

!! Continuations from Page 1 !! Modi to launch...

country. During the programme, the prime minister will also launch the first-of-its-kind initiative - 'Pradhan Mantri Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PMTVGT) Mission'. There are 75 PMTVGTs in 18 states & UTs living in 22,544 villages (220 districts) having a population of around 28 lakhs.

These tribes stay in scattered, remote and inaccessible habitations, often in forest areas and hence a mission with budget of about Rs 24,000 crore, is planned to saturate PMTVGT families and habitations with basic facilities such as road and telecom connectivity, electricity, safe housing, clean drinking water and sanitation, improved access to education, health and nutrition and sustainable livelihood opportunities, the statement said.

In addition, separately, saturation will be ensured for PMJAY, Sickle Cell Disease Elimination, TB Elimination, 100% immunisation, PM Surakshit Matritva Yojana, PM Matru Vandana Yojana, PM Poshan, PM Jan Dhan Yojana etc., it said.

In a step that will showcase yet another example of commitment of the Prime Minister towards welfare of farmers, the 15th instalment amount totalling to about Rs. 18,000 crores under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN), will be released through direct benefits transfer to more than eight crore beneficiaries.

Under the scheme, till now, more than Rs. 2.62 lakh crores have been transferred to farmers' accounts in 14 instalments.

The prime minister will inaugurate, dedicate to nation and lay the foundation stone of projects worth around Rs. 7200 crore in multiple sectors like rail, road, education, coal, petroleum and natural gas, the statement said.

The projects whose foundation stones will be laid by the prime minister include the four-laning of 52-km stretch of Mahagama - Hansdiha section of NH133; four-laning of 45-km stretch of Basukinath-Deoghar section of NH114 A; KDH-Purnadih Coal Handling Plant; new academic and administrative building of IIIT Ranchi.

The projects that will be inaugurated and dedicated to nation include new campus of IIM Ranchi; new Hostel of IIT ISM Dhanbad; Petroleum Oil and Lubricants (POL) depot in Bokaro; several railway projects viz doubling of Hatia-Pakra Section, Talgaria - Bokaro Section, and Jarangdih-Patratu section.

Further, the achievement of 100 per cent of Railway Electrification in Jharkhand will also be dedicated to the nation by the prime minister; the statement said.

The scheme -- PVTG Development Mission -- will be a huge step towards the empowerment of tribals, official sources said, adding that this will be a first-of-its-kind initiative.

In the 2023-24 budget, the scheme was announced for improving socioeconomic conditions of the PVTG.

The mission will be implemented through the convergence of 11 interventions of nine ministries under a host of existing welfare programmes covering rural roads, rural housing and drinking. Some scheme norms will be relaxed to cover these remote habitations, officials said.

Ensure people are...

J&K Vijay Kumar and IGP Kashmir Zone V K Birdi.

Besides the accompanying officers the meeting was attended by ADG CRPF Nalin Prabhat, GoC Victor Force Major General Balbir Singh, IG Kashmir Ops CRPF Gyanendra Kumar Verma, DIG SKR Rayees Mohammad Bhat, Sector Commander 01 RR Brig P S Chauhan, Sector Commander 02 RR Anirudh K Chauhan, DIG CRPF Kulvinder Singh Deswal, SSP Kulgam Sahil Sarangal, COs of Army, CRPF and gazetted jurisdictional officers.

1st division now...

Dheeraj Sharma as IIM-Rohtak director as he had a second division in his Bachelor's.

As per the new norms, the Visitor will have the final say in the appointment of the director of any IIM. The Visitor shall nominate one of the names recommended by the board and send it to the board for appointment.

"Provided that where the Visitor is not satisfied with the names recommended by the Board, he or she may ask the Board to make fresh recommendations. If the Visitor is not satisfied with the panel of names recommended by the Board, the Board shall get a fresh panel of three names recommended through the same search-cum-selection committee or a fresh search-cum-selection committee," the notification said.

