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HAL developing long...

an estimated cost of over USD 3 billion.
In November 2020, the Navy got two non-weaponised MQ-9B Sea Guardian drones from the US on lease.

Restrictions in Srinagar...

procession citing incidents of violence in the past.
Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Srinagar, Rakesh Balwal, said restrictions on the movement and assembly of people were imposed in eight police station areas of the Srinagar city to maintain law and order.

Restrictions were imposed in jurisdictions of 8 police stations of Srinagar city near the one prohibited route. This was done so as to ensure that law and order situation doesn't arise, he said.

Officials said security forces personnel were deployed in strength to prevent any untoward incident.

Shops and other business establishments in the areas, where restrictions are in place, were shut, while public transport was off the roads, they said.

District authorities decided that traditional processions related to Muharram on Guru Bazar towards Buchwara and Abi Guzar towards Zadibal routes respectively will not be allowed keeping in view public security and law and order, the officials said.

Citing past incidents of violence, the district magistrate, Srinagar, in an order said law and order and security concern is the top most priority of the government keeping in view the larger public interest and safety of its citizens.

The order said it has been witnessed from past instances and upon analysis of reports and data from different security agencies with regard to incidents which have occurred during Muharram, it is evident that not only there has been breach in peace and law and order; but also there have been sectarian clashes which have resulted in breach of peace and threat to maintenance of law and order and also resulted in damage to public property and injuries to civilians and security forces as well.

The traditional Muharram procession, to mark the eighth day of Muharram mourning period, used to pass through these areas, but have been banned since the eruption of militancy in 1990, as authorities maintain that the gatherings have been used for propagating separatist politics.

Meanwhile, the SSP Srinagar regretted that general public and tourists had to face certain inconvenience, but said this was done for larger public good of ensuring a peaceful day devoid of any scope whatsoever of communal/sectarian clashes or altercation with police/forces .

SSP Balwal said some youth sporadically tried to come out individually at certain places, but they were taken into preventive custody without using any force and without using tear gas etc.

Neither any anti-national slogan nor any communal slogan was heard today. Thus no case was registered today unlike last year's Muharram, he said.

The SSP said the restrictions of travel in those areas were removed later in the evening. The overall situation remained completely peaceful in Srinagar city, he said.

JKHB approves Satellite...

provide about 150 shops and other commercial spaces that would open up livelihood opportunities for unemployed youth in a highly sought-after commercial area in the heart of Jammu city.

In an important relief to the plot owners of the colonies developed by the Housing Board, JDA and SDA, the Board approved a uniform policy for settling plot-related issues in all the agencies of the H&UDD. To upgrade the infrastructure in the colonies of the Housing Board, the Board also approved an action plan for the current year for various upgradation works for Rs 27 crores. The Board directed the Managing Director to get the works completed in an expeditious manner.

‘Hybrid terrorist’ arrested...

arrested militant, they said.
"On a specific information, one Hybrid terrorist of LeT namely Arshid Ahmad Bhat, son of Abdul Kareem Bhat, resident of Sangam Budgam arrested by a joint team of Srinagar Police & 2RR at Lawaypura," the Srinagar police said in a tweet.

Five pistols, five pistol magazines, 50 pistol rounds and two hand grenades were recovered from the militant, the police said. A case has been registered in the matter, they said.

Chugh exhorts J&K...

Those present in meeting included J&K BJP president Ravinder Raina, MP Jugal Kishore Sharma, former dy CM Nirmal Singh, former Dy. CM Kavinder Gupta, former president Sat Sharma, General Secretaries Vibodh Gupta & Dr. Devinder Manyal, Priya Sethi and Harinder Gupta.

Tarun Chugh said it was the prime minister's vision to see national flag on every house in J&K and for this the BJP workers must work day and night." It is time the Muftis and Abdullahs, who have been surviving due to the support of anti-national forces are also shown their place in J&K," he added.

