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### Gadkari lays foundation...

works worth Rs One lakh crore within next two years will give a boost to the socio-economic development of J&K.

Addressing the gathering, the Lt Governor expressed his gratitude to the Union Minister for Road, Transport & Highways for laying the foundation of 25 new National Highway projects and taking keen interest in the continuous strengthening of road infrastructure across the region.

On the occasion, the Lt Governor also secured inclusion of 06 more road projects for Jammu and 01 project for Kashmir division under National Highways and Bharatmala category. The inclusion of 06 Road projects in Jammu division will give a massive push to the economic growth and industrial development, besides tapping the tourism potential in the region.

These newly included road projects are: Kathua-Basohli-Bani-Bhaderwah-Doda (170 KM); Doda-Bhaderwah-Chamba (Himachal) Road (132 KM); Dayalachak-Challan-Billawar-Mahampur-Basohli Road (118 KM); Tawi Bridge-Jammu Airport-Miran Sahib-R.S.Pura Suetgarh (Old Jammu-Sialkot Road) (29 KM); Surankote-Bafiaz-Shopian-Srinagar (Mughal Road) (145 KM); Atholi(Kishtwar)-Machail-Zanskar Road (Kargil); Narabal-Tangmarg-Gulmarg-Baramulla (70 KM).

Underscoring that robust road network and modern transportation is the key to economic growth, prosperity of the region and transformation in every sphere of life, the Lt Governor said that the foundations of Rs 11,721 crore National Highways projects laid by the Union Minister, besides 07 new projects will pave the way for sustainable development in J&K.

"The new mega road projects will open up new livelihood avenues for the local population and enhancing tourism & business activities, besides strengthening the strategic grid by ensuring all weather connectivity", the Lt Governor added.

The Lt Governor said that the 25 National Highway projects will connect all the villages of Udhampur, Doda, Jammu, Kathua, uplifting thousands of small and big businesses.

"I am confident that these projects will prove to be an important economic lifeline and highways of progress and prosperity for Jammu division", observed the Lt Governor.

The Lt Governor said that after the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019, the execution of new roads, tunnels and other basic Infrastructure has gained huge push to ensure the overall development of the UT of J&K under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Lt Governor also noted that the progress of construction of new roads have been doubled across the J&K under the guidance of Union Minister, Nitin Gadkari.

Noting that roads are now being built at twice the speed as before, the Lt Governor said that there has been a radical change in its progress under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana. Last year, 2402 km of road was constructed under PMGSY in Jammu division. Since August 2019, taking into account the figures of October 2021, 3885 kms length of road has been built under PMGSY in Jammu division alone. 109 projects have been completed in Jammu division at a cost of Rs 455 crore, including 14 bridges. Apart from this, 9 bridges worth Rs 19 crores have been completed under various other schemes, he added.

The Lt Governor said that infrastructure development and raising the standard of living of the common man is an important part of the overall economic priorities of the GoI and the J&K UT government. Now macadamisation of the road is also taking place at double or triple times the speed as compared to earlier. In 2019, 2290 km of road was blacktopped, while last year, 5136 km of road was macadamized. This year a target of macadamisation of 8000 km of road has been set, he added.

Union MoS (I/e), Ministry of Science &Technology, Earth Sciences, MoS PMO, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Department of Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh also addressed the gathering and said that this is the historic day for the Chenab region that 25 new NH projects are launched. He said that the central government has framed a separate road map for the development of the UT and to accelerate the developmental scenario, new bridges, roads, tunnels are being built on war footing involving thousands of crores.

He said that the Union government is giving special focus to the areas which were neglected in the last seven decades by the earlier political parties. He said the present dispensation has established a new political culture by executing projects as per the demands and requirements of the people to ensure equitable and inclusive development in Jammu & Kashmir.