Earlier, the board was solely responsible for the appointment of the director.

The concept of a Visitor in IIMs had first found a mention in the draft of the present act released by the Centre in 2015. However, IIMs had resisted it saying that it would "put a question mark on their said autonomous powers". It was later removed from the final bill.

The President of India is the Visitor of all the central universities and IITs and appoints their vice-chancellors and directors.

Under the new norms, the Visitor will now have the power to dissolve the board, at any time, under three circumstances - if the visitor is of the opinion that the board is unable to discharge the functions, is persistently defaulted in complying with any direction given by the Visitor under this Act, and in the public interest.

Earlier, no such clause for the dissolution of the board was there.

Rajnath holds talks...

issues. "Had a telephonic conversation with the UK Secretary of State for Defence Mr Grant Shapps. We discussed a range of defence and security related issues with particular emphasis on the Indo-Pacific," he said.

The phone conversation between Singh and Shapps came amid the ongoing visit to the UK by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.

The India-UK relationship was elevated to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership during the India-UK virtual summit held between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his then British counterpart Boris Johnson in May 2021.

At the summit, the two sides adopted a 10-year roadmap to expand ties in the key areas of trade and economy, defence and security, climate change and people-to-people connections, among others.

Last month, the first India-UK '2+2' foreign and defence dialogue had taken place that saw the two sides focusing on ways to boost cooperation in a range of key areas such as trade and investment, defence, critical technologies, civil aviation, health and energy.

At the senior official-level dialogue (2+2), the two sides also discussed international developments including in the Indo-Pacific region and considered the possibility of enhancing anti-terror collaboration.

Indian, Pakistan soldiers...

Pakistan Rangers held two flag meetings on the IB to ensure adherence to the ceasefire agreement in October but the latest incident heightened the tension afresh. However, the officials said Indian and Pakistani soldiers exchanged sweets to mark Diwali at Chakan Da Bagh border crossing point in Poonch district.

Sweets and greetings were also exchanged between the two armies at Tatapani crossing in the Balnoi sector of Poonch, the officials said.

In Samba district, a team of civil officials celebrated Diwali with BSF troops guarding the IB, an official spokesman said.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Samba Suresh Sharma, along with tehsildars of Kalsotra, Samba and Rajpura tehsils, distributed sweets and greeted the jawans with warm wishes during a visit to the forward border outposts, the spokesman said. He said the team of officials also interacted with the jawans and appreciated their dedication and bravery in guarding the nation's borders.

Lauding the soldiers for their sacrifice, Sharma said the district administration and defence forces are part of one family, and assured them of the administration's support and cooperation in addressing their issues.

The jawans expressed their gratitude to the administration for their gesture of solidarity and goodwill, the spokesman said, adding they also thanked the administration for providing support whenever required.

The Samba administration has been actively involved in organising various welfare and development activities for the people of the district, especially in the border areas, the spokesman said.

Govt bans 9...

their aforesaid objectives, attacking and killing the security forces, the police and civilians in Manipur, indulging in acts of intimidation, extortion and looting of civilian population for collection of funds for their organisations.

They are making contacts with sources abroad for influencing public opinion and for securing their assistance by way of arms and training for the purpose of achieving their secessionist objective and maintaining camps in neighbouring countries for the purpose of sanctuaries, training and clandestine procurement of arms and ammunition, it said.

The MHA said if there is no immediate curb and control of the Meitei extremist organisations they will take the opportunity to mobilise their cadres for escalating their secessionist, subversive, terrorist and violent activities.

The groups will propagate anti-national activities in collusion with forces inimical to sovereignty and integrity of India, indulge in killings of civilians and targeting of the police and security force personnel, procure and induct illegal arms and ammunition from across the international border and extort and collect huge funds from public for their unlawful activities, the ministry said.