Ravinder Raina said that J&K residents have adopted the 'Har Ghar Tiranga Abhiyaan' by their hearts. He said that today every resident of Jammu & Kashmir is hoisting Tiranga along the length and breadth of the region. He maintained that the sight of Tiranga fills our hearts with pride and joy and the youth of Jammu as well as Kashmir are enthusiastically promoting the 'Har Ghar Tiranga Abhiyaan' on the call of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

3 IAS, eight...

full time basis. According to another order, Preeti Sharma, JKAS, Chief Executive Officer, Katra Development Authority, has been transferred and posted as Project Officer, Wage Employment (ACD), Jammu; Gias-ul-Haq, JKAS, Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Gool, holding additional charge of Sub-Registrar, Gool, has been transferred and posted as Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Ramban; Sartaj Hussain, JKAS, Deputy Secretary, Industries and Commerce Department, has been transferred and posted as Deputy Director, Estates, Kashmir; Parvinder Kour, JKAS, Deputy Director, Geology and Mining, Jammu, has been transferred and posted as Secretary, Jammu Municipal Corporation; Parveen Akhter, JKAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the GAD has been posted as Deputy Director (Administration) in the Directorate of Handicrafts and Handloom, Jammu; Nagesh Singh, JKAS, ETO, City Excise Range (North), Jammu, has been transferred and posted as Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Samba; Noor-ud-din Bhat, JKAS, CTO (Enforcement), Central, has been transferred and posted as Deputy District Election Officer, Bandipore; and Gurpinder Singh, State Taxes Officer in the office of Deputy Commissioner (Stamps), Jammu, has been transferred and posted as Deputy District Election Officer, Poonch.

Protesters block highway after pregnant woman dies post delivery in Rajouri

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A pregnant woman died post delivery at the Government Medical College (GMC) hospital in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district which led to hundreds of people staging a protest alleging negligence by doctors, officials said on Sunday.

Vandna Devi (32) delivered a healthy baby through normal delivery at the hospital late on Saturday but died due to some complications during treatment, they said.

Her relatives accused the doctors of negligence and blocked the Jammu-Rajouri highway, demanding a probe and appropriate action against the erring medical staff.

The protesters dispersed after senior police and administration officials visited the scene and assured people of a magisterial probe and legal action, they said.

708 fresh COVID cases in J&K, 23 in Ladakh

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday reported 708 fresh COVID-19 cases that took its infection tally to 4,69,749, officials here said.

The death toll remained unchanged at 4,776, they said.

While 65 fresh cases were reported from the Jammu division, 643 were from the Kashmir valley, the officials said.

There are 5,304 active COVID-19 cases in the union territory, they said.

Meanwhile, Ladakh has recorded 23 fresh Covid cases that took the infection tally to 28,983, officials said.

Ladakh has so far recorded 228 Covid-related fatalities since its outbreak, of which Leh accounts for the highest 168 deaths followed by 60 in Kargil, they said.

A total of 3,294 people, including 2,430 air travellers, were screened for COVID-19 in the twin districts on Saturday, and 23 of them 21 in Leh and two in Kargil tested positive, officials said.

The total number of active cases in Ladakh stands at 110 -- 97 in Leh and 13 in Kargil, they said.

Ten patients were discharged in Leh after recovering from the infection, taking the overall recoveries to 28,645, officials said.

So far, 4,59,669 people have recovered from the viral disease, they said.

NITI meet: Modi...

conference. "...states suggested that if they are helped in a particular way, they can go for diversification in a faster manner...Two states mentioned about making minimum support price (MSP) for pulses and oilseeds more effective," said Chand.

The Prime Minister, in his remarks, raised the issue of rapid urbanisation, saying it can become India's strength instead of weakness by leveraging technology to ensure ease of living, transparent service delivery, and improvement in the quality of life for every citizen.

He also appreciated the collective efforts of all the states in the spirit of cooperative federalism in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Every State played a crucial role according to its strength and contributed to India's fight against Covid. This led to India emerging as an example for the developing nations to look up to as a global leader," he said.

The Prime Minister underlined the need for collective action to increase collection of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), saying though the realisation has improved, "the potential is much more... and it is crucial for strengthening our economic position and becoming a USD 5 trillion economy."

