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Efforts on to..

all major sporting events across the globe, he added.

The Lt Governor observed that a similar change was started in Jammu and Kashmir after 2019 and, in the last three years, the UT has emerged as a bright spot in the field of sports on the national and international stage.

Earlier, only 2-3 lakh players used to get the opportunity to play in a year. But now the situation has changed and last year, more than 17 lakh youth were provided an opportunity to play, whereas this year we have set a target to connect 35 lakh youth with sports. A huge step has been taken to safeguard the future of the sportspersons through the Sports Policy launched in January this year. Earlier, there was no incentive for players to participate in sports tournaments but we have ensured that both cash awards as well as government jobs are given to the players. They are the new icons of youth, he further added.

This year, 13 national tournaments will be organized in J&K and 11,000 players from all over the country will showcase their talent in the UT with the support of all sports bodies. The Sports Council has also launched 'My Youth My Pride' program to reach out to the players at the grassroots level to develop a sports culture, and around five lakh sports persons will get an opportunity to showcase their talent in various disciplines of sports with the help of 53 sports associations, it was informed.

Highlighting the major improvements in the sports infrastructure across the UT, the Lt Governor said that world class sports infrastructure has been developed in Jammu and Kashmir under the guidance of Prime Minister. FIFA Standard Bakshi Stadium and ICC Standard MA Stadium have been upgraded and renovated for international level matches. Today, we have succeeded in creating a Multi-Purpose Indoor Sports Hall in every district of Jammu and Kashmir with all facilities as per the requirements of the players, he said.

The Lt Governor appreciated the grit of veterans participating in the Masters tournament and expressed hope that their experience and energy will become an inspiration for the new generation. He also presented shawls as a token of appreciation to the veterans on the occasion.

Chairperson J&K Waqf Board, Dr Darakhshan Andrabi, while speaking on the occasion lauded the LG led UT Administration bringing a new era of sports development and providing ample opportunities to the sports persons in the UT.

Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, Advisor to Lt Governor highlighted the transformation taking place in the field of sports in J&K. Sports has been among the top priorities of the Administration and the UT of Jammu Kashmir has now become the power house of sporting talent, he added.

Sarmad Hafeez, Secretary to the Government, Youth Services & Sports, in his welcome address informed that more than 1000 players & officials, including 140 women and eight players aged 80 years & above from every nook and corner of the nation are competing in around 30 different categories. More than 500 TT tables are being provided to the schools to facilitate budding players, he added.

Junaid Azim Mattu, Mayor SMC; K Pole, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; Sujit Kumar, DIG CRPF Srinagar; Sh Mohammad Ajaz, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar; Sh. Rakesh Balwal, SSP Srinagar; Subash Chander Chhibber, Director Youth Services & Sports; Nuzhat Gul, Secretary, J&K Sports Council Ajay Sharma, Chairman of J&K Table Tennis Association and Organizing Secretary of the Championship, besides senior officers, members of sports associations, prominent sports personalities, and sports persons in large numbers were present on the occasion.

4 earthquakes jolt...

degrees north and longitude 75.58 degrees east at a depth of 10 km.

The second earthquake of 2.6 magnitude occurred 9.5 km north east of Doda in Jammu region at 3.21 am, they said. The quake hit at latitude 33.23 degrees north and longitude 75.56 degrees east at a depth of 5 km.

The third quake of 2.8 magnitude occurred 29 km east of Udhampur in Jammu region at 3.44 am on Tuesday, they said. The quake hit at latitude 32.89 degrees north and longitude 75.45 degrees east at a depth of 10 km.

The fourth earthquake of 2.9 magnitude occurred 26 km south east of Udhampur at 8.03 am, they said. It occurred at latitude 32.83 degrees north and longitude 75.40 degrees east at a depth of 5 km.

269 new COVID...

The death toll due to the virus was 4,779 as no fresh death was reported from the union territory, the officials said.

There are 2,213 active cases of the disease in the union territory, while the number of recoveries has reached 4,69,452, they said.

The officials said there were 51 confirmed cases of mucormycosis (black fungus). Meanwhile, Ladakh has reported seven new cases of coronavirus, taking the infection tally to 29,158, officials said.

