

!! Continuations from Page 1 !! 43-day annual...

channels for Yatris, besides use of latest technological measures to achieve optimal synergy between the different government departments and agencies.

Nitishwar Kumar, CEO, SASB gave a brief overview of the route map of the holy Shrine and various services being made available by the SASB en route and at the holy Cave.

It was informed that key preparations have been made for this year's Yatra. With increased capacity for accommodation, new Yatri Niwas Bhawans, augmented health facilities, upgraded tracks, telecommunication facilities, Heli Services, SASB App, year-long Insurance for Ponywaalas, many unique initiatives have been taken for the benefit of Yatris and service providers.

Rahul Singh, Addl. CEO, SASB briefed the meeting about the activities and development works being carried out in connection with the annual Yatra, besides presenting Agenda items before the Board.

Several suggestions and inputs were presented by the members of SASB which included sustained media campaign via social media, mobile app and youtube videos for facilitating people with all the information regarding the Yatra viz-a viz: how to avail yatra services, do's and don'ts, mandatory health checkups.

Shri Amarnathji Shrine board has decided that the Yatra would commence simultaneously from both the routes - the Pahalgam track in Anantnag district and Baltal in Ganderbal district. The board has also decided to put in place a daily route-wise pilgrims ceiling to 10,000 excluding Yatri's who would travel by helicopters. The board has also decided to extend the free-of-cost battery car service for Yatri's at 2.75 Km-long Baltal to Domel stretch.

The Lt Governor during the meeting also directed for sending special invites to Akhada Parishads, Acharya Parishads for facilitation of Sadhu and Sant Samaj.

The Lt Governor said that all the suggestions made by the board members will be acted upon by the concerned officers of UT administration and SASB. He further directed the officers to complete all the ongoing infrastructure upgradation works by May end.

The Lt Governor stressed on ensuring world-class sanitation arrangement on the track and in Yatra camps. He said that all the utilities on the track routes should be ready and made functional well before the commencement of yatra.

The Lt Governor also called for wide publicity of the information regarding Shri Amarnathji Yatra-2022. He further directed the officials to explore the possibility of involving additional public and private Banks and their branches for providing yatra permits.

The Lt Governor also suggested for engaging research fellows for promoting and generating authentic literature and research books with regard to Shri Amarnathji Shrine.

The board will also enable live telecast of morning and evening Aarti (Prayers) for devotees across the globe. 'Shri Amarnathji Yatra' App has been made available on the Google play store to get real time information about the Yatra, weather and for availing several services online.

Dilbag Singh, DGP briefed the Board about the detailed security arrangement plan for the yatra. He said that besides mountain rescue teams, JKP will also install camps of health and medical care for the yatris.

Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary; Dilbag Singh, DGP; Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary, Finance Department; Vivek Bhardwaj, Additional Chief Secretary, Health and Medical Education Department; Shailendra Kumar, Principal Secretary to the Government, Public Works (R&B) Department; Nitishwar Kumar, Principal Secretary to the Lt Governor & CEO, SASB; Mukesh Singh, ADGP Jammu; Pandurang K Pole, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; M Raju, Commissioner/Secretary, Jal Shakti Department; Dr Raghav Langer, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Diljit Singh, ADG CRPF; Vijay Kumar, IGP Kashmir; Anup Kumar Soni, former Additional CEO, SASB were present during the Board Meeting.

260 Kanals State...

selective drives to dislodge a particular community.

They came around 4 am and started the demolition drive without any prior notice. The law is equal for everyone, but why this selective drive in our areas? Was the government sleeping when the buildings were raised? Shabir Ahmad, one of the protesters, said.

He said properties worth crores were damaged.

We have electricity connections and ration cards... there is no justification for the drive. It is nothing but hooliganism," he alleged.

Several protesters also claimed to have legal documents for the land in question.

Officials said the anti-encroachment drive was also carried out in Belli Charana, Sunjwa and Sidhra bypass.

