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Ex-gratia relief...

Transport Nagar, Narwal, Jammu at an estimated cost of Rs. 33.57 Crore. The project will be completed in 12 months.

The Transport Nagar area is visited by approximately by 1-1.25 Lac commuters daily, besides hosting a parking area for 150 buses with passenger shed and booking counters. Besides, there are 1685 shops, 96 warehouses/ godowns & offices / public corporations in the area.

The project aims at decongesting the area, facilitating users in hassle-free movement, and improving the economic/commercial activities by providing proper facilities both in terms of road/drain network and other amenities.

The improvement/upgradation works will include laying of thick bituminous macadamization; surface drainage; factory-made chamfered concrete paver blocks; and internal roads of 7.50 Mtr width including intersection of major roads, over lean concrete, cement concrete, and RCC drain along the sides of major roads.

Currently, the area is in a very dilapidated condition due to an incremental increase in traffic causing damage to road surface creating large potholes and hampering smooth plying of vehicles and conduct of day to day business activities.

By yet another decision, the Administrative Council approved the proposal of Health and Medical Education Department to construct a 100-bedded Mother & Child Health Care Hospital at Lamberi Rajouri,

The sanctioned hospital will be constructed under National Health Mission (NHM) at an estimated cost of Rs. 47.232 Crore and will be completed by 2024-25.

The new 100 Bedded Mother & Child Care Hospital will be equipped with facilities for emergency ward, OPD, IPD and operation theatres. Apart from MCH services, the hospital will also provide general healthcare and accidental services to the common masses besides serving the emergent health needs of tourists & pilgrims.

Being centrally placed, the MCH will serve a large population of Rajouri and Poonch districts and will also serve as accidental hospital on the Jammu-Poonch National Highway. It will be an important focal medical health centre for the populace of Nowshera, Sunderbani, Kalakote and adjoining villages, besides serving as a referral health facility for various PHCs like Lamberi, Seri, Garan and Sub Centres like Kheri, Patrari, Hanjana, Dandesar etc.

The Administrative Council also approved up-gradation of the 30-bedded Community Health Centre at Billawar, Kathua to a 100- bedded Sub-District Hospital at an estimated cost of Rs. 28.18 crore. The project will be completed in financial year 2023-24.

The project will strengthen the healthcare services of the area and help increase life expectancy and decrease IMR/ MMR in the region, besides meeting the long pending demand of the common masses of Billawar, Kathua. It will also create more employment opportunities both for operationalization of the project and by way of development of additional support services around the project area.

Boy found brutally...

bag was recovered from the bushes on the outskirts of the village shortly after midnight, a police official said.

Senior Superintendent of Police, Kathua, R C Kotwal said the boy was found brutally murdered with his mouth shut with a tape and his limbs tied.

His body also bore injury marks which indicate that he resisted his murder, the officer said, adding the exact cause of the death will be known only after the post-mortem report is received.

We have detained four persons in connection with the murder and one of them is a major, Pawan Kumar Saini, who is a neighbor of the deceased boy. The other three are juveniles, Kotwal said, adding it is a heinous crime and will be thoroughly investigated. Police said animosity was believed to be the main reason behind the murder.

Govt notifies guidelines...

Hafeez here. The aim of notifying these guidelines is to create a hassle free environment for those wishing to register their properties as Homestays/Paying Guest Houses by simplifying many of the procedural requirements and minimising the formalities.

An added benefit of introducing the concept of Homestays is to promote local culture, cuisine, handicrafts etc. thereby enhancing the employment opportunities for local inhabitants. Homestays/Paying Guest Houses would also be encouraged at the 75 new tourist destinations recently put on the tourist map by the Department. This is expected to increase the tourist footfall by considerable measure.

It may be recalled that the Department of Tourism in recent times has taken several path breaking steps to upgrade tourism services, extend the touring seasons, adding more destinations to the tourist map, making J&K round the year destination, golf promotion, a rigorous promotional campaign, thrust on adventure and heritage tourism, to name a few.

As a sequel of these efforts, J&K has witnessed a huge tourist footfall over the past one and a half years and many experts say the tourist footfall of the past six months has been the highest in the last 15 years.

