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Efforts underway to...

people for Voluntary blood donation, he added. Two AIIMS, two cancer institutes, seven new medical colleges, 15 new nursing colleges, and thousands of health and wellness centers, besides universal health insurance coverage for up to Rs. Five lakhs under the revolutionary Ayushman Bharat-SEIAT scheme and decentralized health system have ensured that the people of J&K who were deprived of basic health services for decades, now have easy access to the best health care facilities, the Lt Governor added.

Dr. TR Raina, Organizing Chairman, Transcon 2022, while speaking on the occasion highlighted the aims and objectives behind the National Conference. He shared the vision of ISBTI to achieve 100% Voluntary Blood Donation.

During the inaugural session, experts and eminent speakers gave their views on blood donation and blood transfusion. A souvenir of the Tanscon-2022 B was also released.

Renowned companies like Wrig Nanosystems, Meril and Immucor also participated in the conference.

Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, Advisor to Lt Governor; Bhupinder Kumar, Administrative Secretary, Health and Medical Education; Dr Shakti Gupta, Director, AIIMS Jammu; Dr. Shashi Sudan, Principal, GMC Jammu; Dr. Yudhveer Singh, President ISBTI; Dr. Sangeeta Pathak, Secretary General, ISBTI; Dr Meena Sidhu, Head, PG Department of Transfusion Medicine, GMC Jammu, faculty members, doctors, scientists, medical students, nursing staff were present.

Parliament's Winter Session...

also contemplating a symbolic soft inauguration of the new building, being built at an estimated cost of over Rs 1,200 crore, by the end of this month or early December, the sources said.

The session usually starts from the third week of November with around 20 sittings. But there have been occasions when the session was held in December, during 2017 and 2018.

This time, it is likely that the session will be held in the first week of December, the sources said.

Elections to the Gujarat Assembly will be held on December 1 and 5, while counting for both Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh will be held on December 8.

The government earlier aimed to complete the new building before the start of the Winter Session, but some construction work may stretch beyond the stipulated time.

Even after the building is fully furnished, the sources said, around 15-20 days would be required to acquaint and train staffers to make the building fully functional and extend all assistance to MPs.

The sources added that as of now it appeared that next year's Budget Session could be held in the new building and arrangements to hold the Winter Session in the old building have already begun.

Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju had earlier said the Centre would repeal more than 1,500 obsolete and archaic laws during the Winter Session.

SC extends protection...

Gauri row. On Friday, cases related to the Gyanvapi mosque located next to the Kashi Vishwanath temple also came up briefly in the Allahabad High Court and the Varanasi district court.

The case in the high court goes back to 1991 while the one in the Varanasi court relates to the more recent row - over permission to allow regular worship of idols on the mosque's rear wall.

The Supreme Court also directed the Hindu parties to file their replies within three weeks on the appeal by the Anjuman Intezamia Masjid committee challenging the Allahabad High Court order on the appointment of a survey commissioner.

On May 17, the SC had passed an interim order directing the Varanasi district magistrate to ensure protection of the area inside the Gyanvapi-Shringar Gauri complex where the structure claimed to be a 'shivling' was found during a survey.

The mosque committee, however, maintained that the structure was part of the water fountain mechanism at the 'wazookhana' reservoir where devotees perform ablutions before offering namaz.

The video survey was ordered by the court of the civil judge (senior division) in Varanasi. The SC transferred the case to the district judge on May 20, pointing at the complexities" and the "sensitivity" of the issue and saying that a more senior judicial officer should handle it.

In its earlier May 17 order, the top court had directed protection of the area

around the claimed shivling" while also allowing Muslims to offer namaz in the mosque.

The SC had said the interim order shall remain in operation till the maintainability of the suit is decided by the district judge, and then for eight more weeks to allow the aggrieved parties to approach a higher court.

The Varanasi district judge is now hearing the plea by a group of women seeking permission for daily worship of idols of Hindu deities located on the mosque's outer wall. The Hindu side has also sought a survey of two locked basements in the mosque complex.

