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Admn has to...

pertaining to the infrastructure development of Judiciary under the High Court of Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh.

He said that under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, special priority is being given to the development of Jammu Kashmir, Ladakh and North East regions. He assured that sufficient funding will be allocated for removing all the gaps in judicial infrastructure across the UTs of Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh.

During the meeting, the Lt Governor said that the administration has to play a key role in overhauling the infrastructure development of court complexes across the UT. He stressed on making meticulous plans in collaboration with the representatives from the Judiciary.

It was decided that public utilities shall be constructed and renovated in all courts across the region.

Directions were also issued to ensure that all court complexes which are having rented buildings will be provided with new complexes by the end of this fiscal. There shall be complete e-filing system in District Courts for which adequate funds would be released by the Central Government.

The meeting also decided that the construction work of Jammu District Court Complex will be started soon.

Two JKAS officers...

and posted as Secretary in the Agriculture Production Department; Jahangir Hashmi, JKAS, Additional Secretary, Agriculture Production Department as Programme Officer, ICDS Project, Ramban;

Ghulam Jeelani Zargar, JKAS, Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Development Authority, Gulmarg, shall hold the charge of the post of Managing Director, J&K Cable Car Corporation, in addition to his own duties, till further orders.

PAGD to meet...

Abdullah after a meeting of the group, spokesperson M Y Tarigami, said the killing of Kashmiri Pandit government employee Rahul Bhat in Budgam has shaken the Kashmiri society.

A delegation of Kashmiri Pandits wanted to place its concerns before the PAGD. They met us and we told them that as far as we and the people are concerned, this painful story has now become a routine of the day here, but Rahul's killing has shaken us, Tarigami, who is also a senior leader of the CPI(M), said.

Tarigami said the killing has troubled the whole society and the people of Kashmir are with their Pandit brethren in this time of grief.

We appeal all the people that it is our tradition in Kashmir that even when the whole sub-continent was burning in 1947, Kashmir was the only place where no one faced any difficulty. It is our misfortune that Kashmir has become a troubled place for the people living here," he said.

We appeal to everyone to keep Kashmir's traditions of brotherhood alive as our security lies with each other and whatever can be done from our side, we will surely do it. But, the responsibility lies with the government. They have created a narrative that there is normalcy in Kashmir even if ten people are killed, Tarigami said.

He said the amalgam has decided to meet Sinha and take up the issue with him.

As an immediate measure, we have approached Raj Bhavan for a meeting of the PAGD leadership Farooq Abdullah, Mehbooba Mufti, Muzaffar Shah and me with J&K's LG and we will tell him to resolve the issues. He says a lot on radio and TV, let him do something on the ground, Tarigami said.

We will tell the government to check in a mirror whether there is normalcy on the ground or not and see with your eyes open. We will also tell the government to provide security to the Kashmiri Pandits and others as well."

"For that, it is important that Kashmiri Pandit employees get an opportunity to work in a secure atmosphere, at a safe place so that their fears get over and they become confident, he added.

The PAGD spokesperson said the alliance will also tell Sinha that the use of batons on Kashmiri Pandits during a protest at Budgam was very unfortunate.

They had come out to mourn, they had come out with an appeal, they wanted to share their pain, but you lathicharged them as well. This is unfortunate. The use of batons in Kashmir should stop, Tarigami said.

BSF opens fire...

said, adding the search operation is going on in the area falling under the R S Pura sector.

This is the second such incident to take place within seven days. On May 7, the BSF had opened fire at a Pakistani drone in the same area shortly after it entered the Indian territory.

Drone activity from Pakistan has increased after the BSF detected an underground cross-border tunnel in the Chak Faqira area of Samba district on May 4.

Meanwhile on Saturday evening, Jammu Police also recovered a drone from Nai Basti area of Jammu city. SSP Jammu Chandan Kohli said that during preliminary investigation, it came to fore that drone was being used for some official work by a security establishment. It is now being handed over to the concerned.

