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LG directs JKRLM...

said the Lt Governor. The Lt Governor emphasized on striking a perfect balance between society and environment for a healthy ecosystem and a strong economy.

"Nature is a great source of wisdom. The more we learn from nature, the more we understand that forests are not only an integral part of our existence but also essential for our mental, physical health and well-being. A society that is closer to nature is more prosperous", the Lt Governor said.

On this International Day of Forests, let us rededicate ourselves to protect nature and conserve forests with the spirit of "One World, One Health". We must protect and nurture economic, social and environmental values for the benefit of present and future generations, the Lt Governor observed.

The Lt Governor further emphasized on promoting high-value forest produce like Gucci mushroom and Artemisia herbal plant which can be found in abundance in the forests of Jammu Kashmir to bring significant improvement in the quality of life of the forest-dependent population without harming the forests.

The Lt Governor highlighted the efforts made in the last two years for protection of natural resources and for extending economic benefits, livelihood and entrepreneurship opportunities to tribal families.

Under the guidance of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, a large population of our tribal families dependent on forests have been granted their Forest Rights for which they have been waiting for years, he said.

The Lt Governor asked the Tribal Affairs Department and the districts administration to work in mission mode for granting individual rights under the Forest Rights Act and establishment of Van Dhan Kendras.

He complimented the Forest Department and allied wings for achieving higher targets under "One Beat Guard, One Village" programme under the campaign "Har Gaon Hariyal" and for their forest conservation awareness efforts.

With more than 55 per cent green cover, Jammu Kashmir is ahead of many other states and UTs, the Lt Governor said.

The Lt Governor also gave valuable suggestions for sustainable management of forests.

The Lt Governor said the 2.5 billion population of the world is dependent on forests in one way or the other. From our ancient texts to the latest and greatest invention of Artificial Intelligence Tool, you can find one thing in common i.e the entire universe is made of the five elements (Panch Tatva), he observed.

We must move ahead with the mantra of Panch Karma - the five major goals for the next one year: Non-Timber Forest Produce scheme must encourage associated Self-help Groups and communities to work on conservation of forests and plantation, said the Lt Governor.

Forest-related education in schools and participation of students in plantation drives must be ensured. Van Dhan Kendras and Self-help Groups should be involved in branding and marketing of forest-friendly products, he noted.

The Lt Governor said the inclusion of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Van Se Jal and Jal Se Jeevan program will make a greater impact in our campaign for conservation of natural resources. Further, we have to make the re-forestation campaign a mass movement, he added.

On the occasion, the Lt Governor presented the UT-Level Awards of Forestry & Wildlife Conservation to the frontline staff of Forest and Wildlife Department for their outstanding contribution.

He also felicitated the Village Panchayats for their efforts in the greening of common village lands.

Publications on "Forests for Livelihood" & "GIS-Based Land Use and Eco-System Resource Mapping of Kishtwar High Altitude National park" and "Forest Song" were also released by the Lt Governor.

Earlier, the Lt Governor inspected various exhibition stalls which focused on sustainable utilization of Non-Timber Forest Produce including medicinal, aromatic plants and various technologies.

Dheeraj Gupta, Principal Secretary to Government, Department of Forest, Ecology & Environment; Dr Mohit Gera, Pr. Chief Conservator of Forests / Ho/FF; other senior officers and people from all walks of life were present on the occasion.

LG greets people...

is an occasion to pray for strength, courage, determination and to promote goodwill, brotherhood, peace, harmony and to remind ourselves of our rich spiritual heritage, said the Lt Governor.

"May Navratni festivities bring peace, happiness, prosperity and a brighter future to all," the Lt Governor prayed.

Meanwhile, Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar aslso extended his warm greetings to the people on the auspicious occasion of Navratra, saying nine-day long festival, dedicated to Goddess Durga, is one of the most significant festivals in the country as it symbolizes the victory of good over evil, and the celebrations of the triumph of righteousness over wrongdoing.

The Advisor noted that Navratni is a time for reflection and renewal, and an opportunity to come together as a nation to celebrate our shared cultural heritage. "It is a time for us to come together as a community, to celebrate our shared traditions and values, and to rededicate ourselves to the principles of justice, equality, and peace", Advisor said.

The Advisor also prayed for progress and prosperity of entire Jammu and Kashmir.

