

!! Continuations from Page 1 !! LG for reinforcing...

Lt Gen Sanjeep Jain, GOC 16 Corps Nagrota; Maj Gen Shailendra Singh, Chief of Staff & Chairman Local Board of Administration; Capt (IN) AK Desai, Principal Sainik School Nagrota; officials of Army and UT administration; teachers, students and parents were present.

Construction worker falls...

fell to the ground, said a police official.
The official said that the injured labourer was rushed to the Ramban district hospital where he later succumbed to his injuries.
The labourer's co-workers protested the lack of adequate safety measures at the site and demanded adequate compensation to the next of kin of the deceased, he added.

LS passes 3...

Hyderabad MP and AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi, MPs of the Biju Janata Dal and Bahujan Samaj, were present in the House.
"I am astonished at how some people defend and save the lives of terrorists in the name of 'human rights'. Remember, this is neither the rule of Britishers nor of Congress. This is Modi's rule."
"No arguments to save terrorists will be entertained here," Shah said, adding the Modi government has explicitly brought 'terrorism' under the purview of the criminal justice system.

"We have changed the definition of Sedition from 'Rajdroh' (offences against the government) to 'Deshdroh' (offences against the Nation)," he said noting IPC Section 124, or the Sedition Law, has been repealed.
The purpose of the new law is "not to save the government, but to save the country. In a healthy democracy, everyone has the right to criticise the government, but we will not allow anyone to say anything demeaning about India," Shah said.
"The sedition law made by the British, under which Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel... many of our freedom fighters remained in jail for years and that law continues till date.

"When they were in opposition, they used to protest, but when they came to power, they misused it. For the first time, the Modi government completely abolished the sedition law," he said.
Shah said the first duty of the state is justice. "Judiciary, Executive and Legislature are the three pillars of democracy. The makers of our Constitution divided the work among these three to give strong administration to the country. Today, for the first time, these three together will give the country a justice-centric criminal system and not a punishment-centric one," he said,

For the first time, laws are going to be made according to the spirit of our Constitution under the leadership of Modi.
"I am proud to have changed these three laws after 150 years. Some people used to say that we do not understand them, I tell them that if you keep your mind as an Indian then you will understand. But if your mind is of Italy, you will never understand," Shah said in a swipe at the opposition Congress.
The new laws are framed by keeping in mind the core values of our Constitution-individual freedom, human rights and equal treatment for all, Shah said.

The bills were first introduced during the monsoon session of parliament in August. After the standing committee on home affairs made several recommendations, the government decided to withdraw the bills and introduced their redrafted version last week.
Replying to the debate, which started on Tuesday and continued on Wednesday, Shah said three major amendments have been brought in the bills and these include giving relief to medical professionals who sometimes face intimidation from kin of patients.
Shah said the three proposed laws were drafted after comprehensive consultations. "I personally had 158 meetings. Not only every line, I have read every comma and every full stop of the bills," he said.
Highlighting achievements of the Narendra Modi government, the home minister said it delivers on every promise it makes. "We had said that we would remove Article 370 and 35-A, we removed it. We had promised that we would end terrorism.. and give a free hand to the security personnel, we delivered.
"We have said we will construct the Ram temple in Ayodhya and as promised the idol of Lord Ram will be consecrated on January 22," he said amid 'Jai Shri Ram' chants by members of the treasury benches.

Participating in the debate, Owaisi alleged that the new criminal bills are a threat to the civil liberties and rights of the people as they give sweeping powers to the police to act as "judge, jury and executor".
He said several provisions have been incorporated in the BNS which were "very dangerous".
Speaking in the same vein, Shiroman Akali Dal (SAD) leader Harsimrat Kaur Badal said such important bills should not be passed in such a way.

"Such an important bill is being discussed. It should be done in a fair and transparent manner with everybody allowed to air their views and here there is only the ruling party and a handful of its opposition people," she said.
Shah said no one should try to protect anyone involved in terrorism citing the clause of freedom of speech because terrorism is the worst human rights violation. "Anyone involved in terrorism must be given harsh punishment," he said.
He said the existing criminal laws were reflective of the colonial mindset with the intention to punish and not impart justice. They prioritised acts of "looting the treasury", "uprooting rail tracks" and "insult to the Crown" over crimes against women and children, human rights, border security, and the army.

