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J&K's GST revenue...

social equality, the Lt Governor said.

"New policies, greater transparency in governance and crackdown on cronyism have enabled enterprises, Industries and new-age businesses to grow. We have placed great emphasis to make the economy more competitive, increase the tax base, compliance and strengthen trust between citizens and the Government," he said.

The Lt Governor appreciated the State Taxes Department for making tax-paying process seamless and friendlier in every district and spreading awareness on tax regime.

He urged the department and the citizens of the UT to play a constructive role in pushing forward to industrialisation and making J&K one of the engines of Viksit Bharat.

The Lt Governor also assured all the necessary support by the administration to the ICAI for establishing their Centre of Excellence in the UT.

The Lt Governor released the revised edition of GST Acts and Rules - Bare Law and felicitated the consumers under 'Mera Bill Mera Adhikar' campaign.

Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary; Santosh D Vaidya, Principal Secretary, Finance; Dr Rashmi Singh, Commissioner State Taxes Department; Ranjeet Kumar Agarwal, Vice President ICAI; Sushil Kumar Goyal, Chairman, GST & Indirect Taxes Committee; Umesh Sharma, Vice Chairman, GST and Indirect Taxes Committee; senior Officers; members of ICAI; representatives of Trade and Industry Associations and heads of educational institutions were present.

LG greets people...

across the world. The significance of Pujya Babu's ideas and ideals and his philosophy of Non-violence and Peace is relevant today as never before.

On the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti let us take a pledge to follow the path of Peace, Truth and Non-violence and strive to remove social inequities in our society".

Modi pitches for...

in response to the prime minister's appeal for the cleanliness drive.

According to the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry, more than 9.20 lakh sites across the country have been adopted for the mega drive.

In a recent episode of "Mann Ki Baat", Modi appealed for "one hour of shramdaan (or voluntary labour) for swachhata" on October 1 by all citizens, saying it would be a "Swachhjanjali" to Mahatma Gandhi on the eve of his birth anniversary.

Several Union ministers, including Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, R K Singh, Piyush Goyal and Hardeep Singh Puri, participated in the mega cleanliness drive.

Shah took part in the drive in Ahmedabad, while BJP chief J P Nadda participated in it in Delhi's Jhandewalan area.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh led the 'shramdaan' activities, including a cleanliness drive, beautification of the common area and a plantation drive, at the premises of the Controller General of Defence Accounts (CGDA) in Delhi Cantonment.

In a post on 'X', Singh said that in recent years, awareness towards cleanliness has increased throughout the country and become a mass movement.

Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri led the cleanliness drive at Princess Park on Copernicus Marg in Delhi. Sanitation workers, students and residents of the area, along with senior officials from his ministry, attended it.

"Inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for Swachhata Hi Seva, joined residents of the temporary settlement at Princess Park on Copernicus Marg for one hour of Shramdaan for a Garbage Free India," Puri tweeted.

A cleanliness drive was conducted at the Samvidhan Sadan (old Parliament building) complex to pay tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his birth anniversary.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath participated in a 'Swachhata Pakhwada' campaign in Sitapur.

Taking part in the drive in Delhi, Union Power Minister R K Singh told reporters, "We (Centre) have taken a resolve to make the country clean. It is a big challenge but we will do it."

The Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry said the Army, Navy and the Indian Air Force came together with civilians to clean up various areas, railway tracks, heritage buildings, stepwells and forts among others.

Indian Air Force chief Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari volunteered in a cleanliness activity in New Delhi.

The ministry said NGOs, market associations, self-help groups, faith groups, trade bodies and private sector companies among others volunteered for the "shramdaan" in more than 22,000 market areas, 10,000 water bodies, 7,000 bus stands or toll plazas, 1,000 gaushalas, 300 zoos and wildlife areas and various other locations in rural and urban India.

According to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, it held cleanliness drives at 500 locations across the national capital.

According to Sulabh International, it organised a 'Swachhta Hi Seva' campaign at 1,000 locations across 300 cities and towns which saw the participation of 50,000 people.

Bollywood actors, including Akshay Kumar and Suniel Shetty, also took part in the cleanliness drive. Kumar, who is currently abroad, posted a picture on 'X' of participation in the drive on a beach.

"Cleanliness is not just about physical spaces, it is a state of mind. Being out of the country couldn't stop me from paying a tribute to Swachhata Abhiyan. So I would say where ever you are, do your bit to keep your space, and mind, clutter free," Kumar posted.