In his concluding remarks, Modi said the NITI Aayog will study the states' concerns, challenges, and best practices and subsequently plan the way forward.

The issues discussed in this meeting will define the national priorities for the next 25 years, he said, adding, "the seeds we sow today will define the fruits reaped by India in 2047."

The Prime Minister also spoke about India's G20 presidency in 2023, saying "we should develop a mass movement around G20. This will allow us to identify the best talent available in the country."

He further said there should be a dedicated team for G20 in the states to derive the maximum possible benefit from the initiative.

G20 is a grouping of developed and developing nations.

This was the first physical meeting of the Governing Council since the onset of the pandemic, with the 2021 meeting held via video conferencing.

The meeting was attended by 23 chief ministers, 3 lieutenant governors and 2 administrators and Union ministers and moderated by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

Telangana Chief Minister K C Rao boycotted the meeting, while his Bihar counterpart Nitish Kumar could not attend as he was recovering from Covid.

The Governing Council discussed four key agenda items -- crop diversification and achieving self-sufficiency in pulses, oilseeds and other agri-commodities; implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) in school education; implementation of NEP in higher education; and urban governance.

Speaking at the meeting, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said, "The G20 Presidency presents a great opportunity and a great responsibility. For the first time in the history of G20, India will host the G20 meetings over the year, not only in Delhi, but in every State and Union Territory."

Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan spoke about the NEP and highlighted initiatives undertaken to boost learning outcomes, capacity-building of teachers, and skilling.

NTI Aayog Vice Chairman Suman Bery told reporters that the meeting also discussed the issue of timely release of funds to states and financing of municipal corporations.

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel demanded a five-year extension for the compensation paid to states for revenue shortfall due to GST implementation and called for revising the rates of royalty for coal and other major minerals.

Noting that Odisha is impacted by natural disasters almost every year, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik urged the Centre to make it a special focus state and allocate funds for disaster proofing.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy said his government has been according top priority to the agriculture sector as its share in the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) was 35 per cent.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said the Centre should not go against the federal structure of the Constitution and legislation on subjects listed in the concurrent list should be carried out in consultation with the states.

Cop injured in...

a particular area, a group of people pelted stones at them. Two rounds were fired in retaliation to restore order," the officer said, adding selection grade constable Kuldeep Kumar suffered minor injuries in the incident.

He said a case was registered against the stone pelters at Lakhampur police station. Search for the other attackers is on, he said.

Rousing welcome to...

of locals and officials.

While speaking on the occasion, Mahendra Giri briefly gave the religious and historic importance of the Amarnathji Yatra and Shrine.

He added that devotees show satisfaction over the arrangements made by the UT government of J&K for smooth conduct of SANJY and hospitality of kashmiri people have always made the yatra enriching spiritually.

While answering the questions of the media, Mahant Mahendra Giri said that for prosperity to prevail, peace is the prerequisite condition and appealed to the people to shower love on everyone irrespective of creed, colour and caste.

The officers of District administration, officials of the Health, MC Mattan, Information, Revenue and others were present on the occasion. President Mattan Tirith Trust, Ashok Sidha was also present in the ceremonies at Mattan.

Later on, the Chadi Mubarak was taken to Shri Gorishankar Temple, Pahalgam from Mattan where it shall stay for a night and leave towards Holy Cave tomorrow, halting for a night at each Yatra Station.

Meanwhile, The Amarnath yatra remained suspended from the Bhagwati Nagar base camp here for the second day owing to a sharp decline in the arrival of pilgrims, officials said.

However, a fresh batch of 378 pilgrims left the base camp to pay obeisance at the shrine of Buddha Amarnath in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir, they added.

The 43-day annual pilgrimage to the 3,880-metre-high cave shrine commenced on June 30 from the twin routes -- the traditional 48-km Nunwan-Pahalgam route in Anantnag and the 14-km shorter Baltal route in Ganderbal -- and is scheduled to end on August 11 on the occasion of "Shravan Purnima" coinciding with "Raksha Bandhan".