On Friday, district judge A K Vishvesha fixed December 5 as the next date of hearing, according to government advocate Mahendra Pandey.

Meanwhile, the Allahabad High Court adjourned the hearing in the 1991 Kashi Vishwanath temple-Gyanvapi mosque case to November 28.

This was done on a plea by the mosque committee, which had moved a petition challenging the maintainability of the original suit filed in the Varanasi district court.

Appearing for temple side, advocate C S Vaidyanathan argued that a survey should be conducted by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to bring out the truth.

He claimed that looking at the mosque with the naked eye it seems that the structure is part of the temple complex.

JeM terrorist killed...

folds, besides planning to execute terror attacks," the spokesman said.

Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) of Kashmir Vijay Kumar congratulated the joint team of police and security forces for conducting the successful operation without any collateral damage.

He termed the operation a big success as a possible threat of fidayeen and other terrorist attacks were thwarted by his elimination.

Meanwhile, four terrorist associates of Lashkar-e-Taiba, who were planning to plant improvised explosive devices to cause damage to security forces, have been arrested in Pulwama district, police said.

The police along with security forces arrested the four men and recovered incriminating materials, including explosive substances, from their possession.

A police spokesman identified the accused as Karamat-ul-lah Reshi and Suhail Bashir Ganai, both residents of Chewa Uller Tral. Adil Ghani Lon, a resident of Karamulla Tral; and Irshad Ahmed Kumar, a resident of Tral-e-Payeen, are the other two held in the case.

During preliminary investigation, it was found that the terrorist associates were in touch with LeT terrorist commander Babar alias Samama (a resident of PoK).

They were also planning to plant IEDs (improvised explosive devices) in Tral area with the intend to cause damage to police and security forces, the spokesman said.

He added that they were also involved in transportation of arms and ammunition and other logistic support to active terrorists of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

A case has been registered and further investigation has been set in motion, the spokesman added.

J&K first to...

colleges," Principal Secretary said while chairing the inaugural event of launch of Institutional Innovation Councils (IICs) here at Padma Shri Padma Sachdev (PSPS), Government P G College for Women, Gandhi Nagar.

The event, which was organized by HED in collaboration with Ministry of Education (MoE), was aimed at to establish a centre of excellence for innovations development.

He said that 140 GDCs are now the beneficiary of most modern innovation systems and will have the benefit and support of innovation ecosystem of the MoE. 'Entire Government of India and we as an innovation ecosystem are now plugged into GoI innovation ecosystem', he added.

Elaborating further, Kansal stressed upon the quality enhancement and the objective of the relevant skill programmes in order to create job opportunities while focusing on innovation framework, internationalization policy, FDP Policy, paradigm of NEP 2020 to build accountability for the system as a whole.

"This will also promote creativity and innovations to accelerate the growth and success of skills among all Higher Education Institutions. It will also act as a catalyst for students to innovate as well as refine ideas that they already have," he asserted.

Vice Chancellor, Cluster University of Jammu, Bechan Lal, Special Secretary HED, Rakesh Badyal, Director Colleges J&K, Dr Yasmeen Ashai and other officers were also present on the occasion.

The programme was web casted through Facebook.

Principal PSPS Government PG College for Women, Gandhi Nagar; Professor

Minu Mahajan, emphasized that initiatives and innovations will encourage, inspire and nurture young minds with the new ideas and transform them into proto types.

Special Secretary, Higher Education Department talked about the Institutional Innovation Council and JKHED innovation initiatives. He stated that IICs will promote innovation in the institutions through multitudinous modes leading to an innovation promotion Ecosystem in the educational institutions.

He stressed upon periodic workshops, seminars, trainings, interactions with the entrepreneurs, investors, professionals and creators mentor pool for the students to meet with the U.N 2030 agenda.

Assistant Innovation Director, Ministry of Education, Government of India, Dipan Sahu, who joined through virtual mode stated that Innovation initiatives will help in creating a vibrant Innovation Ecosystem Entrepreneurship support, mechanism in Higher Education Institutions to establish functional ecosystem for scouting ideas and pre-incubation.

