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Centre approves Rs...

in CVPPL, the statement said. NHPC will invest Rs 681.82 crore from its internal resources. The project is to be commissioned within a span of 54 months. The project will result in direct and indirect employment for around 2,500 persons, the statement said.

With the project, the Union Territory will get free electricity worth around Rs 4,548.59 crore during its 40-year life cycle. J&K will also receive benefit to the tune of Rs.4,941.46 crore through water usage charges during the same period.

To make the project viable, J&K government will provide exemption of water usage charges for 10 years after commissioning, reimburse state's share of GST and give waiver of free power at the rate of two per cent per year in a decremental manner.

CBI court denies...

for extraction of bribe amount from him which though not a huge amount, was still demanded by accused and accepted. Same was allegedly recovered from him in a trap laid upon him, the prima facie presumption under section 20 of PC ACT thereby proving commission of offence under Section 7 of PC ACT 1988. "With consideration that likelihood of hampering of investigation and tampering of evidence by the accused, whose statements have not been recorded particularly the departmental witnesses, the public interest is definitely not going to be served if individual right of the accused to bail is given precedence over collective interest while striking the balance of interests in the case," with these observations, the Court rejected the bail plea.

Dr Farooq Lone...

2019 and S.O. 3937 (E) dated 31st October, 2019, read with Order issued in terms of sub-clause (i) of clause (c) of the Proclamation issued by the President dated October 31, 2019 and all other provisions enabling in this behalf, the Lieutenant Governor of Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir is pleased to direct that Dr Farooq Ahmad Lone, IAS (Retd), Member of the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission, shall perform the duties of the Chairman, as an interim arrangement, till further orders," reads S.O. 216 notification issued by issued by Manoj Kumar Dwivedi, Principal Secretary, General Administration Department.

"This notification shall take effect from April 28, 2022," it added.

BSF launches intensive...

day before the encounter.

According to officials, one of the arrested accused had also disclosed that he had also ferried a group of four terrorists from the IB to Kashmir earlier this year, sending alarm bells ringing in the security establishments.

A senior BSF officer said no breaches in the border fence were noticed during the stepped up operations which also saw the troops looking for underground cross-border tunnels all along the IB over the past five days.

The BSF is manning about 192 km of IB and Line of Control (LoC) alongside the Army and is keeping a tight vigil to scuttle any attempt of infiltration of terrorists, smuggling of weapons and narcotics and drone activity from across the border; he said.

Anti-tunnel drives along the IB are a regular feature to frustrate the nefarious designs of the enemy nation. The drive is presently underway within 400 meters of the border fence all along the IB in Jammu sector; the officer said, requesting anonymity.

Last year, the force detected two tunnels across the international border in Kathua district, taking the total number of such structures unearthed by the force in the past decade in Jammu sector to 10.

The BSF is keeping a tight vigil on border in view of the continuous attempts by enemy forces and anti-national elements to push terrorists and smuggle weapons and narcotics. The threat posed by the use of drones by Pakistan is also being taken care of, the officer said.

Interacting with media persons visiting the International Border amid the ongoing operation, another BSF officer said they are checking the whole area manually and also using sophisticated gadgets to eliminate any threat.

Wherever we have a doubt, the area is being checked minutely and a round-the-clock vigil is maintained. The BSF is also patrolling the area with special equipment which detect even the slightest movement of small animals, he said.

With the mercury in Jammu hovering around 40 degrees Celsius for the past few days, the officer said, It is a routine for us to perform our duties in scorching heat, severe cold conditions and rainy season. We are trained for that and we do it routinely to keep our nation and the countrymen safe.

Admitting that the search and vigil along the IB have been intensified after the recent encounter in Jammu, another jawan said, They always perform their duties with full responsibility. Over the past few days, there has been an increase in duty hours due to intensified operations.

The BSF personnel were seen patrolling the area along the border fence and also using iron rods to check wild grass and bushes for the possible underground tunnel.

The anti-tunnel drive is going on up to 400 meters from the border fence. The tunnels have been dug in the past from the Pakistan side to push terrorists. We are alive to the threat and the anti-tunnelling operation is part of our duty, he said.

He said they are making every effort to keep the borders safe and ensure no infiltration takes place. If the borders are safe, our countrymen are safe as well.

