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LG directs officials...

his interaction with the people and hearing their grievances during "LG's Mulaqaat"- Live Public Grievance Hearing programme, at the Civil Secretariat.

He said the platform of 'LG's Mulaqaat' also gives an opportunity to officers to strengthen the bond with the community.

Responding to the complaint of Guroo Muzamil, a resident of Kulgam regarding the issue of the unauthorized increase in school fees and annual charges by a private school, the Lt Governor directed the Principal Secretary School Education to take strict action against such schools and keep a check on the hike in school fees.

On the complaint of Sajad Ahmad Wani pertaining to availability of Ultrasound Scan facility during night hours at District Hospital Ganderbal, the Lt Governor directed the Director Health Kashmir to constitute a monitoring team to ensure the healthcare facilities in the Hospitals are available to patients round the clock.

He also passed strict directions to the Health Department for rationalization of health manpower across the UT and to ensure that no unnecessary referrals are being made from District Hospitals. Effective measures should be made for improvement in key nutrition parameters, he added.

Responding to the grievance of Jyoti Devi from Udhampur regarding grant of Inspection certificate for release of Subsidy amount against a loan under PMEGP, the Lt Governor directed the concerned department to ensure that such cases are resolved at the earliest.

Deputy Commissioner Jammu was directed to personally look into matter for appropriate redressal of the grievance of Gourav Sharma regarding functioning of Solar Lights in his village Kot Morha, Jammu.

On the sidelines of the programme, the Lt Governor directed the District Commissioners to prepare a comprehensive plan to increase literacy rate and monitoring of school dropout ratio in the districts.

He further called for replicating the best practices of Anantnag District Administration for monitoring of quality of grievance redressal. He directed the DCs, SSPs and other officers to become Ni-kshay Mitras and adopt a TB patient.

Rehana Batul, Secretary, Public Grievances conducted the proceedings of the LG's Mulaqaat.

Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary; Dr Mandeep Kumar Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lt Governor; Administrative Secretaries; Divisional Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners, SSPs, HoDs and other senior officers were present, in person and through virtual mode.

Corruption free J&K...



Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha administering oath to officers and staff.

reading out the Integrity Pledge and administered the oath to officers and staff.

The 'Integrity Pledge' was given to the officers, SSF Personnel and staff of Raj Bhavan, and Administrative Secretaries and Deputy Commissioners (through virtual mode) at Civil Secretariat on the occasion of the Vigilance Awareness Week.

He also highlighted the steps taken to improve public service delivery in all the organizations and thereby, paving way towards good governance in Jammu and Kashmir.

"We must take this opportunity to renew our commitment to achieve the goals of promoting efficiency, accountability and probity in public life for a better future," the Lt Governor said.

The J&K UT Government is observing 'Vigilance Awareness Week' from 30th October to 5th November. The theme of the 'Vigilance Awareness Week' this year is "Say No to Corruption; Commit to the Nation".

Mattan Police Stn...

name with some part of Anantnag district ever since he laid down his life in the line of duty.

"He did not have a long service but he never shied away from his responsibility.

I still remember the day when the encounter was going on, I was at the spot. We knew that our colleague is injured along with some Army officers. Despite our best efforts we could not effect a timely evacuation.

"We know that before breathing his last, he spoke to his father and his wife. We were hopeful that his life could have been saved if he had been evacuated in time, but sometimes the ground situation is such that what we want is not possible. Sometimes the decisions of life's journey are taken elsewhere," Singh said.

Himayun Muzammil was among the four security personnel who were killed in an encounter with terrorists in Kokernag area of the district on September 13. Two Army officers also laid their lives in the operation that lasted more than six days and ended with the killing of two terrorists.

UP man shot...

south Kashmir areas, following the two terror attacks, the officials said.

The security forces have intensified the checking of vehicles and pedestrians in several parts of Srinagar city and other towns, especially in the south Kashmir district of Pulwama, following the attack on inspector Wani, the officials said.

Mobile vehicle checkpoints have been established at all major intersections in Srinagar as well as at the city's exit points, they added.

Meanwhile, several political leaders have condemned the attack on the police officer and the labourer.

Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister and Democratic Progressive Azad Party chairman Ghulam Nabi Azad has strongly condemned the targeted killing of an outside labourer in Pulwama.

People's Conference leader Sajad Lone, while condemning the attacks, said the scourge of violence is back.

"The scourge of violence is back again. Senseless brutal attack on a police officer yesterday and the killing of a labourer in Pulwama today is indicative of the desperation of these brutal thugs," Lone posted on X.

Apni Party leader Altaf Bukahri said in a post on X, "Deeply aggrieved by the killing of an innocent non-local in Pulwama district. The killing is absolutely senseless and won't serve any purpose to anyone. Hope the authorities nab the culprits very soon to make them pay for their act."

"A man was murdered and it hardly matters whether the deceased is a local or a resident of any other part of the country. We condemn the loss of an innocent life," Bukhari said on the sidelines of a party function in Jammu.

He said there is no justification to the violence.

"The solution of problems lies with the Centre and the Apni Party will continue to highlight the public issues for peace and development in J&K," the former minister said.

Bukhari also expressed concern over the recent ceasefire violations along the International Border in the Arnia sector of Jammu and said it is an attempt to disrupt the peaceful atmosphere.

"People of J&K want peace and our fight to maintain the peaceful atmosphere in here will continue," he said.

He also asked the government to construct more community bunkers for the civilian population and maintain them properly so that they can be used during the cross-border shelling.

Killing of innocent...

cowardly terrorist attack in Pulwama. Heartfelt condolences to the family of Mukesh Kumar. We are firmly resolved to eliminate the terrorist menace that continues to receive encouragement and reinforcement from across the border," the Lt Governor said.

All is not...

and will try to work together," Abdullah told reporters in north Kashmir's Kupwara district.

Asked about People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) constituents hitting out at each other, Abdullah said he has not uttered a word against anyone.

"I have not said anything. I have not targeted any of my friends, despite the fact that for the past several months we have been targeted. But this is also right that for the first time I have not tried to stop my colleague," he said.

In an apparent reference to PDP leaders' criticising the National Conference at a party event last week, Abdullah said there was plenty his party can talk about if it were about raking up the past.

"We have plenty to talk about. They have been raking up issues for the past 30 years...we do not have to go that far, we just have to go back three or four years," he added.

Asked about BJP's claims that the situation in Kashmir was normal, the former chief minister asked why elections were not being held in Jammu and Kashmir if the situation is normal.

"If the situation is normal, why are elections not held? What is the excuse? Only yesterday, a police officer was shot at in broad day light in Srinagar. Now, we heard that something has happened in Pulwama.

"In Rajouri, an area which we had cleared of militancy, every week or 10 days an incident or encounter takes place there. If this is normal situation, then be it," he said.

When asked about J-K elections, Abdullah said people are eagerly waiting for assembly elections.

"But there is no indication of these elections being held any time soon. Parliamentary elections are a compulsion for them but whether they will hold these or not, perhaps only two persons in the country know this and they have not spoken to me about it," he added.

My return to...

people because I want to serve them and do whatever is required for the peace and progress of Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

Azad said that during his tenure he sanctioned and executed lots of projects but lot more is required to be done.

"I want to convey you that I have lot more to do for my people and I am asking you all to give me and my party a chance," he said.

He said the DPAP is meant for the welfare of people and asked his workers to focus on public meetings in their respective areas.

Among others present in the meeting were G.M Saroori Vice Chairman, Ab Majeed Wani Gen Secretary, Anita Thakur Gen Secretary, P.R.Manhas Zonal President, Asif Gattu Distt President, Prabha Salathia Mahila President, Sunita Arora Spokesperson, Javid Azad VP Zone, Arif Najar Block President, Pritam Kotwal Provincial Secretary, Sheikh Zaffarullah Gen Secretary Zone Chenab, Krishan Singh Manhas, Mohd Ashraf Goni and others.

SC asks Centre...

said, voicing concern over the vacancies after taking note of the submissions by senior advocate Prashant Bhushan who, while appearing for RTI activist Anjali Bhardwaj, said the SICs in states like Jharkhand, Tripura and Telangana have become defunct as there were no serving information commissioners.