Dhananter Singh, DDC Chairperson Doda; Pooja Thakur DDC Chairperson Kishtwar; Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, Advisor to the Lt Governor; Shailendra Kumar, Principal Secretary to the Government, Public Works (R&B) Department; Mukesh Singh, ADGP Jammu; Dr Raghav Langer, Divisional Commissioner Jammu, besides PRI members, former legislators, besides key officials of Police and Civil administration and a large number of people were present on the occasion.

### Govt extends 5-Kg ...

PMGKAY scheme, which was announced in March last year to provide relief to poor people during the COVID pandemic, is over and above the normal quota provided under the National Food Security Act (NFS) at a highly subsidised rate of Rs 2.3 per kilogram.

Briefing about the decision, I&B Minister Anurag Thakur said the Cabinet has extended the PMGKAY programme by four months till March 2022.

This will cost an additional Rs 53,344 crore to the exchequer, he said, adding that the total cost of PMGKAY would reach about Rs 2.6 lakh crore, including all five phases of this ongoing programme.

In the wake of economic disruptions caused by the unprecedented outbreak of COVID-19 in the country last year, the government had in March 2020 announced the distribution of additional free-of-cost foodgrains (rice/wheat) to about 80 crore National Food Security Act (NFS) beneficiaries

The Phase-I and Phase-II of this scheme were operational from April to June 2020 and July to November 2020, respectively.

The Phase-III of the scheme was operational from May to June 2021, while Phase-IV of the scheme is currently operational for July-November, 2021.

"The PMGKAY scheme for Phase V from December 2021 till March 2022 would entail an estimated additional food subsidy of Rs 53,344.52 crore," an official statement said.

The total outgo in terms of foodgrains for PMGKAY Phase V is likely to be about 163 lakh tonnes.

So far, under the PM-GKAY (phase I to IV), the Centre has allocated a total of almost 600 lakh tonnes of foodgrains to the states/UTs, equivalent to about Rs 2.07 lakh crore in food subsidy.

"Overall, the government will be incurring an expenditure of nearly Rs.2.60 lakh crore in PMGKAY Phase I- V," the statement said.

As per the reports from the states/UTs so far, 93.8 per cent of foodgrains have been lifted.

Nearly 37.32 lakh tonnes (93.9 per cent of July 2021), 37.20 lakh tonnes (93.6 per cent of August 2021), 36.87 lakh tonnes (92.8 per cent of September 2021), 35.4 lakh tonnes (89 per cent of October 2021), and 17.9 lakh tonnes (45 per cent of November 2021) foodgrains have been distributed to about 74.64 crore, 74.4 crore, 73.75 crore, 70.8 crore and 35.8 crore beneficiaries, respectively.

### Security tightened outside...

Police (Central) stated that a death threat from "ISIS Kashmir" was received on the official email ID of Gambhir at 9.32 pm on Tuesday, they said.

The mail read, "We are going to kill you and your family, the officials said.

In the complaint, a request was made to look into the matter, register an FIR and make necessary security arrangements, they said.

The Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operations unit of Special Cell has written to Google seeking information about the account handlers and registered ID through which the alleged mails were sent.

This would help in tracing the IP location of the device from where these alleged

## Block Diwas meeting: DC Reasi listens to public issues

The local people of all surrounding Panchayats participated in the programme and highlighted their problems and developmental issues faced by them. They demanded Play ground at Bhambla, Health Centre & Veterinary Centre at Letar, adequate staff in schools, regulation of minor mineral rates, up-gradation of Schools, replacement of old electric poles, up-gradation of transformer, sub centre in Godar Khalsa and Community hall for senior citizens.

Resource persons were Ashok Kumar(Assistant Executive Engineer, PHE Nowshera), Dr. Kalpana Arya(Medical Dept.), Mushtaq Ahmed (Functional Manager, DIC Rajouri), Rafakat Hussain (District Employment and Counselling Centre). A lecture was delivered on the topic Water Conservation and Jal Jeevan Mission by Ashok Kumar. Vikrant Sharma, State Level Resource Person, NYK Rajouri stated that Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan is the largest grassroots level organisation of the

threats have been sent, a senior police officer of the Special Cell said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central) Shweta Chauhan said a complaint was received from Gaurav Arora, personal secretary to Gambhir, at Rajendra Nagar police station on Wednesday.