Besides detecting two tunnels, the BSF killed five infiltrators, detained three others and recovered a huge cache of weapons, narcotics and fake currency notes last year.

Army-run school ...

it's certainly not like any other state where they bulldoze the houses of minorities & not allow them the freedom to dress as they want. Our girls will not give up their right to choose," Mehbooba tweeted.

National Conference leader Omar Abdullah said it was an attempt to gain political mileage.

"In this country, everyone has the freedom to follow his or her religion. It is enshrined in our constitution that we are a secular country which means all religions are equal. I don't think any government should interfere in this.

This is playing with such a danger that can piss problems for the country. We would like that such decisions should not be taken. The people of all faiths should be free to follow their own religion," the former J and K CM said.

"We hope that the effort to bring Karnataka into Jammu and Kashmir is stopped

forthwith," he added.

Abdullah said it was wrong on part of the school to issue such a diktat.

"The reason given is just not right. This school did not start yesterday. These teachers (who are wearing hijab) must have been interacting with the students earlier also. What changed overnight? he asked.

Modi flags higher...

on Ukraine, and called for better Centre-states coordination in economic decisions.

Supply chain has been impacted and challenges have been rising, he added.

Modi said the Centre had reduced excise duties on petrol and diesel in November to reduce its price burden on people. It had also urged to reduce VAT, which is imposed by states, and transfer the benefits to people, he noted, adding some states did so and some did not.

Mostly BJP-run states slashed VAT by different margins, taking the cue from the Centre. Most opposition-ruled states did not reduce the VAT, while the Aam Aadmi Party government in Delhi did it much later.

In his remarks, Modi cited the example of Karnataka and Gujarat, both ruled by the BJP, saying they have suffered revenue loss of nearly Rs 5,000 crore and Rs 3,500-4,000 crore respectively by reducing VAT but they did so to help people. Their neighbouring states did not reduce the VAT, he added.

States like Maharashtra, West Bengal, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala- all ruled by different opposition parties- have not reduced VAT for some reasons, and prices there are higher than other states, he said.

"I am not criticising anyone but am praying to you for the welfare of people of your states...I urge you to reduce VAT now even after a delay of six months to benefit people," he said, with chief ministers of most of these states listening.

In Chennai, Jaipur, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Mumbai, petrol prices (per litre) are over Rs 111, Rs 118, Rs 119, Rs 115 and Rs 120, he said, noting that they cost much lower at Rs 102 in the union territory of Daman and Diu, Rs 105 in Lucknow, Rs 106 in Jammu, Rs 105 in Guwahati and Rs 103 in Dehradun.

Noting that the Centre anyway shares 42 per cent of its revenue with states, the prime minister said it is his "special request" to these chief ministers to reduce VAT. However, opposition-ruled states did not agree with the prime minister's assertions.

After the meeting, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee told reporters in Kolkata, "Today's interaction with PM Narendra Modi was completely one-sided and misleading. Faets shared by him were wrong. We have been providing a subsidy of Re 1 on every litre of petrol and diesel for the last three years. We've spent Rs 1,500 crore on this."

In Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala's Finance Minister K N Balagopal said the increase in petrol and diesel rates was due to the cess and surcharge levied by the Centre.

Maharashtra's Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's office issued a statement saying, "It is not correct that prices of petrol and diesel are going up because of the state government's VAT." Thackeray stated.

In his remarks, Modi also mentioned the "manifold" increase in fertilizer prices due to its rise globally, and India depends on its import.

The government does not want to transfer the burden to the farmers, Modi said, asking states to give top priority to people's interests.

The opposition has often blamed the central government for high fuel price, while the BJP has cited rising crude cost in the international market for this and also attacked the states run by rival parties for not doing enough.

Gap between 2nd...

that antibody level wanes after about six months from the primary vaccination with both doses and giving a booster increases the immune response.

All those above the age of 18 who have completed nine months after the administration of the second dose are eligible for the precaution dose.

"Taking into account the scientific evidence and findings of the studies done here and internationally, the gap between the second dose of COVID-19 vaccine and the precaution dose will most likely be reduced from the current nine months to six months soon. A final decision will be taken based on the recommendations by the NTAGI which is set to meet on Friday," a source in the know of the developments told PTI.