Policeman sacked for...

absence and gross service misconduct within one month in the district, a police spokesman said.

He said Singh's dismissal was ordered by Senior Superintendent of Police, Samba, Benam Tosh in accordance with the rules in the interest of the department.

"Singh has been unauthorisely absent from his legitimate duties since February 11, 2021. He has been struck off from the rolls of district police Samba and the belt number allotted to him shall be treated as vacant," the spokesman said.

He said the sacked policeman was habitual of absenteeism and had remained absent from duties for a total of over seven years after his first appointment and had undergone "severe major and minor punishments".

The departmental action against the official has been taken by SSP Samba in terms of J-K Civil Services Regulations after the suspended official did not bother to report back for duties despite several wireless signals, two attendance notices served and final show cause notice through newspapers, the spokesman said.

He said despite his reply to show cause notice after expiry of stipulated time, it got examined through a board which submitted a written report with the remarks that the reply was "not convincing and unauthorised absence of over two years is not justified".

On February 22, the SSP Samba had removed from service SgT Amar Singh for unauthorised absence of over one year after deserting sensitive security posting at district police lines on December 23, 2021.

LS passes budget...

Monday, among other things, provided a thrust on housing in rural areas and water tap connections to 18.36 lakh households in Jammu and Kashmir:

"The total budget estimates for the fiscal is Rs 1,18,500 crore, of which developmental expenditure is of the order of Rs 41,491 crore," Sitharaman had said in the Budget speech tabled in Lok Sabha.

According to the minister, the revenue receipts have been pegged at Rs 1,06,061 crore whereas revenue expenditure was expected to be Rs 77,009 crore, thereby making available revenue surplus for capital expenditure to the tune of Rs 29,052 crore.

"The tax/GDP ratio is projected at 8.82 per cent for 2023-24 which is higher than the previous year of 7.77 per cent," Sitharaman had said.

She had informed the House that the debt/GDP ratio for 2023-24 was pegged as 49 per cent and the GDP growth for the Union Territory for the fiscal has been projected at Rs 2,30,727 crore which shows a growth of 10 per cent over the previous year.

The budget has allocated Rs 2,526.74 crore to agriculture and horticulture; Rs 2,097.53 crore to health and medical education; Rs 4,169.26 crore to rural department; Rs 1,964.90 crore to power sector; Rs 7,161 crore to Jal Shakti; Rs 2,928.04 crore to housing and urban development; Rs 1,521.87 crore to education; and Rs 4,062.87 crore to construction of roads and bridges.

J&K people have...

JK have suffered due to militancy and thankfully when government has been able to control militancy, it should now help us by providing relief in terms of granting rights on jobs, land, sand, contracts, civil works as unemployment is rampant here," Azad told an impressive gathering here which he said is massive after DPAP was launched five months back.

Assuring people of Banihal of providing world class infrastructure as he did as Chief Minister, Azad said he and his party, DPAP doesn't believe in policy of discrimination.

"For me and my party, DPAP, every citizen of JK is equal irrespective of caste, religion and region. I will ensure that all Banihal villages would be connected through roads with more infrastructure to change the economy of Banihal," Azad said appreciating people for attending the DPAP meeting today.

Banihal was the assembly constituency in Jammu province represented by Congress state president Vikar Rasool in last assembly.

Emphasizing that he launched DPAP to make JK prosperous and bring out it of the morass which the present government is pushing it into by implementing anti people policies like land eviction, tax imposition, recruitment agency mess, Azad said my record of two and half years as Chief Minister stands testimony to my vision for JK's future so as to make it number one state of the country.

"I have seen politics as politician for 45 years. I was minister at the age of 30 under Indra Gandhi's Prime Ministership. I was part of every cabinet under former Prime Ministers of Congress party like Rajiv Gandhi, Narsimha Rao, Manmohan Singh. I left national politics to serve my people and I will do that till I am alive," he said.

"I want serve my people as I saw them suffer since 1989 as we lost thousands of youth, women were widowed and kids orphaned," he said.

Stressing that people now are witnessing weak government as it can't depute doctors in hospitals, teachers to schools which I established in every nook and corner of JK, Azad said District Hospitals, Sub District Hospitals, High and Higher Secondary Schools, Degree Colleges and Medical Colleges are few examples of my developmental model.