"The complaint alleged that an unidentified person has sent an email on Tuesday on the email ID of Gautam Gambhir threatening to kill him and his family members," she said.

"On receiving the complaint, the district police increased (Gambhir's) personal security as well as the security of his residence in Rajendra Nagar area. The police are currently enquiring into the source of the complaint," the DCP added.

However, no FIR has been registered in the matter yet as an enquiry is in process, police said.

They said along with the Cyber Cell of the police of the Central district, an enquiry is also being carried out by the Special Cell.

"We are looking into the matter," a senior officer from the Special Cell said.

### Three TRF terrorists...

of School Principal Supinder Kour and teacher Deepak Chand of Government Higher Secondary School, Khankah Noorbagh Sangam on October 7, 2021. Prior to joining terror ranks, several cases regarding his involvement in stone pelting incidents are also registered.

Arafat Ahmad was also involved in several terror crime cases including killing of a non-local labour at Litter area of Pulwama on November 16, 2021.

Manzoor Ahmad was involved in transportation of Foreign terrorists from South Kashmir to Central / North and Vice-Versa through his strong OGW network in order to strengthened LeT/TRF outfit in Kashmir valley .He was also involved in collecting of funds on the name of LeT/TRF outfit and was instrumental for strengthening the LeT/TRF outfit.

Meanwhile, terrorists hurled a grenade at a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) camp in Bandipora district of Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday, officials said.

However, no damage was done as the grenade missed the intended target, they said. The ultras lobbed the grenade towards the CRPF camp at Sumbal in Bandipora, the officials said. The grenade exploded on the roadside without causing any damage, they said.

### 174 new coronavirus...

toll in the UT due to the pandemic was 4,466, as two fresh deaths were reported in the past 24 hours.

Meanwhile, the officials said there were 49 confirmed cases of mucormycosis (black fungus) in the UT as no fresh case was reported since Tuesday evening.

### Active COVID cases...

fresh fatalities, according to the data updated at 8 am.

The daily rise in new coronavirus infections has been below 20,000 for 47 straight days and less than 50,000 daily new cases have been reported for 150 consecutive days now.

The active cases comprise 0.32 per cent of the total infections, the lowest since March 2020, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate was recorded at 98.33 per cent, the highest since March 2020, the ministry said.

A decrease of 2,103 cases has been recorded in the active COVID-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours.

The daily positivity rate was recorded at 0.80 per cent. It has been less than two per cent for last 51 days. The weekly positivity rate was also recorded at 0.93 per cent. It has been below two per cent for the last 61 days, according to the ministry.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 3,39,57,698 while the case fatality rate was recorded at 1.35 per cent.

The cumulative doses administered in the country so far under the nationwide COVID-19 vaccination drive has exceeded 118.44 crore.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 2020, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19.

India crossed the grim milestone of two crore on May 4 and three crore on June 23.

The 437 new fatalities include 370 from Kerala and 19 from Maharashtra.

Of the 370 deaths, 57 were reported over the last few days and 313 were designated as COVID-19 deaths after receiving appeals based on the new guidelines of the Centre and the directions of the Supreme Court, a state govt release said on Tuesday.

A total of 4,66,584 deaths have been reported so far in the country including 14,766 from Maharashtra, 38,182 from Karnataka, 38,045 from Kerala, 36,401 from Tamil Nadu, 25,095 from Delhi, 22,909 from Uttar Pradesh and 19,407 from West Bengal.

The ministry stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities.

"Our figures are being reconciled with the Indian Council of Medical Research," the ministry said on its website, adding that state-wise distribution of figures is subject to further verification and reconciliation.

### Guidelines approved for...

distribution to further streamline the rollout of the ex-gratia relief. He directed completion of relief distribution exercise in favour of all beneficiaries within two months.

