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J&K, Sikkim sign...

Lt Governor added, Sikkim being the first organic state in India has the expertise on organic production technologies and certification. The collaboration will immensely help J&K to provide solutions and policy prescription for the organic farmers in the UT, observed the Lt Governor.

He said that the exchange of knowledge, best practices, and technical interventions will go a long way in promoting Social & Ecological Sustainability and Economic Sustainability in Agriculture, Horticulture and allied sectors.

On the occasion, the Lt Governor highlighted the efforts of the UT Government to bring Agricultural reforms and provide maximum benefits to the farming community.

Outlining the focus of the UT government on agriculture sector during the last two years, he said that government support and credit facilities have been significantly enhanced and special attention is being paid to improve the productivity of small and marginal farmers, as also of Kandi areas of Jammu Division.

Agriculture Universities in the UT are playing a major role in promoting reforms and supporting diversification in the field of agriculture and horticulture, providing solutions, extending handholding to the farmers to meet the future requirements, the Lt Governor observed.

Underlining that Agriculture is the mainstay of J&K's economy and 70% of the population is dependent on it, the Lt Governor said, in this year's budget, an amount of Rs 2835 crore has been allocated for agriculture and Rs 646 crore for horticulture sector; besides for the development of dairy and sheep sector, Rs 392 crore has been allocated separately so that positive changes can be made in the lives of the farmers and progress of villages can be given a new direction altogether.

Lok Nath Sharma, Minister of Agriculture, Sikkim, expressed gratitude to the J&K Government, Sikkim Government and all the stakeholders for taking a significant step towards the holistic development of agriculture and horticulture sector.

Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture Production Department, J&K while speaking on the occasion, highlighted the significance of the tripartite agreement, besides efforts of the government to promote Saffron cultivation.

Professor Avinash Khare, Vice Chancellor, Sikkim University also shared his views on opening up new avenues and exploring possibilities of diversification in cultivation of saffron and other temperate crops.

Chowdhary Mohammad Iqbal, Director, Department of Agriculture Production & Farmers Welfare Kashmir presented the Vote of Thanks.

A PowerPoint presentation on Study and Cultivation of Saffron in Sikkim - An outreach programme of Sikkim University was also presented on the occasion.

Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary; Prof Nazir Ahmad Ganai, Vice-Chancellor, SKUAST Kashmir; Shabnam Kamili, Secretary, Agriculture Production and Farmers' Welfare Department, besides HoDs, senior officials of J&K administration, Sikkim Government and Sikkim University were present on the occasion.

ASI martyred, 2...

condition is stated to be stable. The officials said a cordon and search operation has been launched in the area to nab the attackers.

"ASI Mushtaq Ahmad #succumbed to his injuries & attained #martyrdom. We pay rich #tribute to the #martyr for his supreme #sacrifice made in the line of duty. Other two injured personnel are being treated. Further details shall follow," the Kashmir Zone Police wrote on Twitter.

In order to pay honour and respect to martyr ASI Mushtaq Ahmad, a wreath laying ceremony was held at District Police Lines, Srinagar.

Officers of Police/CAPFs and Civil Administration led by ADGP Kashmir Vijay Kumar laid floral wreaths on the mortal remains & paid rich tributes to the martyr for his supreme sacrifice in the line of duty.

On the occasion, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir PK Pole, DIG CKR Srinagar Sujit Kumar, DIG CRPF (North) Dr. R.K Rana, SSP Srinagar Rakesh Balval, Commandant 49th BN CRPF, all Zonal SsP and other officers & officials of Police/SF also paid rich floral tributes to the martyr.

"We pay our rich tributes to the martyr for his supreme sacrifice made in the line of duty and stand by his family at this crucial juncture," ADGP Kashmir Vijay Kumar said.

Political parties and their leaders condemned the attack.

"Deeply saddened to hear about the militant attack on @JmmKnrPolice personnel deployed in Srinagar in which ASI Mushtaq Ahmed lost his life in the line of duty & two others were injured. My condolences to the family of ASI Mushtaq & prayers for the swift recovery of the injured," National Conference Vice President and former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah wrote on Twitter.

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti described the attack as gruesome.

"Deeply saddened about the gruesome attack on police personnel in Lal Bazar. My condolences to ASI Mushtaq Ahmed's family in this hour of grief & prayers for the two policemen critically injured," Mufti, also a former chief minister, tweeted.

People's Conference president Sajad Gani Lone condemned the militant attack.

"Yet again terror on the prowl. Distressing news of fatality of a brave police officer. My heartfelt sympathies with the family of the deceased. Praying for swift recovery of the injured police personnel, the PC chief said.