"The double shifts during my tenure in short span enabled completion of Hajj House, Assembly building, Tulip Garden, hospital, school and college buildings. 80-90 hospitals with 200 beds in most places of JK; 8 in Jammu, 7 in Srinagar are few examples of my work," he reiterated.

Azad emotionally told the public meeting that he would serve people till his last breath as he loves them for being with him always.

"My son Saddam Nabi Azad, my daughter Sofia Azad, my nephew Mehboob Azad and senior leadership with youth leaders would continue to serve people of J&K and redress their issues of concern," he added.

Those who spoke on the occasion include Mohd Amin Bhat, Salman Nizami, Ilyas Banhali, Muneeb Bhat, Fayaz Ahmad, Asif Khandey, Danish Chaudhry, Fatima who spoke about their contribution in helping people of Banihal.

The entire DPAP leadership was present, including GM Saroori, Taj Mohiudin, Abdul Rasheed Dar, Saddam Nabi Azad, Gulzar Wani, Haroon Chaudhary all district presidents, office in bearers and youth leaders.

Not interested in...

"too much and work less".

"I do not have any interest in fighting elections and becoming an MP or an MLA as I do not have any liking for these (positions). I do not believe in making false promises but my desire is to work for the people of J&K and make the region a real paradise," Saddam, 41, told reporters at the end of a public rally organized by the DAP in Banihal, the home town of Pradesh Congress Committee president Vikar Rasool Wani.

Earlier, during his address to the well-attended gathering, Ghulam Nabi Azad launched a veiled attack on Wani and said though he was not interested about his children following his footsteps into politics, Saddam and his sister Sofiya along with their cousin Mehboob decided to strengthen his hands in response to the personal attacks on him.

"I was not willing to bring my children into politics. I have treated some leaders like my own children but I was not aware that they would grow to become snakes and start biting their master. My children decided to chase such leaders," Azad, a former Congress leader, in an apparent reference to Wani.

Introducing his children to the people along with other senior party leaders in the first major party rally in Banihal, he asked people to support his children and the party as "after my death, they will fight for your rights and will work towards eradication of ignorance and poverty."

Saddam Azad, who did not address the gathering, said he wanted to do "something solid" for Jammu and Kashmir unlike the leaders who talk too much and work less.

"The youth of J&K is looking for a change and the next election is very important. J&K is bestowed with natural beauty but is dubbed as paradise in books only. The real paradise is where the people are happy with peace in their hearts and minds, enough employment opportunities and sources of livelihood. We all will work under the leadership of Azad to make J&K a paradise in real sense," he said.

He said Ghulam Nabi Azad has made no big promises and he had done 10 times more than what he said about his works as chief minister of J&K.

"People know what the leaders of different parties have done over the years and let them decide the fate of the parties (in the elections). I want to tell them they should give us a chance now," Saddam Azad said.

He said the people in Jammu and Kashmir are politically mature and "the time has gone when they used to be hoodwinked. I want to tell every other politician not to make false promises and give hope to the people who are disappointed.

"We have to remove the disappointment from the faces of the people and it is possible when we work hard and believe in ourselves to make a change. J&K needs a leader like Azad

to steer the region to prosperity and development," he said.

NIA makes first...

welfare activities, including public health and education.

"But some of these organisations have developed links with proscribed terrorist organisations, such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Hizbul Mujahideen (HM)," the spokesperson said.

Parvez was arrested in November 2021 by the NIA and chargesheeted on May 13 next year along with six others for alleged anti-national activities including collecting information regarding vital installations and deployment and movement of security forces, procuring official secret documents and passing the same to LeT handlers through encrypted communication channels for monetary consideration.

DG CRPF visits...

the people in the region. The CRPF remains steadfast in its resolve to protect the sovereignty and integrity of our nation," the spokesperson added.

110 YouTube channels ...

Amendment Act (UAPA), Indian Penal Code and other penal laws during the last five years and the current year.

"Police' and 'Public Order' are state subjects under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India and state governments are responsible for prevention, detection and investigation of crimes and for prosecuting the criminals through their law enforcement agencies," Thakur said.

He said the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) does not maintain data separately for journalists/ media personnel.

Thakur said the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has issued directions for blocking access of 110 YouTube-based news channels and 248 user generated URLs, including webpages, websites, posts/accounts on social media platforms, podcasts, and apps for carrying content referred to section 69A of the IT Act, 2000.

In response to a separate question, Thakur said the Fact Check Unit of the Press Information Bureau has busted more than 1,160 fake news.

The minister said the Fact Check Union takes cognizance of news both suo-motu and by way of queries sent by citizens.

700-year-old...

it up under a scheme for revival, restoration, preservation and maintenance of architecture and heritage," Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar, Muhammad Aijaz Asad told PTI.

Asad said the temple management committee was consulted on preserving the structure's original form before the work began.

"There are two sacred trees and we have not touched them... No cement has been used for the reconstruction and the same material is being used with which it was built," he added.

Asad said the faith of lakhs of people was attached with this temple.

"People come here today as well and tell us they want to pray. We are sure people will come in large numbers from across the country. Kashmir is known for Shaivism and Sufism. There is a synthesis of these traditions. I think this temple is a foundation stone of that synthesis," the official said.

The deputy commissioner said there was no encroachment on the temple land and all the land mass belonging to the temple has been fenced. Its land also extends to the lagoon it is built on.

Sanjay Saraf, a Kashmiri Pandit politician, said local people call the temple by several names such as 'Raazeh Mangleshwar', which is also incarnation of Lord Shiva.

"Kashmiri Pandits used to come here for puja. Most of the people from the surrounding areas usually come here, particularly pandits from Srinagar city. It has been their endeavour to pay a visit on Saturdays, Sundays or Tuesdays," he said.

Saraf expressed his gratitude to the government for restoring the temple. "Some politicians only talk about 'Kashmiriyat' but do no nothing. Today, most of Kashmiri Pandits are not living here but these temples are being reconstructed by the government," he said.

He added there were nearly 700 temples in Kashmir that need to be restored.

"It will send a good message from Kashmir if they are renovated. I think the government is very serious on these matters, whether to renovate mosques, temples or gurdwaras," Saraf said.

Riyaz Ahmad, a local resident and social worker, said Kashmiri Pandits used to visit this temple in large numbers in the past.

"In 2010, we took steps for its renovation but in the 2014 floods, this temple was completely devastated. We are very thankful to the R&B department that took measures for its restoration. Credit also goes to our NGO 'Samaj Sewa Sanstha', who also took up the restoration work with the government," he said.

Altaf Hussain Shah, the executive engineer in-charge of the renovation work, said, "The entire project cost is Rs 1.62 crore and it has four components. The first is the main temple for which Rs 64 lakh was allotted, Rs 21 lakh was set aside for the guard room and the rest of the money will be spent on landscaping, ghats and signage."

Hizbul OGW charge-sheeted...

and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act was filed in a special court here, a spokesperson of the federal agency said.

"Najar is a handicrafts dealer and based out of Pokhara, Nepal. He was found to be channelising funds for proscribed terrorist organisations in the garb of legitimate trade in Kashmiri handicrafts," the spokesperson said.

The NIA said the profits accrued from the sale of the handicrafts were then sent to Kashmir through hawala channels and distributed amongst terrorists operating in the valley through another charge-sheeted overground worker.

The spokesperson said the case pertains to a conspiracy hatched by proscribed terrorist organisations Hizbul Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammade (JeM), along with their frontal organisations such as The Resistance Front (TRF), People's Anti-Fascist Front (PAFF) and overground workers operating in Jammu and Kashmir, to undertake violent militant actions in the valley and in other major cities, including Delhi.

"Investigations in the case had earlier established the connections of commanders of these proscribed organisations based in Pakistan with their operatives in Kashmir to recruit and train the youth in handling of arms and explosives.

"They had floated a lot of propaganda material in cyberspace to talent-spot and recruit these individuals who then function as sleeper cells and cause terrorist incidents, including targeted killings, acting in small groups or as lone wolf actors," the spokesperson said.