Vice Chancellor, Cluster University of Jammu, Professor Bechan Lal, who was guest of honour on the occasion, emphasized upon the need to promote innovation that shall play an instrumental role in building and streamlining of the startup of ecosystem at institutional level.

The cultural bonanza included melodious song by Professor Rahul Kumar, Assistant Professor, Department of music, folk dances followed by National Anthem.

The technical sessions were conducted by Professor Manish Arora, BHU, Professor Rohit Sharma, Punjab University, Prof Lalit Kumar, Hindu College, University of Delhi, Ms Salva Rani, Innovation Officer, Ministry of Education, Innovation Cell. The technical sessions were chaired by Dr. Yasmeen Ashai, Director Colleges, Higher Education Department, U.T of J&K.

The concluding remarks were given by Dr Sarabjeet Singh, Higher Education Department.

The programme concluded with vote of thanks by Dr S P Saraswat, Nodal Principal, Jammu division.

We have to...

through a testing time and mere slogans are of no use, he said.

"We have lost thousands of lives to some slogans. We cannot afford to lose even one more life to such slogans," he said in an apparent reference to the separatist wave in Jammu and Kashmir in the 1990s.

"When I was here (as chief minister), we were doing both things. Security forces were fighting the terrorists but we saved hundreds of youths and brought them back into the mainstream. No effort is being made in that direction now.

"You cannot just go on killing. That way we will kill the entire youth. In our families, our children sometimes do not listen to us. We ask his friend or teacher to make him understand and bring him back on track," he added.

Death of infants...

children who died in Udhampur district due to consumption of spurious cough syrup.

A bench of Justices M R Shah and M M Sundresh said officers were found to be negligent and it does not find any reason to interfere in the matter.

"Your officers are found to be negligent. They ought to have been vigilant. Don't compel us to say things about food and industry department.The health of citizens is in their hands. They don't perform duties at all. They can't play with the lives of citizens. It is their duty to check and verify things," the bench observed.

The top court was hearing a plea filed by the Jammu and Kashmir administration challenging the March 3, 2021, order of the high court which had dismissed its plea against the NHRC order.

Ten children died in Rammagar tehsil of Udhampur in December 2019 and January 2020 due to consumption of spurious cough syrup.

The NHRC found procedural lapses on the part of the Drugs Department.

The Commission held Jammu and Kashmir vicariously liable for the lapses on part of the department and recommended compensation of Rs 3 lakh each to the next of kin of the deceased.

Div Com, Add...

handed over financial assistance to Sunita Pandit, wife of Late Sunil Pandit on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor.

Sunil Pandit was killed by terrorists in Kashmir. The financial assistance has been provided from the Lieutenant Governor's Relief Fund over and above the ex gratia relief provided by the district administration. The Divisional Commissioner instructed the Sub Divisional Magistrate to facilitate the admission of daughters of Sunil Pandit to a reputed school immediately and also assured all support & assistance to the terror-attack victim family needed from time to time.

Committed to support Startups, all assistance to be provided to make their business dreams reality: LG

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Asserting that the Government is committed to support Startups and help them grow, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said: "We want to assure aspiring entrepreneurs that all necessary assistance will be provided to make their business dreams a reality."

Incubation centres in J&K's educational institutions are playing an important role in building and nurturing ideas for Startups, Sinha said while addressing the 'Kashmir Expo- Start Up for Livelihood' at Srinagar.

He said there is a greater need to infuse technology and innovation in rural sector which will produce better quality of life and enhance the socio-economic development.

Emphasizing that innovation is about people rather than ideas, the Lt Governor underscored that in order to transform an idea into commercial product, we need to provide right environment and opportunity to innovators and Startups entrepreneurs.

Under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the ecosystem of innovation, start-ups has been strengthened. In just 8 years, India has established 75,000 startups with 50% of them established in Tier 2 & Tier 3 cities providing direct employment to 4 lakh youth, the Lt Governor said.