Addl SP, DySP...

shall be deemed to have been placed under suspension with effect from 21.09.2023 i.e. the date of arrest of the Officer in case FIR No. 149/2023 under sections 7, 7A of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, and section 167, 193, 201, 210, 218, 221 of IPC in Police Station Nowgam.

It is further ordered that the officer shall remain attached with Zonal Police Headquarters Kashmir, during the period of suspension.

In another order it stated that "In terms of Rule 31(1) of the Jammu and Kashmir Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules, 1956, pending enquiry into his conduct, Gowhar Ahmad Khan, Addl. Superintendent of Police Budgam, is hereby placed under suspension with immediate effect".

"It is further ordered that the Officer shall remain attached with Zonal Police Headquarters Kashmir, during the period of suspension" the order further reads.

Like Chandrayaan, Indo...

the India House. "In this changing world, I would say today that India and the US have moved to a position where we see each other as very desirable, optimal and comfortable partners with whom it's a natural instinct today to pick up the phone or if you meet someone and have a natural conversation," he said.

Jaishankar said that the success of the G20 could not have happened without the support of the US.

"As the host, when things go well, the host always gets the credit. It's reasonable. But, the G20 could not have come together if all the members of the G20 did not work for its success," he said.

"The contribution, the support and the understanding that we got from the US to make a successful G20, I think that is something I would certainly like to recognise in public in Washington DC," Jaishankar said amidst applause from Indian-Americans.

"So, it may have been our success in a literal way, but I think it was the G20 (nations) success. To me, it was also a success of the India-US partnership please keep giving this partnership the support it needs, the support it deserves and the support it expects. And I can promise you that this relationship, like the Chandrayaan, will go to the moon, maybe even beyond," he said.

Jaishankar said that the human bond between the two countries makes the bilateral relationship unique.

"Countries do business with each other. Countries do politics with each other. They have military ties, they do exercises, and they have cultural exchanges. But when two countries have that deep human bonding, that's a completely different ballgame. That is today the defining characteristic of our relationship," he said.

He said the people remember Rajiv Gandhi's visit to the US in 1985, Manmohan Singh's visit in 2005 and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's several visits.

"But I have to say that this one (PM Modi's recent state visit) was different, it was different in optics, and if you ask me what has changed, I would say India and the US earlier used to deal with each other and now they work with each other," he said.

He recalled the recent collaborative endeavours between the two countries, all starting with the letter I. These initiatives include the India-Middle East Economic Corridor, I2U2 (India, Israel, the US, the UAE), Indo-Pacific cooperation, and the initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (CET).

"Alphabet I is very good for the US, certainly," Jaishankar added.

He said the contribution of the diaspora in building the bilateral relationship is something fantastic.

"There are no words that can capture it. It is on that foundation that today we are looking ahead for...a new hope on the horizon...So, I think when we look at the horizon, we see fantastic possibilities out there, and it's the community which is going to deliver on that," Jaishankar said.

He recalled that when PM Pandit Jawar Lal Nehru came to the US in 1949, there were 3,000 Indian Americans, when PM Indira Gandhi came in 1966, there were 30,000 Indian Americans, when PM Rajiv Gandhi came in 1985 there were 3,00,000 Indian Americans, when PM Modi came there were more than 3 million Indian Americans and it's grown to almost 5 million.

"If there is something unique about our relationship it is the human bond that we have. The role, responsibilities and commitment of the diaspora to the India-US relationship is commendable," he added.

The minister said the India of today is different from what it was earlier.

"I want to share with you that this is truly a different India for which I speak. It is an India, which as you heard from others, is capable of the Chandrayaan-3 mission," he said.

"It is an India which was able to pull off the most spectacular G20 and prove those who said that we will not be able to get 20, I don't want to say quarrelling nations but 20 countries with different positions, to come to the table together," he said.

This is an India, which showed during the Covid pandemic that it could not only look after its people but could extend its hand to more than a hundred countries across the world, he said.

"I want to say in many ways, if there is a spring in our step, a confidence in our voice, a sort of squaring of our shoulders, there are very good reasons for it," he said.

"Because it is built today on 10 years of hard work...There are domains where our capacities have doubled or tripled," he said.

"The new India is an India of Chandrayaan, it's an India of CoWIN, it's an India of 5G. This is really what we are capable of, and it is this India today that the United States also sees. It is this India with which the United States actually has an appetite for working, much more closely," said Jaishankar.

Remembering Mahatma Gandhi ahead of his birth anniversary, he said calling him an extraordinary man would be the understatement of this century.