As many as 26 people have earlier been charge-sheeted in the case, including Pakistan-based "listed individual terrorists" Bashir Ahmed Peer alias "Intiyaz Alam" and Kundoo. The NIA has also attached the property of Peer on March 4 under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

KCCI delegation calls on J&K Bank MD & CEO



Delegation of KCCI calling on MD & CEO J&K Bank, Baldev Prakash at Corporate Headquarters at Srinagar on Tuesday.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: A delegation of Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industries (KCCI) on Tuesday called upon MD & CEO J&K Bank, Baldev Prakash at Corporate Headquarters. During the introductory meeting, MD & CEO felicitated the newly elected members of KCCI executive body led by President Javed Ahmed Tenga. Bank's General Managers Ashutosh Sareen, Syed Rais Maqbool, Syed Shujaat Hussain, Divisional Head (Kashmir) Syed Shafat Hussain, Zonal Head (Srinagar) Shabir Ahmad along with DGMs were also present at the meeting besides senior KCCI office-bearers

Ashaq Hussain Shangloo, Riyaz Ahmad Punjabi, Raiz Ahmad Bakshi and others.

Speaking on the occasion, MD & CEO Baldev Prakash dwelt upon the long-lasting relationship between the chamber and the Bank saying, "J&K Bank is your Bank, which has always supported businesses in a very pro-active manner. While carrying forward the rich legacy spanning over decades of mutual progress, we plan to take this association to another level in coming times."

"Whatever is required to further strengthen the relationship will be done within the regulatory guidelines, for I truly believe that our progress is interlinked with your growth. And we need to join forces to

accelerate the socio-economic development of this place", he added.

Earlier, the members thanked the Bank for its continued financial support especially to ensure continuity and revival of businesses during difficult times like 2014 floods, Covid19 etc. The delegation also put on record its appreciation of the management for recently taken measures especially rolling out One Time Settlement Schemes and establishment of LCUs.

While stressing upon the need to engage each other at various levels, members of the delegation assured the Bank's management of complete cooperation from KCCI whenever and wherever required.

Justice Moksha Khajuria Kazmi visits Ganderbal

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

GANDERBAL: Justice Moksha Khajuria Kazmi, Judge High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, who is also Administrative Judge of District Ganderbal, on Tuesday visited various courts of District Ganderbal.

She was welcomed in District Court Ganderbal by accord of guard of Honor.

Justice Moksha Kazmi took stock of the difficulties faced by litigants, lawyers, staff as well as the judicial officers.

Principal District and Sessions Judge Ritesh Kumar Dubey briefed the Justice Moksha about the ongoing construction projects in District Ganderbal for developing infrastructure.

Justice Moksha Kazmi passed instructions on the spot to Deputy Commissioner and Executive Engineer Public Works Department of District Ganderbal to expedite the process of construction of court building for the court of Additional District and Sessions Judge Ganderbal and also the new court complex.

Justice Moksha Kazmi also interacted with District Administration Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, SSP Ganderbal and all the Judicial Officers of District Ganderbal and lawyers.

Various instructions were passed by her Ladyship for not only developing the infrastructure but also disposal of the cases pending before the courts.

Specific instructions were given on the spot to develop digital library facility for lawyers and also for building lawyers chambers in the existing court complex of District Court Ganderbal.

On this occasion, Chairman Municipal Council Ganderbal, Altaf Ahmad assured the Administrative Judge that he will construct Lawyers Chambers including court canteen, litigants shed, washrooms etc. in the court complex Ganderbal.

Justice Moksha Kazmi on spot approved the proposal of the Chairman Municipal Council and instructed him to complete the work as quickly as possible.

Pending demand to open Bohri Chowk will be fulfilled soon: Baru



BJP senior leader Sanjay Kumar Baru interacting with locals.

of the local people, the Bohri Chowk would soon get a makeover. He said that the Chowk will be decongested and will be opened up soon for the ease of the locals and the commuters.

President BSA Sahwney, Payare Lal Mawa, Bubesh Sharma, Ashish Mangotra, Bachan Bhagat, Sanjay Sharma, Thoru Ram, S.Parshotam Singh and others accompanied Baru during the tour.

Jammu observes World Down Syndrome Day

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: World Down Syndrome Day was observed in District Jammu with a function held on Tuesday at Muskan Home for Mentally Challenged Children in Channi Rama Jammu. Deputy Commissioner, Avny Lavasa presided over the event. The celebration focused on this year's theme "With Us Not For Us" and highlighted a human rights-based approach to disability. The event emphasised fair treatment, equal opportunities and freedom for individuals with Down Syndrome to make their own choices. Various activities were held including a balloon race, seminar on hygiene activities, dance session and cake cutting ceremony. Children with special needs participated in these activities.