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Lt Gen Navin...

exhorted all ranks to work relentlessly towards maintaining the operational preparedness of the highest order and ensuring peace and stability in the region, the army said. Lt Gen Jain, who relinquished the command of the corps, paid tributes to the bravehearts by laying a wreath at the Ashwamedh Shaurya Sthal at Nagrota, it said. He extended his best wishes to all ranks and their families of White Knight Corps.



Lt Gen Navin Sachdeva taking over command of White Knight Corps from Lt Gen Sandeep Jain.

New J&K Cong...

government on all fronts, leading to large scale economic distress, unemployment, unprecedented price hike, huge taxation and imposition of fees on common people.

J&K court declares...

he added. Poswal said this was made possible by the diligent efforts of Kishtwar police, which gathered crucial intelligence and registered FIRs against these terrorists before meticulously presenting all information before the court.

The court has given these terrorists a month to appear before it, he said. "If they don't surrender before the law, their properties will be attached under Section 82 of the Criminal Procedure Code," he said, adding properties of 12 of them have already been identified by police.

Properties of seven of the 13 terrorists who were declared proclaimed offenders in September have been identified and the process of attaching them has been initiated in the court, the SSP said.

He said Kishtwar police is committed to upholding the law and ensuring the safety and security of the district.

"We are working closely with law enforcement agencies to follow the due process and bring these individuals to justice," Poswal said.

Amit Shah to...

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, and Director General of Police RR Swain would be present in the meeting, sources said.

The meeting will also be attended by National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla, Director Intelligence Bureau Tapan Deka, Director Generals of Police of Central Reserve Police Force and the Border Security Force besides concerned officers of the Ministry of Home Affairs and Jammu and Kashmir.

The Centre had notified a New Central Sector Scheme for Industrial Development of Jammu and Kashmir in 2021 with an outlay of Rs 28, 400 crore to boost industrial development. Home Minister may review the development projects of the Union Territory.

During 2022-23, an investment of Rs 2153.45 crore was realized in the industrial sector. In 2023-24, an investment of Rs. 2326.65 crore has been realized up to November 2023.

The Home Minister had chaired a similar high-level review meeting on the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir on January 13 last year and said that all security agencies are fighting a decisive battle against terrorism following the policy of zero tolerance against terrorism of the government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

He had also said that a 360-degree security mechanism would be further strengthened to eliminate the support and information system of terrorists.

The Minister had also held a review meeting of the security situation of the Union Territory of in New Delhi on April 13 last year in which reviewed the functioning of the security grid and various aspects related to security.

Kashmir in grip...

temperature sliding further in most parts, including Srinagar, the officials said. The minimum temperature dropped in the summer capital of Srinagar to minus 5.2 degrees Celsius from the previous night's minus 3.4 degrees Celsius, they said.

Pahalgam in south Kashmir's Anantnag district, which serves as one of the base camps for the annual Amarnath Yatra, recorded a minimum temperature of minus 5.7 degrees Celsius, down from the previous night's minus 3.4 degrees Celsius, they said.

Qazigund recorded a low of minus 3.6 degrees Celsius, while Kokernag town saw the minimum settle at minus 1.7 degrees Celsius and Kupwara recorded a minimum of minus 4.5 degrees Celsius.

Kashmir is currently under the grip of 'Chilla-i-Kalan' -- the 40-day harshest win-

ter period when a cold wave grips the region and the temperature drops considerably leading to the freezing of water bodies, including the Dal Lake as well as the water supply lines in several parts of the valley.

The chances of snowfall are the highest during this period and most areas, especially the higher reaches, receive heavy snowfall.

'Chilla-i-Kalan' will end on January 31.

However, the cold conditions will continue after that with a 20-day-long 'Chilla-i-Khur'd' (small cold) and a 10-day-long 'Chilla-i-Bachha' (baby cold).

COVID surge; Leh...

Sukhadeve said. The chief medical officer will ensure rigorous surveillance and submit daily status reports on COVID-19 to the DDMA, he said.

Meanwhile, India has logged 636 new cases of COVID-19, while the number of active cases of the infection have increased to 4,394, the health ministry said.

Three new fatalities due to Covid-- two from Kerala and one from Tamil Nadu -- have been reported in a span of 24 hours, according to the ministry's data updated at 8 am.

The number of daily cases had dropped to double-digits till December 5 last year, but cases have again gone up after emergence of a new variant and cold weather conditions.