Terror angle emerges..

behind. I was in light sleep when a blast took place. I woke up to it and found everything burning."

Another victim, Kajal from Jammu's Gorkhanagar said, "5-10 minutes after leaving from Katra, blast took place near Shani Dev Temple. I jumped off from running vehicle, many people were injured in it. Doctors helped us to get here in Ambulance."

Earlier, Lieutenant General Manoj Sinha had reacted to the incident. In a tweet, he had said, "Extremely pained by the loss of lives in the tragic bus incident in Katra. I offer my deepest condolences to the bereaved families and prayers for the speedy recovery of the injured. Directed district administration to ensure the best possible treatment to the injured."

A specially trained NIA explosive team visited the spot around 3.30 PM on Saturday and collected samples during their one-and-a-half-hour stay, the officials said adding that the team was briefed by a senior police officer about the incident.

Expressing grief over the incident, Lt Governor Manoj Sinha has announced an ex-gratia of Rs 5 lakh each to the next of kin of the deceased and Rs one lakh to the seriously injured.

The National Conference and the Congress have expressed shock and grief over the incident and demanded a probe.

National Conference president Farooq Abdullah and vice president Omar

Abdullah also condoled the loss and prayed for fast recuperation of the injured.

"It is expected that the concerned departments will depute a team to ascertain the causes behind the tragedy," the former chief ministers said in a joint statement.

J&K Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) chief spokesperson Ravinder Sharma termed the incident as heart-wrenching and said that an in-depth investigation is needed.

J&K SIA submits...

they could not give a satisfactory reply and on a thorough search of the car, two bags containing Rs 43 lakh in cash were recovered.

Further questioning of the accused revealed that the money was being transported from Punjab to south Kashmir for financing the terror activities of proscribed outfit Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM).

The arrested accused were in constant touch with their handlers across the border and terrorists based in south Kashmir.

Will continue struggle...

National Conference did not come on the roads and would not ask the people of Poonch to do that either to provide a handle for their arrest and firing of bullets and teargas.

"We will not take law into our own hands, disturb peace or make people fight each other. We will continue our struggle in a peaceful manner," he said.

Abdullah said the National Conference will knock every relevant door to ensure that the rights of the people are restored and they get justice.

Referring to the Supreme Court decision to consider listing after summer vacation the pleas challenging the Centre's decision to abrogate provisions of Article 370, the NC leader said, "We hope the hearing starts soon and the court gives its verdict".

"We are of the opinion that what happened (in August 2019) was unconstitutional and unlawful. There is delay in God's house but there is no darkness. It may take some time but we will wait," he said, adding "my heart says we will get justice and I have faith in it."

Cautioning the people against attempts to divide them on the basis of religion and regions, he said "we have suffered a lot and need to stand united to pull out J&K from this quagmire."

In an apparent reference to the BJP, he said, "They are trying to weaken us, divide us, suppress us and are playing with the future of our coming generations. You have to make a right decision on the right time (during assembly elections) to get rid of them and safeguard your future."

Lashing out at the BJP-led government, he said it has failed to keep a single promise made to the people of Jammu and Kashmir while justifying its decision to revoke Article 370 and bifurcate J&K into the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

"They claimed that Article 370 was the biggest hurdle in the restoration of peace and normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir. Two-and-a-half years have passed, I do not see any peace prevailing. In Kashmir, the people are still being killed inside their homes and now even they started targeting people in government offices," he said, referring to the recent killing of a Kashmiri Pandit employee inside Tehsil office in Budgam and a Special Police Officer in Pulwama district.

He said the fear has increased as people lost the sense of security because the government had failed to provide them protection.

"We were told that Article 370 was the reason for creation of separatist ideology and its abrogation will change the minds and the separatist ideology," Abdullah said, adding there are some youths who want to take arms and tread the "wrong path" despite knowing the fact that they will be killed within a week, a month or six months.

They are misleading the people by saying that everything is alright, he said.