We are third in startup ecosystems globally. In last 2 years, 107 unicorns worth more than \$340 billion have been established in the country. Today one out of 10 new unicorns in the world, is being established in India, he further added.

Noting that Youth has always been integral part of evolving technology, the Lt Governor observed that the potential ideas and new Startups will contribute not only to economic growth and productive diversification, but also to sustainable and inclusive development.



LG Manoj Sinha speaking during 'Kashmir Expo- Start Up for Livelihood' in Srinagar.

Technological progress is growing at an exponential rate and the adoption time for commercialized technologies has been considerably reduced. This is having a direct impact on the society and business ecosystem.

Whether its businesses or educational institutions, they have to innovate and adopt new technologies to stay relevant in the future, the Lt Governor further emphasized. In this Amrit Kaal Khand, it is the collective responsibility of all of us to fully support the enterprise and determination of our youth, our entrepreneurs in the making of a self-reliant Jammu and Kashmir, he added.

The Lt Governor complimented the Department of Science and Technology for organizing the three-day "Kashmir Expo - Start up for Livelihood" and congratulated all stakeholders associated with this event.

The Lt Governor appreciated two innovative products- Saffron Sowing Machine and Seed Sowing Machine from NIT Srinagar and stressed on the necessity of having excellent coordination between the industry, academia and society for the success of both the products.

Highlighting the immense potential for startups in rural sector, the Lt Governor said that in the last two-three years, many youths of Jammu Kashmir have implemented impressive ideas such as the apple grading machine, strawberry plucker etc. and successfully used them in agriculture, horticulture sectors.

The Lt Governor further said that 15 youths from each panchayat were provided support for becoming entrepreneurs and 20 youths were given skill development opportunities during the recently concluded Back-to-Village

program this month.

Dr Rajesh S. Gokhale, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology highlighted the significance of the Kashmir Expo in providing a platform for the youth to develop their ideas into startups.

Saurabh Bhagat, Commissioner/Secretary to Government, Science & Technology Department, informed that the Department is supporting more than 120 research projects across different Universities and Colleges of J&K. We are also providing scholarships and seed money for nurturing innovation, he added. Akhilesh Gupta, Senior Adviser, Department of Science and Technology (DST) delivered the welcome address and Dr. Vipin Kumar, Director, National Innovation Foundation presented the Vote of Thanks. Prof Nilofer Khan, Vice Chancellor, University of Kashmir; Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai, Vice-Chancellor; SKUAST-K; Prof Farooq Ahmad Shah, VC, Central University of Kashmir; Prof. Qayyum Hussain, VC, Cluster University Srinagar; Prof. Shakil Ahmad Romshoo, VC, IUST; Pandurang K Pole, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; Dr Anita Gupta, Advisor & Head NSTEDB, DST; besides students, innovators and prominent citizens were present on the occasion.

SC orders release of 6 remaining convicts in Rajiv Gandhi assassination case

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI/CHENNAI: The Supreme Court on Friday set free Nalini Sriharan and five other remaining convicts who are serving life term for about three decades in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, noting that its earlier order releasing another convict A G Perarivalan was equally applicable to them.

The top court ordered the premature release of the six convicts after holding that all of them are deemed to have served their sentence in relation to the crime. The former prime minister was assassinated by a woman suicide bomber named Dhanu at a poll rally in Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu on the night of May 21, 1991.

A bench of justices B R Gavaai and B V Nagarathna noted that the Tamil Nadu Government has recommended the remission of sentence of all convicts, which has not been acted upon by the Governor. It also took into account that the conduct of the convicts was satisfactory during incarceration. Life imprisonment implies a jail term for the convict's entire life.

Besides Nalini, the five others to be released are R P Ravichandran, Nalini's husband V Sriharan alias Murugan, Santhan, Robert Payas and Jayakumar.

Sriharan, Santhan, Robert and Jayakumar are Sri Lankan nationals.