2 terrorists surrender...

module of the LeT. "These youngsters were brainwashed and tasked with carrying out anti-national activities and killings at the behest of the LeT and the ISI. Security forces remain committed to encouraging misguided youngsters to lay down arms and facilitating their return from the path of terrorism," Colonel Musavi said.

People's Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti lauded the security forces and the two terrorists' family members, who persuaded the ultras to lay down arms and surrender.

She said such efforts should continue in order to give a second chance to those youngsters who have joined terror ranks.

"Two lives saved thanks to the efforts of their families and the support extended by security forces. These kind of efforts must be continued so that youngsters who join militancy are given a second chance to live their lives," the PDP president said in a tweet. Meanwhile, Inspector General of Police, Kashmir, Vijay Kumar said many lives can be saved if every parent appeals to their children, who have joined terror ranks, to shun the path of violence.

"If every parent #appeal to their #terrorist sons to shun the path of #violence, whether they are trapped during live #encounters or have joined the #terrorism, many lives can be saved as in today's encounter two lives were saved," the IGP wrote on Twitter. IGP reiterated his appeal to the parents to keep strict vigil on their wards to prevent them from indulging in any anti-national activities especially joining the terror ranks.

Prez Poll: Sinha...

said. Meanwhile, senior leaders of opposition parties Wednesday met at the res-

idence of NCP supremo Sharad Pawar and took stock of Sinha's campaign.

Sources close to them said Pawar has assumed charge of the campaign strategy.

The leaders who attended the meeting included Leader of the Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge of the Congress, CPI-M general secretary Sitaram Yechury, CPI's Bhalechandra Kango and A D Singh of the RJD. Kulkarni was also present..

Some other members of the campaign committee for the July 18 poll also joined them online.

It was decided at the meeting that Yashwant Sinha will visit Uttar Pradesh on Thursday and Gujarat on Friday, after which he would go to Jammu and Kashmir on July 9.

Kulkarni said he briefed the opposition leaders on Sinha's campaign which started from Kerala, followed by Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Karnataka and Chhattisgarh.

He asserted the response to the campaign so far has been excellent, especially in Telangana where Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) took out a big procession on a day Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Hyderabad to attend the BJP's national executive meeting.

Kulkarni said Sinha will later move to other states, including Bihar and Jharkhand, where he hopes the Congress's allies will back his candidacy. Jharkhand's ruling JMM, a Congress ally, has not yet made up its mind about whom to support in the election.

Sinha's campaign will conclude with a visit to Mumbai on July 17, a day before the presidential election. The Maha Vikas Aghadi government of Congress-NCP-Shiv Sena combine was ousted from power in Maharashtra a few days back, in a setback to Sinha's presidential bid.

"A meeting of opposition parties to discuss about the presidential elections was held at my Delhi residence. In this meeting the campaign strategy was planned. We all are standing strongly with our candidate Shri Yashwant Sinha to fight for the issues faced by our country," Pawar said on Twitter, sharing pictures of the meeting.

Sinha is pitted against NDA's Droupadi Murmu, a tribal leader from Odisha, in whose favour the scales are heavily tilted given the strength of BJP and its allies in Parliament and state assemblies. Fence-sitter parties like Odisha's ruling BJD have also extended support to her.

Last week, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had said opposition parties might have considered backing Murmu had the BJP held a discussion with them before fielding her.

Sinha was vice president of the Trinamool Congress before he was chosen as the joint opposition presidential nominee.

CBI raids 5...

the premises of Rupen Patel, Chairman and Managing Director of Patel Engineering Ltd in Mumbai, Vijay Gupta and Anurendra Kumar Singh among others.

Malik, who was the Governor of J&K between August 23, 2018 and October 30, 2019 had claimed that he was offered a Rs 300-crore bribe for clearing two files. "After going to Kashmir, two files came to me (for clearance), one belonging to Ambani and another to an RSS-affiliated man who was a minister in the previous Mehbooba Mufti-led PDP-BJP coalition government and claimed to be very close to the Prime Minister (Narendra Modi)," Malik had said.

"I was informed by secretaries in both the departments that there is a scandal and I accordingly cancelled both the deals. The secretaries told me that you will get Rs 150 crore each for clearing the files' but I told them that I have come with five Kurta-Pyjamas and will leave with that only," Malik had told a gathering at an event at Jhunjhunni in Rajasthan in October last year.