CPI(M) leader M Y Tarigami said, "Deeply pained to hear about the killing of ASI Mushtaq Ahmad in a militant attack in Lal Bazar, Srinagar. My heart goes out to the family of slain official. I wish speedy recovery to injured cops."

Govt watchful of price situation; pointed attack on inflation to continue: FM

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: With consumer price inflation remaining high, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said the government is watchful of the price situation and will continue the pointed attack on inflation.

Her remarks came hours after official data showed that retail inflation in June eased to 7.01 per cent in June. The print was lower than 7.04 per cent recorded in May but still higher than RBI's comfort level of 6 per cent.

"As RBI has estimated, till the start of the second half of the (fiscal) year, both RBI and government will

have to be mindful," she told reporters here.

India's fiscal year is from April to March and second half would be from October.

"We will have to be mindful and watchful how the price movement is," she said. "I will keep monitoring (prices) item by item for anything that goes haywire. This pointed attack on inflation will need to continue." The finance minister also said a favourable monsoon will lead to good production and rural demand.

The government has taken several steps in the past to cool down prices. These include reducing excise duty on petrol and diesel, ban-

ning wheat exports, allowing duty free import of certain crude edible oil and revising duty structure on steel and steel products.

Besides, the government asked edible oil manufacturers to reduce rate Maximum Retail Price (MRP) of edible oils by Rs 15 per litre amid a fall in global prices.

Last week, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said the price situation will gradually improve in the second half of the current fiscal and the central bank would continue to take monetary measures to anchor inflation with a view to achieving strong and sustainable growth.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the nation's farmers.

The DDC Chairman urged the farmers to use modern implements, adopt latest farming technology besides making use of hybrid seeds only for increasing the productivity of their crops. He emphasized that the Union Government led by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched multiple schemes to benefit all sections of the society and the farmers must come forward to avail the benefits of the schemes specially tailored for farmers.

Besides a large number of farmers Besides DDC Mahanpur, BDC Mahanpur, Surinder Rai, CAO Kathua, Raj Singh SDO Basohli, around a dozen Sarpanch and PRI members were present.

distributed among the Panchayat members include Pawan Kumar of Sabar Panchayat; Radha Devi - Kelhari; Sushma Devi - Atheltha; Kandharv Singh-Arhoon; Sushma Devi Thein; Krishan Singh -Poonda and Sher Singh -Dhamlad Panchayat.

The Chief Guest on the occasion, DDC Chairman, while reiterating the Union Government's commitment to double farmers' income, asserted that it is the joint and synchronized efforts of the farmers and the Agriculture Department that will go a long way in raising the living standards of nation's food producers to optimum by doubling their income in consonance with the mission visualized by the

Govt enhances ex-gratia...

Rs. 5.00 lakh to Rs. 25.00 lakh (Rs. 20.00 lakh out of UT Budget and Rs. 5.00 lakh out of SRE) in favour of NoKs of those defence personnel hailing from J&K who attain martyrdom in the territorial jurisdiction of Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir," reads an order issued by Manoj Kumar Dwivedi, Principal Secretary, General Administration Department.

It added "Grant of Ex-Gratia Relief of Rs. 25.00 lakh each, out of UT Budget, in favour of NoKs of those Defence Personnel hailing from Jammu & Kashmir, who attain martyrdom in consequence of due performance of official duties, due to law and order problems, terrorism, civil commotion, communal violence, land mine blast, IED blast, cross border firing or Left Wing Extremism, anywhere in the country." The aforementioned stipulations shall be effective from February 1, 2022, it added.

17 JKAS officers...

Election Officer, Jammu; Masood Ahmad Blehoo, JKAS, awaiting order of adjustment in the General Administration Department has been posted as General Manager, DIC, Reasi; Abhay Ram Gupta, JKAS, Deputy Secretary, Department of Floriculture, Parks and Gardens as Deputy District Election Officer, Kathua; Sheeba Inayat, JKAS, BDO Pattan, Baramulla as Deputy Director, District Employment and Counselling Centre, Srinagar, vice Mohammad Rouf Rehman, JKAS, who shall await further orders of adjustment in the General Administration Department.

Sheraz Ahmed, JKAS, Tehsildar Surankote has been transferred and posted as Project Manager, IWMP, Rajouri; Riaz Ahmed, JKAS, Deputy District Election Officer, Kathua as Assistant Commissioner, Relief Organization (Migrants), Jammu; Rajneesh Jearth, JKAS, ETO in the office of Deputy Excise Commissioner (Accounts), Jammu as Deputy Director, Employment (Central), J&K; Mukhtiar Ahmed Ahanger, JKAS, STO-Circle II, Srinagar as Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Anantnag; Mohammad Muneer Ahmed Bhat, JKAS, STO, Circle-E, Srinagar as Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Kangan. He shall also hold the additional charge of the post of Sub-Registrar, Kangan, till further orders.