The daily numbers were in lakhs at the peak of the pandemic, which began in early 2020 and has seen more than 4.5 crore people getting infected and over 5.3 lakh deaths in about four years since then across the country.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease stands at over 4.4 crore with a national recovery rate of 98.81 per cent, according to the ministry's website. According to the website, 220.67 crore doses of Covid vaccines have so far been administered in the country.

Petrol, diesel sales...

air-conditioning demand.

Month-on-month petrol sales dropped 4.9 per cent when compared to 2.86 million tonnes consumption in November. Diesel demand too was down 0.8 per cent month-on-month when compared to 6.79 million tonnes in November.

Diesel is India's most consumed fuel, accounting for almost 40 per cent of all petroleum product consumption. Transport sector accounts for 70 per cent of all diesel sales in the country.

Fuel consumption has been on a see-saw over the last couple of months.

Demand for both petrol and diesel had risen in October but diesel consumption fell 7.5 per cent in the following month.

Consumption of petrol during December 2023 was 7.1 per cent more than in the COVID-marred December 2021 and 21.5 per cent more than in pre-pandemic December 2019.

Diesel consumption was up 4.3 per cent over December 2021 and 2.7 per cent compared to December 2019.

Jet fuel (ATF) sales rose 3.8 per cent year-on-year to 644,900 tonnes in December. But this was 6.5 per cent lower than in December 2019 primarily because not all international flights have resumed after the pandemic.

ATF consumption was 25.5 per cent more than in December 2021, but lower than 628,400 tonnes used in pre-COVID December 2019.

Month-on-month jet fuel sales were 2.6 per cent higher than 628,400 tonnes in November 2023.

Cooking gas LPG sales were almost flat year-on-year at 2.73 million tonnes in December. LPG consumption was 8.1 per cent higher than in December 2021 and 16.4 per cent more than in pre-COVID December 2019.

Month-on-month, LPG demand rose 6.2 per cent against 2.57 million tonnes of LPG consumption during November; the data showed.

Set in motion...

proportion of successful convictions made in the court of law. He asked them to work towards enhancing the capacity of the concerned police personnel so that the cases are prepared professionally with higher conviction rate.

Dulloo maintained that since the relevant laws are in place bolstered by police force in satisfactory numbers, it becomes imminent to deal with the drug menace very forcefully to weed it out from the UT. He stressed on using their resources optimally to gather information and laying of hands over the big suppliers who are pivotal in supporting this illicit trade here.

He also asked putting in place extra deterrent measures and giving exemplary punishments to those found guilty of running drug trade here. He asked for gathering the audio-visual data from the CCTV footage of all drug stores and analysing it to find threads about possible operators using the modern Artificial intelligence tools. He asked the DCs to report about the status of properties sealed under PIT NDPS Act.

The Chief Secretary also directed the health department to utilize the services of the best of their psychiatrists to study the models adopted in providing care to the victims of this menace in different drug deaddiction centers across J&K. He also asked them to lay a robust protocol as per the standard operating procedure (SOP) at national level. He told them to make an effective strategy to assign the responsibility of deaddiction centers to psychiatrists only as these can treat the addicts as per their requirements.

He enquired from Deputy Commissioners about the scenario of drug trade in their areas and the response of administration against it. He asked from them about the achievements made in this regard and the issues, if any, faced by them. He asked them to work for total eradication of this trade in their respective jurisdictions.

The Chief Secretary even asked the Information, School Education and Social Welfare Departments to create the necessary awareness among the masses besides ensuring community participation to fight this narcotic trade effectively.

During this meeting the ACS Home, RK Goyal made out that since the capacity of concerned police personnel has been enhanced and the necessary testing facilities for samples has also been provided to them it should invariably result in enhanced convictions and speedy trails. He asked them to refine their efficacy and intent to turn most of the detentions into their convictions in the court of law.

It was given out in his presentation given by Special DG, Crime, AK Choudhary that this year the number of detentions and convictions has taken a quantum leap by laying more focus on NDPS cases. He also shared that effective deterrents are being put in place including referring of cases to SIA and sealing of properties of the people involved in this nefarious trade.

Decline in terrorism...

"It is a security threat as well as a social evil. We need to work relentlessly to uproot it. We owe it to the society that J&K police shall keep our future generations free from this menace," he said.

Swain also talked about the challenge posed by artificial intelligence (AI) warfare and warned that the threat is going to get stronger in the near future.