"The people were told that NC and others were the obstacle in the path of development. Where is that development? I left the chair of chief minister eight years ago and PDP's Mehbooba Mufti about four years ago. J&K is under central government rule since 2018 but the development is nowhere to be seen," he said.

Continuing his tirade against the central government, he said they are speaking about massive industrialization but the "fact is that not a new industry has come here over the past four years".

"Our industry is on the verge of collapse. Every six months, they are bringing in people from Arab countries and making them tour the valley for photo opportunities as nobody from our industrial sector in the country came forward for investment in Kashmir."

He said tourists visiting Jammu and Srinagar is good but expressed concern that these visits "fail to benefit" the people living in the remote villages of Poonch and other districts.

"The tourists come and go but it is unfortunate that they failed to bring a new area on the tourism map over the past four years," Abdullah said.

Expressing concern over the "dangerous game" of polarisation "being played" in the country, Omar claimed that even his party is being looked at with suspicion despite thousands of its workers sacrificing their lives in Jammu and Kashmir.

"The people are frightened to go outside Jammu and Kashmir because of the prevailing situation in the country, where the first person under attack is a Muslim. A dangerous game is being played by exploiting the sentiments of a particular community (against another)," Abdullah said.

Accompanied by senior NC colleagues including General Secretary Ali Mohammad Sagar and former minister Mian Altaf, Abdullah travelled from Srinagar to Poonch through the historic Mughal Road and offered prayers at Peer Ki Gali's shrine enroute for peace and prosperity of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Taking strong exception to the developments over azan (Muslim call for prayer), halal meat and Hijab (head scarf) in the recent past, the former chief minister said "some people have problems with everything about Muslims" even as the Constitution treats every religion equally.

"There should be no religious difference. By pitching one religion against another, India is being destroyed," he warned.

In an apparent reference to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the NC leader said they are looking at his party with suspicion.

"We do not understand what our fault is. We linked with the country, gave numerous sacrifices as thousands of our workers and leaders were killed and those at the podium are the ones who had a narrow escape (in terror attacks)," he said.

Abdullah said the National Conference (NC) is targeted because it talks about having friendly relations with the neighbouring country.

"When it (BJP government) holds talks with them (Pakistan), there is no problem but when we advocate for dialogue (for peace in the region) we are dismissed as anti-nationals," he said and referred to the statement of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee that 'Dost Badle Ja Sakte Hain, Padosi Badle Nahi Ja Sakte' (you

was arrested.

Drug peddler arrested; illegal poppy cultivation destroyed

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

HANDWARA/SOPORE: Continuing its efforts to eradicate menace of drugs, police on Saturday arrested a drug peddler in Handwara and recovered contraband substance from his possession. Besides, Police along with officers from Revenue Department destroyed poppy cultivation spread on a vast area of land in PDs of Awantipora and Sopore.

As per details, a party from Police Post Chogul during patrolling at Wahipora on Sopore-Kupwara highway apprehended a suspect and on search, recovered about 200 gm Charas like substance from his possession. He was identified as Shabir Ahmad Lone @ Raina, son of Gh Mohi-Ud-Din Lone, resident of Tujar, Sopore. He was shifted to Police Station where he remained in custody. Accordingly, FIR number 124/2022 under relevant sections of law was registered at Police Station Handwara and investigation started.

Meanwhile, in Awantipora, a special drive against illegal poppy cultivation was carried out in various villages of Sub Division Awantipora, Tral and Pampore and poppy cultivation spread on over 18 Kanals of land was destroyed. A police team led by SDPO Awantipora Mumtaz Ali Bhatti along with Executive Magistrate, SHO Awantipora and officials of Revenue department destroyed illegal poppy cultivation spread on 3 Kanals of land at Bahu, Awantipora. Another team of Police led by SHO Pampore along with officials of Revenue and Excise department destroyed illegal poppy cultivation spread on 5 Kanals of land at Samboora. Similarly, two more teams led by SHO Tral and Incharge Police Post Aripal along with officials of Revenue and Excise department destroyed illegal poppy cultivation spread on about 10 Kanals of land at Monghama, Lurgam, Seer, Syedabad, Pastuna and Lurow areas. Accordingly, cases under relevant sections of law were registered against cultivators at respective police stations and investigation started.