Anju Anand, JKAS, STO, Circle-D, Jammu has been transferred and posted as Assistant Settlement Officer, Jammu; Zahoor Ahmad Bhat, JKAS, STO, Circle Ganderbal, Kashmir as Deputy District Election Officer; Pulvama; Amresh Kotwal, JKAS, Functional Manager, DIC, Kishtwar as Deputy District Election Officer, Doda; Saddat Iqbal, JKAS, Assistant Director, Hospitality and Protocol, Kashmir as Deputy Director, Hospitality and Protocol, Kashmir; and Tariq Kakroo, Deputy Director, IMPARD, Kashmir has been transferred and posted as General Manager (Operations), JKTDCC.

Transgender Welfare Board...

Dwivedi, Principal Secretary, General Administration Department.

As per order, the Board will be headed by Chief Secretary, J&K as Chairperson while Director General, Social Welfare, Kashmir will be its Member Secretary and Administrative Secretary, Home Department; Administrative Secretary, Finance Department; Administrative Secretary, Health and Medical Education Department; Administrative Secretary, School Education Department; Administrative Secretary, Social Welfare Department; Administrative Secretary, Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs; Director, Social Welfare, Jammu; Saair Ahmad Bhat, Vice President, Palzun Foundation, Bemina Srinagar; Aijaz Ahmad Wani, son of Sonullah Wani, resident of Galwanpora, Sebdan, Budgam; Haji Miya Saira, daughter of Miyan Janki, resident of Shahidi Chowk, Jammu; and Madan Lal, son of Late Lahri Ram, resident of Ward No. 13, Hiranagar, District Samba will be its Members.

Unilateral attempts to...

diplomats. Jaishankar said the border issues with the eastern neighbour were largely due to the Chinese occupying large parts of India, including Ladakh in 1962 - during Congress rule.

Taking a dig at Gandhi, he said, "I did not see anything particularly new in what his tweet said, because you all know that a large part of the problem we have on the boundary is because in 1962, the Chinese came and occupied large areas, including Ladakh."

"Many of these are strategic areas which obviously create challenges for our border forces," Jaishankar added.

The minister said that at the moment discussions were going on between the two sides involving military commanders and also diplomats.

"These (discussions) relate to friction points where we are very very closely deployed vis-a-vis each other and the focus is to see whether disengagement at these friction points was possible. In the last year there has been very substantial disengagement. There are still some issues...there are ongoing discussions. I have myself raised the issue with the Chinese Foreign Minister when I met him in Bali (G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting)," Jaishankar said.

"So, I think we have been very clear and very open about it. So, I really don't know what the confusion is," he added.

Gandhi in his tweet had alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was afraid of China, hides the truth from the public, just protects his own image, lowers the morale of the Army and plays with the security of the country.

On whether the China-Pakistan maritime exercises -- Sea Guardians -- pose a threat to the Indian maritime security, the minister said security was always given a priority and was at the top of the country's foreign policy.

COVID: J&K reports 71 new cases, Ladakh 3

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir reported 71 new Covid cases on Tuesday that pushed the infection tally to 4,56,151, officials said.

Of the new cases, 44 were reported from the Jammu division and 27 from the Kashmir valley, they said.

The death toll stands at 4,758 and no fatalities due to Covid were reported in the last 24 hours, officials said.

There are 738 active cases, while the overall recoveries have reached 4,50,655, they added.

There are 51 confirmed cases of mucormycosis (black fungus) in the Union Territory, officials said. Meanwhile, Ladakh reported three fresh COVID-19 cases during the past 24 hours, taking the overall infection tally of the union territory

"So, whenever we feel the country's security interests are in some way affected, we will do whatever we feel is necessary, whatever we feel is possible to ensure our security."

"We have demonstrated that in different situations. In some respects, you saw that in Uri and Balakot. You have also seen that even on the LAC with China where even in the middle of covid-19 in 2020, we actually sent an enormous number of troops up there to effectively defend the LAC," he said.

Jaishankar said India was aware of the maritime activity in the seas and oceans south of it and keeps track of the same.

"We do whatever we feel are the countermeasures we need to do," the minister said. On whether India's image abroad has changed from one of compassionate and gentle to intolerant, Jaishankar said it was not true.

He said India is still seen as a compassionate nation in view of its actions during the covid-19 pandemic when even while dealing with the domestic challenges, it was providing vaccines to countries which were finding it difficult to access them.

The minister further said India is also seen as a country which is capable of taking care of its own people, as seen during the Ukraine-Russia war when it safely evacuated almost all of its students from the war zone.

