attacked Army search parties on October 11 and 14, killing nine soldiers, including two Junior Commissioned Officers (JCOs).

Over a dozen people, including two women, were detained for questioning after it came to light that they had allegedly provided logistic support to the terrorists, officials said, adding during this operation, four IEDs planted by terrorists were detected and defused safely.

The security forces also busted a hideout last week at the encounter site in Bhatti Durian forest, leading to the recovery of an assault rifle, a magazine with 29 rounds, two grenades, and two detonators, officials said.

Although the combing operation was launched after the detection of suspicious movement two months ago, the first contact with terrorists occurred on October 11 then again on October 14.

While a JCO and four security personnel laid down their lives in a gunfight during the counter-insurgency operation in Surankote forest of Poonch on October 11, four other soldiers, including another JCO, died in an encounter in Nar Khas forest in Mendar on October 14.

After suffering nine casualties, the Army has upped the ante against terrorists holed up in the jungles of Poonch in the Jammu region, asking locals not to venture out of their homes and blocking main roads for a full-scale operation, officials said.

Last Tuesday, Army Chief General M M Naravane visited forward areas along the Line of Control to review the ground situation and ongoing counter-infiltration operations in Poonch.

In 2009, Poonch was the theatre of a nine-day operation and encounter with terrorists. Four soldiers, including a JCO, lost their lives while four terrorists were killed in that encounter.

The ongoing operation against militants holed up in the Pir Panjal ridges in the twin border districts of Rajouri and Poonch is the longest in the area since 2003, officials said.

In April-May 2003, the Army had launched a massive combing, search and destroy operation in Hill Kaka area of Surankote belt of Poonch district and

killed 83 terrorists, most of them foreign mercenaries.

Rijiju inaugurates Legal...

on the occasion. While speaking on the occasion Kiren Rijiju said that government's duty is to provide justice to various sections of the society and said that Legal Services Authority is doing a commendable job in this regard.

He said that continuous efforts are being made by courts to ensure that every individual has access to justice so that justice is delivered to the common man at doorsteps.

He further said that residents have a right to basic amenities like drinking water, drainage, roads, electricity and other things and said the outreach programme started by the Government of India provides a window to approach people directly for resolving their issues. The government wants every individual of Jammu and Kashmir to get benefited and several initiatives are being taken in this regard, he further added.

Different stalls were installed by various departments which include Horticulture, Health, Revenue, Agriculture, Youth Services & sports Labour Deptt., Forest, and DLSA Srinagar, highlighting different welfare schemes of their respective departments.

During the camp, the Union Minister inspected each stall and took first-hand experience of activities of each department. He further distributed 15 wheel chairs, 15 hearing aids, 16 marriage assistance to the beneficiaries by Social welfare Department, a Borewell on subsidy rate and khadi component worth Rs 50,000 by Horticulture Department, 35 scheduled Tribe certificates & 50 Domicile certificate by Revenue Department, a tractor, tiller, seeds, mushrooms & fresh vegetables by Agriculture Department, 20 sport kits to the registered clubs by Youth Services & Sports Department, Financial assistance to 8 Children of Artisan workers & 30 Registration Certificate to the registered beneficiaries by Department of Handicraft, 50 Job Cards by Rural Development Department, 25 Gold Cards, Baseline Tests & Vaccination derive of Covid-19 by Health Department and legal aid provided in 15 cases by District Legal Services Authority Srinagar.

A legal awareness programme was also organised on "Legal Rights of Tribals" and the aim of this camp was to effect a paradigm shift from awareness to empowerment.

The camp was attended by Achal Sethi, Law Secretary; Mohammad Akram Chowdhary, Chairman DLSA(PDJ) Srinagar; M.K. Sharma, Member Secretary J&K LSA; Mohammad Ajiaz, Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar; Sandeep Choudhary Sr. Superintendent of Police; Noor Mohammad Mir, Secretary District Legal Services Authority(Sub-judge) Srinagar. All Directors & Secretarial Officers of departments, PRIs, DDC, BDC, Sarpanches, Panches, Panel Lawyers, Para Legal Volunteer, & Staff of DLSA Srinagar and large number of beneficiaries were also present on the occasion.

NIA raids 8...

terrorism conspiracy case after conducting raids in six districts of Jammu & Kashmir earlier on Friday. The raids were conducted over attacks carried out by Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and Al Badr. The agency had also informed that the arrested ones are terror operatives of various proscribed terrorist organisations and have been instrumental in providing logistical and material support to terrorists.

LG inaugurates Regional...

its age-old traditions. The literary festivals will serve as a platform for the budding poets, writers, creative thinkers to carry forward the literary legacy of Jammu and Kashmir', the Lt Governor added.

Welcoming the prominent writers, poets, and literary enthusiasts from different parts of the country in the Regional Lit-Fest, the Lt Governor remarked that that Poetry is creation, writing is creation, and everything else is construction.

The Lt Governor said UT government has taken full responsibility for the promotion of regional languages and it is our aim to bring their unique features to fore. The second objective is to provide a platform to the budding poets, writers to carry forward the great tradition of Jammu and Kashmir, he added.