Listing the features of the bills, he said, "This bill punishes mob lynching with the death penalty.
"(Congress leader P) Chidambaram kept asking me what about mob lynching. He does not understand the BJP and our mentality. Why did you not penalise mob lynching during your rule?"
"The three bills reflect the spirit of the Constitution...but those with an Italian mindset will never understand it," he said asserting that the three proposed laws were based on justice, transparency and fairness.
"This is the first government which has fulfilled the promises it has mentioned in its manifesto. We have revoked Article 370, removed AFSPA in 70 per cent areas in the northeastern states, banned triple talaq and gave 33 per cent reservation to women in Parliament," he said.

On the criminal justice system, the home minister said the timeline has been the biggest barrier to securing justice in the country.
"Justice is not delivered timely....tarikh pe tarikh milti hain (prolonged trial) ...everyone keeps shifting the blame on each other," he said.
"For the poor, the biggest challenge to get justice is finance... now, we have made many things clear in the new laws...there will be no lingering on," he said.
Shah said that now an FIR will have to be filed within three days of receiving the complaint and the preliminary enquiry will have to be finished within 14 days...

"The judges will not be able to reserve judgement for more than 45 days.. the accused will get seven days to file a plea for acquittal... The judge has to hold the hearing in those seven days, and in a maximum time of 120 days, the case would come to trial.

"There was no time limit for plea bargaining earlier. Now if one accepts their crime within 30 days of the crime then the punishment would be less..." he said.
The minister said a provision for "trial in absentia" has also been introduced.
Shah said those who have fled the country after committing crimes, killing hundreds of people in bomb blasts or those who are hiding in Pakistan after carrying out terror attacks will not be spared.
"Whether you come or not, the trial will be continued, there will be punishment and their property will also be confiscated," Shah said.

Parliament passes Provisional...

(the bill) also tells you that you refund the money back," she said.
The finance minister said that there are no major changes in the law as it has existed since 1931.
"It is part of a larger re-look at the bills so that any colonial past residues are in these acts, we want to remove them and make them reflective of modern India, the new India that we are trying to build," Sitharaman said.
Seven members including BJD member AMK Patnaik, YSR Congress Party member Ayodhya Rami Raddy Alla, AIADMK member M Thambidurai, BJP members Ghanshyam Tiwari and K Laxman participated in the discussion on the bill.

Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla...

been commissioned," Vaishnav said.
He added, "The work on the Katra-Banihal (111 km) section has been taken up. Anticipated cost of the project is Rs 37,012 crore, against which, expenditure of ₹34,261/- crore has been incurred up to March, 2023 on the project. An outlay of ₹5,310 crore has been allocated for the year 2023-24."
Talking about the challenges in the project, the railway minister said the Katra-

Banihal section predominantly involves tunnelling.

According to him, 97.42 km out of 111 km, which is 87 per cent of the total length of Katra-Banihal section, is in tunnels and the maximum length of tunnel T-49 is 12.77 km, which will be the longest transportation railway tunnel in the country.
"Railway has made the world's highest Railway Bridge over Chenab river in Reasi District of Jammu and Kashmir. The iconic Chenab Bridge is 1,315 metres long having arch span of 467 metre and height of 359 metre above river bed," Vaishnav said.

He added, "Indian Railways' first cable-stayed bridge has been constructed over AnjiKhad. Its bridge deck is 331 metres above the river bed level and height of its main pylon is 193 metres."

Besides the USBRL, Vaishnav said that final location survey of the following lines have been sanctioned: doubling of Baramulla-Banihal section (135.5km); new line of Baramulla-Uri (50km); new line of Sopore-Kupwara (33.7km); new line of Avantipora-Shopian (27.6km); and new line of Anantnag-Bijbehara-Pahalgam (77.5km).

Highlighting the socio-economic contributions of the USBRL project, the minister said that employment generation is a significant aspect of its impact.