On the controversial remarks by expelled BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma, Jaishankar said while there was some concern among the Arab nations initially, once the Indian government clarified its stand, they saw the truth.

"We have good relations with the Gulf nations and they have faith in our government," he added.

UP priests' body...

who has assured the teeth purohiths of full security during their visit to religious places in Srinagar and nearby places.

He added that the visit is completely non-political.

"We are going there to know about the problems faced in implementing the Hindu rituals and customs, and find a solution to it," he said.

Stop religious conversion...

only in the mind and not in the scriptures.

"Resolving this problem, which has been existing in our mind for many centuries may take time to fade. There is a need to find a solution to this issue. It will surely happen one day and we are working on it. Till then, we should have patience," Bhagwat said.

The RSS chief emphasised upon focusing on Indian culture such as respecting the elders and treating women with dignity.

"Modern way of teaching imparts education but it distances from culture. If we have to strengthen culture and commitment,

then we have to associate ourselves with some form of worshipping, which the seers alone can do," Bhagwat told the religious heads.

Online test for...

paved the way for level playing field for all the candidates, he said.

The minister said, the number of complaints in Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) increased from two lakh per year in 2014 to 25 lakh per year at present, which also reflects positively that here is a government which listens to citizens' grievances promptly and addresses them, according to a personnel ministry statement.

Singh informed the delegates that by the end of this year, the National Recruitment Agency (NRA) under DoPT is gearing up to conduct computer-based online Common Eligibility Test (CET) for recruitment to non-gazetted posts, according to the statement.

The minister said, the prime minister's mantra of minimum government, maximum governance means more involvement of citizens, innovation, use of latest techniques and transparency.

He said, the ultimate aim of all governance models is to reach out to the last man in the last queue to empower him economically.

Singh said, there is a need to try to adopt best practices from each other and implement them in our respective sectors, regions and states.

He said states with similar problems have been coupled by the government so that they can share their expertise and experiences related to similar issues and learn from each others' success stories.

Karnataka Minister of Health and Family Welfare and Medical Education K Sudhakar, in his address, said, people-centric governance model is being followed in the state.

Referring to success of ease of doing business , he said because of a conducive business eco-system, 400 odd MNCs have set up units in Karnataka.

Sudhakar also referred to the RRR model of 'Recognise, Respond and Redress' to empower the youth and common man.

Secretary, DARGP, V Srinivas said, the conference is an effort to bring the government and citizens closer through various administrative reforms at the centre, state and district levels.

Three ARTOs transferred...

in Administrative Department, has been posted as ARTO Ramban; Jamsheed Rasool, Office of the RTO, Kashmir as I/c ARTO, BoI, Srinagar; and Mubashir Jan, Office of the Transport Commissioner, J&K has been posted as I/c Assistant Transport Commissioner, J&K.

Minor girl kidnapped from Subash Nagar

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A 17 years old girl was kidnapped from Subash Nagar area of Jammu on Thursday.

As per details, a man, resident of Odisha, presently working as a Mason in Jammu and staying at Sarwal, has lodged a complaint with police stating that her minor daughter went out for some work didn't return back. He further stated that he is having doubt that his neighbour Sidhant Nayak has kidnapped her as she was seen with her last time and now he is also missing. Police has registered a case and started investigation.

Man dies under mysterious circumstances

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A man was found dead at Railway Station, Jammu on Tuesday.

As per details, Durga Dass, son of Poonam Singh, resident of Rajasthan was found unconscious at Railway platform and was shifted to hospital where doctors declared him as brought dead. Police is investigating the matter.

FIR lodged over damage of idol at temple in Kathua

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KATHUA/JAMMU: A case has been registered against unidentified people who allegedly damaged an idol at a temple in the Kathua district, police said on Tuesday.

The alleged incident at Dhamlar-Morha village in Mahanpur on Monday had sparked a protest by the locals who blocked the main road to press for action against the culprits, they said.

"An FIR has been registered and a police team deputed to probe the incident and bring the culprits to book," a police official said.

He said some unidentified people entered the temple and allegedly damaged the idol.

As the news of the alleged vandalism spread, angry villagers led by District Development Council member Goldy Kumar blocked the main road, demanding the arrest of the culprits.

Senior police officers rushed to the spot and persuaded the protesters to disperse and assured them of a thorough probe to identify the culprits and bring them to book.

This was the third incident of alleged temple vandalism in the Jammu region over the past three months.

A temple was vandalised by unidentified miscreants in the Sidhra area of Jammu on April 8 followed by another similar incident at Vasuki Naag temple in the upper reaches of Doda district on June 5.