"He said so many things so tellingly. But at the end of the day, if we ask ourselves what was the message, the message at the end of the day was about doing the right thing, about doing the decent thing, and about leaving no one behind," he said.

"Gandhi ji's message is very complicated, but its essence is very, very simple," Jaishankar said.

Azad dispels 'rumours'...

I left two prized (Union) ministries Housing and Urban Development and Parliamentary Affairs to serve the people. It was not as if I was without work," he said referring to criticism by some quarters that he returned to JK politics at the behest of the BJP.

Azad said unemployment and inflation were two main problems facing Jammu and Kashmir which he wants to address by exploiting the tourism potential of the region.

"Inflation is on the rise. It is true that inflation is not specific to India. Europe has the highest inflation but they have other means to tackle it. We are a poor state.

"Unemployment is on the rise. There are no jobs. Government is advertising posts but interviews are not held. Educated youth have no jobs and their parents have exhausted their savings on their education," he said.

The former chief minister said tourism has the potential to provide a livelihood for all sections of the society.

"One Tulip Garden (which was made in 2007) has provided livelihood to thousands of people. As CM, I had a plan to develop 10 to 12 tourist locations in each district of Jammu and Kashmir.

"I had plans of providing loans to people for setting up homestay facilities which could provide earning opportunities to them," he added.

Referring to the abrogation of Article 370 and Article 35A by the Centre in 2019, Azad said it was a "great mistake".

"There were some political mistakes over many years which have pushed the state backwards, instead of going forward. In the last nine years, another great mistake was made - Article 370 and Article 35A were removed.

"Article 35A, subsequently Article 35B, was not promulgated after Independence. It was brought by the Maharaja (Hari Singh) in 1925. I said this in Parliament that had the BJP known that they would not have touched Article 370 and Article 35A. This mistake pushed us further back. There was an uncertainty whether the land will stay with us or not," he added.

Azad asked party leaders not to make personal attacks against opponents.

"I have said earlier also that we were subjected to a political fraud but why should I comment on someone's appearance?" he said.

He demanded the death penalty for those involved in running drug mafia in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Drug abuse has become a major problem. Many people have become millionaires by dealing in drugs. They should be hanged to death," he said.

Reiterating his commitment to serve the people, Azad said that his return to regional politics is aimed at building Jammu and Kashmir as an epicentre of peace and prosperity.

Azad said he rejected many offers like the seat of Rajya Sabha and other portfolios only because he shares the concerns of common people in the Union Territory and vowed that all the socio-economic issues will be addressed if he is elected to power.

"While I can see the resounding gathering today at the very first Foundation Day of our party, it shows to all our opponents where the people stand politically," Azad said.

He said that the people of Jammu and Kashmir remember his tenure as Chief Minister as golden era of development and if in the upcoming elections he got the mandate again the speed of developmental activities will be further accelerated.

"This time not three shifts but in four shifts developmental works will be taking place. That will enhance job opportunities for both skilled and non skilled labourers. Those who are migrating from the UT in search of jobs will get opportunities to earn their livelihood at home," Azad said.

The DPAP Chairman said that he won't mislead the people like many other political parties.

"We will not mislead people on fake assurances and promise them sky and deliver nothing. We want to tell them truth and ensure whatever we speak is delivered on ground," he said.

Azad said that due to fake promises and emotional politics, the developmental issues have taken the back seat.

"It is imperative to engage with the people and begin a healthy politics instead of playing over emotions and securing power for personal gains. I believe it is my duty and responsibility to guide my people towards the path of peace, prosperity and development to ensure all coming generations have secure and safe future," he said.

The DPAP chairman assured the people of J&K that he will defend their political and economic rights and will lead from the front whenever needed. DPAP is not just a political party fighting to gain power but an ideology, belief and a mission to restore and secure the socioeconomic rights for the people of Jammu and Kashmir, he added.

The former Chief Minister of erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state said that the belief and the trust of people in just one year has taken the party to new heights and it is in itself a record that in just 12 months DPAP is a household name.

"I ask my workers not to rest here but ensure we are one of the most effective and pro people political alternative in Jammu and Kashmir. Work hard and ensure more and more people are joining this caravan," he appealed.

On the occasion Working President Congress from Bandipora Basharat Bohroo and Ghulam Rasool Ex Chairman MC Sopore joined DPAP.