"The project has generated more than 553 lakh man-days of indirect employment so far. Another crucial facet of the USBRL project's socio-economic development efforts has been the construction of over 215 km of approach roads, which include construction of a tunnel and 320 small bridges," Vaishnav said.

"At present, nine pairs of trains are running over the Kashmir valley section due to which travel time of passengers has been reduced and travel experience has also become more comfortable than bus services. The passenger services and facilities are being improved by major redevelopment of Jammu Tawi railway station," he said. Vaishnav also informed the Lok Sabha that in accordance with international norms, adequate safety provisions have been kept in mind for the USBRL project. "All tunnels having length more than two km have been provided with mechanical ventilation systems to ensure air quality as per international norms," he said. Besides, according to him, a firefighting system consisting of fire hydrants and fire extinguishers, to promptly address and contain potential fire incidents has been provided in all the tunnels. "Proper access roads have been constructed to all escape tunnels and adits," Vaishnav said. To ensure safety of passengers, he said that trains plying between Baramulla and Banihal are being escorted by RPF staff. According to the railway minister, the expansion of the rail line in Jammu and Kashmir is benefiting the local community and businesses by improving transportation and connectivity, boosting tourism, and facilitating the movement of goods and services. "It's a positive development for the region," Vaishnav said.

Court frames charges...

constable, Faquir Chand Bhagat former District Magistrate Rajouri along with Mohd Javed Khan former DM Shopian connived with each other and issued 12 gun licenses against payment of Rs, 12,000/- each and thereby has abused their official positions to procure pecuniary advantage amounting Rs 1.44,000/-, Prima facie, it is found that accused Faquir Chand Bhagat issued 10 gun licenses and accused Mohd. Javed Khan issued 02 gun licenses with connivance of accused No.1 Parmod Kumar Sharma. It is found prima facie that accused Parmod Kumar in furtherance of criminal conspiracy managed his entry in BSF campus Gandhi Nagar Gujarat and cheated gullible BSF personnel by inducing them to pay Rs. 12,000/- against the requisite license fee of Rs. 60/- and submitted forged documents to his co-accused Faquir Chand Bhagat the then DM Rajouri and Mohd. Javed Khan the then DM Shopian those have issued total 12 arms licenses in question to BSF personnel without adhering to the due procedure and guidelines issued and in gross violation of rules and regulations and mandatory norms.

Special Judge CBI Bala Joyti after hearing Public Prosecutor VK Dogra for the CBI, observed that entire material on record, it appears that prima facie offences U/S 120-B r/w 420, 467,468 and 471 RPC 5(1) (d) r/w 5(2) of J&K P.C. Act Samvat 2006 and section 30 Arms Act 1959 are made out against all accused persons and further certainly there are grounds for proceeding against each of them as such charges are framed against all the accused persons separately under sections 120-B r/w 420, 467,468 and 471RPC 5(1) (d) r/w 5(2) of J&K PC. Act Samvat 2006 and section 30 Arms Act 1959 for the commission of aforesaid offences.

J&K calls for...

recommended testing protocols.
The secretary directed raising timely demands for logistics such as testing kits, drugs and PPE kits and also called for strengthening community-based surveillance for early detection of unusual events.
All the heads of departments were advised to conduct mock drills regularly for checking the functioning of oxygen generation plants, the official said, adding that emphasis was also laid on reassessing the readiness of all facilities to ensure operational preparedness.

Atal Dulloo accorded...

the post at the beginning of this month.
Atal Dulloo, 1989 Batch IAS officer has served in J&K for most part of his service. He has earlier been the Administrative Secretary of many important departments including Health & Medical Education, Finance, Agriculture besides being Deputy Commissioner of several districts of J&K.

Before being elevated to the post of Chief Secretary he was serving J&K as Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Agriculture Production Department and has been instrumental in devising of Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) aiming at revolutionizing the Agri sector with manifold increase in farmers' income.

On reaching Srinagar Secretariat this afternoon the Chief Secretary was received by hundreds of employees in Secretariat premises who accompanied him in congregation to his office chamber.

Later he also took round of the Secretariat and interacted with the employees working in different departments here. He enquired about their work and other facilities available to them for smooth functioning of official work.

