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Sinha holds special...

view the pandemic.

While reviewing the status of release of compensation amount to the victims, the Board decided to provide an additional amount of Rs 5 lakhs each to the next of kin of the pilgrims who lost their lives in the unfortunate tragic incident. An ex-gratia of Rs 10 lakhs was already announced by the Lt Governor on January 1.

A slew of directives were issued for physical and systematic improvements wherever required after critical examination.

The Lt Governor emphasized on appropriate use of technology and putting in place RFID Tracking system for effective crowd and queue management.

The Lt Governor advised for roping in technical experts and adopting best crowd management practices.

The Board directed the CEO for making concerted efforts towards early implementation of the Master Plan for the Bhawan area in a phased manner strictly in accordance to the timelines and also reiterated for expediting construction work and early completion of Durga Bhawan for the pilgrims.

Directions were issued for carrying out required improvisations in 2nd and 3rd Phase of Master Plan to take care of all foreseen challenges.

The Board discussed the modalities for suspension bridge and skywalk for effective queue management, besides identifying more halting spots to cater to large crowd at Bhawan and Katra.

The Board also considered various suggestions for making requisite improvements that can be carried out to safeguard against similar mishaps in future.

Discussions were also held on exploring possibilities of ropeway from Katra for the aged and infirm pilgrims.

The CEO was asked to consider resumption of the token/group number system that was discontinued six years ago. The Board also directed for early undertaking of an exercise for critically examining the safety audit of physical infrastructure and fire safety at main Bhawan, shopping complex and other important areas. The Members of the Shrine Board will monitor the implementation of directions and works to be undertaken.

The meeting ended with two minutes of silence, praying for the pilgrims who lost their lives in the stampede.

16 tourists injured...

officials said.

They said the mini-bus carrying the tourists, including women, collided head-on with an oil tanker coming from the opposite direction, resulting in injuries to 16 tourists. The injured were rushed to Udhampur district hospital and 10 of them were later referred to the Government Medical College (GMC) hospital Jammu for specialized treatment, the officials said. The condition of two of the injured, including a girl, was stated to be "critical", they said.

Man impersonating Army...

to produce his army identity card which create more suspicion among the patrolling party. On sustained interrogation, the accused disclosed that he is not an army officer and impersonating himself as Army Lieutenant.

The arrested person disclosed his identity as Raman Singh, son of Pritam Singh, resident of Rakha Flora Tehsil R.S Pura, Jammu.

FIR No. 01/2022 under section 420, 170, 171 IPC has been registered at Police Station Bari Brahma and investigation started.

Under-construction bridge...

hospitals. "Our priority was the rescue operation...an inquiry will be conducted tomorrow (Monday) to look into the cause of the accident," the deputy commissioner said.

The injured have been identified as Yashpal, son of Bachan Lal, resident of R.S Pura; Santosh Kumar, son of Bratu Lal, resident of Chattishgarh; Moti Lal, Raju, Surinder Lal, son of Diwan Chand resident of Nanowali R.S Pura, Phirtan Bhai, wife of Byas Ram resident of Chattishgarh, Kajal, wife of Sewan Lal, resident of Chattishgarh, Kavita, wife of Dilhan resident of Chattishgarh, Deepak, Om Parkash, son of Vishwakarma, resident of Chattishgarh, Muri Dhar, son of Fagu Lal resident of Chattishgarh, Avtar Singh, son of Arjun Singh, resident of Chattishgarh, Bhunveshwar Jaiswal, wife of Dwaraka Jaiswal, resident of Chattishgarh, Surjeet Singh, son of Naseeb Singh, resident of Allah Arnia, Jammu, Subash Chander, son of Ram Chand, resident of Magowali R.S Pura, Kanshi Ram Yadav, son of Prem Lal Yadav, resident of Chattishgarh, Deepak referred to GMC Jammu who were under treatment at Emergency hospital Vijaypur and 11 injured workers were brought to CHC Ramgarh for treatment which include Santosh Kumar son of Tara Chand resident of Chhattisgarh; Vijay son of Durdersh resident of Chhattisgarh; Sikender Singh son of Raman resident of Jharkhand; Karan Singh son of Raj Singh Resident of R.S Pura, Sonu Kumar son of Ghardari Lal, resident of Chhattisgarh, Naresh Kumar son of Isar Viskarma resident of Chhattisgarh, Madan Lal son of Ravila Ram resident of R.S Pura; Naryan Kumar son of Bangeli Kumari resident of R.S Pura, Santoshi Lohar son of Lohar resident of Chhattisgarh, Vijay Soni son of Ram Lal, resident of Chhattisgarh and Sudhgar son of Mangal Dass, resident of R.S Pura.