"The lawyer has submitted a chart of huge vacancies. This would defeat the underlying spirit and express orders of this court.... As regards to the CIC, four Information Commissioners are working and seven vacant posts," the bench said after taking note of Bhushan's submissions.

Bhushan, in the course of his arguments, highlighted the seven vacancies in the CIC and the fact that there was no Central Information Commissioner.

Even the four serving Information commissioners (ICs) will demit office in the coming months, he added.

Taking note of the submissions, the bench directed the DoPT to collate information from all states and file a status report, including on the aspect of steps being taken to fill the vacancies in SICs.

It also asked Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati to assist the bench in dealing with the matter.

"We direct all the states to take steps to fill posts (in SICs). List it after three weeks," the bench ordered.

Bhardwaj, in her application, claimed the Centre and states have not followed the apex court's 2019 judgement on issues including timely filling up of vacancies at the CIC and SICs.

The top court had in December 2019 directed the Centre and state governments to appoint information commissioners within three months at the CIC and SICs, observing there was a need to evolve guidelines to stop misuse of the Right to Information Act.

It had also directed the authorities concerned to put on their website the names of members of the search committee meant for selection and appointment of information commissioners (ICs) at the CIC.

It had then taken note of Bhushan's submission that the Centre and various states have not complied with the February 15, 2019 judgement of the apex court asking them to appoint ICs in the CIC, and the SICs within 1-6 months in a transparent manner.

"We direct the Centre and the states to conclude the appointment within three months," the bench had said, cautioning the authorities that a contempt petition may be filed if its order is not complied with.

The apex court had in its judgement also said information officers should include people of eminence from varied fields and the choice be not limited to bureaucrats alone. It had also highlighted the importance of the exercise being conducted in a transparent manner.

Lal Singh bats for separate 'Jammu State'

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Dogra Swabhimani Sangathan Party Chairman Choudhary Lal Singh on Monday called for the creation of a separate state of Jammu, arguing there were stark differences in tradition, language, and culture between Jammu and the Kashmir valley. "There should be a separate Jammu state. Why can't you (Central government) give us a separate state?" Singh said while addressing a rally in Samba district.

"Neither our language resembles theirs, nor our culture, nor do we dress alike. No water flows from Jammu into Kashmir or vice versa," he said.

Singh, a former minister in an erstwhile Jammu & Kashmir government, paid tribute to the Dogras' contributions in the making of the state, and said,

"Dogras have not only shed their blood to establish this state but also safeguarded India's borders. Our forefathers valiantly fought to carve out this state, and our youth currently defend the territory from Siachen to Rajasthan."

He alleged that the Kashmir-based leaders were responsible for a six-decade-long denial of Jammu's rights and said the leaders from the valley usurped the share of jobs that belonged to people of Jammu.

"Kashmir-based rulers have not only eroded Dogra culture but also usurped job opportunities. They have exploited Dogras for the past 60 years. They harbour resentment towards us. They overlooked Jammu's tourism potential and deprived the people of Jammu of their rightful entitlements," he said.

"If you stand by me for the next six months, we will bring about a revolution here," said Singh, who was once part of Congress and later BJP, which too he quit to form his own party.

Singh criticised the BJP government's discontinuation of widow pensions and the unnecessary demand for certificates. "It has become a government of certificates. Instead of offering solace and comprehensive assistance, the government makes them suffer due to these cards devoid of benefits."

The former MP also slammed the health infrastructure in the region.

Singh spoke about the J&K government's handling of smart metres and erroneous bills, highlighting its capacity to generate 60,000 Megawatts of electricity. "Yet, we suffer, as these resources are not made available to us."

State Taxes Deptt officials administered 'Integrity Pledge' across UT

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: With pledge-taking ceremony by officers and staff of State Taxes Department, the observance of Vigilance Awareness Week (2023) commenced for the department here on Monday.

Every year Vigilance Awareness Week is observed as an outreach measure to create greater awareness about the importance of integrity and ethics in public life. This year, for Vigilance Awareness Week, the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) has given the theme of 'Say no to corruption; Commit to the Nation'.

