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Amarnath Yatra resumes...

at higher reaches of Shri Amarnathji Shrine. There were gusts of water near the Holy Cave area and the nallah adjoining the Holy Cave," Sinha had tweeted on July 28 last year.

Jammu and Kashmir's former chief minister Farooq Abdullah had last week questioned the rationale behind setting up tents in the dry bed of the stream and demanded an inquiry to fix responsibility.

"The location of the tents and langars is such that I do not think these things were done there earlier. Panjtarni is such a nice area for this. This needs to be investigated. Maybe it is a human error," Abdullah said.

The local administration had claimed that flash floods had occurred because of cloudburst, a claim negated by the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) which termed it as a highly localised rain event only.

"The flash floods could have been triggered due to rainfall in the higher reaches of the mountains near the Amarnath cave shrine," IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra had said earlier.

According to the IMD, a rain event is categorised as a cloudburst if a weather station receives 100 mm of rain in one hour but the rainfall reported on Friday was 31 MM between 4.30 pm and 6.30 pm, which is quite low to be categorised as a cloudburst.

The Raj Bhavan spokesperson also dismissed the allegations that Radio Frequency Identity (RFID) cards had not been properly distributed. Some of the pilgrims had said on their return that they were never provided the RFID card.

"All yatris are provided with an RFID tag. This is for the first time RFID tag is being issued for Amarnath Yatra to ensure pilgrims' security and safety. RFID tag had proved very useful on the day of the flash flood in ascertaining how many people had crossed into the area closest to the cave," the spokesperson said.

However, he chose not to answer about the number of people who were still missing.

Officials, in the know of the developments, said the picture will be clear by Tuesday evening when the remaining debris would be cleared.

A day after the Andhra Pradesh government had said that 37 pilgrims were still missing, its Additional Resident Commissioner of AP Bhavan Himanshu Kaushik, who has been camping in Srinagar, said that 35 persons for whom "we received calls from their relatives on Andhra Pradesh helpline numbers" have been traced and are safely returning to their state.

Out of the remaining two, the body of Gunisetty Sudha of Rajamahendravaram was found on Monday and was identified by her husband.

Another woman Kotha Parvati of Rajamahendravaram still remained untraced and the search for her was continuing, he added.

Flash floods near the shrine on July 8 left at least 15 people dead and more than 30 missing.

According to the officials, among the dead are six pilgrims from Rajasthan.

Two pilgrims hailing from Uttar Pradesh were cremated at Srinagar while some of the bodies of the victims who had been identified were airlifted to their native places.

Air Commodore Pankaj Mittal on Monday said that the efforts of the first responders ensured that the number of deaths was "limited".

He said a major part of the rescue and relief operations was over and the area should be good enough to be opened for normal activities in the next two days.

"Basically, due to the initial efforts which people put in on the first day, the fatality rate and the number of casualties were really limited," he told reporters here.

"Major effort (of rescue and relief operation) has already gone through and they have already cleared the opening of the yatra again. I think in a day or two, we will be able to clear the area for anything else," he added.

The Indian Air Force (IAF) officer said the weather was the biggest challenge in the rescue and relief operations in the aftermath of the incident.

"The valley (leading to the cave shrine) being narrow and due to clouding, choppers were finding it difficult to enter," he told reporters.

Kanhaiya killing: Badgam...

days and further probe was underway.

Kanhaiya Lal was killed with a cleaver inside his tailoring shop on June 28 by two persons who claimed they were avenging an insult to Islam. The National Investigation Agency has arrested seven persons so far in the case.

Top JeM terrorist...

an encounter. The other terrorist killed has been identified as Ishaq Ahmad Lone, son of Ghulam Nabi Lone, resident of Lelhar, Pulwama.

As per police records, the killed terrorist Kaiser Koka was a categorized terrorist involved in several terror crime cases including attacks on police, security forces and civilian atrocities. He was active since 2018 and had ex-filtrated to Pakistan. After acquiring training, he infiltrated back to the Kashmir Valley and was active in the areas of Avantipora, Pulwama. He was involved in an IED attack at Larmoo Avantipora on May 2,2022 in which two CRPF personnel got injured.