Hurriyat leaders duped...

wire transferred or delivered to their persons of choice in Kashmir," the charge sheet, accessed by PTI, said.

It is the first chargesheet filed by the SIA, a newly carved-out unit of J&K Police, which named nine people, mostly separatists, for allegedly selling MBBS seats in Pakistan to Kashmiri students and using the money to spread unrest in the Union territory, officials said.

"Parents would comply with such diktats of these Pakistan-based Hurriyat leaders or terrorists of Kashmiri origin (who had exfiltrated to Pakistan for arms training during the outbreak of militancy) to seek admissions to MBBS at Pakistan."

"This accumulated money under a well-knit conspiracy/secrecy would land in the hands of active terrorists, families of killed militants and stone pelters through some Hurriyat leaders and their associates to further terrorist/secessionist activities in Jammu and Kashmir," the SIA said, adding that in a few cases, students and parents were completely duped by the accused and their hard-earned money was never or partly returned.

The SIA submitted the charge sheet in a special court here on Thursday against the nine, including Mohammed Akbar Bhat alias Zaffar Bhat, a constituent of the Hurriyat Conference.

It alleged that some students and their parents were also duped of their money on the pretext of having professional seats arranged in Pakistan.

The SIA said students were made to appear in a National Talent Search (NTS) test at Hurriyat office in Pakistan as a "dupe tactic" to make them believe that they were writing a pre-qualifying test which would lead to their admission in professional colleges in Pakistan.

It said such tests were mostly facilitated by the people or relatives of the accused, who had exfiltrated to Pakistan and were settled in the country or in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), who were utilising their Kashmir-based contacts to aid and abet terrorism in J&K.

During investigation, the SIA said it surfaced that as part of a larger conspiracy, the accused used to motivate gullible parents of students aspiring for professional courses, especially for MBBS, to apply to Pakistan through valley-based consultancies, without their knowledge, assuring cost-effectiveness in comparison with other South Asian or Middle East countries offering such courses.

The SIA said it came to light that the accused were affiliated with the Hurriyat chapter of Kashmir and Pakistan and were illegally making money under a planned conspiracy.

"...while recording statement, it came to fore that the accumulated money was ploughed into militancy and to create law and order problems by disturbing peace, damaging public property, striking terror among the common masses and creating potential threat to the sovereignty of India."

"Money raised through this process was also distributed among the families of killed terrorists as token of incentive for such families and families of active militants to boost their morale and carry forward anti-national, subversive and radical activities against Union of India," the SIA said.

A case was registered in July last year by the Counter Intelligence Kashmir (CIK), a branch of the police's CID which was later designated the SIA, after receiving information through reliable sources that several unscrupulous people, including some Hurriyat leaders, were hand in glove with educational consultancies and were selling seats of MBBS and other courses in Pakistani colleges and universities.

Besides Bhat, chairman of Salvation Movement, a constituent of moderate Hurriyat Conference, the charge sheet named his brother Altaf Ahmad Bhat along with Manzoor Ahmad Shah (both living in Pakistan), a religious leader from Anantnag Qazi Yasin, Fatima Shah, Mohammad Abdullah Shah, Sabzar Ahmad Sheikh and Mohd Iqbal Mir of Mahaz Azadi Front and Syed Khalid Geelani.

While five people, including Bhat, were lodged in Central Jail, Altaf Ahmad Bhat, Qazi Yasin and Manzoor Ahmad Bhat were absconding. A process had been initiated by the SIA declaring them absconders. The ninth accused, Geelani, would be charged only for cheating.

According to the SIA charge sheet, the accused were demanding huge amounts of money from parents for getting their children admitted in different technical courses in Pakistan and would also arrange recommendation letters from Hurriyat and other valid travel documents from Pakistani Embassy, New Delhi to facilitate their visit to the neighbouring nation for admission.

Infiltrator killed in...

of Pakistan Army across the Line of Control at around 3 pm on Saturday.

"Ambushes were laid along likely routes that could be adopted by the intruder and movement was followed till 16.00 hours (4 pm). The ambush was sprung at the opportune moment and the infiltrator eliminated. The body of the slain infiltrator was recovered along with one AK-47 and large quantity of ammunition, including seven grenades," he said.