India began administering precaution doses of vaccines to healthcare and frontline workers and those aged 60 and above with comorbidities from January 10.

The government removed the comorbidity clause making all people aged above 60 eligible for the precaution dose in March.

According to health ministry data, 5,17,547 precaution doses have been administered in age group 18-59 years so far.

Besides, 4736367 healthcare workers, 7447184 frontline workers and 14545595 individuals aged 60 and above have taken the precaution shot.

India on April 10 began administering precaution doses of COVID-19 vaccines to all aged above 18 years at private vaccination centres.

Apollo hospital to...

(State Administrative Council) had said.

Jammu and Kashmir is set to become the top investment destination in the country as it races up to various infrastructure projects and is reaching out to foreign and domestic investors through several forums and industrial summits, the officials said.

Investors from foreign countries, particularly the Middle East, are keen to invest in J&K, which Jammu and Kashmir has not received in the last 75 years, they added.

Before arriving in Pali village in Samba to participate in the National Panchayati Raj Day celebrations, Prime Minister Narendra Modi met a large delegation from UAE.

The Prime Minister said that a new story of development is being written and many private investors are interested in Jammu and Kashmir:

"For seven decades of independence, private investment of only Rs 17 thousand crore could be made in Jammu and Kashmir. But, this investment is now reaching around Rs 38,000 crore," he said.

The Jammu & Kashmir administration has worked hard to convince Dubai-based investors to explore investment possibilities in the Union Territory.

10 JKAS officers...

Magistrate, Padder, Kishtwar, holding additional charge of the post of Sub-Registrar, Padder has been transferred and posted as Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Kishtwar; Mushtaq Ahmad Chowdhary, JKAS, awaiting orders of adjust-

ment in the GAD has been posted as Deputy District Election Officer, Jammu; Bilal Mukhtar Dar, JKAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the GAD, as Deputy Director, Information (PR), Srinagar; Manu Hansa, JKAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the GAD, as Deputy Secretary, School Education Department; Nasir Mehmood Khan, JKAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the GAD, as Assistant Commissioner (Nazool), Srinagar. He shall also hold the charge of the post of Sub-Registrar, Srinagar.

Chand Singh, JKAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the GAD has been posted as Deputy Secretary, Transport Department; Jaffar Hussain Sheikh, JKAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the GAD as Deputy Secretary, GAD; Lekh Raj, JKAS, Tehsildar Kashtigarh as Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Assar, Doda. He shall also hold the charge of the post of Sub-Registrar, Assar, Doda in addition to his own duties.

Omar welcomes SC...

and appealed to the Chief Justice of India to hold the hearings on a fast-track basis.

"We welcome the decision of the Supreme Court to constitute a bench after the summer vacation. We understand that due to COVID-19, the petitions could not be listed earlier but we would now request the CJI that the hearings be held on a fast-track basis.

"Since August 2019, many changes have taken place, which should not have happened. Any further delay would mean that it would be difficult to reverse the changes," Abdullah told reporters here.

The Centre abrogated the provisions of Article 370 on August 5, 2019 and bifurcated the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir into the Union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

Abdullah was interacting with the youth leaders of the NC at the party headquarters here.

Asked if the meetings were related to elections in Jammu and Kashmir, the NC vice-president said there was no connection.

"I am meeting youngsters to understand what they think and what problems they face," he said.

Asked about the delimitation commission's report, the former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister said his party has told the panel that its very existence is illegal.

"We have put before the delimitation commission that its existence itself is illegal. We have challenged the reorganisation act, which means that the delimitation commission has also been challenged.

"That is why we want fast-tracked hearings and a judgment by the court," he said. Abdullah said the NC had put forward various suggestions before the commission, but those were ignored.

"Whatever happened has happened. Let the final report come, then only we will have a detailed chat with you on this," he said.

"We are told not to use loudspeakers for azaan. Why? We do not tell you that you should not use loudspeakers at temples. You are telling us halal meat should not be sold. Why? We are not forcing you to eat. Show me where a Muslim has forced a non-Muslim to eat halal.

"It is just that you have a problem with our way of life. Why?" he asked.

Abdullah said Jammu and Kashmir had acceded to a secular nation.

"This was not the India we had acceded to. We had acceded to a secular India where all religions were equal.

"We were not told that one religion will be treated as superior to others. Had we been told this, may be our decision would have been different," he said.