The other killed ultra Ishaq Ahmad Lone was a hybrid terrorist and was also involved in several cases including attacks on police, security forces and civilian atrocities. In this regard, a case under relevant sections of law has been registered and investigation has been initiated.

PM unveils national...

wah, this is your hut!" He then added that every poor person of the country should also feel that this is his hut. "You have said a very good thing," the prime minister said.

When he asked them if they feel that they are making a building or history, they said in a chorus, "History".

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said the 6.5-metre-high emblem is made of bronze and weighs 9,500 kg. It has been cast at the top of the central foyer of the building, and a supporting structure of steel weighing around 6,500 kg has been constructed to support it.

The concept sketch and process of casting of the national emblem on the roof of the new Parliament building has gone through eight different stages of preparation from clay modelling and computer graphics to bronze casting and polishing, the PMO said in a statement.

Meanwhile, several opposition parties have slammed PM Modi for unveiling the national emblem.

Criticising Modi's presence, All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) president Asaduddin Owaisi said, "The Constitution separates powers of parliament, government & judiciary. As head of the government, the prime minister should not have unveiled the national emblem atop the new Parliament building."

The Speaker of Lok Sabha represents Lok Sabha which isn't subordinate to the government, and the prime minister has violated all constitutional norms, alleged Owaisi, who is a Lok Sabha member from Hyderabad.

In a statement, the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) said the prime minister's action was a "clear violation of the Indian Constitution".

It said the Constitution unambiguously separates the three wings of our democracy - the Executive (government), the Legislature (Parliament and state assemblies) and the Judiciary.

"This Constitutional separation of powers between the three wings is being sub-

verted by the head of the Executive," the CPI(M) said.

Hitting back at Owaisi, the BJP said he is always driven by a negative mindset and constantly attacks the country's political, moral, social, cultural and constitutional values to run his party.

"He does it habitually," BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi said replying to a question at a press conference.

Citing a verse, Trivedi said even the best of doctors have no cure to doubts, and added that only those with the 'official and statutory' positions were involved in the unveiling of the emblem.

NCP leader Majeed Memon wondered why the government had kept away opposition leaders from the ceremony to unveil the national emblem atop the new Parliament building. He, though, added that he had no objection to the prime minister unveiling the national emblem. "It is his right as he is the tallest leader of the country," Memon said.

The CPI(M) also took objection to the religious ceremony organized at an event to unveil the national emblem cast.

National emblem installation should not be linked to religious ceremonies. It is everyone's emblem, not those who have some religious beliefs. Keep religion separate from national functions, said CPI(M) in a tweet.

CPI General Secretary D Raja said the Parliament belongs to everyone and wondered "how a private event" was organised there.

Attacking the government, TMC MP Jawhar Sircar said MPs, who will occupy this building, were never consulted, and alleged that "Modi will now zap us with a mediocre architecture designed by his crony architect at exorbitant costs".

Parameswaran Iyer takes...

humbled to have been given the incredible opportunity to serve the country again, this time as NITI Aayog CEO. Iyer also said that he was deeply grateful to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for another chance to work under his leadership towards a transformed India.

India must be...

careful about it," he mentioned. When a new technology brings a huge change, its transition period is also as big and serious, he said.

"Since AI is a technology that can bring a massive change, we must be ready to face the legal, ethical, political and economic upheaval that may follow," Singh noted.

"We need to work on AI extremely carefully so that this (technology) does not go out of our control in the coming times," he added.

The defence minister said the arrival of technology is just like the movement of a clock because once it moves forward, it is not possible to turn it back.

"Whenever a new technology comes, society takes its time to adjust itself to it," he added.

He also said that the country should ensure democratic use of technology.

The defence sector is undergoing important changes due to AI. The training of soldiers is also being improved with the help of AI, he said.

Referring to Russia's continuous progress in the field of science and technology, he said, "On AI, Russian President Mr Vladimir Putin had said 'Whoever becomes the leader in this sphere will become the ruler of the world'."

"Although India believes in the principle of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (the whole world is one family) and has no intention to rule the world, we must develop the capability of our AI technology so that no country can even think of ruling us, he added.

India has started incorporating AI applications in remote piloted, unmanned aerial vehicles, etc, he mentioned.

There is a need to move further in this direction so that India can develop autonomous weapon systems, he noted.