Mentioning about the Lit-fest inaugurated in Gulmarg yesterday, the Lt Governor said that today a big message is reaching across the country from the beautiful valleys of Patnitop that J&K, which has always been a prominent seat and beacon of art and culture, has again started showing the way through its old traditions.

The Lt Governor said that it is our endeavor that young writers, poets of J&K, who are presently in the nascent stages, are provided the right platforms and ample opportunities to shine in this field.

Speaking on linguistic harmony, the Lt Governor said that in our country, regional languages have always been the medium of exchanging feelings of the whole nation. I firmly believe that linguistic harmony can strengthen unity, the Lt Governor added.

The Lt Governor also mentioned about the works of great Poetess Amrita Pritam, American writer Walt Whitman and Dr Sampurnanand. Literary works are best enjoyed in their original script; translation is necessary but only for understanding the original text, he remarked.

The Lt Governor conveyed his best wishes to all the poets, writers and literary enthusiasts, on the occasion.

Earlier, he took a round of Book Exhibition and inspected the stalls displayed for disseminating information about various welfare schemes of the Government,

Udhampur laid a Naka at Tikri and stopped an Alto car (JK20B 2760) for checking. During checking, 10 gm heroin was recovered from the possession of two accused namely Sunny Singh, son of Pawan Singh, resident of Supply Morh, Udhampur and Sunny, son of Late Mohan Lal, resident of Omara Morh, Udhampur, who were arrested on spot and FIR No. 237/2021 under sections 8/21/22 of NDPS Act was registered against them at Police Station Rehambal.

One held for cloning ATM cards, 15 ATMs cards seized

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KATHUA: An accused, who conned hundreds of gullible people queuing up at ATMs, by cloning their ATM cards, was arrested by Kathua Police under overall supervision of SSP R C Kotwal.

As per details, acting on reliable information received at Police Post Chadwal that some unknown persons of an inter-state gang are indulged in preparing different type of ATM cards and later use them for withdrawal of hard-earned money of innocent people by making them fool and presently a member of gang is active in the jurisdiction of Police Station Rajbagh and adjoining areas. On this information, FIR No. 215/2021 under sections 465/467/471 of IPC was registered at Police Station Rajbagh.

During course of investigation, a team from Police Post Chadwal led by Insp Arun Slatia Incharge Police Post Chadwal succeeded in arresting a person namely Shunker, son of Om Prakash, resident of Balwakher Tehsil and District Muzaffernagar (UP) and recovered 15 ATM cards from his possession. He used to insert skimmers in the Automated Teller Machine to steal passwords and other card details on pretext of helping elderly and tech-disabled to withdraw money. Further investigation is still in progress.

8 injured in group-clash over land dispute

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

BISHNAH: At least eight persons were injured in clash between two rival groups over a land dispute in Bishnah area on Friday.

As per details, Khem Raj and Sanjay Singh had an issue over a piece of land in Ratn village of Bishnah. On Friday, Dhrmender Singh and Sanjay Singh started construction work over disputed land and when Khem Raj came to know about this, he along with family went to construction site where they had a clash. Both parties attacked each other with stones and sharp-edged weapons, due to which eight persons got injured. The injured were identified as Sandip Singh, Sanjay Singh, Davinder Singh, Khem Raj, Ram Dass and Rita Devi. They were shifted to Bishnah hospital for treatment from where they were further referred to GMC Jammu. Police has registered a case and started investigation.

Man dies of burn injuries

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KATHUA: A man died of burn injuries in his house at Kathua area on Friday.

As per details, Des Raj, resident of Samnawani, Ramnagar who was staying in a rented accommodation at Shiv Nagar, Kathua received burn injuries when a fire broke out in his room, when he was sleeping. He was shifted to hospital where he succumbed to injuries. Police has registered a case and started investigation.

Two held with 31 Kg poppy straw

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Continuing its drive against drug trafficking and substance abuse, Jammu Police achieved a major success by recovering 31 Kg of poppy straw from two drug peddlers, traveling in a vehicle (PB10HP/7045) during Naka checking at TCP Nagrota.

As per details, a Naka was laid by team from Police Station Nagrota led by SHO Nagrota Insp Mohd Showkat under supervision of SDPO Nagrota Parupkar Singh. During checking, police rounded up two suspects who turned suspicious on seeing police Naka. On search, 31 Kg poppy straw was

besides stalls of Duggar Manch and Dogri Sanstha.

The poets and writers who participated in the Regional Literary Festival included Dr Lalit Magotra, Darshan Darshi, Sita Ram Sapolia, Mohan Singh, Inderjeet Kesar, Om Prakash Vidyarthi, Dr Promila Manhas, Dr Sushma Rani, Prakash Premi, Shiv Dev Singh Sushil, besides prominent Urdu poets Liaqat Jafri, Shakeel Azmi, Shakeel Jamali, Humorous poet Popular Meruthi, Deepi Mishra, Tariq Qamar, Parvez Manoos, Iqbal Ashhar.