The surveillance of the area is in progress, denying any exploitation of the bad weather condition prevailing in the area and the operation is underway, he added.

He said the route adopted by the terrorist was similar to the one adopted on April 4, 2020, during Operation Rangdori Bhaikh in which five terrorists were eliminated.

The official said the slain man's national identity card and vaccination certificates, issued by the Ministry of National Health Services Regulation and Coordination, Government of Pakistan, ascertained his identity.

"The belongings also include a photo of the infiltrator in Army uniform wearing the name tab of Shabbir," he said.

The official said this clearly establishes that Pakistan continues to sponsor cross border terror.

"A hotline communication has been made to Pakistan Army asking it to take back the body of the killed individual," he said.

Four charge-sheeted for...

lesser salary from the accused persons as such he demanded his money back, the spokesperson said.

Subsequently, a cheque of Rs 50,000 was provided to him by accused (Lal) but rest of the amount was not returned and after waiting for quite some time it was found that the appointment order provided by the accused was fake and forged and the complainant was cheated, he said.

On receipt of the complaint, the spokesperson said the Crime Branch Jammu initiated preliminary verification and during the course of enquiry the allegations levelled were prima-facie substantiated, leading to the registration of instant criminal case against the suspects -- Kumar, Lal and their two associates Arshad Hussain Bhat, an employee in Fire and Emergency Services, and Mushtaq Ahmad Dar, a daily-wager in PHE.

He said the offences under relevant sections of law have been fully established against the accused for cheating the complainant with sheer intention after hatching a well-planned criminal conspiracy and knowingly and dishonestly causing wrongful gain to themselves and wrongful loss to the complainant by providing a fake and forged appointment order.

COVID, Omicron: LG...

optimally utilized. Health teams in the districts were directed to focus on prompt contact tracing, audit of oxygen cylinders and concentrators as well as availability and functioning of ventilators.

The meeting discussed the time-bound implementation of the action plan of Covid vaccination drive for 15-18 years age group to be started on 03 January, 2022.

Enquiring about the modalities and preparations done for smooth administering of Covid vaccine to the 15-18 age group, the Lt Governor directed for ensuring observance of mandatory monitoring period of 30 minutes of each inoculated person.

District wise status of covid containment measures was sought from the respective Deputy Commissioners where they informed the chair about the implementation of Covid protocols and awareness campaigns being run to sensitise people regarding the danger of omicron variant of covid.

The Lt Governor directed the Health department and District teams to keep their men and machinery ready, health infra, testing and vaccination capacities up to the mark and undertake a dry run of PSA Oxygen Plants and other health equipment for effective management of any emergency situation.

Reviewing various parameters of covid analysis, the Lt Governor underlined the importance of following Covid Appropriate Behaviour, which includes maintaining social distancing and wearing masks. He directed the District administrations to ensure proper implementation of Covid Protocol and following of CAB in their districts.

Directions were also issued to Directors of Health Services Jammu, and Kashmir to conduct a meticulous mock-drill for preparing their resources to deal with any emergent situation.

The Lt Governor asked the Deputy Commissioners and CMOs to submit a joint report enlisting the steps of preparation and status of health infra and human resources in their respective districts to effectively deal with any emergent situation.

The Lt Governor also congratulated people of Anantnag and Budgam for completing 100% coverage of 2nd dose of Covid vaccine.

Vivek Bhardwaj, Additional Chief Secretary, Health and Medical Education Department gave a detailed briefing on the analysis of Covid-19 situation, District-wise threat level, testing, contact tracing and vaccination across the UT, besides vaccine stock, and preparations for administering vaccine to 15-18 age group.

Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, Advisor to the Lt Governor; Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary; Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary, Finance Department; Shaleen Kabra, Principal Secretary, Home department; Shailendra Kumar, Principal Secretary, Public Works (R&B) Department; Nitishwar Kumar, Principal Secretary to the Lt Governor; Mukesh Singh, ADGP Jammu; Dr Raghav Langer, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Vijay Kumar, IGP Kashmir; Deputy Commissioners and SPs, attended the meetings, in person and through virtual mode.

Sinha to launch...

Medical Education Department. The J&K government is fully prepared to vaccinate the children between 15-18 years of age and has made all the necessary arrangements for the vaccination sites where the children falling under the targeted age group will be vaccinated. The school education department has been asked to encourage the children to come forward and get vaccinated from Monday.