Ten patients, including eight from Leh and two from Kargil, were cured and discharged from hospitals, they said.

With this, the total recoveries stand at 28,858, they said.

Of the new cases, six were reported from Leh and one from Kargil, officials said. So far, 229 people have succumbed to COVID-19 in Ladakh. Of these, 169 deaths were reported from Leh and 60 from Kargil, according to the officials.

The number of active COVID-19 cases has gone up to 71 in Ladakh -- 64 from Leh and 7 from Kargil.

BJP leader found...

SSP said. Raj's body was handed over his family and it was cremated, police said. Raj's family alleged that he was murdered and demanded that the government should provide justice to them. Many BJP leaders, who visited Raj's home, also demanded a probe into his death.

Fix target of...

beneficiaries in rural and far flung areas. He advised them to culminate it at Panchayat level simultaneously with 'Back to Village' program so that the coverage of beneficiaries percolates down to each Panchayat.

He also reviewed the progress made under respective employment schemes extended by different departments and targets set for them earlier. He implored upon them to regularly review their progress and take instant measures for achieving their targets well on time.

The Chief Secretary was informed that under PMEGP the Department of Industries & Commerce has cleared some 1379 cases sanctioning an amount of Rs 5669.00 lakhs with potential employment generation for 5291 persons. Similarly KVIB had cleared 4462 cases sanctioning Rs 9512.30 lakhs generating employment for more than 35000 persons.

Moreover it was revealed that JKRLM has sanctioned 5400 cases amounting Rs 10400.00 lakhs to 10800 beneficiaries. Under PMEGP (16931 cases), NRLM 2879 cases, NULM (871 cases), JKREGP (447 cases), PMWMY (482 cases), CCS for Artisans and Weavers (1312 cases) has been disbursed by the banks with a total amount of Rs 52580.92 lakhs, as was given out in the meeting.

The meeting was further apprised that the Departments of Labour & Employment, H&UD, Handicrafts & Handloom, Women Development Corporation has sponsored thousands of cases. In the same way many more cases were sponsored under Himayat and by JK SC, ST & OBC Corporation benefitting thousands of poor and marginalized people throughout the length and breadth of J&K.

Chug slams Farooq...

are still playing the same anti-national game which would in the long run harm the interest of people of the union territory," tweeted Chug.

"Voting is a Constitutional right of a person who belongs to the state and there is no reason that 'Abdullahs or Muftis' should be barred from it", he added.

"Farooq Abdullah had withheld the voting rights of the people. Farooq Abdullah and Mehmoodji are spreading the poison of local and non-locals. The citizens of India have now got their right to vote while under your leadership they were left for terrorists from Afghanistan and ISI and were given the title of refugees," he added.

He also stressed that the President of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Farooq Abdullah would be given voting rights across various regions in the country as a citizen of India and he thus questioned the credibility of his 'non-local voters' remarks.

The BJP secretary's remarks came as an all-party meeting was held at the National Conference president Farooq Abdullah's residence in Srinagar over the "registration of new voters in Jammu and Kashmir. PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti also present for the meeting.

Benami Act 2016...

continued presence of an unconstitutional law on the statute book does not prevent it from holding that such unconstitutional laws cannot enure to the benefit of or be utilised to retroactively amend laws to cure existing constitutional defects.

"In view of the fact that this Court has already held that the criminal provisions under the 1988 Act were arbitrary and incapable of application, the law through the 2016 amendment could not retroactively apply for confiscation of those transactions entered into between September 5, 1988, to October 25, 2016, as the same would tantamount to punitive punishment, in the absence of any other form of punishment," a bench headed by Chief Justice N V Ramana said.

The verdict came on the appeal of the Centre challenging the Calcutta High Court

judgement in which it was held that the amendment made in the 1988 Act in 2016 would be applicable with prospective effect.

The centre had contended that the 2016 Act would be applicable retrospectively.

The 1988 Act was made to prohibit Benami transactions and the right to recover property that is held to be 'benami'.

"It is in this unique circumstance that confiscation contemplated under the period between September 5, 1988, and October 25, 2016, would characterise itself as punitive if such confiscation is allowed retroactively," the bench, also comprising Justices Krishna Murari and Hima Kohli, said in its 96-page judgement.