During his visit the Chief Secretary was accompanied by Commissioner Secretary Science & Technology; Commissioner Secretary Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs; Secretary, Youth Services & Sports; Secretary Tourism and Culture; Director Estates, Kashmir besides other senior civil and police officers.

Chief Secretary also listened to grievances of several delegations and gave on spot instructions for their resolution and early disposal.

Administration to ensure...

child is deprived of education.
The Lt Governor congratulated the people of J&K for overwhelming participation in Yatra which aims to saturate government flagship schemes.
"Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra is a resolve and guarantee of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to fulfill the dreams of common man. It has a pivotal role in bringing transformation in the lives of people by ensuring that all the benefits reach citizens and to bring holistic, inclusive development in rural and urban areas," the Lt Governor said.

He said the socio-economic empowerment of the poor, women, farmers and marginalized sections of the society is essential to realize the goal of Viksit Bharat and Viksit Jammu Kashmir.

The Lt Governor called upon the elected representatives and political leaders for active participation to achieve saturation of government schemes and generate awareness among the people. Healthy competition among the districts must be ensured to make J&K a top performer in Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra programme, he added.

The Lt Governor also shared the efforts of the UT Administration to increase the input credit to farmers, and providing 5 marla land to poor landless beneficiaries under PMAY including eligible members of Gujar Bakerwal community.

Responding to the demands projected by PRI members, the Lt Governor assured that the issue of drinking water supply in Udhampur city will be redressed soon. He also directed Deputy Commissioner Udhampur to address the issues pertaining to Udhampur Master Plan at the earliest.

He further asked the District Administration and the PRI members for identification of eligible beneficiaries from Udhampur for the Mega camp of Social Welfare department to be held at Jammu.

Mamohan Raina, Sarpanch Panchayat Ballian and beneficiaries from the Panchayat also shared their experiences and success stories.

On the occasion, the Lt Governor administered 'Hamara Sankalp Viksit Bharat' pledge to the people. He visited the stalls put up by various departments, and handed over the sanction letters and benefits to beneficiaries under different schemes.

Lal Chand, Chairman, District Development Council, Udhampur; Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Mohd Suleman Choudhary, DIG Udhampur-Reasi Range; Saloni Rai, Deputy Commissioner Udhampur; political leaders, PRI members and people in large number were present.

Drug peddler booked...

police stations, he added. A warrant of arrest under the Public Safety Act (PSA) was issued against Singh by the Jammu district magistrate on December 12. The warrant was executed by a team from the Gangyal police station, the official said. The PSA is an administrative law that allows detention without charge or trial for up to two years in some cases.

Police raids 5...

we promote the company. This company was in operation for nearly one year with branches in Jammu, Srinagar, Patton, and Sangrama. What was happening during all this time?" he asked.

Kashmir valley braces...

and Kupwara recorded a low of minus 3.5 degrees Celsius. The weather office has forecast generally dry weather over the next few days in Kashmir as the minimum temperature is expected to dip further. The drop in temperature has resulted in freezing of many slow moving water bodies. It has also resulted in freezing of water supply pipes in some areas. With electricity supply erratic in many areas of Kashmir, people have resorted to use of 'kangri', an earthen firepot, to beat the chill. The drop in temperature has resulted in an increase in respiratory problems among the children and elderly. The 'Chilla-i-Kalan' is the 40-day harshest winter period when a cold wave grips the region and the temperature drops considerably leading to the freezing of water bodies, including the famous Dal Lake here as well as the water supply lines in several parts of the valley. The chances of snowfall are the most frequent and maximum during this period and most areas, especially the higher reaches, receive heavy snowfall. While 'Chillai-Kalan' begins on December 21, it will end on January 31. The cold wave continues even after that in Kashmir with a 20-day-long 'Chillai-Khurd' (small cold) and a 10-day-long 'Chillai-Bachha' (baby cold).

Javaid Rahi gets charge of Secy Kala Kendra Society

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Government on Wednesday assigned the charge of Secretary Kala Kendra Society, Jammu to Dr. Javaid Rahi, Chief Editor Gojri, Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages.