"Timely infusion of technologies like AI and Big Data in the defence sector is of utmost importance, so that we are not left behind the technological curve and are able to take maximum advantage of technology for our services, he mentioned.

Singh launched 75 defence products powered by artificial intelligence at the event.

Some are already being used by the armed forces while the rest are in the process of deployment.

These 75 products are in the domains of robotics systems, cyber security, human behaviour analysis, intelligent monitoring system, supply chain management, voice analysis and C4ISR (command, control, communication, computer and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) and operational data analytics.

COVID: 39 new...

officials said. Meanwhile, Ladakh has reported nine fresh COVID cases during the past 24 hours, taking the overall infection tally of the union territory to 28,570, officials said. All fresh cases were reported in Leh.

So far, 228 people have succumbed to COVID-19 in Ladakh. Of these, 168 deaths were reported from Leh and 60 from Kargil, according to the officials.

The officials said that there are total 57 active cases in Ladakh, all of which are in Leh. A total of 129 samples were tested in Ladakh, of which 120 cases, comprising 96 in Leh and 24 in Kargil, came out negative, they said.

Total 48 people were discharged in the last 24 hrs after being cured.

With this, the total number of recoveries in the union territory has gone to 28,285, the officials said. As many as 2,308 passengers were screened at the Leh airport while 1,486 people were screened at Khaltse, and 230 at Upshi check post on highway, they added.

Consider introduction of...

are the guardian angels of liberty. Liberty, as embedded in the Code, has to be preserved, protected, and enforced by the Criminal Courts. Any conscious failure by the Criminal Courts would constitute an affront to liberty," said a bench of Justices S K Kaul and M M Sundresh.

It said it is the pious duty of the Criminal Court to zealously guard and keep a consistent vision in safeguarding the constitutional values and ethos.

A criminal court must uphold the constitutional thrust with responsibility mandated on them by acting akin to a high priest, it said.

It said an investigating agency has to expedite the process of investigation as a suspect is languishing under incarceration.

"Thus, a duty is enjoined upon the agency to complete the investigation within the time prescribed and a failure would enable the release of the accused. The right enshrined is an absolute and indefeasible one.

"Such a right cannot be taken away even during any unforeseen circumstances, such as the recent pandemic," the bench said in its 85-page judgement.

It said High Courts are directed to undertake the exercise of finding out the under-trial prisoners who are not able to comply with the bail conditions so that appropriate steps under the law can be taken for their release.

It said bail applications be disposed of within two weeks except when provisions mandate otherwise while pleas for anticipatory bail be decided within six weeks.

"The Government may consider the introduction of a separate enactment in the nature of a Bail Act so as to streamline the grant of bails," the bench said while pronouncing a judgement in a case related to the arrest of a man by the CBI.

It said there is a pressing need for the introduction of an Act specifically meant for granting bail as done in various other countries like the United Kingdom.

"Our belief is also for the reason that the CrPC as it exists today is a continuation of the pre-independence one with its modifications. We hope and trust that the Government of India would look into the suggestion made in right earnest," it said.

It said probe agencies and their officers are duty-bound to comply with section Section 41-A of the CrPC(Notice of appearance before police officer).

The court said the State and Central Governments will have to comply with the directions issued by this Court from time to time concerning the constitution of special courts.

"The High Court in consultation with the State Governments will have to undertake an exercise on the need for the special courts. The vacancies in the position of Presiding Officers of the special courts will have to be filled up expeditiously.

"The High Courts are directed to undertake the exercise of finding out the under-trial prisoners who are not able to comply with the bail conditions. After doing so, appropriate action will have to be taken in light of Section 440 of the Code, facilitating the release," it said.

It said any dereliction has to be brought to the court's notice, followed by proper directions and non-compliance would entitle the accused to grant bail.

It noted jails in the country are flooded with undertrial prisoners and the statistics placed before us would indicate that more than two-thirds of the inmates of the prisons constitute undertrial prisoners.

"Of this category of prisoners, the majority may not even be required to be arrested despite registration of a cognisable offence, being charged with offenses punishable for seven years or less. They are not only poor and illiterate but also would include women. Thus, there is a culture of offense being inherited by many of them.