Moreover, the State Executive Committee also sanctioned the release of Rs. 66.12 crore to districts for distributing disaster relief on account of damages due to incessant rains, hailstorms, and snowfall on 23rd and 24th October 2021.

### ACB presents charge-sheet...

to fraudulent means, prepared fictitious/false bills in respect of purchase and repairs of vehicles and put the state exchequer to loss of Rs. 11,78,240. "It was also found during investigation that an amount of Rs 8,01,990 was found withdrawn by the accused Chief Medical Officer Budgam, in league with other accused persons on account of repairing of departmental vehicles and shown disbursed to private firms. The investigation further established that these vehicles were never repaired by the firm and payment was not received by firm," he added.

The official further said that investigation further revealed that a supply order for installation of two number of LED hoardings and production of short-films was placed in favour of M/S Oscar Cine Media Group Srinagar, without ascertaining reasonability of rates and without inducing competition with an excess amount of Rs. 88,250 by accused CMO Budgam, to the supplier firm. "All the accused persons except a deceased were presented before the Court of Special Judge Anti-Corruption Srinagar, for further legal action. Further trial of the case will proceed in due course," said the official adding that next date of the case has been fixed on January 28, 2022.

### Cabinet clears bill...

of Price Assurance and Farm Services Act; and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act. Later, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar tweeted that the Cabinet's approval in the very first meeting after the Prime Minister's announcement is a sign of the uniformity of his "words and deeds".

The repeal of these three legislations has been one of the key demands of around 40 farmer unions protesting against these reforms for nearly a year now.

These laws, which are under suspension following a Supreme Court order in January this year, had triggered widespread protests by thousands of farmers, mainly from Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh, at Delhi borders.

The protest, which started at the flag-end of November 2020, is still continuing.

On November 21, the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) -- the joint body of farmer unions leading the current protests -- had written to the Prime Minister to immediately resume talks on the farmers' six demands, including legal guarantee for procurement of crops at MSP.

This would help in tracing the IP location of the device from where these alleged

The other demands were sacking and arrest of Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Ajay Mishra in connection with the Lakhimpur Kheri incident, withdrawal of cases against farmers and building of a memorial for those who lost their lives during the agitation.

They also sought removal of penal provisions on farmers in the 'Commission for Air Quality Management in the National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Act 2021' and withdrawal of the draft 'Electricity Amendments Bill, 2020/2021' proposed by the government.

SKM had said it would continue their planned protests, including a march to Parliament on November 29, to mark the one year of anti-farm law protests.

The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act is aimed at giving freedom to farmers to sell their produce outside the mandis.

The Farmers' (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Act is to provide cultivators the right to enter into a contract with agri-business firms, processors, wholesalers, exporters, or large retailers for the sale of future farming produce at a pre-agreed price.

The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act was implemented to remove commodities like cereals, pulses, oilseeds, onion, and potatoes from the list of essential commodities and also do away with the imposition of stock holding limits on such items, except under 'extraordinary circumstances'.

### Shyam Steel expands...

our retail business operation across the country. We are starting our expansion in Jammu & Kashmir and Punjab which have huge growth potential. The policy shift of the government will boost development and help the industry grow in the Kashmir region," Shyam Steel director Lalit Beriwal said.

The company also plans to expand its footprint in Himachal Pradesh and Haryana.

The TMT bar manufacturer said its retail operations have been expanded to Kathua, Samba, Udhampur, Reasi, Rajouri, Poonch, Doda, Ramban, Baramulla, Srinagar, Pulwama, Shopian, Ganderbal and Budgam in Jammu & Kashmir.

"We are looking to become one of the leaders in the primary TMT bar segment in North India," he said.

The company will look to create a base of 5,000 MTs through 500 retail outlets covering Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Haryana in north India.

Shyam Steel has roped in Olympic medallists boxer Lovlina Borgohain and India hockey team captain Manpreet Singh as its "Build India" brand ambassadors, in addition to Bollywood actor Sonu Sood.

These associations will help elevate the brand value of Sh