"So, while we continue to improve upon the traditional methods and practices of maintaining peace as well as counter-terrorism efforts, we need to keep honing our skills in technology and AI-backed policing with an urgency," he said.

Lauding the role of the police force, the DGP said over 1,600 police personnel have made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty in the past three decades of terrorism.

"This proud professional force has given enormous sacrifices to get J&K out of the clutches of sponsored terrorism and ensure an enabling environment for fostering peace and development," he said.

He said Jammu and Kashmir Police is a unique police force in the country as it has the "onerous" responsibility of maintaining law and order on the streets and battling terrorists with and without guns.

Swain also hailed the force for playing a lead role in realising the vision of 'Naya Kashmir' as envisaged by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The DGP said police personnel and their families faced pressures in the past from "bullies and goons working secretly on behalf of the terrorist and secessionist networks".

"We will do everything possible to fight any attempt to vilify you only because you are a member of JK Police," he said.

2024 to be...

helicopter-based drop test to prove the parachute systems for the unmanned mission.

"There will be multiple drop tests. Also, we will have the launch pad abort and hundreds of such valuation tests including environmental control support system tests, the crew module related tests and simulation tests," he said.

On the other missions lined up for ISRO in 2024, he said, "We are going to have launches of GSLV for NSAR this year itself. We are going to have the first flight of GSLV with INSAT-3DS soon. The (launch) vehicle is almost ready.

"The second flight of GSLV will carry the NASA-ISRO synthetic aperture radar satellite. This means that a minimum of two GSLV satellites are required to be launched. There are a few more in pipeline, including the NAVIC series," he said.

1 lakh people...

tourism potential" of areas bestowed with natural scenic and serene surroundings, he said.

Rashid said the department is also promoting homestays to meet the shortage of tourism infrastructure and to create livelihood for locals.

The festival was organised by the Directorate of Tourism, Jammu, in collaboration with the Doda district administration, the Academy of Art, Culture and Language and the Bhaderwah Development Authority.

To conclude the festival, there was a performance by Punjabi singer Kaka and a display of fireworks.

Over the five days, the Bhaderwah Fort was illuminated and it hosted several cultural performances. Films such as 'Sam Bahadur', 'Tiger-3' and '12th Fail' were screened during the festival.

"The festival not only showcased the natural beauty and cultural heritage of Bhaderwah but also marked its emergence as a dynamic hub of tourism in the Chenab Valley, blending tradition with modernity," Doda Deputy Commissioner S Harvinder Singh said.

He expressed keen interest in encouraging the tourism sector in the district to create livelihood opportunities and to give the district its due share on the tourism map of the country. "All measures will be taken to improve the tourism infrastructure of the district," Singh said.

The deputy commissioner said that in view of the great potential of the district in the tourism sector, some private stakeholders have already pitched in, and world-class hotels and some five-star facilities are being established.

The administration is committed to work towards having tourism activities in the district throughout the year, he said.

Joint Director Tourism Sunaina Mehta said Bhaderwah has been earmarked as a wedding destination and a site for 'Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE)' tourism.

She said last year, over five lakh tourists visited Bhaderwah.

VC BGSBU unveils wall calendar 2024



BGSBU vice-chancellor Professor Akbar Masood and others releasing wall calendar.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

RAJOURI: BGSBU vice-chancellor Professor Akbar Masood on Monday launched the calendar 2024 of Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University, Rajouri. Prof Akbar greeted university teachers, officers, non-teaching employees, alumni and students on the occasion of New Year.

The calendar 2024 highlights the flagship initiatives of Govt. of India including Viksit Bharat @2047.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Akbar said that India has seen a transformational change in the last one decade. Numerous flagship schemes have been launched by the Government for the benefit of all citizens of the

Country. Prof. Akbar Masood, Vice Chancellor, Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University said that the launch of Viksit Bharat @2047 by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given a new vision and direction to the nation. Prof. Akbar said that this historic occasion has brought in the great opportunity for Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University to channelize the power of the youth to shape the future of the country and play a pivotal role towards the accomplishment of Viksit Bharat@2047.

Those who were present on the occasion including senior functionaries, officers and staff of the University.

MP Khatana denounces political exploitation amidst tragic events in Poonch

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

POONCH: Bharatiya Janata Party MP, Rajya Sabha, Er. Gulam Ali Khatana, strongly condemned some political parties for trying to exploit the unfortunate situation in Poonch district, where both army jawans and civilians lost their lives. He said that these parties ruled over dead bodies of the innocent civilians in Jammu and Kashmir and enjoyed the perks of terrorism.