"As observed by this Court, it certainly exhibits the mindset, a vestige of colonial India, on the part of the Investigating Agency, notwithstanding the fact arrest is a draconian measure resulting in curtailment of liberty, and thus to be used sparingly. In a democracy, there can never be an impression that it is a police State as both are conceptually opposite to each other,"it said.

SC sentences businessman...

shall extend assistance and complete cooperation.

"It shall be open to take such appropriate steps including the appointment of forensic auditor(s)," the bench said in its 19-page order.

The bench said the fine shall be deposited in the apex court registry within four weeks and upon such deposit, the amount shall be made over to the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee.

It said in case the fine amount of Rs 2,000 is not deposited within the stipulated time, Mallya shall undergo a further sentence of two months.

It said the transactions referred to in the judgement and order dated May 9, 2017, in terms of which the amount of USD 40 million was disbursed to the beneficiaries, are held to be "void and inoperative".

The bench said that in its May 9, 2017 verdict, the apex court had found that the action on part of Mallya in disbursing the amount of USD 40 Million was against the "text and tenor" of orders passed by the Karnataka High Court and that the contemnor was guilty of contempt.

"In the circumstances, in order to maintain the majesty of law, we must impose adequate punishment upon the contemnor (Mallya) and must also pass necessary directions so that the advantages secured by the contemnor or anyone claiming under him are set at naught and the amounts in question are available in the execution of the decrees passed in the concerned recovery proceedings," the bench said.

"Considering the facts and circumstances on record and the facts that the contemnor never showed any remorse nor tendered any apology for his conduct, we impose a sentence of four months and fine in the sum of Rs 2,000 upon the contemnor," it said.

"We direct the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi to secure the presence of the contemnor to undergo the imprisonment imposed upon him," it said.

The bench said the Government of India, including the Ministry of External Affairs and all other agencies or instrumentalities, shall carry out the directions issued by the court with due diligence and utmost expediency.

"A compliance report shall thereafter be filed in the registry of this court," it said.

As per the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971, contempt of court may be punished with simple imprisonment of up to six months, or with a fine up to Rs 2,000, or both.

In its order, the apex court said in spite of repeated opportunities afforded to Mallya, no submissions were advanced on his behalf either on the purging of contempt or on the quantum of punishment.

The bench noted that the actions on part of Mallya having been found to be contumacious and established in the May 2017 judgement, it is presently concerned with the issues as to what orders be passed regarding punishment and purging of contempt.

The apex court said it is well settled that apart from punishing the contemnor for his contumacious conduct, the majesty of law may demand that appropriate directions be issued by the court so that any advantage secured as a result of such contumacious conduct is completely nullified.

"The approach may require the court to pass directions either for reversal of the transactions in question by declaring said transactions to be void or passing appropriate directions to the concerned authorities to see that the contumacious conduct on the part of the contemnor does not continue to enure to the advantage of the contemnor or any one claiming under him," the bench said.

"In a given case, to meet the ends of justice, the concept of purging of the contempt would call for complete disgorging of all the benefits secured as a result of actions which are found by the court to be contumacious," the bench said while disposing of the contempt petitions.

Mallya is accused in a bank loan default matter of over Rs 9,000 crore involving his defunct Kingfisher Airlines.

The apex court had in 2020 dismissed Mallya's plea seeking a review of the May 2017 verdict.

Mallya has been living in the United Kingdom since March 2016. He is on bail on an extradition warrant executed by Scotland Yard on April 18, 2017.

Earlier, a consortium of lending banks led by the State Bank of India had moved the apex court alleging that Mallya was not following the court orders on repayment of the loan which was then over Rs 9,000 crore.

LG visits Chandanwari...

of Ponywalas, Palikiwalas and Pithuwalas, arrangements for sanitation, water and food for the pilgrims.

It was informed that with regular meetings between Civil Administration, Police and Security Forces all arrangements from security & safety point of view have been ensured with perfect coordination among JKP, Army, CAPFs, NDRF, SDRF, SASB and Civil administration.

The members of the langar committees expressed gratitude to the Lt Governor for the elaborate arrangements made by the UT administration.

Pandurang K Pole, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; Dr. Piyush Singla, Deputy Commissioner Anantnag; Abdul Jabbar, DIG SKR, senior officers of Armed forces, Civil and Police administration besides Yatra officers were present during the visit of the Lt Governor.

