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Hosting G-20 summit...

Bharat, and we have undertaken multiple key initiatives to establish a transparent system to attract capital and harnessing local entrepreneurial potential.

The meeting deliberated on enhancing ease of doing business and support to local industries.

Certain measures of business revival package-2020, yet to be saturated across industries will be implemented within a time-frame to cushion the shock of pandemic, said the Lt Governor.

He said development and blossoming of businesses is possible only in peace. Those trying to disrupt the peaceful atmosphere are the biggest enemies of industrial and socio-economic growth of J&K.

At the core of the government's industrial policy is providing opportunities and assistance to local industries, economic growth and generating employment for our youth, added the Lt Governor.

The government is sensitive to the issues of the Industries and Business sector and committed to provide all assistance. A committee comprising of Industries & Commerce department and entrepreneurs is being constituted as an institutionalized mechanism to hold regular interactions with the Industry representatives, Chambers of both the divisions to resolve the issues and challenges confronting the businesses, the Lt Governor said.

The Lt Governor highlighted the technological interventions and online services introduced for extending completely transparent and hassle-free government services to the business and industry sector.

The Lt Governor further informed that the administration is working out a policy for separate industrial estate for Startups.

A similar interaction will be held in Jammu with representatives of Chamber and Industries soon.

Pertinently, many representatives of Chamber and Industries Association from Jammu region were unable to attend today's meeting due to closure of Jammu-Srinagar Highway.

During the interaction, the representatives of various associations including FCIK, KCCI, PHDCCI, KPO, TAHAFUZ, KCC, Confederation of Indian Industry, Hyd Power Association, Kathua Industrial Association, Industrial Estates etc projected their issues and concerns and sought Lt Governor's intervention for their early redressal.

Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary, Vivek Bhardwaj, Financial Commissioner (Additional Chief Secretary) Finance Department; Pandurang K Pole, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; Anoo Malhotra, Director, I&C, Jammu; Mahmood Ahmad Shah, Director, I&C Kashmir; besides concerned HoDs and senior officers were present during the interaction here at SKICC.

Encounter breaks out...

presence of militants there, a police official said.

He said the search operation turned into an encounter after the militants fired at a search party of the forces, who retaliated.

The exchange of fire is underway. So far, there are no reports of any casualty on either side, the official said.

Massive searches carried...

have also been set up to strengthen the border and highway grid.

Officials said the searches were also carried out in R S Pura sector in Jammu district and Hiranagar sector in Kathua district to keep an eye on any suspicious movement.

Meanwhile, security forces have made unprecedented security arrangements for Amarnath yatra as it apprehends a higher threat perception to the pilgrims this year, a senior Army official said in Srinagar.

The Army officer, who did not wish to be identified, said security personnel three to four times more in strength have been deployed around the yatra as there's a credible intelligence of a likely terror strike.

There is an increased threat perception to the Amarnath yatra this year. We generally receive inputs about terrorists targeting the yatra every year, but this year, there are more such inputs, the officer said.

He said the administration expects the number of yatris to go up this year especially since the pilgrimage is taking place for the first time in four years -- it was cancelled midway in 2019 with the Centre's revocation of J-K special status, and suspended in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID pandemic -- and also because of the increased number of tourist arrivals.

The security preparations have also been made keeping these factors in mind, the officer added.

We are expecting almost two to three times increase in the number of yatris. A lot of preparations have been put into place. The number of security forces personnel deployed on the ground for the smooth conduct of the yatra is three or four times more than the previous years, he said.

The heightened security measures also come in the backdrop of a recent spurt in target killings, including those of workers belonging to the minority community.

Despite the administration's efforts to ensure a safe and secure yatra we cannot say that we have made it 100 per cent foolproof, the officer said.

Apart from the deployment, drone surveillance and RFID chips will also be part of the three-tier security arrangements for the pilgrims.

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir Vijay Kumar had on June 14 said that three Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorists, who were killed in recent encounters, were sent from Pakistan to attack the annual Amarnath Yatra.