In its FIR pertaining to the alleged malpractices in awarding contract for civil works package of Kiru hydroelectric power project registered in April this year, the CBI had said that guidelines related to e-tendering were not followed.

The CBI had also conducted a round of searches after the registration of the FIR. "The case was registered on allegations of malpractices in award of the contract worth Rs 2,200 crore (approximately) of civil works of Kiru Hydro Electric Power Project(HEP) to a private company in the year 2019," Joshi had earlier said.

The agency has booked Navin Kumar Chaudhary, M S Babu, former MD, M K Mittal and Arun Kumar Mishra, former directors of Patel Engineering Ltd.

"Though a decision was taken in 47th Board meeting of CVPPPL (Chenab Valley Power Projects (P) Ltd) for re-tender through e-tendering with reverse auction after cancellation of ongoing tendering process, same was not implemented (as per decision taken in 48th board meeting) and tender was finally awarded to Patel Engineering Ltd," the FIR has alleged.

Chhari Mubarak to...

Shri Amareshwar Temple Dashnami Akhara here on July 31.

After performing Chhari-Pujan at Dashnami Akhara here on the auspicious occasion of Nag-Panchami' on August 2, Mahant Giri will carry the Holy Mace to Holy Cave Shrine on Shравan-Purnima' which falls on August 12.

There will be night halts at Pahalgam on August 7 and 8, Chandanwari on 9, Sheshnag on August 10 and Panchararani on August 11.

Mahant Giri urged the government to make all the necessary arrangements and take the appropriate preventive measures for the safety and security of the sadhus and pilgrims accompanying the Holy Mace.

He also advised sadhus and members of civil society, who intend to join Chhari-Mubarak, to get themselves registered and stated that only registered pilgrims with valid Yatra permit shall be allowed to accompany Chhari-Mubarak during the pilgrimage.

Security forces carry...

day, police along with BSF and CRPF also conducted a massive search operation in dozens of villages along the International Border in Ahsanpur in Samba district, the officials said. The search operation started around 6 am and continued for several hours, they said, adding the border villagers were approached and asked to inform the nearest police post or security installation about any suspicious movement or drone activity from across the border.

IPS officer to...

against Sudershan Mehta, the then Assistant Commandant, Home Guards, Samba (now Retd. Dy.SP)," read an order issued by Raj Kumar Goyal, Financial Commissioner/Additional Chief Secretary, Home Department.

Rajesh Bali, JKPS, AIG(CIV), PHQ, J&K shall be the presenting officer.

The Inquiry Officer shall complete the enquiry and submit his report/ recommendations to the Home Department within a period of thirty days from the date of issue of this order.

Gupkar alliance an...

Jana Sangh founder Shyama Prasad Mookherjee, Chugh said the PAGD, also known as Gupkar alliance, is a failed alliance .

Responding to a question about the National Conference and the PDP, two

major constituents of the PAGD, announcing that the grouping will jointly contest the next assembly elections, he said Gupkar alliance is an expired injection which has tested and failed in District Development Council (DDC) elections as people do not like Abdullah's, Mufti's and Congress dynasts.

The eight-phased DDC elections, held in November-December in 2020, were swept by the PAGD by winning 110 seats, while the BJP emerged as the single largest party by getting 75 seats. Congress, which is not part of the PAGD, won 26 of the total 280 seats.

The three families (Abdullah's, Mufti's and Congress) conspired against J-K and looted its resources and the people. Whether they fight together or separately, they will fail as they failed in the DDC, Block Development Council (BDC) and Panchayat elections, he claimed.

Both the NC and the PDP had boycotted the panchayat and urban local bodies elections in 2018.

They (NC, PDP and Congress) have lost their credibility among the people who do not like those who nourished terrorism and were singing the songs of Pakistan and China, Chugh said.

Asked about the recently captured LeT terrorist who was reported to have links with the BJP and a part of a terror conspiracy to target saffron party leaders, he said, His questioning is underway and the reality will come before everyone. As far as BJP is concerned, we will not be cowed down by such threats. We will continue to work for the nation.

He said the BJP has zero tolerance against terrorism and corruption which is based on our ideology.

We have finished terrorism from J-K and reduced the shelf life of the terrorists and the operations against them will continue, he added.

Anyone who takes up arms against the nation at the behest of Pakistan and kills innocents will be sent to graves, the BJP leader said.