At Belli Charana, a large chunk of land under occupation of a prominent politician was retrieved and several structures demolished, they said, adding that illegal constructions were also removed in Sidhra and Sunjwa.

Meanwhile, according to an official spokesperson, an anti-encroachment drive was launched by the Revenue Department along-with Police teams in village Jammu Khas of Tehsil Jammu and Channi Rama of Tehsil Bahu whereby 260 Kanals of State land has been retrieved during a daylong exercise.

It has been learnt that large patch of 220 Kanals of State land located near Tawi River in village Jammu Khas has been retrieved after dismantling 15 structures. The total value of this patch is estimated to be close to Rs.200 Cr as per Stamp Duty Rates.

Further another prime patch of land totalling 40 Kanals situated along the National Highway in village Chhanni Rama, Tehsil Bahu has also been retrieved simultaneously. A total of 52 structures including 6 large commercial buildings situated on this patch have been demolished during the exercise. The value of this land is estimated to Rs.56 crore as per Stamp Duty Rates though the market value is much higher owing to large scale commercial establishments that are located in the vicinity and along the National Highway.

Prominent sign boards depicting State land have been erected at the retrieved sites in order to secure the retrieved land and prevent any re-encroachment attempt by the land grabbers.

It is pertinent to mention that several directives have been issued by the High

Court J&K and UT Government for removal of encroachments on State land. In pursuance to the directions, action plan has been formulated for retrieval of such land and State land and over 15000 Kanals of State land has been retrieved in the District over the past 03 months and sign boards stands installed.

The land so retrieved shall be put to gainful use keeping in view the requirements projected by various Government Departments as well as priorities of the Administration.

In a separate exercise, the Forest Department has retrieved 12 Kanals of Forest land in Compartment No. 65/Bahu located along the National Highway in demarcated forest area near Environmental Park, Raika. The joint eviction drive was carried out by Forest Department and J&K Police whereby 17 structures were dismantled for retrieval of land under the supervision of Conservator of Forest, East Circle, Jammu and Divisional Forest Officer, Jammu.

Six fresh COVID...

territory did not report any fresh cases.

There are 134 active COVID-19 cases in Jammu and Kashmir. So far, 4,48,774 people have recovered, the officials said.

Meanwhile, the overall COVID-19 infection tally remained unchanged at 28,218 in Ladakh as no new case was reported, officials said.

The recovery of four patients during the past 24 hours has brought down the number of active cases in Leh district to 18, while Kargil has already become coronavirus free, the officials said.

According to officials, no virus-linked death took place on Saturday as the death toll from the pandemic also remained unchanged at 228 with 168 in Leh and 60 in Kargil. The number of overall recoveries has gone up to 27,972, the officials said.

Principal's interference in...

by performing seven complex procedures of CRT D and CRT P insertion in a single day.

This is perhaps for the first time in country that such complex procedures have been performed in a Government institute in a single day under Ayushman Bharat scheme. This will go a long way in providing affordable and quality healthcare to the needy and poor patients and serve as example to others to work on same lines.

Dr Sushil Sharma and his team took initiative and performed complex cardiac procedures and in such big number in a single day. Already the Department of Cardiology, under the supervision of Dr Sushil Sharma, has been performing number of complex coronary procedures under Ayushman Bharat scheme, free of cost.

JKSSB conducts first...

colleges extended their full cooperation in conduct of the aforesaid examination.

"The JKSSB was entrusted with recruitment of Sub-Inspector, Police (Home Department) for the first time in history of J&K. I express my gratitude to all role partners including Deputy Commissioners, Police, Transport, education, Traffic Police, Health department and others for their enormous cooperation in successful conduct of the exam. The Board ensured enhanced transparency and fairness during the examination process by equipping all the venues with facility of live CCTV surveillance and capturing of bio-metric attendance to avert attempts of unfair means practices", said the Chairman JKSSB.