Of the three slain terrorists, two were Pakistanis and one was a local, he said.

On July 10, 2017, seven people were killed and 11 others injured when militants attacked a bus carrying Amarnath yatri in Boteng on the Srinagar-Jammu national highway. The Yatra is scheduled to start on June 30 and will culminate on August 11.

NEW RANT: Mehbooba...

emphasise on the fact that Pandits were a part of the Kashmiri society and are its asset. Kashmiri Pandits are still protesting. When the situation was bad during my tenure (as CM), even then no Pandit was killed. We provided them a salary for 17 months while they were home. I appeal to our people, our maulvis (religious leaders) to announce that they (Kashmiri Pandits) are our assets," she said.

"Whenever something wrong happens here, the BJP uses this community (Kashmiri Pandits) to defame us, she added.

About the unprecedented security arrangements for this year's Amarnath Yatra, the former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister said the administration has created such an atmosphere as if some attacker is coming.

They are yatris, our guests. We have been caring for them for centuries. But, (this year), you (administration) have placed so many nakas (security checkpoints) that it seems the yatra is taking place for the first time, she added.

Referring to the revocation of Article 370 by the Centre in August 2019, Mehbooba said the endeavour is to take away our lands, jobs, mineral, water, assets, but do not let them take your courage.

They want to give us a sense of hopelessness and helplessness that nothing will happen now and what has happened, has happened. But, it is not like that. I do not accept that whatever has happened, has happened. We all have to get united.

If we lose hope and accept everything, then, God forbid, our position will become worse that the people in the Gaza strip who have certain rights... So, do not lose hope. We still have many things which we need to safeguard. Otherwise, a time will come when our situation will be worse than what Israel did to Gaza Strip, she said.

The PDP chief said if the people stand united and use their powers in a peaceful manner, democratically, constitutionally and politically, then we will succeed and get back what was taken from us.

On the ban on Falah Aam Trust (FAT) schools, followed by administration's direction that schools built on government land should be shut, she said, after 2019, attempts are being made to disempower the people of Kashmir.

Now, there is a latest attack on education. First, they targeted the 300 schools of FAT. They are accused of being affiliated to the Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI). Is JeI a criminal organisation? Does it provide arms training or trishul' (trident) or sword training to children which otherwise takes place at (RSS) shakas?

They provide modern education, have the same syllabus which other schools have. The only difference is that our poor children study there in minimal fees. Now, they are closing schools which are on government land, she said.

This, she added, will leave lakhs of students and thousands of teachers helpless.

On the situation in Maharashtra, she said the BJP has made a mess of this country.

The country was built with so much of blood and sweat by leaders like Jawahar Lal Nehru, over the years by the Congress party, Indira Gandhi, A B Vajpayee. The basic fundamentals of India were democracy and secularism. They are turning everything upside down.

They are the most corrupt system that I have ever seen in my life because (of) the way they are purchasing MLAs after the elections, be it in Rajasthan, MP, Goa or now in Maharashtra. There is no example of such corruption in the history of India for the last 70 years, she said.

On the Centre's Agnipath scheme, Mehbooba said it was against the pride, the hard work and the spirit of sacrifice of the army personnel.

(Veer) Savarkar wanted Hindus, the RSS people, to be trained so that tomorrow they are more brutal in their dealings with the minority community and others, she added.

150 terrorists ready...

The Army officer said terrorists are now focusing on other infiltration routes other

than those that have been identified.

I am not saying that we have put in place a system that ensures zero infiltration. Yes, there is a possibility of infiltration taking place here, but in recent years, the way we have made the fence stronger, the way the deployment has been made including the surveillance equipment, the success rate of infiltration has gone down.

As a result, what happens is that when there is pressure on one side, they try other sides, the alternate routes. They (terrorists) are now trying the Rajouri-Poonch routes, the areas of the south of Pir Panjal. The infiltration here (in Kashmir valley) has gone down compared to other routes, he said here.