Earlier, Chugh, along with J-K BJP chief Ravinder Raina and other senior leaders of the party, paid rich tributes to Mookherjee on his birth anniversary and recalled his contribution for national integration.

Naqvi, RCP Singh...

birthday in the morning.

With their term as Rajya Sabha MPs set to end on Thursday, both ministers submitted their resignations to fulfil the constitutional obligation as they will cease to be parliamentarians from Friday.

After Naqvi, there will be no Muslim minister at the Centre and the BJP will have no Muslim MP among its nearly 400 Members of Parliament.

After Naqvi was not nominated in the recent Rajya Sabha polls, there has been speculation that he is being considered for the post of vice president, the election for which is scheduled to be held on August 6, or some other key position.

Singh had fallen out of favour with Nitish Kumar and was denied a Rajya Sabha ticket. With his resignation, there are only two ministers at the Centre from BJP allies -- Ramdas Athawale from the RPI(A) and Anupriya Patel from the Apna Dal.

Naqvi was holding the charge of Minority Affairs Ministry and Singh was Union Steel Minister. It was yet to be declared who would get the charge of these ministries.

With the Union Cabinet now having two more vacancies and no representation from the BJP's biggest ally JD(U), there is a possibility of a cabinet expansion-cum- reshuffle in near future. However, there was no official word on it so far.

Mir resigns as...

his resignation. "It is up to the Congress president to appoint the new PCC chief. There is no question of infighting (being the reason for resignation)," he said.

LPG price hiked...

per 14.2-kg cylinder in the national capital, up from Rs 1,003 previously, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

Firming international energy prices have led to non-subsidised cooking gas (LPG) prices being increased on eight occasions in the past year. In all, rates have gone up by Rs 244 per cylinder or 30 per cent.

Common households pay non-subsidised rates for the cooking gas they buy after the government restricted subsidy to just poor beneficiaries who got connections under the Ujjwala scheme.

This is the fourth increase in the LPG rate since the Ukraine war. The price was hiked by Rs 50 per cylinder on March 22 and again by the same quantum on May 7. Rates went up by Rs 3.50 per cylinder on May 19.

Of the Rs 244 per cylinder hike in the past year, Rs 153.50 increase happened since March 2022.

Opposition Congress termed the increase "anti-people" decision and asked if this is the "cost" of toppling the Maharashtra government.

In a tweet in Hindi, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said the BJP spoke of the welfare of the poor at its national executive meeting while imposing a 5 per cent "Gabbar Singh Tax (GST)" on flour, cereals, curd and paneer, and then broke the back of the poor and middle class by increasing the price of domestic cooking gas by Rs 50. Petrol and diesel prices, however, continue to be on freeze for the third straight month. The pause followed rates being hiked by a record Rs 10 per litre in a matter of 16 days beginning March 22.

In May, the government cut excise duty on petrol by Rs 8 per litre and diesel by Rs 6 per litre to cool soaring inflation.

At that time, the government also stated that Rs 200 per cylinder subsidy on cooking gas will be limited to only 9 crore poor women and other beneficiaries who got free connections under the Ujjwala scheme and the remaining users including households will pay the market price (also known as non-subsidised rate).

Originally, non-subsidised cooking gas was the one that consumers used to buy after exhausting their quota of 12 cylinders at subsidised or below-market rates. However, the government stopped paying subsidy on LPG to households in mid-2020. Non-subsidised LPG costs Rs 1,052.50 per 14.2-kg cylinder in Mumbai, while it is priced at Rs 1,079 a bottle in Chennai and Rs 1,068.50 in Kolkata.

Rates differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes such as VAT. Prices are higher in states with higher taxes. Alongside, oil firms also reduced the price of commercial LPG cylinders -- the ones used by establishments like hotels and restaurants. It now costs Rs 2,012.50 per 19-kg cylinder in the national capital, down from Rs 2,021 per cylinder. Industry sources said that commercial LPG prices were almost aligned with cost while the cooking gas used in the household kitchens was being sold at a discount. The reduction in commercial LPG rates reflects softening in Saudi CPP prices while domestic LPG rates are being adjusted upwards to align them closer to cost. Domestic LPG rates are about Rs 300 short of their actual cost. International oil prices have been on the rise this year. They jumped to a 13-year high of USD 140 per barrel in March before shedding some of the gains. Brent was trading at USD 103.92 per barrel on Wednesday. To compound things, the Indian rupee tumbled to Rs 79.24 to a dollar, making imports costlier. India relies on overseas purchases to meet about 85 per cent of its oil requirement, making it one of the most vulnerable in Asia to higher oil prices.

