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MPs, MLAs to...

vote, every elector can mark as many preferences as there are candidates contesting the election. These preferences for the candidates are to be marked by the elector, by placing the figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and so on, against the names of the candidates, in the order of preference, in the space provided in column 2 of the ballot paper. This is the reason why electronic voting machines are not used in this as well as vice presidential, Rajya Sabha and legislative council polls. The EVMs are based on a technology where they work as aggregator of votes in direct elections such as the Lok Sabha and state assemblies.

According to Election Commission's directions, while MPs will get a green-coloured ballot paper, the MLAs will get a pink ballot paper to cast vote. Separate colours help the returning officer ascertain the value of vote of each MLA and MP.

Seeking to maintain secrecy of voting, the EC has issued a specially designed pen with violet ink to enable voters mark their ballot papers in the presidential poll.

J&K reports 203...

Jammu division and 2425 in Kashmir.

Providing district-wise breakup for positive cases during the past 24 hours, the Bulletin informed that Jammu reported 91 cases, Srinagar 64, Baramulla 12, Udhampur 10, Ganderbal 06, Kathua and Anantnag 04 cases each, Budgam, Poonch and Kupwara 03 cases each, Pulwama 02, Kupwara, Doda, Samba and Reasi reported one case each while as no other district across the Union Territory reported any fresh case.

Meanwhile, Ladakh has reported 14 new COVID-19 cases, raising its tally to 28,629, officials said.

All the positive cases were recorded from Leh district, they added.

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

They said the number of active cases has risen to 68 in the union territory -- all in Leh. Seven more people were cured of the disease, the officials said, adding the total number of recoveries stands at 28,333.

As many as 2,371 passengers were screened at the Leh airport, 579 people, including the drivers and helpers of trucks, and light motor vehicles, at Khatse, 179 at Upshi check-point for the virus, the officials said.

250 Kg poppy...



Drug peddler in police custody along with seized consignment.

owner Jatinder Singh of Hoshiarpur in Punjab was arrested and the contraband, along with the vehicle, seized, they said. A case was registered and investigation started, the officials said.

Ensuing people's involvement...

of Power Development Department, PWD, Jal Shakti and all personnel associated with disaster management who defied the recent inclement weather and ensured round the clock services and operations.

The Lt Governor acknowledged the indispensable efforts of the Water Heroes of Baramulla, including Mohammad Ramzan Wani, Abdul Ahad Reshi, Mushtaq Ahmed Dar, Riyaz Ahmed Mir, Ashraf Wani and Abdul Hameed Tantr who ensured water supply to 25 villages despite flash floods.

There are many such officers and employees of the administration who are working round the clock with the resolve to serve the people. We acknowledge their dedication towards service; the work being done by them reflects their values and high ideals, added the Lt Governor.

While enlisting government's endeavours for promoting entrepreneurship and harnessing demographic dividend, the Lt Governor said, J&K has emerged as the top performer in the ranking of UTs for dynamic change in the ecosystem of Startups. Through the new industrial policy, we are focusing on developing the start up ecosystem in the districts as well, he added.

He said 100 per cent banking facilities in all the villages is helping us to bring the remote villages closer to the markets of Delhi and Mumbai.

The Lt Governor made a special mention of women entrepreneurs from J&K who are inspiring other women folks with their resolve, efforts and achievements.

Saima Khan's technology institute 'Step in', Madina Talat's 'Shirin Aromatics' and Malika Shah's brand of herbal products have become synonymous with self-reliance, women entrepreneurship and empowerment, said the Lt Governor.

The Lt Governor noted that Geetika Kohli's institute on soft skill training and Payal Sharma's start up named 'JK Aromatic Herbs' are some of the shining examples of women empowerment, creative power and the very essence of excellence and leadership.

Referring to the suggestions received from Sankarshan Sharma and Akarshit Sharma from Jammu regarding provision of coaching facilities for recently launched Agnipath scheme in the armed forces, the Lt Governor instructed the Mission Youth and District Administrations to provide necessary facilities to all the youths preparing for Agnipath recruitment through various training programs and facilities initiated by the government.

The Lt Governor thanked Umang Sharma from Jammu for invoking the contributions of the illustrious mathematicians of ancient India. She has suggested that life, accomplishments, and affect of such great personalities in shaping modern mathematics and astronomy should be taught in schools for a minimum of an hour per week.

The Lt Governor also shared the suggestions of Syed Aijaz Kashani from Srinagar and Baramulla's Aaqib Tantray for promoting the culture of community policing as an effective medium of synergy between the people and the police.

Replying to an issue raised by Anantnag's Rayees Ahmad Bhat pertaining to the garbage disposal in rural areas, the Lt Governor underscored the government's efforts to ensure Garbage Disposal Management in the villages through Jan-Bhagidari and directed rural development to examine the issue of setting up compost units.

On Mushtaq Ahmad Wani's suggestion on revival and landscaping of water bodies in Budgam, the Lt Governor said that Rural Development Department, elected public representatives and district administrations are working together to keep the water bodies clean and more people, volunteers, youth should join the movement.