MP Khatana asserted that some political entities have resorted to shedding crocodile tears while, ironically, being responsible for the loss



MP Er. Gulam Ali Khatana during visit to Poonch.

of more than 150 innocent civilian lives during their tenure, all in an attempt to come back to power. He said that Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, has been instrumental in bringing

peace and development to the Union Territory (UT), resulting in an atmosphere of almost complete tranquility, a surge in tourist numbers, and increased developmental activities. MP Khatana

DC Kishtwar asks banks/agencies to extend handholding to innovative entrepreneurs

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KISHTWAR: The District Level Review Committee/ District Consultative Committee (DLRC/DLRAC/DCC) meeting was chaired by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kishtwar Dr. Devansh Yadav, here today in the conference hall of the DC Office Complex. The purpose was to assess the performance of banks and other financial institutions.

Highlighting the necessity of bank branches in Tehsil Headquarters and other district areas, the DC urged RBI officials and bank authorities to open branches on the basis of population and distance, rather than concentrating solely on towns.



DC Kishtwar Dr. Devansh Yadav chairing DLRC meeting.

The Deputy Commissioner advised the representative of ICICI Bank to expedite the opening of proposed branch in Marwah.

The DLRC Chairman (DC Kishtwar) advised banks to extend Kisan Credit Cards

(KCC) to all PM Kisan beneficiaries.

Additionally, he urged banks and sponsoring agencies to support and guide innovative entrepreneurs, providing them with all feasible assistance to establish their business ventures.

During the DLRC meeting, the Chairman emphasized the importance of reaching out to maximum number of people. He advised RSETI Kishtwar to offer market-oriented training to youth aligned with local requirements.

The meeting also involved a review of the progress made by RSETI.

Furthermore, a DLTC meeting was conducted to determine the Scale of Finances for KCC.

The meeting was attended by ADDC Kishtwar Sham Lal, Joint Director Planning Mohd Iqbal, LDM Pankaj Badani, District and Sectoral officers, representatives from Banks.

ADDC reviews progress under HADP in Kishtwar district

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KISHTWAR: Additional District Development Commissioner Kishtwar Sham Lal on Monday convened a meeting with district heads of Agriculture and allied departments to review progress under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) in the district.

He had a detailed assessment of the physical and financial status of all projects being implemented by Agriculture, Horticulture, Sericulture, Animal Husbandry, and Sheep Husbandry departments.

He reviewed and evaluated implementation of the programme for Holistic

development of Agriculture and allied sectors in the district and passed necessary directions to the concerned officers.

The ADDC stressed on the stakeholder departments to motivate the farmers for taking benefit of HADP for their overall progress and prosperity. He affirmed that HADP is aimed to tap the huge potential of agriculture in transforming the rural economy and bring sustainable livelihood and development of the farmers.

He asked the officers of allied departments for ensuring saturation of

schemes under their purview for benefit of the farming community. He stressed to adopt the target driven approach for effective implementation of the programme.

The ADDC specifically asked for completion of all the approved projects as per the guideline and within the stipulated time frame.

The meeting was attended by Joint Director Planning, Mohd Iqbal CAO Kishtwar, CAHO Kishtwar, CHO Kishtwar besides other concerned officers and officials.

To maintain credibility of SC, we have to ensure allocation of cases in manner not lawyer-driven: CJI

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud said on Monday the Supreme Court will be able to maintain its credibility if it ensures allocation of cases to benches are not "lawyer-driven".

In an exclusive interview with PTI, the CJI responded to the allegations about politically important cases being earmarked to particular judges of the Supreme Court.

"I am very, very clear in my mind that if the credibility of the institution of the Supreme Court is to be maintained, we have to ensure that the allocation of cases in the Supreme Court is not going to be a lawyer-driven allocation," he said.

"It has to be an allocation which we do in terms of our system laid down in the Supreme Court," the CJI said, adding "You have to trust your decision makers."

Senior lawyers like Prashant Bhusan and Dushyant Dave had recently questioned the way important matters were reassigned to judges. Underlining that there are "well-defined structures" for the allocation of cases, he said they were assigned through the roster, according to which, the subject matter is printed in advance under the authority of the chief justice. "The roster is notified for everyone to see. It is in the public realm. It is published on the website of the Supreme Court," the CJI added.