He said the focus of infiltration has largely now shifted to the south of Pir Panjal. In fact, there are inputs that some people may have also trickled in via Nepal, he added.

The officer said the militant numbers were the lowest figure that we have in the last few years at all levels but the numbers will keep on changing. We have the kinetic domination on the ground.

We have eliminated more than 50 (terrorists) in the last 40-42 days. Their overall lifespan is negligible, but, yes, it remains a curse for the society. It remains a challenge and a security hazard. So, that is what we are working on.

Be it 100 or 150, these numbers will continue till the time the people do not understand the futility of what is happening, till the people do not understand what is right and what is wrong. Till there is the support base, they will remain, but once they (people) shun them, then they will have no way to go, and you will automatically find this entire concept getting eliminated or the numbers coming down, he added.

Security situation in...

targeted killings in the valley, especially of members of the minority community, the Army officer said a person does such things when he comes under pressure, is pushed to the wall, and feels he is losing control.

"There are a few aspects as to why they are happening. Either it is to provoke the security forces or bring a fear factor among the people that their (terrorists) writ still runs large or because they are soft targets," he said.

Attacks on soft targets, especially Kashmiri Pandits, shakes up the entire country, the Centre and the state administration, the officer said.

"They (terrorists) also know, in terms of their capacity, which is the weakest link as they (Kashmiri Pandits) are working in the society, roaming around in the society and it is easy to target them," he said.

The officer, however, said protecting every individual or providing round-the-clock security cover to them was not possible.

Police solves SI...

in execution of the murder. All the three accused involved in the martyrdom are very close neighbours of the martyr SI Farooq Ahmad. While as accused Tawkeer Manzoor is the martyr SI Farooq Mir's cousin brother's son.

Incriminating materials, one pistol and other ammunition have been recovered from their possession. Further investigation into the matter is in progress.

IGP Kashmir appreciated the role of Awantipora and Pulwama Police for jointly solving this heinous terror crime.

Sadhus upbeat over...

the cave shrine to thwart any terror attack and ensure peaceful yatra.

Staying in small groups inside a large hall at the temple complex and chanting praises of the Lord Shiva like Bham Bham Bhole' and Har Har Mahadev', the sadhus who have renounced the worldly life are least bothered about the terror threat and said it is a non-issue for us .

We only know dharma (religion) and our dharma is Sanatana which teaches us to love everyone. We are on religious journey to meet our lord and we are only concerned about it and nothing else, Shri Raja Giri, a mahant from Assam, said.

Accompanied by 12 disciples including women, he said religion is above politics and it is politics which is dividing the people.

We have nothing to do with politics, Azan' (Muslim call for prayer) controversy or terror threat (to Amarnath pilgrims). We are all one and should respect and love each other, he said.

Another Sadhu Suraj Khuria, who had come from Indore about two weeks ago, said they have come for darshan' and do not fear terrorists.

We only fear our lord and pray to him that we do the right things on his earth till our last breath this is my only concern, he said.

Expressing similar views, Sadhvi Sapna Dass from Siliguri in West Bengal said she is going to meet the baba' and seek his blessings for the entire world.

I need nothing for myself but will seek blessings for the countrymen and the people around the globe. We will also pray for good sense to the terrorists who are taking innocent lives, she said.

Full of enthusiasm, Mahant Ram Giri Raj Rajashree Naga from Rajasthan said it was for the first time he was visiting the cave shrine.

We are happy to be going there and are satisfied with the security and other arrangements. We are hopeful of completing the pilgrimage without any trouble, he said.

For Sherghi Maharaj from Sukhdev Ashram in Uttar Pradesh, he has missed the darshan' for the past two years and is dying to reach the cave shrine in the first batch.

Most of the sadhus and sadhvis have performed the yatra over 15 times and they all are eagerly waiting for the day to be part of the yatra. However, many of them suggested that the government should run special trains to facilitate sadhus to reach Jammu from different parts of the country.