The activities of the Meitei extremist organisations are considered detrimental to the sovereignty and integrity of India and that they are unlawful associations, it said.

"The central government, having regard to the circumstances, is further of opinion that it is necessary to declare the Meitei extremist organisations... as 'unlawful associations' and accordingly, in exercise of the powers conferred by the proviso to sub-section (3) of section 3 of the said Act, the central govern-

ment hereby directs that this notification shall, subject to any order that may be made under section 4 of the said Act, have effect from the 13th day of November, 2023, for a period of five years," it said.

Manipur has seen bouts of violence since ethnic clashes first erupted in May. More than 180 people have been killed since then.

The clashes have occurred over a number of grievances that ethnic Meitei and Kuki communities have against the other. A major flashpoint has been a move to give the Meiteis the Scheduled Tribe status, which has since been rolled back.

Meiteis account for about 53 per cent of Manipur's population and live mostly in the Imphal Valley, while tribals, which include Nagas and Kukis, constitute 40 per cent and reside mainly in the hill districts.

IIM-J collaborates with...

Credit Connect Schemes, the official informed.

"The STEM programme is a joint initiative of IIM Jammu and SIDBI with a total of 60 selected participants to be trained over a period of one year free of cost," the official said.

Army captain's life...

case relates to the July 18, 2020 encounter at Amshipora in which three men of Rajouri district -- Imtiyaz Ahmed, Abrar Ahmed and Mohammed Ibrar -- were killed and branded as terrorists.

2,000 people from...

state near the Indian border; he said, adding that the fighting continued till Monday.

Over 2,000 people from Khawmawi, Rihkhawdar and the neighbouring villages in Chin crossed over to India and took shelter in Zokhawthar in Champhai district due to the gunfight, Lalrinchhana said.

The Myanmar military base at Rihkhawdar was taken over by the militia in the early hours of Monday, and the base at Khawmawi was also taken over by them in the afternoon, he said.

In retaliation, the Myanmar army launched airstrikes on Khawmawi and Rihkhawdar villages on Monday, he said. At least 17 people injured in the gunfight were brought to Champhai for treatment, Lalrinchhana said.

A 51-year-old civilian from Myanmar who was already living in Zokhawthar died when the gunfight was happening on the other side of the border; the DC said.

Local sources said he was allegedly hit by a stray bullet from across the border.

Zokhawthar Village Council president Lalhuanpuia told PTI that five personnel of the Chin National Army (CNA), which was a part of the PDF, were killed in the gunfight.

Lalhuanpuia said that more than 6,000 people from Myanmar were already living in Zokhawthar before the gunfight started.

Six districts of the state -- Champhai, Sialha, Lawngtlai, Serchhip, Hnahthial and Saitual -- share a 510-km-long border with Myanmar's Chin state.

The first influx from the neighbouring country happened in February 2021 when the junta seized power. Since then, thousands of people from Myanmar have taken shelter in the northeastern state.

According to the state Home Department, 31,364 Myanmar nationals are currently living in different parts of the state. The majority of them live in relief camps, while others are accommodated by their local relatives and some live in rented houses.

The Myanmar nationals taking shelter in Mizoram are from the Chin community, who share ethnic ties with the Mizos.

After SC order...

notified by the government on January 2, 2018, was pitched as an alternative to cash donations made to political parties as part of efforts to bring in transparency in political funding.

According to the provisions of the scheme, electoral bonds may be purchased by any citizen of India or entity incorporated or established in the country. An individual can buy electoral bonds, either singly or jointly with other individuals.

Only political parties registered under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 and which secured not less than one percent of the votes polled in the last election to the Lok Sabha or a state legislative assembly are eligible to receive electoral bonds.

According to the government notification, electoral bonds shall be encashed by an eligible political party only through an account with an authorised bank.

India, Russia take...

issues including political, trade, economic, energy, connectivity, defence and consular issues. They also shared perspectives on regional and global issues of mutual interest," he said.