The Lt Governor also shared insights received from Ganderbal's Sheikh Minhas and Kishtwar's Hakim Singh for preparing a roadmap for identifying the young talent across the genres of performing arts and providing them with the right platform to harness their capabilities, and establishing a special cell in educational institutions through which all the villagers can be informed about government schemes.

The Lt Governor paid homage to all those who lost their lives in the unfortunate incident of flash-flood near Shri Amarnathji Cave last week.

The Lt Governor also expressed gratitude to Jammu and Kashmir Police, Central Police Forces, Army, CAPFs, NDRE, SDRE, SASB, Civil Administration and all personnel, officials, local volunteers and other stakeholders associated with disaster management who, with great urgency and dedication completed the rescue operation in difficult conditions to save precious lives.

India presses for...

of the talks. The 15th round of the military dialogue took place on March 11 but it failed to yield any significant outcome, with both sides, in a joint statement, reaffirming that resolution of the issues would help restore peace and tranquillity in the region and facilitate progress in bilateral relations.

The Indian side pressed for disengagement of troops as soon as possible in all the remaining friction points, the people cited above said.

It is learnt that the Indian delegation also sought resolution of pending issues in Depsang Bulge and Demchok.

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

The situation in eastern Ladakh figured prominently in talks between External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Bali on July 7.

At the one-hour meeting on the sidelines of a conclave of foreign ministers of the G20 nations, Jaishankar conveyed to Wang the need for early resolution of all the outstanding issues in eastern Ladakh.

"Recalling the disengagement achieved in some friction areas, the external affairs

minister reiterated the need to sustain the momentum to complete disengagement from all the remaining areas to restore peace and tranquillity in the border areas," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement after the meeting.

The MEA further said Jaishankar "reaffirmed the importance of fully abiding by bilateral agreements and protocols, and the understandings reached between the two ministers during their previous conversations."

Workshop on EVMs...

constituencies following fresh delimitation.

The officials said the district election officers have been holding meetings with the representatives of political parties in every district.

Discussions have taken place with these representatives of political parties on the post-delimitation exercises, including rationalisation of polling stations, list of draft polling stations after formation of new constituencies, addition and deletion of voters in the list, they said.

After this process is completed, the officials said, the booth-level officers (BLOs) would be trained and sensitised regarding the post-delimitation exercise.

Meanwhile, workshop on first-level checking (FLC) of EVMs and VVPATs will be held at SKICC here on July 27, in which the district election officers and deputy district election officers of all the 10 districts of the valley will be participating.

A team of officers from the Election Commission of India, including Director EVMs, S Sunder Rajan, Secretary Madhusudan Gupta and Under Secretary 0 P Sahani, besides, representatives from Electronics Corporation of India Ltd, including Deputy General Manager P C Mandal, Technical Officer C V Dinesh Datta and Officer C Venkanna, are also participating in the workshop, the officials said.

The preparations for the polls also come amid statements by the Centre as well as the UT administration on the conduct of the polls.

Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on June 17 had said there is a possibility of holding the polls by this year-end.

Earlier this month, J-K LG Manoj Sinha said the elections will surely take place after the completion of the electoral roll revision.

The prime minister and the country's home minister have said it many times in Parliament that elections (in Jammu and Kashmir) will take place. The process of delimitation in the union territory has been completed and the electoral roll revision started. After this, there will surely be elections, Sinha had said at a function here.

Political parties in the union territory have also been demanding early assembly elections. While some of them have started preparations for the polls, the regional forces -- the National Conference (NC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) -- have been saying the preparations will start once the elections are announced.

However, both the parties have shown interest in contesting the polls together as part of the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) formed in October 2020.

The PAGD, comprising five J-K parties -- NC, PDP, CPI(M), CPI and ANC -- was formed with a stated aim of restoring Article 370 which was scrapped on by the Centre on August 5, 2019. The Centre had also bifurcated the erstwhile state into UTs -- Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

Article 370 of the Constitution gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir.

The PAGD is headed by NC president Farooq Abdullah.

We will contest the elections together, Abdullah had told reporters here recently.

Similar sentiments were expressed by PDP president Mehbooba Mufti.

"We intend to contest the elections together as it is the will of the people that we should strive together for the restoration of our lost dignity," she has said.

5,284 pilgrims leave...

convoy of 225 vehicles amid heavy security of CRPF, the officials said.

They said that 1,743 pilgrims heading for Baltal were the first to leave in 87 vehicles around 3.20 am, followed by the second convoy of 138 vehicles carrying 3,541 pilgrims for Pahalgam at 4.20 am.

The annual 43-day yatra commenced on June 30 from the twin base camps -- traditional 48-km Nunwan-Pahalgam in south Kashmir's Anantnag and 14-km shorter route from Baltal in central Kashmir's Ganderbal.

So far, over 1.65 lakh pilgrims had offered their prayers at the cave shrine, housing the naturally formed ice-shivlingam, the officials said.

With this, a total of 1,05,109 pilgrims have left from the Bhagwati Nagar base camp for the Valley since June 29, the day the first batch of pilgrims was flagged off by Lt Governor Manoj Sinha. The yatra is scheduled to end on August 11 on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan. A total of 30 people mostly pilgrims have died during the on-going yatra till now excluding 15 pilgrims, who died in the flashfloods at Amarnath cave shrine on July 1.