The Congress termed as "totally unacceptable and completely erroneous" the apex court order and said it has shocked the nation's conscience

The party also said it disagreed with former party chief Sonia Gandhi, whose appeal helped in the commutation of death sentence of Nalini in 2000. It asserted that the party's stand had been consistent on this over the years despite the statements of the Gandhi family as it considers this an "institutional matter".

Congress spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi told reporters that the party intended to take "all available remedies, be it review or any other form of legal redress".

Nalini declined to comment on her release citing parole norms but her elated mother S Padma said the feeling of happiness cannot be explained in words.

"It is boundless joy and nothing but ecstasy. The suffering, grief and pain that Nalini and the rest of the family endured for over three decades cannot be put in words," Padma told PTI.

The order was welcomed by Tamil Nadu's ruling DMK, a Congress ally, and its arch rival AIADMK with both the Dravidian parties seeking to claim credit.

Chief Minister M K Stalin said the court order is historic as it reinforced the cornerstone of democratic principles but the DMK leader used it target Governors, asserting it demonstrated that those who hold gubernatorial posts should not put the decisions of elected governments on the back burner.

He said the Governor (Banwarilal Purohit and later R N Ravi) had put the Tamil Nadu Cabinet decision (during the AIADMK regime in 2018) to release the convicts in cold storage.

Stalin said his party-led government exerted pressure on the Raj Bhavan continuously to accord sanction for the release of the convicts.

The AIADMK, which is the main opposition party in Tamil Nadu, said the order is a victory for the continuous legal steps taken by the previous party-led regimes.

Citing legal steps taken for the release of the convicts during the regime of previous governments (20011-21) led by the party, senior leader D Jayakumar said it is a victory for the AIADMK. However, now the DMK government is attempting to take credit for it, he told reporters.

But Anusuya Daisy Ernest, a retired woman police officer and a survivor of the suicide bombing, asked, "What about justice for those killed and injured survivors?"

Besides Rajiv Gandhi, 16 people including 9 police personnel were killed in the suicide bombing. The woman suicide bomber also died in the blast which left 45 others injured.

Invoking its extraordinary power under Article 142 of the Constitution, the Supreme Court had on May 18 this year ordered the release of Perarivalan, who had served over 30 years in jail.

Under Article 142, the top court may issue any verdict or order necessary to provide "complete justice".

"The court (SC) held that the Governor in matter of remission of an appellant convicted under section 302 was bound by advice of state cabinet. Undisputedly, in the present case the cabinet has resolved grant of remission to all the appellants.

"We, therefore, find that the factors which weighed with this court while directing the release of A G Perarivalan are equally applicable to the present applicants. We direct that all the appellants are deemed to have served their sentence in relation to the

crime. The applicants are thus directed to be released unless required in any other case," the top court said on Friday.

The Tamil Nadu government had earlier favoured the premature release of Nalini and Ravichandran, saying its 2018 advice for remission of their life sentence is binding upon the governor.

In two separate affidavits, the state government had told the top court that in a cabinet meeting held on September 9, 2018, it had considered mercy petitions of seven convicts in the case and resolved to recommend the governor for remission of their life sentences invoking the power granted under Article 161 of the Constitution.

Nalini and Ravichandran had moved the top court seeking premature release.

Both of them had challenged a June 17 order of the Madras High Court, which rejected their pleas for early release, and cited the apex court judgment ordering the release of co-convict Perarivalan.

Both Nalini and Ravichandran have been on ordinary leave (parole) from December 27, 2021 till date as sanctioned by the Tamil Nadu government under the Tamil Nadu Suspension of Sentence Rules, 1982 and based on their request.

A TADA court had in 1998 sentenced 26 of the accused to death.

In May 1999, the top court upheld the death sentence of Murugan, Santhan, Perarivalan and Nalini, commuted the death sentence of three to a life term and freed the remaining 19 convicts.

Nalini's death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment in 2000.

In 2014, the top court commuted the death sentence of Perarivalan to life imprisonment along with those of Santhan and Murugan on grounds of delay in deciding their mercy petitions.