Among others present on the occasion were, Taj Mohiuddin Treasurer, G.M.Saroori Vice Chairman, Ch Haroon Khatana Gen Secretary, Mohd Amin Bhatt Provincial President, Mohd Yusef Gorsl Chairman DDC, Chief Spokesperson Salman Nizami, Gulzar Wani Zonal President, Shoaib Nabi Lone Distt president Baramulla, Spokesperson Adv Saleem Parray Shaffiq Shabnam Provincial Gen Secretary, Bilal Peer Zonal President, Sujada Bashir Spokesperson, Distt President Amir Bhatt, Khalid Tufail, Haji Musadiq, Arif Maqbool, Er Nazir Ah Yattoo, Muneer Ah Mir, Gn Nabi Palpuri, Ayoub Thakur, Altaf Dar, Waseem Yaqoob, Asghar Khan, Khurshid Bhatt, Gh Nabi Parwana, Firdous Nabi, Aqib Khanday, Mushtaq Khanday, Zameer Ahmed, Amir Rasool, Shubi Jaan, Bilal Khan, Ghulam Mohidudin Bhatt, Javed Iqbal, Sajjad Ahmed and others.

J&K receiving Center's...

and focusing on inclusive development, with innovative approaches to enhance public service delivery and good governance. The Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) stands as a hallmark in the journey towards an accountable governance. This online platform has significantly streamlined grievance redressal mechanisms, providing citizens with an effective channel to voice their concerns and seek resolutions, he added. He said that the system's efficiency has been duly recognized through the esteemed PM's Awards for Excellence.

While mentioning the initiative like Har Ghar Jal Yojana and Aspirational Districts Program, he outlined the role of effective governance in transforming lives, especially in rural areas, by ensuring water security and improving overall public health and well-being. He further pointed out the focused approach in Jammu and Kashmir, which exemplifies the government's dedication to uplift underdeveloped regions through strategic interventions and collaborative efforts, which aim to improve key indicators related to education, health, nutrition, financial inclusion,

and infrastructure.

Srinivas added that the District Good Governance Index, which was first implemented in Jammu and Kashmir, plays a pivotal role in evaluating and enhancing the performance of districts across the nation. This initiative facilitates healthy competition among districts, encouraging them to strive for higher standards of governance and service delivery.

"National E-Services Delivery Assessment is another significant step towards evaluating e-services delivery mechanisms, promoting innovation, and ensuring effective redressal of public grievances. It stands as a testament to the government's commitment towards providing citizen centric services in the digital age", maintained Srinivas. He said that efficiency in the Central Secretariat is being enhanced through systematic reforms and leveraging technology to streamline processes, improve coordination, and achieve greater effectiveness in policy formulation and implementation through convergence of multiple portals to one portal "one nation, one portal" with reverse integration.

"Jammu & Kashmir is a huge success story in this context. Vision India@2047, an ambitious initiative, aims to transform India into a self-reliant and globally competitive nation, emphasizing sustainable growth, equitable development, and inclusive governance is a testament to the government's unwavering commitment towards providing efficient, transparent, and citizen centric services. These transformative initiatives pave the way for a brighter and more prosperous future, aligning with the aspirations of a 'New India' by 2047", asserted Srinivas.

Dr. Ashok Bhan, Former DGP, JKP and Patron, IIPA JKRB, in his address, said we are enlightened to have first hand information from V. Srinivas and emphasized the vital role of citizen-centric governance. He stressed that good governance alone is insufficient; proactive citizen involvement and a citizen-centric approach are imperative. He emphasized the need to empower citizens, ensure a proactive delivery system at various levels, and foster participation to ascertain inclusive and equitable practices.

B R Sharma, Former Chief Secretary, J&K and Chairman of IIPA JKRB, emphasized e-government as a developmental priority with a focus on citizen-centric governance and effectiveness, rule-of-law-based implementation. He said that integration of cutting-edge technology is vital for achieving objectives in the pursuit of good governance.

K B Jandial, Director (Seminars), IIPA JKRB, in his welcome address advocated evolving governance from British legacy, drawing from Kautilya Arthashastra, e-governance, to embracing AI's potential.

The programme was attended by over 100 government officials from General Administration Department and J&K Police, members of IIPA, eminent people from civil society and academia.

Swachh revolution across...

experience of our life. Cleanliness brings happiness, joy and prosperity. It is the door to reach closest to the God. I am happy to witness cleanliness turning into the ambition of society and Garbage-free cities and villages are no longer imagination but a reality," the Lt Governor said.

The Lt Governor called upon the people to make united efforts and contribute to realize the vision of 'Garbage-Free India'.