VHP to invite 10 crore families to take part in January 22 consecration ceremony at Ram temple

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) on Monday said it will invite more than 10 crore families in the country and abroad to take part in the consecration ceremony to be held at Ram temple in Ayodhya on January 22.

Addressing a press conference here, VHP central working president Alok Kumar said the "pious akshat kalash" sanctified in Shri Ram Jannabhoomi Temple on November 5 has already been sent across the country.

"Workers of the Vishva Hindu Parishad, along with other Hindu organisations, will visit Hindu families in cities and villages of the country from January 1 to

January 15, 2024, to invite them," he told reporters.

A similar programme has also been organised to invite "Hindus living abroad," he said.

"Along with the invitation, we will give a picture of Bhagwan Ram and his temple with other necessary information to each family," he said, adding that the Shri Ram Jannabhoomi Teertha Kshetra Trust has given a call in this regard.

Kumar said VHP teams and workers engaged in this work will not accept "any gift, donation or other materials" from the devotees.

"This time we are not reaching out to society to seek anything," he added.

Noting that all devotees of Lord Ram cannot be called to

Ayodhya to join the consecration ceremony, the VHP leader appealed to Hindus across the world to gather at their nearest temple and perform puja on January 22.

He also urged people to watch the live telecast of the "grand" consecration ceremony to be held at Ram temple in Ayodhya on January 22 and "enjoy this historic event."

"Our assessment so far is that this event will definitely take place at more than five lakh temples across the world and millions of Hindus will participate in it," he added.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and thousands of saints from across the country have been invited for the consecration ceremony.

"We celebrate Diwali to mark Bhagwan Shri Ram's return to Ayodhya after 14 years (of exile), but on January 22, 2024, the world will be celebrating the second Diwali when Ram ji will return to his birthplace after 500 years during 'amrit kaal' of Bharat's independence," the VHP leader said.

"Therefore, it is necessary that the entire Hindu society from around the world participate in this 'pran pratistha' (consecration) ceremony," he added.

The VHP leader said arrangements have been made to facilitate Ram temple visit of the family members of those who "sacrificed" their lives during the Ram Jannabhoomi movement.

Such devotees will be taken to the Ram temple in Ayodhya for "darshan" in small groups from January 27 to February 22 next year; he said.

"Arrangements have been made for about one lakh such people," he added. Kumar urged Hindu families to light at least five lamps on the "auspicious night of January 22, 2024 and visit Ayodhya with family and friends on any day thereafter."

"Vishva Hindu Parishad is confident that Ram temple in Ayodhya will spread harmony, unity and self-respect among the Hindus across the world and will emerge as a national temple to take Bharat towards its ultimate glory," he added.

Pak's anti-corruption court issues arrest warrants against Imran Khan in two cases

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

ISLAMABAD: An anti-corruption court in Pakistan on Monday issued arrest warrants against former premier Imran Khan in two cases linked with the Al-Qadir Trust and the Toshakhana gifts case.

Islamabad-based accountability court judge Muhammad Bashir issued the warrants at the request of the National Accountability Court (NAB), the anti-corruption watchdog.

The Ali-Qadir Trust case is about the settlement of 190 million pounds, about Rs50 billion, which the UK's National Crime Agency sent to Pakistan after recovering the amount from a Pakistani property tycoon.

Khan being the prime minister then, instead of depositing in the national kitty, allowed the businessman to use the amount to partly settle a fine of about Rs450 billion imposed by the Supreme Court some

years ago.

Reportedly, the tycoon in return gifted about 57 acres of land to a trust set up by Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi to establish the Al-Qadir University in Sohawa area of Jhelum district of Punjab.

The court also issued Khan's arrest warrant in the Toshakhana gifts, which is a different case from the one he was convicted in August and arrested but later granted bail. That case was filed by the Election Commission of Pakistan for hiding the proceeds of sale from the gifts he got from the Toshakhana.