Meanwhile, a party from Police Station Sopore headed by SHO Sopore along with officers from Revenue Department destroyed illegal poppy cultivation spread over 2 Kanals of land at Arampora Sopore. Accordingly, FIR Nos. 91 & 92/2022 under relevant sections of law were registered at Police Station Sopore and investigation started.

ARTO Reasi recovers Rs 1,61,500 fine from traffic violators

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

REASI: Taking cognizance of a number of complaints of overcharging from pilgrims, ARTO Reasi Rajesh Gupta, on the directions of Deputy Commissioner Reasi, conducted an on the spot checking drive on Saturday in and around District Reasi.

The ARTO, along with his team, conducted extensive checking at different places

can change your friends but not neighbours.

"We were reminding them of the statement of Vajpayee so that there is peace on the borders and the border residents can take their livestock across the fence for grazing. War is not going to take us anywhere but friendship will," he said.

He said the NC's dialogue with the neighbouring country was its fault but wondered what happened after a prolonged hostility on the borders between the two countries. "Today, there is a ceasefire (between India and Pakistan) along the borders. This happened when they talked with each other and agreed to silence the guns," he said.

J&K reports 8...

all the cases were reported from the Jammu district while as no other district across the Union Territory reported any fresh case.

Meanwhile, Ladakh's Covid caseload has increased to 28,256 as three more people tested positive for the viral disease during the past 24 hours, officials said.

Of the fresh cases, two were detected in Leh and one in Kargil.

The death toll remained unchanged at 228. Of these, 168 deaths were reported from Leh and 60 from Kargil.

The number of active cases in Ladakh stands at nine. So far, 28,019 COVID-19 patients have recovered, according to the officials.

Amit Shah briefed...

be shifted to Jammu. They have also threatened to quit en-masse.

I spoke to the home minister on Friday and briefed him about the concerns and problems being faced by the Kashmiri pandits serving in the valley under the Prime Minister's employment package, Raina told reporters here.

He said it is the responsibility of the government to provide a "safe and secure" environment and provide all facilities to the nationalists who are keeping the tri-colour aloft in the valley, whether they are Muslims, Sikhs or Hindus.

The latest killing of Bhat and Special Police Officer (SPO) Riyaz Ahmad Thokar (on Friday) shows the barbaric face of terrorism which needs to end, the BJP leader said.

Regretting the lathi-charge on Kashmiri pandit protesters during their march towards Srinagar airport from Sheikhpura camp, Raina said he held a series of meetings with political, religious and social leaders from the community and I am of the opinion that their concerns and problems are genuine.

I raised the issue with the Lt Governor (on Friday) and am again heading a high-level BJP delegation to meet him at Raj Bhavan in Srinagar on Sunday.

We will discuss all issues of minorities living in the valley besides Gujjars and Bakewals and Pahari speaking people, he said.

He said the Kashmiri pandits are grief-stricken and angry and we have to address all their genuine concerns and problems.

Raina said there is also a dire need to talk to the Kashmiri pandits and no need for the use of force.

It is our responsibility to meet their aspirations and make arrangements for their absolute security. It is our prime responsibility to ensure the security of every nationalist community and we will press with full force all the issues before the LG, he said.

Over 100 trapped...

support was provided for preparation of the bridge at night. Early in the morning, the commanding officer along with his team reached Chisoti and assessed the situation along with engineers from civil administration, the spokesperson said.

After carrying out inspection of the area, the Army built an adhoc bridge using fallen trees and wooden planks and anchored it using ropes, the spokesperson said.

Work on the construction of a permanent bridge is in progress at full pace to enable regular movement across the river, the spokesperson said.

Army Chief visits...

north and south banks of the Pangong lake and in the Gogra area.

India has been consistently maintaining that peace and tranquillity along the LAC were key for the overall development of