Statue of Shani Dev installed in Hanuman Temple at Mendhar

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

MENDHAR: The Murti and 'Shila Sthapna' of Bhagwan Shani Dev was done in a grand ceremony at Hanuman Temple, Near LoC Mendhar Sub division of Poonch District today.

In this connection, a grand Bhagwat Katha was organized in Hanuman Mandir Mendhar for the last one week, which ended on Wednesday, on the occasion of Hanuman

of Hindu community with the help of our Community member and Management



Committee amid recitation of Vedic mantras and Yagna, which was followed by 'Pooja' performed and other guests present on the occasion. A Bhandara was also organized on the occasion. Rahi Kapoor, Ketan Verma, Sunny Bhatia, Anoop Bhatia, Balram Bhandara, chanting of Mantras. Sawami said that the idol was installed by youth

Div Com Kashmir to enquire into demolition of Shopping Complex at Anantnag

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Government on Wednesday appointed as Pandurang Kondbarao Pole, IAS, Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir as Inquiry Officer to enquire into the demolition of Shopping Complex at Ganjiwara, Anantnag and damage to the assets of IndusInd Bank.

"Pandurang Kondbarao Pole, IAS, Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir is appointed as Inquiry Officer to enquire into the issue of demolition of shopping complex housing office of the IndusInd Bank at Ganjiwara, Anantnag. The Inquiry Officer shall ascertain whether the said demolition was carried out in accordance with procedure prescribed under rules and whether any damage was deliberately inflicted on the moveable assets of the Bank," reads an order issued by Manoj Kumar Dwivedi, Principal Secretary, General Administration Department.

"The Inquiry Officer may co-opt any officer for conduct of the enquiry and shall submit his report within a period of fifteen (15) days to the Government," it added.

113 new COVID cases reported in J&K, 8 in Ladakh

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir reported 113 new COVID-19 cases on Wednesday, taking the infection tally in the Union Territory to 4,55,588 while no fresh death was reported, officials said.

While 78 cases were reported from the Jammu division, 35 cases were reported from the Kashmir valley, they said. The death toll due to the viral disease stood at 4,757 with no fatality being reported from the Union Territory in a day. Jammu and Kashmir currently has 641 active cases while the number of recoveries has increased to 4,50,190, the officials said.

Meanwhile, Ladakh has reported eight fresh Covid cases that took the infection tally to 28,527, officials said.

All the new cases were recorded in Leh, they said. 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 officials.

The number of active cases stands at 137 -- all in Leh, they said.

While a total of 219 sample reports were tested in Ladakh, 173 of those in Leh and 38 in Kargil were found to be negative, officials said. Fourteen people were discharged from hospitals in Leh, taking the overall recoveries to 28,165, officials said.

As many as 2,924 passengers were screened at the Leh airport, while 753 passengers, including drivers and helpers of trucks and light motor vehicles, were screened at Khatlse, and 245 were screened at Upshi check post on the highway, they added.

GCW Gandhi Nagar bids farewell to final year cadets

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: NCC Wing of GCW Gandhi Nagar bid farewell to outgoing cadets on Wednesday. Tags were gifted to the outgoing cadets

and trophies were rewarded to the achievers. The function comprised of a bouquet of cultural bonanza.

Cadets mesmerised the audience with their spell bound performances. Hand-made bouquet, cards were admired by all. The cadets also relished the delicious cakes and other food items. The cadets also shared their wonderful experience being in NCC. They also motivated their juniors to excel and grow in NCC. Principal of

the College, Prof. Minu Mahajan was the Chief Guest of the programme and appreciated the zeal of the cadets and wished them luck for future as well as



encouraged them to do services for the nation. The programme was conducted under the supervision of ANOs of 1J&K Girls Bn, Lt.Dr. Revika Arora and 1J&K Naval Unit, S. lt. Dr. Neelima G., 2J&K Girls Bn, Lt. Prof. Suman Bala and Prof. Poonam, Prof. Neelam Thapa was also present on the occasion.