The latest arrest warrant was issued in the case filed by the NAB, which approached the court to issue arrest warrants against Khan because he was needed to complete investigation in the two cases.

The court accepted the plea and directed the superintendent of Adiala jail, Rawalpindi, where Khan is currently lodged

in connection with the cipher case, to ensure compliance.

Separately, Khan's wife Bushra Bibi appeared before NAB in Islamabad in connection with the Al-Qadir Trust case probe. After questioning her, the watchdog gave her a questionnaire containing 11 questions.

Khan was for the first time arrested on May 9 in the Al-Qadir Trust case and his supporters in retaliation resorted to violence. He was released on May 11 on the orders of the Supreme Court but later arrested after conviction in the Toshakhana case.

He was later given two-week bail by the Islamabad High Court in the Al-Qadir Trust case.

Separately, Dunya News reported that the caretaker government on Monday placed the name of Bushra Bibi on the no-fly list.

The government took the decision on the recommendation of the NAB in the Al-Qadir Trust case.

U'khand tunnel collapse: Ecological concerns need to be addressed for development in Himalayas, say experts

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

DEHRADUN: Horrific incidents like the partial collapse of an under construction tunnel on the Char Dham route in Uttarkashi's Silkyara would continue to happen if ecological concerns were not addressed, noted environmentalist Ravi Chopra said on Monday.

Chopra had resigned last year as the chairman of a Supreme Court-appointed high-powered committee on Char Dham all-weather road expressing disappointment over the apex court order limiting the panel's jurisdiction to only two 'non defence' stretches of the project.

For development in the Himalayas, it is necessary to first address ecological concerns, he said, adding sustainable development

demands approaches that are both geologically and ecologically sound.

"Unless this balance is achieved such horrific incidents will continue to happen," Chopra told PTI.

A portion of the tunnel between Silkyara and Dandagaon on the Brahmakhal-Yamunotri national highway collapsed in the early hours of Sunday. Rescue operations are being carried out to evacuate 40 labourers trapped inside.

Some experts are also unhappy with the methods being adopted for the construction of Char Dham all-weather highways, especially the widening of roads.

Former advisor to the State Planning Commission, Harshapati Uniyal, said, "These all-weather roads are

a tragedy for Uttarakhand, especially because of the wrong techniques being used for their widening. The river valley alignment cannot be considered safe. If you disturb the slopes, disasters like landslides are inevitable."

In the first decade after the formation of Uttarakhand, the number of natural disasters was very less. In 2002, 36 people died in a cloud-burst in Ghansali area of Tehri district, while in 2003, a landslide from Varunavat mountain in Uttarkashi town caused huge devastation.

However, after 2010, the number of natural disasters increased significantly. The Kedarnath disaster of June 2013 was of an unprecedented magnitude killing thousands of people, Uniyal said.

During monsoon, small and big disasters keep occurring in the state from time to time. During this period, cracks also appeared on Kedarnath and Badrinath highways due to which traffic was disrupted.

The Char Dham road project also suffered damage at many places in the Garhwal region. Quoting Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, Uniyal said there was a loss of about Rs 1,000 crore in the state this monsoon.

In the landslide-zone map presented by ISRO, Rudraprayag district has been shown to be very vulnerable to disasters but the government has not taken any steps towards reducing them, he alleged.

Kedarnath Dham is in

Rudraprayag district.

Earlier this year, a case of land subsidence was also reported in Joshimath where some residents blamed NTPC's 520 MW Tapovan-Vishnugad hydroelectric project for the problem.

Uniyal said due to the underground tunnel of the project passing near the hill town, cracks had appeared in the buildings and roads of the city.

Social activist Shivanand Chamoli, who has been vocal on these issues, said considering the sensitivity of the Himalayas, development projects should be examined from every aspect before permission is given.

"If development work is carried out in a haphazard manner, disasters will definitely occur," Chamoli said.