At the UT-level event, the Lt Governor congratulated the citizens and the administration on achieving ODF PLUS status for 100 per cent villages of J&K under the 'Model' category.

He said this historic milestone underlines our united resolve of building dream villages with new potential, possibilities and full of self-confidence, he added.

The Lt Governor administered the Swachhata Pledge to the officials and the citizens. He also flagged off the fleet of Shikaras and participated in the cleanliness drive at Char Chinar.

At Golden Island in Dal Lake, the Lt Governor interacted with school students and encouraged them to become 'Swachhagrahi'.

Junaid Azim Mattu, Mayor, Srinagar Municipal Corporation; Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, Advisor to Lt Governor; Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary; senior officials and eminent personalities from diverse fields participated in the Shramdaan. Padma Shri Dr SP Varma, members of Gandhi Global family and several other civil society groups and organizations were also present.

Cocaine worth Rs...

two persons," Additional Director General of Police, Jammu zone, Mukesh Singh said.

He said the successful recovery resulted in the busting of a narco-terror module.

A case under relevant sections of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act was registered at Banihal police station and investigation set into motion, Singh said.

"This operation was developed on intelligence generated by SSP Ramban and her team who have been continuously waging war against drug smugglers and peddlers," the ADGP said.

He said a large number of notorious peddlers and smugglers have already been booked by the team of Ramban police.

"A total of 104 cases (under NDPS Act) have been registered in 2022 while 36 such cases were registered in 2023 till date following the recovery of 2,500 kg poppy straw, 10 kg charas, 200 grams heroin and 200 tablets," Singh said, adding 158 accused have been arrested and three detained under the Prevention of Illicit Traffic in NDPS Act.

Banihal Station House Officer Mohd Afzal Wani identified the arrested smugglers as Sarabjeet Singh of Jhalandhar and Honey Basra of Phagwara in Punjab.

While three kilograms of the narcotic was found hidden on the top of the vehicle, 27 kgs were recovered from their luggage, he said.

Wani said the smugglers tried to escape when signalled to stop and were chased and subsequently arrested.

The officials said the high-grade cocaine was smuggled from across the border and being taken from north Kashmir to Punjab.

Afghan embassy in India announces shut down of operations

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The Afghanistan Embassy here announced Saturday night that it is ceasing its operations from October 1, citing a "lack of support from the host government", failure to meet expectations in serving Afghanistan's interests, and reduction in personnel and resources.

In a statement, the Afghanistan Embassy in New Delhi said it regrets announcing the decision to cease its operations, effective October 1, 2023.

"It is with profound sadness, regret, and disappointment that the Embassy of Afghanistan in New Delhi announces this decision to cease its operations," the statement said.

The embassy said that this decision, while deeply regrettable, was made after careful consideration, taking into account the historic ties and long-standing partnership between Afghanistan and India.

The embassy statement also listed key factors affecting its ability to continue the mission effectively and said that they were the primary reasons for the "unfortunate closure".

The embassy cited a "lack of support from the host government", alleging that it has experienced a notable absence of crucial support from the host government, which it said hindered its ability to carry out duties effectively.

The mission also cited "failure to meet expectations in serving Afghanistan's interests" as one of the reasons.

"We acknowledge our shortcomings in meeting the expectations and requirements necessary to serve the best interests of Afghanistan and its citizens due to the lack of diplomatic support in India and the absence of a legitimate functioning government in Kabul," the mission said. It also said that due to unforeseen and unfortunate circumstances, there has been a significant reduction in both personnel and resources available to it, making it increasingly challenging to continue operations.

"The lack of timely and sufficient support from visa renewal for diplomats to other critical areas of cooperation led to an understandable frustration among our team and impeded our ability to carry out routine duties effectively," the statement said.

Given these circumstances, "it is with deep regret that we have taken the difficult decision to close all operations of the mission with the exception of emergency consular services to Afghan citizens till the transfer of the custodial authority of the mission to the host country," it said.

The embassy has been headed by Ambassador Farid Mamundzay.

Mamundzay was appointed by the previous Ashraf Ghani government and he has been operating as the Afghan envoy even after the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan in August 2021.

In April-May, the embassy was rocked by a power struggle in the wake of reports of the Taliban appointing a charge d'affaires to head the mission, replacing Mamundzay. Following the episode, the embassy came out with a statement that there was no change in its leadership. The tussle for power had erupted after Qadir Shah, who was working as a trade councillor at the embassy since 2020, wrote to the MEA in late April claiming that he was appointed as the charge d'affaires at the embassy by the Taliban.