Remain grounded, ensure...

have to seek approvals from the higher ups to serve the cause of citizens.

The minister emphasised that young officers in charge of districts or tehsils or any department must ensure "that no citizen who needs your intervention or support is turned away from your office empty handed", according to the statement.

The minister was addressing the IAS officers of 2020 batch here, who are undergoing three-month stint as assistant secretaries in central government departments before moving to their respective state cadres.

Singh reminded the young officers of their destined role in 2047 when India celebrates 100 years of independence.

"With age on their side, only they have will have that opportunity and privilege," he said.

Singh said, in order to make the government citizen-centric, it is important that we use technology to bring in meaningful exchanges and definite improvements in national governance.

He said as the expectations and aspirations of citizens from the administration and governance are on the rise, information technology, internet, mobile technology, artificial intelligence, machine learning etc. can bring dramatic changes in the lives of the people and they can help the administration to establish a direct contact with the people.

Singh said he was informed that this batch of 175 officers has 108 officers with engineering background and many officers with background in medicine, management, law and arts have also joined.

He emphasised that it would be very much admirable if they utilise their educational background to showcase how the ministries/departments can innovate, use new ideas and deliver high quality outputs directly to citizen with complete elimination of middlemen and leakages.

The minister also hoped that the technocrats will be able to do justice to the flagship programmes of the government in sectors like health, agriculture, sanitation, education, skills and mobility to name a few, which are technology-based and technology-driven.

He said the required improvement in citizen services and speedy resolution of grievances related to them can be brought about by utilising technology in an effective manner.

Singh said today's citizen aspires to have a voice in the processes of policy formulation and policy implementation.

He noted that the initiative of mandatory stint of assistant secretaries with the central ministries/departments was a huge experiment introduced at the behest of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2015 and said that it has paid off extremely well to the benefit of the government of India.

The minister said the assistant secretaries are expected to give their inputs for improvement in various flagship programmes in different ministries/ departments of government of India.

This not only gives them an opportunity to demonstrate their skill and talent but also an opportunity to make a presentation before the Prime Minister of India, which is an opportunity that might have eluded their senior batches, the statement said.

Singh summed that like other years, the officers posted as assistant secretaries for the 2020 batch are being given the opportunity to contribute to the major programmes of the government of India as they are getting posted to different ministries and are being allocated work relating to the flagship programme.

He said the officers will be required to give suggestions and ideas to improve the delivery of these programmes both qualitatively and quantitatively.

During this period, "your special focus should be on the states and districts where implementation of these programmes is slow to take off", the minister added.

Singh urged the officers to examine the status of the programmes, ideas and suggestions that were initiated by the 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 batches of assistant secretaries and ensure that their ideas and suggestions are also taken to the logical conclusion.

He said through this programme, officers are getting an awesome opportunity to gain insight into policy making with the senior most and most experienced officers at the beginning of the career, which is going to be very useful, relevant and enlightening for all of the officers.

Search operation launched...

they have suspected to be a drone.

Security personnel have been asked to remain alert in view of threat of drones, they said.

Monsoon Session: Oppn...

the house in Rajya Sabha Piyush Goyal and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi.

"Today, in the all-party meeting, many political parties, including those supporting NDA, pointed out the contradiction in the Modi government claiming credit for its presidential candidate on the one hand and killing off the Forest Rights Act, 2006 on the other hand," Congress' Jairam Ramesh tweeted after the meeting.

He earlier raised strong objections over the absence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi from the all-party meeting to discuss issues that will come up in Parliament.

Indian Union Muslime League leader E T Mohammed Basheer said every opposition party raised the issue of Agnipath, price rise and the row over the words listed in a new booklet by the Lok Sabha Secretariat that will be considered 'unparliamentary'.

BJD leader Pinaki Misra came out in support of Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla over the issue, saying he was 'unfairly targeted' as listing out such words has been a routine practice in Parliament.

The BJD leader also pressed for the passage of the women's reservation bill besides demanding a legislative council for Odisha, where the party is in power for many years now.

"It is high time we insisted that government should bring the women's reservation bill," said All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam leader M Thambidurai.

DMK's T R Baalu and AIADMK's Thambidurai also raised the Sri Lankan crisis and said India should intervene to settle the issue.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi, however, hit out at the opposition and accused them of belittling Parliament by making issues out of non-issues.

He said the opposition is doing so as it had nothing against the government and the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi was being recognised within the country as well as abroad.

Condemning the Opposition for creating a row over unparliamentary words and circulars issued in routine for the past several years, he said such a practice is being carried on since 1954, when the first such list was brought out, and the opposition was doing so as it was devoid of any issues against the government.

Joshi claimed the government was 'doing good work' and the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi was recognised not just by people within India but also those abroad.

"The Opposition is trying to make issues out of non-issues as they do not have anything against the Government... It is trying to belittle the image of Parliament," he said on the row over unparliamentary words.

"Actually there is no major issue against the government as it is functioning well under PM Modi's