

Dr Jitendra addresses G20 Ministerial Meet, reiterates India's crusade against corruption

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KOLKATA: Addressing the G20 Ministerial meet here today, India's Minister In-charge Personnel and Administrative Reforms, Dr Jitendra Singh reiterated India's crusade against corruption and underlined Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for zero tolerance against corruption. He also recalled the 9 point agenda on fugitive economic offenders presented by PM Modi to G20 in 2018.

The Minister said, the G20 Anti-Corruption Ministerial meeting is an opportunity for all of us to demonstrate collective and strong political will to lead the global fight against corruption. India's zero tolerance approach for corruption also guides our approach towards international cooperation for combating corruption, he said.

The Kolkata Ministerial comes on top of the 3rd and final meeting of G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group (ACWG) under India's Presidency held from 9-11 August 2023 in Kolkata.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, "I am impressed by the efforts put in by G20 ACWG members in updating the guides related to asset recovery and mutual legal assistance which will enhance the utility of existing knowledge resources. I also welcome work towards finalisation of the Accountability Report on a very important subject of Mutual Legal Assistance.



Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh addressing the G20 Ministerial Meet in Kolkata on Saturday.

Its findings and recommendations would be very useful in improving and strengthening cooperation between countries in combating transnational crime and maintaining global security. These are important steps towards dealing with the menace of Fugitive Economic Offenders," he said.

India's Minister said, fugitive economic offenders pose a significant challenge to both national and international law enforcement as they are able to exploit gaps and differences between legal and financial systems of countries to evade justice.

"Fugitive Economic offenders commit grave economic crimes in their home country and flee to another country to avoid arrest, prosecution, or the execution of their sentence. Economic crimes include a wide range of illegal activities such as fraud, tax evasion, money laundering, and embezzlement. Their actions undermine the rule

of law, hamper economic development, and often contribute to corruption," he said.

Dr Jitendra Singh referred to the 9 point agenda presented by PM Modi. "It called for strong and active cooperation across G20 countries in legal processes and mechanisms to deny safe haven to all fugitive economic offenders, effective implementation of international commitments, establishment of international cooperation for timely and comprehensive exchange of information and formulation of a standard definition of fugitive economic offenders, development of a set of commonly agreed and standardised procedures for dealing with fugitive economic offenders by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), setting up of a common platform for sharing experiences and best practices and initiation of work on locating properties of economic for its recovery," he said.

Lauding the G20 ACWG for publishing an important G20 Action paper on International Cooperation dealing with Economic Crime, Offenders and Recovery of Stolen Assets in 2020, Dr Jitendra Singh said, it underscored the commitment of G20 countries to make efforts towards the denial of safe havens and facilitate the return of such fugitives and recovery of stolen assets.

"Taking forward the momentum, G20 ACWG under India's Presidency has been successful in building consensus on important issues related to strengthening law enforcement cooperation, information sharing and asset recovery mechanisms. We, as the G20 need to be bold in our ambition and work together to address the lacunes in international cooperation to combat corruption. I am sure that G20 members will take concrete steps to implement these principles to enhance the effectiveness of extradition

mechanisms, and to facilitate better tracking of cross-border financial flows which will deter fugitive economic offenders," he said.

Dr Jitendra Singh said technology, transparency, and public participation form the bedrock of our anti-corruption efforts.

"Corruption can be countered by harnessing technology to enhance transparency and by fostering a culture of active citizen participation. I welcome the efforts of all G20 members to highlight the role of Information and Communication technology in preventing and combating corruption. By modernising governance, improving efficiency, and enhancing service delivery, these tools offer pathways to minimise corrupt practices," he said.

Welcoming the consensus reached on principles regarding promoting integrity and transparency of specialised agencies, India's anti-graft minister hoped it will help enhance the independence, transparency, and capabilities of such agencies and institutions.

Dr Jitendra Singh said the fight against corruption is all the more important in our times since the world is confronted with unparalleled and diverse challenges today, including COVID pandemic, supply chain disruptions, geo-political conflicts, and climate-related incidents.



Kashmir potter bags bulk order of earthen lamps for I-Day celebrations

Oil lamps will light up at Zabarwan Park along Dal Lake today evening

■ SHAKEELA ANDRABI

SRINAGAR: Twenty-eight-year old Kashmiri Commerce Graduate Potter Mohammad Umar is working enthusiastically and tirelessly at his Nishat unit to meet the huge order of 5,000 to 10,000 earthen lamps that would lit under the initiative 'