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Jan Bhagidari imperative...

several laws have been relaxed wherein farmers can now avail benefits from different government sponsored welfare schemes and programmes which were previously not available owing to restrictive enactments, said the Lt Governor.

High density plantation is now a reality in Jammu region also. Now, any farmer can develop orchards and can go for High density plantation irrespective of their land holding. Youth would be given every possible assistance and handholding to become successful entrepreneurs, he added.

The Lt Governor said that a number of initiatives have been launched and many others are in pipeline for overall development in every village and block of the UT.

Referring to the release of 50% revenue and capital outlay, the Lt Governor said that it is for the first time that funds have been released on the very 1st day of the financial year.

The recently approved highest ever budget of Rs.1,08,621 crore for the Union Territory witnessed a quantum jump in the allocation of Budget in all sectors, including PWD(R&B), Power, PHE, Tourism etc, he added.

Emphasizing on empowering and strengthening the grass-roots democratic setup, the Lt Governor underscored that Functions, Functionaries, Finance, and Framework help operate a Panchayat effectively.

I assure that every Panchayat will get Rs 1 crore for development purposes, which will be double from the previous allocation. All remaining Panchayats will get Panchayat Bhavans at the earliest, maintained the Lt Governor.

A provision of Rs 10 crore has been kept for every DDC, besides funds are being allocated to Panchayats and Blocks, he added.

DDC members and PRI representatives who were present on the occasion in large numbers expressed their gratitude towards the Lt Governor led UT Administration for empowering the 3-tier Panchayati Raj system in J&K. They also extended their full support and cooperation to the Government's efforts for complete grassroots development in the UT.

DDC Chairperson Kathua, Col Mahan Singh and DDC Vice Chairperson, Raghunandan Singh spoke on the occasion and thanked the government for being sensitive to the hopes and aspirations of the people, besides apprising the Lt Governor about the developmental needs and public issues of the region.

While addressing the issues and demands of the area projected by the public representatives present there, the Lt Governor directed the Deputy Commissioner to prepare a comprehensive development plan addressing the urgent developmental needs of the region so that necessary measures can be taken in this direction.

He further directed the concerned officers for speeding up the process of distribution of Golden cards under SEHAT scheme.

Underlining the importance of Jan Bhagidari, the Lt Governor termed the Government as a facilitator to the people. He said that people and the public representatives must themselves decide what development should be done in their area on the basis of their needs and requirements, and monitor the execution of the work.

On employment generation, the Lt Governor said that the unprecedented new Industrial development scheme of Rs 28,400 cr would generate more employment. We are also expecting to bring in investment of Rs 20,000 cr-Rs 25000 cr in coming two years. 24,000 posts are being filled through the accelerated recruitment process.

Terming transparency, accountability, and responsiveness as the core objective of the government, the Lt Government said that regular review and monitoring of the progress of development works is being done at all administrative levels. Now people can also monitor the utilisation of funds and the execution of development works, he added.

All the departments have been directed to make their respective e-office functional at the earliest for establishing paperless and minimum human interface governance, the Lt Governor said.

To address the issue of water supply in the area, the Lt Governor said that 100 % saturation under 'Har Ghar Nal se Jal' in 13 districts of the UT would be completed this year.

Underscoring the measures being undertaken for meeting the developmental aspirations of the people, the Lt Governor observed that Dry port and cold storage being established in Kathua would give fillip to the socio-economic development of the region, besides generating substantial employment for the local youth.

He also noted that, recently 12 villages of Hiranagar tehsil and 5 villages of Marheen tehsil have been declared as border villages taking the total to 90 villages (51 in Hiranagar and 39 in Marheen).

Referring to the ongoing celebrations of Azaadi ka Amrut Mahotsav, the Lt Governor said that the Stories of courage and valour of brave-hearts like Brig. Rajinder Singh, Maqbool Sherwani, Ms Mali and other unsung heroes of every area would be told in schools, and are being included in curriculum so that the young generation would know about their sacrifices.

The Lt Governor also urged all eligible people to get vaccinated, besides following all the precautionary measures and COVID related SoPs.

Later, the Lt Governor handed over various certificates and sanction letters to beneficiaries under different departmental schemes as a token of service delivery to be ensured by the Government in such camps regularly.

Hearing Aid, Financial Aid under Marriage Assistance Scheme, Pass books under Ladli Beti scheme, Micro debit cards, Tablet computers to meritorious girls and teachers, Schools bags were provided to the beneficiaries on the occasion.

The Lt Governor also handed over the keys of subsidized Laser Land Leveler and Combine Harvester to the beneficiaries.

Meanwhile, the Lt Governor held interaction with DDC members, BDC Chairpersons, members, Sarpanches, PRI representatives and listened to their issues and demands.

Dr. Raghav Langer, Divisional Commissioner, Jammu; Sh. Rahul Yadav, Deputy Commissioner, Kathua; public representatives and large number of people from all walks of life were also present on the occasion.

The projects which were e-inaugurated today included Water Supply Scheme Gadyal at Panchayat Gadyal, Block Hiranagar costing Rs 1.15 cr; Water Supply Scheme, Kore Quasba at Panchayat Kore Quasba, Block Hiranagar, costing Rs 2.16 cr; Water Supply Scheme, Kheri Maltha at Panchayat Kheri Maltha, Block Dinga-Amb costing Rs 1.88 cr; Water Supply Scheme, Satoora at Panchayat Satoora, at the cost of Rs 2.33 cr; CFC building of RDD under BADP Model Village Scheme at Kore Punnu, Marheen worth Rs 50 lakhs besides, Upgradation of Government High School in Marheen done at the cost of Rs 40 lakhs.

2 die as...

Dhayaan Singh, both in their early 20s, from the ill-fated vehicle.

Two others, Surjeet Singh and Tariq, sustained serious injuries in the accident and were rushed to hospitals, the official said, adding that Singh was referred to the Government Medical College (GMC) hospital in Jammu for specialised treatment.

Army hands over...

Kashmir (PoK), was handed over to the Pakistani authori-

ties at 11.50 am, he added.

"On the night of April 5, the youngster inadvertently crossed the LoC into Kupwara's Karnah. He was identified as Mausam, son of Manzoor Ahmad from the Lipa area of PoK," the defence spokesperson said, adding that the Indian troops took due care of the boy and the Pakistani authorities were informed of his whereabouts.

Following an interaction between the authorities of both countries on the hotline, the Indian side handed over the boy to Pakistani officials at the Titwal crossing point as a humanitarian gesture, he said.

"The boy was presented with clothes and sweets. On the occasion of his repatriation, representatives of the Karnah civil administration were present," the spokesperson said.

He said such instances of inadvertently straying across the LoC have been reported earlier also due to the proximity of villages along the LoC on either side.

"However, the Indian side has always been prompt in returning the individuals, keeping the humanitarian issue in mind," he added.

The Titwal crossing bridge located on the Kishanganga river has been acting as a point of peace between the two sides, the spokesperson said.

He said the site is visited by a number of people from either side and is emerging as a tourist spot, especially after the recently-agreed ceasefire between India and Pakistan.

"The peace and tranquillity as a result of the agreement is being appreciated by the civil population on either side of the LoC," the spokesperson added.

Highest single-day...

-- were reported in the past 24 hours.

Meanwhile, Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Dr Raghav Langer has urged the people to cooperate with the administration and follow COVID appropriate behaviour and SOPs keeping in view fresh surge in the cases.

Addressing a press conference here, Dr Raghav said "We have witnessed fresh surge in cases in last 3 weeks, particularly in district Jammu and the people need to follow all SOPs to control further spread of Covid-19". The people's cooperation in following SOPs including Wearing of face masks, maintaining social distancing and avoiding gathering is imperative to contain the spread, he added. He said that the preventive measures have been intensified, while committees have been constituted to check violations.

Deputy Commissioner Jammu, Managing Director National Health Mission, SSP Jammu, Principal Government Medical College Jammu, Director Health Services, Joint Director Information were also present.

The Managing Director, NHM informed the media about the overall situation of Jammu division, saying that testing capacity has been increased in all the districts, while 100 per cent sampling of all the incoming travellers at Airport, Railway stations and Lakanpur is being ensured.

He further informed about the positivity rate, recovery rate, death rate. "Health department is putting in all possible efforts to deal with the emerging situation, however people's cooperation is most important to contain the spread, he said.

Principal GMC Jammu also informed that all existing facilities have been augmented including Bedding capacity, availability of oxygen, staff and others to deal with the situation.

The DG Family welfare and immunization also informed about the progress of vaccination drive and urged people to come forward and take doses of vaccine.

All the concerned officers also cleared queries of the media persons.

Farooq discharged from...

to SKIMS, Srinagar with COVID my father was discharged this evening. He will continue the rest of his recovery and recuperation at home. My father and the entire family are indebted and deeply grateful to the doctors, nursing staff & others at the institute," his son and NC vice-president Omar Abdullah wrote on twitter.

"My father has been instructed by his doctors to focus on his recovery & for the time being will not be allowed visitors. He looks forward to completing his recovery so he can resume a full schedule of work," Omar Abdullah said in another tweet.

The 85-year-old NC president tested positive for COVID-19 on March 30. He was kept in home-isolation initially, but doctors on Saturday decided to shift him to a hospital for better medical care.

Several leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, wished him a speedy recovery.

Farooq Abdullah received his first dose of COVID-19 vaccine on March 2.

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha had visited the SKIMS Hospital on Sunday to enquire about his health from Omar Abdullah.

"In Srinagar, I met Omar Abdullah at SKIMS Hospital, Soura. Enquired about Farooq Sahab's health and instructed the doctors to provide the best treatment. I pray for his long and healthy life," the L-G's office had tweeted.

The L-G had also offered to shift the senior Abdullah to another facility or hospital for better monitoring and care.

Omar Abdullah expressed his gratitude to Sinha for inquiring after his father's health, and said the NC president was getting the best possible care at the facility.

"Thank you for your visit to enquire after my father @manojsinha_ji. We are grateful for the offer to shift my father; the doctors & other medical staff at SKIMS Srinagar are amongst the best anywhere and my father is getting the best possible care," he had written on Twitter.

Firing outside contractor's...

the family and police to identify four armed men who opened fire.

Choudhary family had identified the assailants as Raja, resident of Old City Jammu; Bablu Langda, resident of RS Pura; Sethi, resident of Rangarh and Babbar, resident of Gujjar Nagar, presently living at Bhagwati Nagar.

Kin of CRPF...

gunfight that took place along the Bijapur-Sukma border on Saturday and was stated to have been taken hostage.

Twenty-two personnel from various security forces like the Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) of the Central Reserve Police Force, its Bastariya battalion and those from the District Reserve Guard and STF of the Chattisgarh Police were martyred in the ambush.

In Jammu, dozens of relatives and neighbours of Minhas took to the streets and blocked the main road outside his Burmai residence on Wednesday, raising slogans of "Bring back our hero", "Long live India" and "Shoot the traitors of the nation".

Officials said a police party was at the scene trying to persuade them to allow normal movement of traffic, which had to be diverted to another route.

A purported statement released by the Maoists on Tuesday claimed that they have abducted a jawan during the gun battle in Bijapur and sought nomination of some mediators for his release.

Asked about the statement, Meenu questioned the central government's "silence" on the issue.

"If a jawan is late to report to duty by just one day after leave, action is taken against him, but here he is missing since Saturday and nobody is bothered," she said.

She added that not a word had been received from the government or the CRPF, and whatever information they had was through the media.

Demanding an assurance from the government for her husband's safe release, Meenu said, "We are concerned about his

safety. The Naxals made a claim and also came out with a written statement, and now the government should look for a mediator to bring him back."

"We do not have any source or approach to reach out to the Naxals. We can only make a request for his release," she said, as her five-year-old daughter, Shragvi, stood dumb-stuck nearby.

The jawan's younger brother, Sumit, also appealed to the government to act fast.

"We request the government not to waste any time and bring him back. He is not on any foreign land like (Wing Commander) Abhinandan Varthaman, who returned home from Pakistan within 60 hours," he added.

National president of NSUI, the student wing of the Indian National Congress, Neeraj Kundan visited the family members along with J&K Congress vice-president and former minister Raman Bhalla on Monday, and facilitated a telephonic conversation between them and Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel.

"I want to talk to my son. Please bring him back," Minhas's mother Kunti Devi, a CRPF jawan's widow, had then told Baghel.

J&K Film Policy...

country and abroad for exploring the unexplored scenic locales available in abundance in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir:

Director Information and Public Relations, Rahul Pandey gave a detailed presentation on 'Advantages of Jammu and Kashmir for the Indian film Industry', besides administrative structure and the way forward for the film sector in J&K.

BVR Subrahmanyam, Chief Secretary; Arun Kumar Mehta, Financial Commissioner, Finance Department; Atal Dulloo, Financial Commissioner, Health and Medical Education; Shaleen Kabra, Principal Secretary, Home Department; Rohit Kansal, Principal Secretary, PDD and Information; Nitishwar Kumar, Principal Secretary to Lt Governor; Ranjan Prakash Thakur, Principal Secretary, Industries & Commerce; Sarmad Hafeez, Administrative Secretary, Tourism Department, and other concerned officers attended the meeting, in person and through virtual mode.

Do not fear...

Life is very long and these are just a stage of life. Parents, teachers and peers should not put pressure on students. Exams should be treated as merely a good occasion to test oneself and not be turned into a question of life and death.

"Parents who are involved with their children know their strength and weaknesses. but they at times make children "instruments" of fulfilling their dreams and goals. If external pressure is not created, then students will not feel pressure of exams and their confidence will also grow," he said.

The interaction, which lasted for more than ninety minutes, saw students, teachers and parents seeking guidance on various issues of importance to them from the Prime Minister.

While acknowledging that one cannot be good in everything, Modi also asked students to not run away from any subject even if they find it difficult, and cited his own example of taking up more complex work in morning when he feels fresh and leaving easier parts to late night.

"My view on trying easy questions first in the exams is slightly different. The most difficult part should be addressed with fresh mind' and this will make easy ones feel even easier. In my work as the Prime Minister and Chief Minister earlier, I preferred to tackle difficult issues in the morning with fresh mind.

"It is not important to be master of all the subjects even those people are highly successful who have a firm grasp over one specific subject," he said.

Modi gave example of legendary singer Lata Mangeskar who has given her entire life to single minded pursuit of music.

Finding a subject difficult is not a limitation and one should not run away from difficult subjects, he added.

The Prime Minister dwelled at length on the importance of free time.

"Free time should be valued as without it life will be like a robot. One values free time more when it is earned. More importantly, we should be careful about avoiding things during the free time that have the danger of eating away all the time. These things will leave you exhausted instead of refreshed. Free time is the best opportunity to learn new skills. Free time should be used in the activities which bring out the uniqueness of an individual, " he said.

During the interaction, Modi emphasized the need of positive reinforcement and cautioned against negative motivation by scaring the child.

"With the active efforts of the elders, children find the light within as they observe the exemplary behaviour of the elders. Positive motivation augers well for growth and development of youngsters. First Part of the motivation is training and a trained mind precedes motivation," he said.