The apex court said that the legislature has the power to enact retroactive/retrospective civil legislation under the Constitution.

However, Article 20(1) mandates that no law mandating a punitive provision can be enacted retrospectively, it said.

"Section 3 (criminal provision) read with Section 2(a) and Section 5 (confiscation proceedings) of the 1988 Act are overly broad, disproportionately harsh, and operate without adequate safeguards in place.

Such provisions were stillborn law and never utilized in the first place. In this light, this Court finds that Sections 3 and 5 of the 1988 Act were unconstitutional from their inception," the bench said.

The top court said that the taint of Benami transactions is not restricted to the person who is entering into the aforesaid transaction, rather it attaches itself to the property perpetually and extends itself to all proceeds arising from such a property, unless the defence of innocent ownership is established.

"When such a taint is being created not on the individual, but on the property itself, a retroactive law would characterise itself as punitive for condemning the proceeds of sale which may also involve legitimate means of the addition of wealth," it said.

Concerning the provision of forfeiture under Section 5 of the 2016 Act, the top court said being punitive in nature, can only be applied prospectively and not retroactively.

"As this Court is not concerned with the constitutionality of such independent forfeiture proceedings contemplated under the 2016 Amendment Act on the other grounds, the aforesaid questions are left open to be adjudicated in appropriate proceedings," the bench said.

TADA Court issues...

not possible as there is already a High court order that all accused should attend court through virtual mode only. Pertinent to mention here that Malik has refused legal aid and was insisting for physical appearance.

Policeman kills pregnant...

Police Lines Kathua and was on leave for the past three days, brutally killed his wife Asha Devi (32), a mother of two daughters, following an argument over some family matter, the officials said.

The SPO fled the scene before the neighbours arrived, they said, adding some agitated people torched his house before the situation was brought under control by police. The officials said the woman was eight months pregnant and her baby also died in her womb.

All political parties...

against any schemes..." the bench said. During the hearing, as soon as senior advocate P Wilson commenced submitting on behalf of the DMK, the bench referred to some statements of party leaders and came down on them.

Wilson (senior advocate P Wilson, counsel for DMK), I am sorry to say this. I wanted to say so many things. But I am not saying so being the Chief Justice of India. The party and the minister which he (a lawyer) is talking about...I don't think that wisdom only belongs to a particular person or a particular party. We are also responsible..., the CJI said.

At the outset, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, whose assistance has been sought by the bench, mooted the idea of setting up a panel of the statutory finance commission.

He said as per the Fiscal Management Responsibility Act, if some freebies are given, then the benefit cannot go beyond 3 per cent.

This issue needs to be dealt with through a system and not politically. If states exceed allocation it will result in beyond 3 per cent deficit and if the deficit exceeds then the next year's allocation can be reduced by the Finance Commission, he said.

The bench took note of the suggestions and said that the debate was necessary and asked whether judicial scrutiny was permissible if there were a central law on it.

Sibal said that the judiciary has the power to test the validity of any law.

"For example, some states give cycles to the poor and women. It is reported that bicycles have improved lifestyle. The problem is which is a freebie and which can be said to be a beneficiary for the upliftment of a person. For a rural poverty-stricken person, his livelihood may depend on that small boat or bicycle. We cannot sit here and argue on this, the CJI said.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said that nobody has an issue with the social welfare schemes and the difficulty arose when a party distributed non-essentials such as television sets etc.

He referred to the promise of free electricity by some parties and said that some of the PSUs are bleeding financially.

"The voter has a right to make an informed choice. If you are giving him false promises which your finances do not permit or you are destroying the economy... It is a serious issue leading to disastrous economic consequences," the law officer said.

Senior advocate Vikas Singh, Vijay Hansaria, and Gopal Sankarnarayanan appeared for PIL petitioner Ashwini Upadhyay.

Singh said the political parties were deflecting the issue and trying to make a legal problem into a political one.

Political parties were hijacking the issue by calling it social welfare, he said, adding that in reality, it was an issue about fiscal discipline and if it is not dealt with effectively then the country can go bankrupt.

He gave the illustration of Sri Lanka.