The JKSSB deployed a multi layered structure for supervision with one Centre Observer and Centre Magistrate for each examination Centre, in addition to the Center Superintendent and Invigilators. Besides, 322 Magistrates, 322 Centre Observers and 322 Centre Superintendents and around 4800 Invigilators were deployed for smooth conduct of the examination. Also, CCTV live streaming, Flying Squads and Chief Inspectors were nominated for effective supervision and monitoring of the examination. GAD also nominated Examination Observers for each district.

Adequate security arrangements were made at each Examination Centre by the J&K Police for frisking and maintenance of law and order.

The officers and officials deployed, while exercising vigil, detected one case of attempted unfair means by candidate at Government Women Degree College, Anantnag. The candidate was found to be in possession of Mobile Phone while attempting to appear in aforesaid examination. However, the same was retrieved and candidate was immediately put in isolation.

Section 27(a) of the Jammu & Kashmir Services Selection Board (Conduct of Examination) Regulations, 2013, lays down that "the candidate found to be in possession of communication device, electronic equipment/ gadget or any other material with the intention of receiving assistance shall be declared to be using unfair means in the examination". Accordingly, the Services Selection Board in order to maintain transparency & fairness in the examination decided to disqualify the said candidates and debar the said candidates for 3 years from participating in the Examinations conducted by the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board, in accordance with procedure.

Further, the aforesaid examination was strictly conducted in pursuance of the SoPs notified under COVID 19 protocols and required medical teams were deployed at the venues.

Tearful adieu to...

brother Umar Jan also received bullet injuries. Jan was taken to the SKIMS Hospital in Bemina where he succumbed on Sunday morning.

Heart-wrenching scenes were witnessed in Chadbugh as the bodies reached their residence. Men and women -- old and young alike -- could not control their tears and wailed.

Women showered flowers and toffees on the coffins of the two as they were taken on their final journey and laid to rest at their ancestral graveyard.

Top police officials, including Inspector General of Police Vijay Kumar, visited their residence and expressed condolences to the family.

Kumar said the entire police family stood with the bereaved family, according to a tweet by the Kashmir Zone Police.

Earlier, a wreath-laying ceremony was held at the District Police Lines in Budgam for the slain SPO where the Deputy Commissioner and the Senior Superintendent of Police led police personnel in paying floral tributes to him.

PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti, while expressing condolences to the family, said death and destruction have become a norm in Kashmir Valley.

Condemning the killings, CPI(M) leader Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami termed it heinous and barbaric, and demanded that perpetrators be identified and brought to book.

It has sent shock waves into the whole region and everyone is pained and grieved, he said.

Petrol price hiked...

depending upon the incidence of local taxation.

This is the fifth increase in prices since the ending of a four-and-half-month long hiatus in rate revision on March 22. On all the previous four occasions, prices had been increased by 80 paise a litre - the steepest single-day rise since the daily price revision was introduced in June 2017.

In all, petrol prices have gone up by Rs 3.70 per litre and diesel by Rs 3.75 in six days.

Prices had been on a freeze since November 4 ahead of the assembly elections in states like Uttar Pradesh and Punjab -- a period during which the cost of raw material (crude oil) soared by about USD 30 per barrel.

The rate revision was expected soon after counting of votes on March 10 but it was put off by a couple of weeks apparently to not give opposition leaders like Rahul Gandhi a handle to say that they had rightly predicted that prices will go up after elections.

Congress and other opposition parties have criticised the government for the price rise saying it has added to the burden on common man reeling under general commodity price rise.

The increase in retail price warranted from crude oil prices rising during the 137 day hiatus from around USD 82 per barrel to USD 120 is huge but state-owned fuel retailers Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) are passing on the required increase in stages.

Moody's Investors Services last week stated that state retailers together lost around USD 2.25 billion (Rs 19,000 crore) in revenue for keeping petrol and diesel prices on hold during the election period.

Oil companies "will need to raise diesel prices by Rs 13.1-24.9 per litre and Rs 10.6-22.3 a litre on gasoline (petrol) at an underlying crude price of USD 100-120 per barrel," according to Kotak Institutional Equities.