"The Amarnath yatra remained suspended from Jammu due to the non-availability of adequate numbers of pilgrims.... We might send one more batch before the culmination of the yatra, depending on the availability of pilgrims," an official said.

The officials said the Bhagwati Nagar base camp is wearing a deserted look for the last few days, prompting the community kitchen operators to wind up their services.

On August 2, Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha had appealed to the pilgrims to visit the cave shrine before August 5 in view of a fore-

cast of inclement weather and more rains after that.

Nearly three lakh pilgrims visited the cave shrine, housing a naturally formed ice-shivling, this year.

Meanwhile, the 11-day Buddha Amarnath pilgrimage is scheduled to conclude on August 8 with the departure of the "Chari Mubarak" from Shri Dashnami Akhara in Poonch.

There were 90 women and two children in the fresh batch of pilgrims that left the Bhagwati Nagar base camp on Sunday morning, the officials said.

They said the pilgrimage is progressing smoothly and thousands of devotees have so far visited the shrine since the commencement of the yatra on July 29.

Not Dragon or...

of harming the Indian interest has not changed even after seven decades of independence. Memories are still fresh of how the opposition-the Congress, Communists and others tried to put the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force in dock over successes in Doklam and Galwan or for that matter surgical strikes in Pakistan occupied Kashmir on 29 September 2016 and later Balakote Air Strike. Nehru-Gandhi seion, Rahul Gandhi and his Congress is not missing any opportunity to seek evidence of the country's valour but also cornering India in the national and international forums over, what they say, the nation's submission to China in eastern Ladakh. And what hypocrisy and duplicity. During the Doklam stand-off Rahul Gandhi had a meeting with the Chinese ambassador in India, which he first denied but shamelessly acknowledged when the envoy himself confirmed that the then Congress Vice President had come to meet him. The worst has been the role of the Communists, radicalised Jihadis, pseudo seculars and liberals in India. Now, it is for Modi's New India to treat the traitors with iron hand.

Israeli airstrike kills...

and the risk of the cross-border fighting turning into a full-fledged war remained high. Gaza's ruling Hamas group, which fought an 11-day war with Israel in May 2021, appeared to stay on the sidelines for now, possibly because it fears Israeli reprisals and undoing economic understandings with Israel, including Israeli work permits for thousands of Gaza residents, that bolster its control. The Islamic Jihad commander, Khaled Mansour, was killed in an airstrike on an apartment building in the Rafah refugee camp in southern Gaza late Saturday.

Two other militants and five civilians were also killed in the attack, bringing the Palestinian death toll to 31 since the start of the Israeli offensive on Friday. Among the dead were six children and four women. The Palestinian Health Ministry said more than 250 people were wounded since Friday.

Israel says some of the deaths were caused by errant rocket fire, including one incident in the Jebaliya refugee camp in northern Gaza in which six Palestinians were killed Saturday. On Sunday, a projectile hit a home in the same area of Jebaliya, killing two men. Palestinians held Israel responsible, while Israel said it was investigating whether the area was hit by an errant rocket.

Mansour, the Islamic Jihad commander for southern Gaza, was in the apartment of a member of the group when the missile struck, flattening the three-story building and badly damaging nearby houses.

Suddenly, without warning, the house next to us was bombed and everything became black and dusty with smoke in the blink of an eye, said Wissam Jouda, who lives next to the targeted building.

Ahmed al-Qaissi, another neighbour, said his wife and son were among the wounded, suffering shrapnel injuries. To make way for rescue workers, al-Qaissi agreed to have part of his house demolished.

As a funeral for Mansour began in the Gaza Strip on Sunday afternoon, the Israeli military said it was striking suspected Islamic Jihad rocket launch posts. Smoke could be seen from the strikes as thumps from the strikes' explosions rattled Gaza. The Rafah strike was the deadliest so far in the current round of fighting, which was initiated by Israel on Friday with the targeted killing of Islamic Jihad's commander for northern Gaza.

Israel has said it took action against the militant group because of concrete threats of an imminent attack, but has not provided details. Caretaker Prime Minister Yair Lapid, who is an experienced diplomat but untested in overseeing a war, unleashed the offensive less than three months before a general election in which he is campaigning to keep the job.