On December 25, Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi announced inclusion of 15 to 18 year age group in the National Covid Immunization programme from January 03, 2022. The decision taken was based on the advice of technical experts on immunization looking into the scientific evidence generated globally on children's vaccination against Covid-19.

The eligible teenagers will be administered only Bharat Biotech's COVAXIN as it is the only vaccine with Emergency Use Listing (EUL) for the 15-18 years age-group and recommended by 'Covid -19 Working Group' of the National Technical Advisory Group on immunization.

Children taking the vaccine shot will be kept under observation for half an hour to monitor adverse effects, the same as all eligible people. They will be given the second dose after 28 days.

The facility for online registration has already been made available from January 01. Those falling under the 15-18 years age group can register online through an existing account on the CoWIN portal or can register by creating a new account by using a unique mobile number. The walk-in facility and on the spot registration at the vaccination centers will also be facilitated for such beneficiaries.

LG led J&K...

with other government officials from the Union Territory (UT), will hold various G2B, B2G and G2G meetings and invite global investors to invest across key sectors like tourism, handloom & handicraft, food processing among others.

The delegation will participate in various bilateral meetings during the week. A special speech on Development after UT will be hosted on January 6 where Sinha will talk about the initiatives taken by his government in ensuring growth across different sectors.

Given J&K's prominence as tourist destination, the delegation will also participate in a joint session with the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, on January 12 to promote balanced growth of industry and commerce through sustainable utilisation of natural resources and development of human skills in the region.

With this vision, the government of J&K is working towards creating an enabling and entrepreneurial friendly environment that will facilitate the sustainable growth and development of industrial enterprises including Cottage and Village industries, according to a statement.

The UT is aiming to encourage new investment in industries and facilitate new entrepreneurs. With the focus on growth in these areas, J&K is also working towards encouraging and creating conditions that will enable the promotion of human resource skills, creation of new employment opportunities and development of new designs in the handloom and handicrafts sector, it said.

Admn, probe panel...

the notice read. The three-member inquiry panel headed by Principal Secretary (Home) Shaleen Kabra, with Additional Director General of Police Mukesh Singh as the other member, has been asked to submit its report within a week.

Meanwhile, DGP Dilbag Singh has said that a police probe into the stampede at the Vaishno Devi shrine will go on along with the investigation of a high-powered committee, and action will be taken against those involved in the scuffle that led to the incident,

"The committee constituted would look into the causes that led to the stampede," Director General of Police Dilbag Singh said.

Replying to a question whether police will take action if those involved in the scuffle were identified, he told PTI "yes" and added that "police would do its work simultaneously".

He said the government has already set up a three-member committee to inquire into the "unfortunate" incident which was the result of the "irresponsible" behaviour of some people.

One of the members of the committee is a senior police officer under whose jurisdiction the shrine comes.

The DGP was the first who had indicated that the stampede was a result of a scuffle between some people. This was confirmed late night by the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board.

The stampede happened around 2:15 am on January 1 near Gate No three of the Bhawan.

"The unfortunate incident, due to a scuffle between two groups of pilgrims, resulted in the stampede. In this ill-fated incident, a total of 12 pilgrims lost their lives and 16 others were injured," the board had said in the statement.

This is the first such tragedy at the revered shrine located atop the Trikuta hills - about 50 km from here - that attracts lakhs of people every year.

Singh had personally visited the shrine in the aftermath of the stampede and reviewed the situation.

Omicron rise; SC...

SOP stating matters that require lengthy hearings will be taken up on Wednesdays and Thursdays for physical hearing.

To avoid overcrowding on miscellaneous days like Mondays and Fridays, hearing of cases was done through virtual mode only, and on Tuesdays, it was through a hybrid mode.

The top court has been hearing cases through video-conferencing since March 2020 due to the pandemic. The October 7, 2021 SOP was issued after several bar bodies and lawyers demanded that physical hearings should be resumed immediately as there was a fall in coronavirus cases at that time.

J&K logs 165...

The Bulletin further said that out of 19453304 test results available, 341624 samples have tested positive and 19111680 samples have been tested as negative till date. Besides, 62,778 COVID tests have been conducted in last 24 hours.

Till date 5246176 persons have been enlisted for observation which included 7839 persons in home quarantine including facilities operated by the government, 1429 in isolation and 433806 in home surveillance. Besides, 4798572 persons have completed their surveillance period.

Meanwhile, Ladakh's Covid tally rose to 22,207 as 23 more people tested positive for the infection, officials said.

While 20 cases were detected in Leh, three were reported from Kargil district, they said.