Asked if the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) will contest the election as an alliance, Abdullah said it was for the leaders involved to decide.

"I am not an office-bearer of the PAGD. But I can give my personal opinion.... I would like that the PAGD contests the election as an alliance. We should not allow the BJP and its B team and C team to divide votes. This will be my suggestion, but the final decision has to be taken by the PAGD," he added.

Mughal road reopens...

the road was allowed from Poonch towards Shopian around 9 am, marking the reopening of the alternate link between Kashmir and the rest of the country.

The traffic will be restricted to one-way and will play alternatively from Poonch and Shopian for the time being as a precautionary measure, he said, adding no fresh vehicle will be allowed on the road after 3 pm.

However, he said, the nomadic population moving along with their cattle from the higher reaches in search of greener pastures in Kashmir will be allowed uninterrupted.

The traffic department has deployed adequate number of personnel at Behramgala, Buzliaz and Poshana to facilitate smooth movement of the vehicles, the official said.

Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, Raghav Langer ordered the reopening of the road, which was cleared of snow by the Mechanical Engineering Department after a hectic road clearance operation, the officials said.

The department had pressed its men and machines to clear the 84-km stretch from Buzliaz in Poonch to Shopian and managed to clear the road about two weeks ago but a decision for its reopening was delayed to ensure that the stretch is safe for the commuters.

The commuters have been asked to follow the traffic advisories issued by the traffic police authorities from time to time for smooth movement and regulation of heavy and light motor vehicles.

There has been a persistent demand from the locals for the early reopening of the Mughal road, an alternate road link between Kashmir and Jammu, which usually remains closed for several months during the winter.

The road was closed for vehicular traffic on December 23 last year after the high-altitude areas including Peer Ki Gali along the stretch received heavy snowfall.

The 270-km Jammu-Srinagar highway is the only all-weather road connecting Kashmir with the rest of the country, while Anantnag in south Kashmir and Kishtwar in the Jammu region is connected through Sinthan top and the road was briefly opened last week.

J&K logs 8...

Union Territory, while the number of recoveries has reached 4,49,212, officials said.

The COVID-19 death toll stands at 4,751 as no fresh fatality was reported in the last 24 hours.

There are 51 confirmed cases of mucormycosis (black fungus) in Jammu and Kashmir, they said.

Information under RTI Act can't be accessed directly from one who is not public authority: HC

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Justice Sanjeev Kumar held that private unaided institution is not a public authority still all the information as can be accessed by the public authority (Public Information Officer of the Education Department) or some other department of the Government under any other law for the time being in force can be provided by the public authority. Such information could be the one in possession of the public authority or it could be the information legally accessible or obtainable from the private body. Needless to say that the edu-

cational institution other than the one, which is a public authority, shall be entitled to deny information sought for by the Public Information Officer in terms of Section 8 of the Act of 2005. Justice Sanjeev Kumar while disposing of petition, held that holding that Tyndale Biscoe & Mallinson Society, which has established and is running the petitioner-educational institutions is not a public authority, as defined in Section 2(h) of the Act of 2005 and, therefore, information in its exclusive possession cannot be accessed directly from it by the information seeker under the pro-

visions of the Act of 2005. "Information seeker may, however, approach the public authority to obtain information relating to the petitioners and the public authority shall be bound to provide such information in relation to petitioners as may be in its possession or which can be accessed by it under any other law for the time being in force. The public authority before supplying such information shall put the petitioners on notice and adjudicate the objection, if any, raised by it under Section 8 of the Act of 2005 or any other similar provision contained in the Act of 2005," the Court observed.

Anti-national elements dishonour National Flag, FIR registered

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NOWSHERA: Some anti-national elements dishonoured National flag which was hoisted on building of Sub District Hospital Nowshera, however police has registered an FIR and started investigation. As per details, on Wednesday evening, information regarding dishonouring of National flag was received at Police Station wherein it was reported that National flag hoisted on building of Sub District Hospital Nowshera has been dishonoured by some unknown miscreants. Soon after receiving information, a team from Nowshera police station rushed to the spot and examined the site. Accordingly, FIR No 68/2022 under section 2 - Prevention of Insult to National Honour Act has been registered at Police Station Nowshera and investigation set into motion.