Group Editor, Hindustan, Shashi Shekhar; Prof. Manoj Kumar Dhar, VC Jammu University; Prof. Ravinder Kumar Sinha VC Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University, Katra; Dr Raghav Langer Divisional Commissioner, Jammu; Mussarat-Ul-Islam, DC Ramtan; Indu Kanwal Chib, Deputy Commissioner, Udhampur and other Divisional and District officers of UT administration were also present.

MHA likely to...

remain to be acquired and transferred to the executing agency and that the work is not held up on account of non transfer of this small portion of land to the executing agency.

The Chief Secretary assured the MHA officials that the requirement of funds for compensation shall be worked out in the next fifteen days and conveyed to the Punjab Government.

The representative of Punjab Government informed that the filling up of the reservoir at Shahpur Kandi would cause submergence of a portion of Lakhanpur Basohli Road.

The Chief Secretary directed the Administrative Secretary, Jal Shakti department to come up with a plan to either realign the road or conceive an alternative bridge/road project for execution on priority and in line with the project timelines so that the pondage of the reservoir targeted by the Punjab Government in the first quarter of the calendar year 2023 is not held up by the submergence of portion of the Lakhanpur Basohli road.

While reviewing the Ujh Multi Purpose Project, Additional Secretary, MHA indicated early approval of the project in view of enhanced irrigation potential.

He advised that the cost of the project has been revised from Rs. 9167 Cr to Rs. 11908 Cr and as the funding pattern of the project is 90:10, prior concurrence of the UT government is required before placing the same before the TAC for approval to the revised project cost. The Chief Secretary assured that the UT will furnish concurrence to the revised project cost of the Ujh MPP within 15 days.

While observing that Phase II of the plan for comprehensive flood management of River Jhelum and its tributaries is approved as a part of PMDP during 2015-16 and, therefore its execution needs to be accelerated, Dr Mehta requested MHA officials to expedite release of funds under the project so that its implementation could get underway. Additional Secretary, MHA announced that the approval to the phase II of the flood management plan of river Jhelum shall be conveyed within two months.

Trucks with relief...

winter season and provide flood relief to people of Uttarakhand," Mandaviya said in a tweet.

The flag-off function was held at Nirman Bhawan, New Delhi.

Along with blankets, the supplies to Uttarakhand consisted mosquito nets, kitchen sets, tents and essential medicines from Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Kendras.

While flagging off the supplies, Mandaviya said, "Red Cross assists the most vulnerable and needy in times of disasters and other crisis situations."

He added that people affected by severe flooding are already being assisted by the local Red Cross branches. The national headquarters is supplementing their efforts by sending fresh supplies.

The Union health minister said that prepositioning of relief items is under process for use by vulnerable states. These items consist of among other things about one lakh blankets, one lakh hygiene kits, one lakh tarpaulins and 75,000 kitchen sets.

The Union Health Minister further stated that recent landslides and flash floods in Uttarakhand have severely affected the state.

"To supplement the efforts of the State Government, three truck loads of relief supplies have been sent to Uttarakhand. In addition, Ministry of Health has also sent medicines for the suffering population. Hilly states experience severe cold in the winter months. The blankets are being pre-positioned so that in times of any crisis, people affected can be supported immediately", he added.

Heavy rains in the recent past have left scores of people dead in Uttarakhand. Over 300 people were rescued by the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) from the flood-affected areas of the state.

Suspension of scheduled...

on a case-to-case basis," it added.

Scheduled international passenger services have been suspended in India since March 23, 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic. But special international flights have been operating under the Vande Bharat Mission since May 2020 and under bilateral "air bubble" arrangements with selected countries since July 2020.

India has formed air-bubble pacts with around 28 countries, including the US, the UK, the UAE, Kenya, Bhutan and France. Under an air-bubble pact between two countries, special international flights can be operated by their airlines between their territories with specific restrictions.

The circular issued by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) also said the suspension does not affect the operations of international all-cargo services and flights specifically approved by it.

recovered from possession of two suspects, identified as Balbir Singh, son of Khushia Singh, resident of Charanjeetpura, Ludhiana and Ashok Kumar, son of Mohan Lal, resident of Bain Ghar Samba. Drugs were concealed in tool box above cabin. The duo was arrested and FIR No 415/2021 under sections 8/15 of NDPS Act was registered against them at Police Station Nagrota.

Drug peddler nabbed with Charas

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Police on Friday nabbed a drug peddler and recovered 375 gm Charas from his possession.

As per details, a Naka was laid by a team from Police Station Satwari led by Incharge SHO Satwari Insp Sunil Sharma under supervision of SDPO South P K Mengi. During checking, police rounded up a suspect who turned suspicious on seeing police Naka. On search, 375 gm Charas was recovered from his possession. The accused, identified as Tika Ram, son of Nanak Chand, resident of Chatha Mill was arrested and FIR No 248/2021 under sections 8/20 of NDPS Act was registered against him at Police Station Satwari. The overall arrest and recoveries were made under supervision of SP City South Deepak