In February, it was announced that Modi's annual interaction with students would be held online this year in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"While we can say that students have lost a year of their lives due to COVID-19, but due to the pandemic, they have also learned a lot of lessons. They have learned the true value of many essential things," he said.

The Prime Minister also exhorted students to contribute to Vocal for Local' campaign. He said the he wants the student to pass this test with cent percent marks and make India Aatmnirbhar.

He also asked the students to get involved in Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav by collecting information about the events of Independence Struggle and write about them.

The first edition of the prime minister's interaction programme with school and college students 'Pariksha Pe Charcha 1.0" was held at the Talkatora Stadium on February 16, 2018.

An online creative writing competition was conducted on various topics from February 17 to March 14, for children studying in classes of 9 to 12, teachers and parents.

Almost 14 lakh participants have registered themselves in the contest for the fourth edition of Pariksha Pe Charcha. As many as 10.5 lakh students, 2.6 lakh teachers and 92,000 parents participated in the creative writing contest.

"More than 60 per cent of the students who participated are from classes 9 and 10. For the first time students from 81 foreign countries have participated in the pre-PPC creative writing contest," a senior official of the Ministry of Education said.

Dr Jitendra reviews...

but also to minimise the loss of man-days on account of government employees falling sick on account of COVID.

Dr Jitendra Singh recalled that during the last one year of the pandemic, DoPT had developed a set of guidelines to be followed in the government offices, which not only sought to contain the spread of Corona Virus but also aimed to carry on the office functioning effectively and without interruption. He said, the Work From Home (WFH) protocol developed by DoPT had been so successful that many a time, the work output was even more than the normal circumstances because government functionaries were working online even on the weekdays or holidays.

Dr Jitendra Singh hoped that from the experience gained over the last one year, it would be possible to effectively develop and implement measures to contain the fresh spike of COVID infection.

Cop among four...

it had been committed inside police premises. Pertinently, in

addition to criminal proceedings, departmental proceedings have also been initiated against him.

Pak smuggler shot...

Wednesday. With this, the police claimed to have busted a major narco-terror module.

Based on inputs about the movement of Pakistani smugglers towards the Indian territory with a consignment of drugs, the Punjab police team led by SSP Dhruv Dahiya along with Border Security Force (BSF) troops launched a joint operation at the Kakkar border outpost (BOP), the officials said.

During the operation, the movement of a Pakistani smuggler was noticed. The smuggler fired at the Indian troops and was killed when they returned the fire under Lopoke police station area, a senior police official said.

A joint combing operation was launched at the site and 22 packets of heroin (weighing 22.660 kg), one SAIGA - MK Rifle (semi-automatic rifle) along with two magazines and 24 live rounds of 7.50 mm, one AK - 47 rifle along with two magazines and 21 live rounds of 7.62 mm, Pakistani currency, one mobile phone along with two Pakistani SIMs (Telenor and Jazz), and a pipe which bore a 'made in Pakistan' marking were recovered, the Punjab police said in a statement.

During preliminary investigation, it was found that the smuggler was known to his two Indian associates, it said.

The police have registered an FIR against the two associates -- Jagdish Bhura, who is a terrorist of Khalistan Zindabad Force and currently based in Belgium; and Jaspal Singh, a resident of Ferozepur's Gatti village, who has been arrested.

Singh was in close contact with Bhura and was involved in the smuggling of composite drugs and weapon consignments across the border in Amritsar sector, according to the statement.

Singh is learnt to have close links with Pakistan's ISI, the statement quoted SSP Dhaiya as saying.

A case has been registered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, the Arms Act, the Foreigners Act and the Indian Passport Act at the Lopoke police station, the statement said.

Director General of Police (DGP), Punjab, Dinkar Gupta said follow-up action is being taken to unearth the entire network of border couriers and Bhura's associates who are active on the India-Pakistan border, as well as to establish the entire network of his foreign and Indian associates.

"Arrest of Jaspal Singh is also likely to lead to further vital disclosures regarding the physical and financial flows associated with the recovered drugs and weapons consignment," Gupta said.