According to a government order issued in this regard, Dr Rahi has been given this charge in addition to his own duty till further orders.

800-year-old monastery develops cracks following recent earthquake in Ladakh

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KARGIL: An over 800-year-old monastery in Ladakh's Zaskar area developed cracks following a recent earthquake and was declared unsafe, an official said on Wednesday.

A 5.5-magnitude earthquake followed by two aftershocks of lower intensity struck Zaskar in Kargil district on Saturday.

The official said a government team headed by Tehsildar (Zaskar) Sonam Dorjay inspected the earthquake-affected areas, including the 800-year-old main lakhang (protectors' room) of Karsha monastery.

The monastery developed cracks due to the earthquake, the official said, adding the team decided to declare the site unsafe for "performing prayer and gathering".

The team requested the monastery monks to restrict entry in the affected lakhang, the official said.

Seat-sharing among INDIA bloc parties will be completed without any hurdle: Congress

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: INDIA bloc parties will complete the seat-sharing process for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections comfortably without any hurdle and there will be a joint opposition candidate against the BJP-led NDA on every seat, a senior Congress leader said on Wednesday.

"Consultations are on and seat-sharing will be done comfortably. There will be no hurdle in that," Congress Working Committee (CWC) member Ghulam Ahmad Mir told reporters in Anantnag district in south Kashmir.

Mir said the alliance would field a joint candidate everywhere, including in Jammu and Kashmir, so that votes do not get divided.

"If any party in J-K is with them (BJP), then they will be on one side and one candidate of INDIA alliance will be on the other. We will have only one candidate contesting on a seat so that the votes don't get divided and the people vote on one symbol only as only then will it be possible to bring a change in India in 2024," he said. The CWC member said the thinking among the alliance partners is that every party will get its due.

On reports about Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar being miffed, Mir said it was only the media's creation.

"Kumar is the architect and initiator of the alliance and there is no such thing. The alliance is ready to fight the NDA (National Democratic Alliance) in 2024," he said.

The former Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) president said providing certain guarantees such as land and job rights to the people of Jammu and Kashmir will be a part of the agenda of the alliance.

"The upcoming fight in 2024 is between the BJP and the INDIA alliance. These guarantees will be part of the agenda of the alliance and will be provided under the ambit of the Constitution," he said.

The CWC member said his party is committed to provide these rights to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

"The Congress party accepts the Supreme Court verdict (on Article 370) as it is the highest court, but the requirement and the demand of the people of Jammu and Kashmir as of today is the protection of their rights to land, jobs and resources.

"The Congress wanted to give these rights and it is clear that the BJP wants to take those away. The Congress is committed to provide these rights to the people of Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

Modi govt committed for overall development of Ladakh: Koul

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

LEH: Prime Minister Narendra Modi led Union Government is committed for the overall development of Ladakh, said Ashok Koul, General Secretary (organization), Bharatiya Janata Party, Jammu-Kashmir and Ladakh, while addressing in a 'Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra' programme at Chushot Panchayat, Leh.



Ashok Koul, BJP General Secretary (organization) joins 'Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra' programme at Chushot Panchayat, Leh.

Mumtaz Hussain, Chairperson Block Development Council Chushot Saira Bano and other officials of various departments participated in the programme along with the common masses.

Ashok Koul emphasized on the major development projects brought in Ladakh by the Modi Government. He said that the Modi government has fulfilled the long-pending demand of the Union Territory for the fast development of Ladakh and has ensured liberal flow of funds from the Union government to achieve the target of unprecedented development.

Koul said that concrete steps were taken to improve employment in Ladakh. He said that steps have been taken to reinforce the electricity infrastructure in the region along with the drinking water, roads and other infrastructure.

He said that the Modi government has emphasized on the preservation and nurture of local culture and language.

"The 'Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra' programme focuses on the fast track development in Ladakh after the formation of Union Territory, PM Modi's vision of 'Development Ki Guarantee' and inclusiveness in progress and participation of local people in democracy is a fact", said Koul and added that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi led Union Government is committed for the overall development of Ladakh.

On the occasion, Ashok Koul along with others visited the stalls installed during the Yatra.