At Jammu headquarters Additional Commissioner State Taxes, Administration & Enforcement, Jammu, Namrita Dogra administered integrity pledge to officers and staff of the department.

Likewise, in Srinagar, Additional Commissioner, Administration & Enforcement, Shakeel Maqbool administrated the pledge to officers.

Similar functions were organised in other districts including Kathua, Samba, Reasi, Udhampur , Pooneh, Rajouri, Doda , Kishtwar, Ramban, Anantnag, Kulgam, Pulwama, Shopian, Budgam, Bandipora,



Additional Commissioner State Taxes, Administration & Enforcement, Jammu, Namrita Dogra administering integrity pledge.

Ganderbal, Kupwara and Baramulla across Jammu and Kashmir UT wherein State Tax Officers and other field officers administrated pledged to officials. The attendees read out the pledge in Hindi Urdu and English languages.

Speaking on the occasion, both Additional Commissioners shared their insightful thoughts on the importance of the occasion and elaborated the ways to

maintain integrity in all walks of life. The Commissioners exhorted everyone to follow moral values in all spheres of their life.

Vigilance Awareness Week is observed every year to commemorate the birthday of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel - the first Home Minister of the country.

The observance of Vigilance Awareness Week is taken up to encourage all stakeholders to collectively

participate in the prevention of corruption. The celebrations also encourage stakeholders to fight against corruption and to raise public awareness regarding the existence, causes and gravity of and the threat posed by corruption.

Several activities including debate, slogan, poster competitions are scheduled in the week along with a panel discussion by eminent personalities in diverse fields.

Minorities inspired by policies of PM Modi: MP Khatana

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

POKHRAN: Bharatiya Janata Party MP Rajya Sabha, Gulam Ali Khatana has said that minorities have great appreciation for the policies and programmes initiated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, for welfare of minority communities. He said that the government is committed to inclusivity and have effectively bridged the digital divide and promoted educational opportunities for minorities. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visionary leadership, the government has taken significant steps to empower minorities, ensuring they are not left behind in the fast-paced growth of the nation. Khatana noted that the slogan "Ek Haath Mein Koran, Ek Mein computer" (One hand holds the Quran, the other a computer) has not remained just a catchphrase but has been transformed into reality through various scholarships and schemes. Prime Minister Modi's government has introduced a range of scholarships and schemes designed to provide equal access to education and technology, further leveling the playing field for minority communities. These initiatives have had a profound impact on the lives of countless individuals, enabling them to pursue their dreams and contribute to the nation's progress.

MP Khatana stated, "The policies and programs put forth by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government have resonated strongly with minorities. Minorities across the country are inspired and impressed by the government's commitment to their welfare and advancement."

He urged all citizens to embrace these opportunities and work together to build a stronger, more inclusive India. He emphasized that this progress is a testament to the government's dedication to the welfare of all citizens, regardless of their background.

Former HP CM, Jai Ram visits Jammu; pays obeisance at Raghunath Mandir, Tirupati Balaji Temple

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Former Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur who is also the Leader of the Opposition in the Himachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly arrived here today on a private visit along with his wife, paid obeisance at the heritave Raghunath Mandir.

At Jammu Airport, Thakur, was warmly received by the senior BJP leaders, including Jugal Kishore Sharma, Member Parliament, Rajinder Sharma, Mayor JMC, Baldev Billawaria, Dy Mayor, Dr Devender Manyal, Priya Sethi, Dharamveer Singh, Jamwal, Ashok Singh Manhas, Surinder Singh Bunt, Sucha Singh, Ajay Gupta, Sanjay Gupta and others.

Thakur drove to the ancient Raghunath Mandir



temple and prayed for peace and prosperity in the region and well-being of the people.

Accompanied by the senior leaders, Jai Ram Thakur later visited the most thronged Balaji Tirupati Temple in the city outskirts and offered Puja.

He also interacted with devotees from various parts of the country, who visit the temple after performing pil-

grimage at the holy cave shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi on the Trikuta Hills in Katra.

Thakur also visited the BJP headquarters in Jammu where he interacted with the Karyakartas and senior party functionaries.

Earlier he also visited the residence of Subash Jandyal at Mohalla Narayana, Kachi Chawani in old Jammu City.