COVID vaccination at...

the population aged 45 years and above is in the organised sector of the economy and is involved in formal occupation in offices (government and private) or manufacturing and services.

"In order to increase the access of vaccine to these populations, COVID-19 vaccination sessions may be organised at work places (both public & private) which are having about 100 eligible and willing beneficiaries by tagging these work places with an existing COVID vaccination centre," Bhushan said in the letter.

He said the states can initiate due consultations with private/public sector employers and management to prepare for launch of workplace vaccination.

"Such work place vaccination centres may be launched across states/Union territories from April 11, 2021," he said.

The Centre has asked states and Union Territories to make adequate preparations and issued guidelines in this regard.

According to the guidelines, only employees aged 45 years or more will be eligible for vaccination at work place and no outsiders including eligible family members will be allowed for vaccination.

One of the senior staff of the organisation will be assigned to work as nodal officer to coordinate with district health authorities/ private COVID vaccination centres (CVCs) and support vaccination activities.

The beneficiaries will be required to register in Co-WIN portal prior to vaccination and CVC nodal officer will ensure registration of all targeted beneficiaries and facility of on-the-spot registration will also be available but only to employees of the workplace, the guidelines said.

For optimal utilisation of resources, vaccination sessions will be planned at workplace CVC once at least 50 beneficiaries get registered for vaccination.

"The schedule of vaccination sessions can be made up to 15 days in advance and intimated to the workplaces so that maximum attendance is ensured on the day of vaccination. In most of the workplaces vaccination schedules may, however, be completed in less than 15 days," the Centre told states and union territories in the guidelines.

The District Task Force chaired by district magistrate and Urban Task Force chaired by municipal commissioner will identify such government and private workplaces after due deliberations with relevant employers.

Every CVC in a government workplace will be tagged to an existing and nearest CVC in the government medical facility while every CVC in a private workplace will be tagged to an existing and nearest CVC in the private medical facility.

The designated government and private CVC to whom the workplace CVC has been tagged will be responsible for deployment of the vaccination team at workplace CVCs.

All government and private CVCs are already linked to some cold chain points for receiving vaccines.

"These CVCs will continue to use the same mechanism to receive the vaccine needed for vaccination at tagged workplace CVC," the guidelines said.

The healthcare workers of this health infrastructure of the workplace CVCs (such as doctors, nurses and other staff) may be deployed for the COVID-19 vaccination activities at workplaces as vaccination team members, it said.

The workplace CVCs staff engaged in COVID-19 vaccination activities will follow the same SOPs for vaccination and reporting including management and reporting of adverse events following immunisation.

DC Doda participates in Special Gram Sabha; calls for focusing on Jal Shakti Abhiyan

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

DODA: The Special Gram sabhas were conducted by the rural development department across this mountainous district with the special focus on Jal Shakti Abhiyan.

In this regard, Deputy Commissioner Vikas Sharma participated in the gram sabha at Panchayat lower Arnora Ghat and Panchayat Birshalla.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC directed all the officers/officials of line departments to actively participate in the Gram sabhas, and give special focus on water conservation works during the execution of current RDD plan.

The DC also directed to revisit the MGNREGA plan 2021-22 and incorporate the works focusing on water conservation, rejuvenation of traditional water bodies etc. Moreover, the DC directed the forest and allied departments to identify the land patches in the Panchayats to conduct the plantation drive in convergence mode with the RDD. He further asked the field functionaries to maintain quality of works. Meanwhile the locals also highlighted various grievances during the Gram sabha for which the DC assured timely response. The locals and field functionaries also held varied activities during the day across various panchayats which included Shramdan/ cleanliness drives, IBC activities on Jal Shakti Abhiyan, awareness on restricted use of Single use plastic etc. The DC was accompanied by BDC Chairperson Ghat, DPO Doda, BDO Ghat, PRI members and field functionaries of various departments.