"No one is saying that we should not give free water and electricity. What we are saying is that there is already governance going on in a state. You are contesting for elections there and saying I will provide additional benefits. These additional benefits will require fiscal support. Where will you get the money from? The voter has a right to know, the taxpayer should know that this money is going from my pocket. Election manifestos must provide where the money will be coming from, he said.

Senior advocate AM Singhvi, appearing for the Aam Aadmi Party, said that the PIL petitioner was seeking a gag order without saying so.

AAP said that targeting and regulating electoral speeches will amount to nothing more than a wild-goose chase if the concerns are over the fiscal deficit due to the promises of freebies made during polls by political parties.

The top court was hearing a PIL filed by lawyer Ashwini Upadhyay, which opposes the practice of political parties promising freebies during elections and seeks the Election Commission to invoke its powers to freeze their election symbols and cancel their registration.

3 J&K health...

the LaQshya certification for next three years under National Health Mission for further strengthening, following which there will be re-inspection.

Under the guidance of Director Health Services Jammu, Dr. Salim ur Rehman, Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Harbakhsh Singh the team comprising Medical Officer UPHC Shastri Nagar, Dr. Ila Gupta, RMNCH Coordinator Dr. Roli Sharma, DEIC Manager Geetanjali Jasrotia and DPM Jammu Dr. Esha Kohli has been successful in achieving National Quality Assurance Certification (NQAS) for UPHC Shastri Nagar Jammu. Staff of the health institution put in sincere efforts to achieve the NQAS Certification with overall score of 91.4 % which is appreciable. CMO Jammu congratulated all the team members and staff for this remarkable achievement which has raised the bar of quality and standards for other institutions to follow. This achievement would be an inspiration to improve health care services for the public.

Administrative Secretary, Health & Medical Education, Bhupinder Kumar while congratulating the staff of the concerned certified hospitals for this achievement, urged all Medical Colleges, District Hospitals and CHCs of the J&K UT to work for implementation of NQAS and LaQshya standards for improved patient care.

Elaborating on the achievement, Mission Director, NHM, Yasin M. Choudhary said that the certification has been accorded to these facilities in recognition of the "high standards of quality and performance maintained by the hospital" and informed that under NHM all efforts are being made to strengthen the health care delivery system to the utmost satisfaction of general public.

ED registers money...

in two to three days instead of ten days he believed earlier.

The AAP supremo was speaking at a townhall programme in Bhavnagar.

Sisodia, who was also present at the event, claimed that the growing enthusiasm among the people of Gujarat in supporting the AAP in the state was the reason behind the CBI action against him.

Addressing events in Hamirpur and Una districts to celebrate the upcoming 75th anniversary of the formation of Himachal Pradesh, Minister Thakur said Sisodia has failed to respond on the "liquor scam".

"The Aam Aadmi Party is a party of liars and whatever Manish Sisodia has said about the BJP is completely false. The BJP did not give him any offer," he said, responding to queries by reporters in Hamirpur on allegations by Delhi's deputy

chief minister.

Sisodia had linked the recent raid at his home in connection with the alleged excise claim to his "refusal to accept a BJP offer that he would be made the Delhi chief minister if he quits Kejriwal's party.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) alleged that the AAP government in Delhi ignored infractions in the implementation of the excise policy and recommendations of an expert committee set up to reform liquor trade in the national capital.

It said the AAP leaders had been pitting each other on the back and digressing from the questions raised on the alleged malpractices.

According to the Delhi excise policy, producers, retailers and distributors of liquor cannot be the same. Also, there cannot be common directors or shareholders in different companies bidding for licenses, BJP MP Sudhanshu Trivedi told a news conference in Delhi.

The ED, during its probe, will analyse if individuals and companies who were involved in the policy-making of this scheme and related entities generated any "proceeds of crime under the definition of PMLA" and if there was any possible creation of illegal or benami assets, sources said.

The agency has powers to attach such assets and question, arrest and prosecute those who indulge in the offence of money laundering.

The Delhi excise policy scheme came under the scanner after Delhi Lt Governor V K Saxena last month recommended a CBI probe into alleged irregularities in the implementation of Delhi's Excise Policy 2021-22