CRISIL Research said a Rs 9-12 per litre increase in retail price will be required for a full pass-through of an average USD 100 per barrel crude oil and Rs 15-20 a litre hike if the average crude oil price rises to USD 110-120.

India is 85 per cent dependent on imports for meeting its oil needs and so retail rates adjust accordingly to the global movement.

NC was ready...

same party. In the 2014 assembly elections, PDP had won 28 seats, BJP 25, NC 15, and Congress 12.

On March 1, 2015, Sayeed took oath as the chief minister of the PDP-BJP combine in a ceremony that was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other leaders.

On June 19, 2018, the coalition government headed by Sayeed's daughter

Mehbooba Mufti collapsed after the BJP pulled out of the alliance over worsening security scenario and bitter political feuds between the two parties.

Addressing a public meeting in Chatroo village in Kishtwar district on November 30 last year, Omar had said that the BJP-led central government took advantage of the weak position of the National Conference and snatched what was given to the people of J&K by the constitution in the form of Article 370.

I had foreseen such a situation and went to Mufti sahib to extend unconditional outside support for forming the government. I told him that the path he is going to tread will be a disaster for J&K and we will not be able to save ourselves, Omar had then said.

I told him that I have no greed for power as I have just completed six years as chief minister and asked him to desist from bringing those to power who do not have good intentions for J&K.

Referring to the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD), an amalgam of several mainstream parties including NC, PDP, and CPI (M), which is fighting for the restoration of Article 370, Rana said they are spreading lies and false narrative against the BJP.

The decision to revoke Article 370 was taken by the parliament. Can a decision of the parliament be changed by an Assembly? When it cannot be done why are they fooling the public, the BJP leader asked.

He said BJP treats every citizen equally without discriminating on the basis of caste, religion, and region and without appeasement.

We are the torchbearers of communal harmony and as long as we are alive, there is no threat to any community, Rana said.

Govt considering dropping...

The telecom service providers (TSPs) have been playing the pre-call announcements and caller tunes related to coronavirus to spread awareness amongst citizens and tell them about the precautions and vaccination to be taken during the pandemic.

"After the passage of around 21 months, these announcements have served the intended purpose of awareness creation amongst the citizens and serve no value now.

"The message being played across networks invariably results in holding up and delaying critical calls from going through during emergencies and ends in consumption of precious bandwidth resources. This overloads the TSPs network and creates a significant delay in call connection," the DoT said in a letter written recently to the Health ministry citing the representations.

It also impacts customer experience and many have approached the TSPs to deactivate these as it is a hindrance when the customers need to make urgent calls, the letter said, adding many complaints through RTI have requested to deactivate the RBTs (ring back tone) as the citizens are not able to connect to the people in case of emergencies.

Regular Int'l flights...

coronavirus cases. It also relaxed various COVID-19 guidelines.

Talking to reporters in Gwalior on Sunday, Scindia said, "Today is a very important day...All regular international flights services resumed with full capacity from today. During the last two years of the coronavirus pandemic, the international flights were being operated under the air bubble arrangements."

He said he was confident that people from India are eager to go abroad and vice versa.

The Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) in the national capital, which is also the country's largest airport, expects international flight departures to witness a significant jump in the first week of April.

While Indian carriers are prepared for normal international services, various foreign airlines, including Emirates, Virgin Atlantic and LOT Polish, have announced plans about their services to and from India.

As many as 60 airlines from 40 countries have been permitted to operate 1,783 frequencies to and from India during the summer schedule, according to the DGCA. The summer schedule will be effective from March 27 till October 29.

A total of 1,466 international departures per week have been approved for six Indian carriers for the summer schedule. They will operate to 43 destinations in 27 countries, according to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

The government has revised the COVID-19 guidelines for international flight operations, including the removal of the requirement to keep three seats vacant on overseas flights for medical emergencies.

Besides, the requirement for the crew for having a complete PPE kit has been done away with.