Mahant Rameshwar Dass, the head of the temple having a capacity to accommodate over 4,000 sadhus, said all necessary arrangements are in place to ensure that there is no inconvenience to the holy men.

My whole team is busy in making arrangements for food, shelter, registration and medical facilities for the sadhus, in active coordination with the district administration, Dass said.

Expressing satisfaction over the arrangements made by the Lieutenant Governor administration, the Mahant said the yatra is an example of Hindu-Muslim unity for centuries but there are certain anti-national elements who are trying to weaken the communal harmony and brotherhood by disturbing the yatra.

Facilitating peaceful yatra is our responsibility. Let us join hands to thwart any attempt by anti-national elements to disturb the yatra, he said.

Meanwhile, the main transit camp of Bhagwati Nagar in Jammu was completely sealed by police and paramilitary forces as part of the heightened security arrangements for the yatra.

Only people with special identity cards are allowed inside the complex, an official said, adding bomb disposal squads, sniffer dogs and surveillance drones were also deployed in and around the areas to maintain tight vigil.

Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) Commissioner Rahul Yadav said they are working to ensure that the yatra is made litter and garbage free this year.

All arrangements are in place with adequate manpower for sanitation and hygiene. Our focus this time is to make the yatra litter and garbage free, he said.

He said the JMC will also ensure the implementation of single-use plastic ban during the yatra.

Traffic movement resumes...

late Friday evening, the officials said.

"Fresh traffic was allowed from both sides (Jammu and Srinagar) this morning and is moving smoothly," a traffic department official said.

The highway was blocked at nearly three dozen places by landslides and mudslides, mostly in Ramban and Udhampur districts, on Tuesday evening following incessant rains, leaving over 2,000 vehicles, mostly trucks, stranded.

All stranded vehicles were cleared during the night hours, paving the way for resumption of normal traffic movement, the official said, adding that road clearance work is in progress at many places.

He said the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) was also undertaking repair work of the steel tunnel at Panthiyal which was damaged by shooting stones from the hillock overlooking the highway.

"The repair work, necessary to safeguard the lives of commuters from shooting stones, is being done between 0430 hours and 0800 hours daily," the official said.

The official further said the Mughal Road, connecting the twin districts of Poonch and Rajouri in Jammu region with south Kashmir's Shopian district, was blocked by a landslide at Mansar Morh near Peer Ki Gali in the early hours of Saturday.

Men and machinery have been moved to the landslide-hit area, and efforts are on to make the road traffic-worthy, he said.

Take every measure...

DG Health & Family Welfare; Director Health, Kashmir/Jammu; Principals of GMCs, State Surveillance Officers, Jammu/Kashmir and Chief Medical Officers.

Several officers including Jammu based officers participated in the meeting through video conferencing.

Dr Mehta impressed upon the officers to adopt prescribed level of random testing of those traveling from outside. He directed the health authorities to issue the advisories to people so that the people remains safe and cautious. He asked them to encourage people to adhere to the Covid-19 protocols.

He advised them to remain vigilant and use social and other media to create awareness among people so that no rumor mongering occurs. He asked them to create digital health records of patients visiting hospitals and integrate the same with Rapid Assessment System (RAS) for quality feedback of public.

The Chief Secretary also maintained that the health infrastructure of the UT was upgraded to a larger extent during past few years. He reminded them it is for this reason that in the past the UT faced no major problem dealing with the pandemic. He sug-

gested them to work for promotion of medical tourism here as the UT is set to establish medical cities in both the divisions here.

The MD, NHM briefed the CS about the current scenario of the Covid-19 in the UT. He gave out that there is no major reason of concern for the people. He revealed that the health infrastructure available throughout J&K including isolation beds, oxygen supply and medicines are enough to deal with any situation and J&K faced no uneven occupancy of beds in recent times.

It was further made out that the positivity rate in J&K in the past 24 hours is just