In a statement Sunday, Lapid said the military would continue to strike targets in Gaza in a pinpoint and responsible way in order to reduce to a minimum the harm to noncombatants. Lapid said the strike that killed Mansour was an extraordinary achievement. The operation will continue as long as necessary, Lapid said.

Israel estimates its airstrikes have killed about 15 militants.

Islamic Jihad has fewer fighters and supporters than Hamas, and little is known about its weapons arsenal. Both groups call for Israel's destruction, but have different priorities, with Hamas constrained by the demands of governing.

The Israeli army said militants in Gaza fired some 580 rockets toward Israel. The army said its air defenses had intercepted many of them, with two of those shot down being fired toward Jerusalem. Islamic Jihad has fewer fighters and supporters than Hamas. Air raid sirens sounded in the Jerusalem area for the first time Sunday since last year's Israel-Hamas war.

Jerusalem is typically a flash point during periods of cross-border fighting between Israel and Gaza. On Sunday, hundreds of Jews, including firebrand ultra-nationalist lawmaker Itamar Ben Gvir, visited a sensitive holy site in Jerusalem, known to Jews as the Temple Mount and to Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary. The visit, under heavy police protection, ended without incident, police said.

Such demonstrative visits by Israeli hard-liners seeking to underscore Israeli claims of sovereignty over contested Jerusalem have sparked violence in the past. The holy site sits on the fault line of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and is central to rival narratives of Palestinians and Israeli Jews.

In Palestinian cities and towns in the West Bank, Israeli security forces said they detained 19 people on suspicion of belonging to the Islamic Jihad during overnight raids.

RS members to...

successor Jagdeep Dhankhar will take the oath of office on August 11. There will be no sitting of the House on Tuesday and Thursday on account of Muharram and Raksha Bandhan, sources said.

They added that there will be another farewell function for Naidu at the GMC Balayogi Auditorium on Monday evening on behalf of all the members of the House. The prime minister will present a memento to Naidu while the deputy chairman of Rajya Sabha will deliver the farewell address, they said.

A publication chronicling the tenure of Naidu as the vice president and chairman of Rajya Sabha will be released by the prime minister. This will be followed by dinner. A day after he was declared elected as the 14th vice president, Dhankhar met Naidu here on Sunday. Dhankhar and his wife Sudesh were welcomed at the Upa-Rashtrapati Nivas by Naidu and his spouse Usha Naidu. Naidu gifted his successor an 'ang vastram' (stole). Sources said their meeting lasted over 30 minutes and later Naidu gave a tour of the residence and the secretariat to Dhankhar.

Naidu also introduced Dhankhar to the secretariat staff.

Army launches pre-recruitment training for Agniveer aspirants in J&K

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Army has initiated a six-week-long pre-recruitment training for Agniveer aspirants in the Ramban district of Jammu and Kashmir, an army officer said on Sunday.

The training capsule, being organised under the aegis of the Army's counter insurgency force (Delta) at remote Buzla and Mohabal villages, commenced on August 6 and will conclude on September 20, the officer said.

"The six week-long training capsule is aimed at preparing young Army aspirants for physical, medical and written tests. Aspirants on the inaugural day were explained about the Agnipath scheme in detail," he said.

He said dedicated and experienced staff from the Army will be preparing raw youth to meet standard requirements in making of an Agniveer, adding that a large number of youth from the remote villages have competed in the qualifying rounds.

"Huge crowds of youth thronged the preliminary screening tests, making it evident that Agniveer scheme is finding substance among masses as it is beneficial to both categories, one who continues to be a regular soldier and also to those who wish to seek exit," he said.

The officer further said the ethics and discipline imparted during training will become core values of Agniveers that will stick with them lifelong, adding that their positive outlook will help immensely in nation-building.

A total of 43 eligible youths have been selected for the training, he added.

Announced on June 14, the Agnipath scheme, provides for the recruitment of youth between the age of 17-and-a-half and 21 years for four years with a provision to retain 25 per cent of them for 15 more years.