India's largest airline IndiGo said on Sunday it will resume scheduled international flights on 150-plus routes in a phased manner during the next month.

In a statement on Saturday, IndiGo Chief Commercial Officer Willy Boulter said the airline is keen on resuming international operations back to pre-Covid levels but that will also depend on factors like arrival guidelines of various countries.

"We certainly have plans to open new destinations in the near future as well as pump up capacity on our existing routes as travel further opens up. Reaching economies of scale in such a dynamic environment where ATF and other fixed costs are constantly going up, becomes challenging," he said.

On Friday, a DIAL spokesperson said, "Post resumption of commercial operations, South East Asia and Europe are expected to be the main drivers of further international passenger growth."

DIAL, the operator of IGIA, expects to connect to over 60 international destinations after the resumption of regular overseas flights.

IGIA is the country's largest airport and handled around 1.8 lakh passengers per day during pre-Covid times.

The spokesperson had also said the number of international Air Traffic Movements (ATMs) is likely to increase from 165 per day to 300 per day in summer 2022.

The total weekly departures of international flights are expected to increase 66 per cent in the first week of April once the regular overseas flights commence, according to the spokesperson.

This is in comparison to the flights that operated under bilateral air bubble arrangements during winter 2021.

On Friday, Gulf carrier Emirates said it would re-introduce pre-pandemic service frequency across its destinations in the country from April 1.

Prior to late March 2020, when the scheduled international services were stopped by India, Emirates was operating 170 weekly flights to nine destinations, including Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata.

All these flights are being restored now, starting from April 1, as per the airline.

These 170 weekly flights include 35 services to Mumbai, 28 to Delhi, 24 to Bengaluru, 21 each to Chennai and Hyderabad, 14 to Kochi, 11 to Kolkata, nine to Ahmedabad and seven to Thiruvananthapuram.

Sri Lankan Airlines on Friday said it would start operating up to 88-weekly flights to India to match the pre-COVID flight schedule. The airline flies to nine cities, including Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Kochi, Chennai and Bangalore.

British carrier Virgin Atlantic would start a second daily service between Delhi and London starting from June 1. Coupled with its service from Mumbai, Virgin Atlantic will offer three daily flights from India, it said on Friday.

"American Airlines is poised to serve India with daily service between New York (JFK) and New Delhi (DEL). As India resumes international flying, we look forward to expanding our presence in the country as we deepen our partnership with IndiGo and plan to launch new service between Seattle (SEA) and Bangalore (BLR) later this year," Rhett Workman, Managing Director Europe, Middle East and Asia Operations at American Airlines, said in a statement on Friday.

Poland-based LOT Polish Airlines on Thursday said it would commence flights to Mumbai from May 31 and resume services to Delhi from March 29.

While mentioning about the resumption of regular international flights, Civil Aviation Minister Scindia, on March 8, said, "with this step, I am confident the sector will reach new heights."

Let's make local 'global', augment prestige of Indian products: Modi

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said India achieving its export target of USD 400 billion this fiscal shows that the demand for its items is increasing all over the world, and asserted that when every Indian gets vocal for local, it does not take much time for the "local to become global".

In his monthly Mann Ki Baat radio broadcast, Modi also noted that the government has purchased items worth more than Rs 1 lakh crore in the last one year through Government e-Market with close to 1.25 lakh small entrepreneurs and shopkeepers having sold their goods directly to the government.

From a time when only big companies could sell goods to the government to now when even the smallest of shopkeepers can sell their produce, a new India has emerged, he said.

"She (new India) not only dreams big but also shows the courage to reach that goal, where no one has reached before. On the basis of this very courage, all of us Indians together will definitely fulfil the dream of an Aatmanirbhar Bharat, a self-reliant India," he said. The prime minister also lauded the rise in the market for Ayush products and start-ups related to it and asked entrepreneurs to try to make their portals in all languages recognised by the United Nations as there are many countries where English is neither spoken nor understood much.