Rajouri man sharing...

arrested and put behind bars for further legal formalities. The investigation is going on, the said.

SSP Mohammad Aslam said that no one will be allowed to hurt the religious sentiments of people from any community.

Flood-like situation in parts of Gujarat after heavy rains, 6,000 people evacuated; PM calls up CM, assures help

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

AHMEDABAD: Several parts of districts in south and central Gujarat, including Ahmedabad, received very heavy rainfall over the last 24 hours, resulting in a flood-like situation in various low-lying areas from where over 6,000 people were shifted to safer places, officials said on Monday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi called up Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and took details of the situation. He assured Patel of all possible help from the central government, the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said in a statement.

Due to the widespread rains, 388 roads, including state highways and panchayat roads, were closed. Efforts were on to open them for the traffic. Thirteen teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and 16 of the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) have been

deployed to carry out rescue operations, a government release said.

Thirteen dams have been put on 'high alert' and eight on 'alert' as their water level rose due to the heavy showers, it said.

The IMD has forecast heavy to very heavy rainfall with isolated extremely heavy showers during the next five days in south Gujarat, and heavy downpour in central parts of the state and Saurashtra.

Ahmedabad city received 219 mm downpour on Sunday night, causing water-logging in many residential areas and flooding on underpasses and roads. Several areas in the city inundated, resulting in hardships for commuters.

Schools and colleges in the city were closed on Monday.

Narmada and Chhota Udepur districts in central Gujarat, and Surat, Tapi and Valsad in south Gujarat

have been badly affected due to the heavy downpour.

In Valsad district, a helicopter was used to rescue around 10 people from a village where they were stranded due to flooding in the Auranga river, revenue official Madhavi Mistry said.

Nearly 1,000 people were shifted to safer places from various rain-hit areas in Valsad and 15 rescued, five of them from an urban area, she said.

In Chhota Udepur district, Bodeli taluka recieved 549 mm rainfall and Kwant taluka 432 mm rainfall in the 24-hour period till 6 am on Monday, leading to water entering many areas.

The Uchh and Heran rivers in the district were in spate, and caused flooding in low-lying areas. A total of 5,245 people were evacuated and more than 350 rescued, an official said.

In Bodeli town, river waters entered many residential areas.

The movement of four passenger trains and an express train was affected after tracks between Chandod and Ekta Nagar sections were washed away, a Western Railway official said.

Panchmahal, Dang, Navsari, Valsad, Tapi and Kheda districts were also affected by heavy rains, an official from the State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC) said.

In all, 218 out of 251 talukas in Gujarat received rainfall in the 24-hour period till 6 am on Monday, it said. The state has so far received 36 per cent of its average annual rainfall, as per the data shared by the SEOC.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast heavy to very heavy rainfall with isolated extremely heavy showers during the next five days in south Gujarat's Dang, Navsari and Valsad districts.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The Congress on Monday asked Prime

Minister Narendra Modi to take the nation into confidence on the Chinese transgressions into India and asked him to address the concerns on national security, integrity and sovereignty.

Congress spokesperson Gaurav Gogoi claimed that the recent talks between India's external affairs minister and the Chinese foreign minister have "failed" and did not yield the desired result of maintaining the status quo ante as in April 2020 at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh.

Gogoi also demanded a white paper on the issue, a two-day debate in Parliament

and a dedicated briefing to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence.

He alleged that the government's approach towards China has so far been "very weak" and said it is time that the prime minister should take the Chinese head-on.

"We demand that Prime Minister Modi takes the nation into confidence about the Chinese threat and take action by addressing a press conference by the prime minister; defence minister and external affairs minister to explain the current situation followed by a White Paper," he told reporters.

Gogoi also said the Congress wants the early appointment of a full-time Chief of Defence Staff, not-

ing that the position has been vacant for seven months during a critical period for national security.

The party also demanded the immediate withdrawal of the Agnipath scheme, alleging that it threatens to demoralise troops at a time of high national security threat.

The Congress leader said "the prime minister should stop appeasing China to protect his image and should act boldly and sternly".

"More than two years after the border crisis with China began in eastern Ladakh, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's strategy can be summed up with DDLJ: Deny, Distract, Lie, Justify," Gogoi said at a press conference.

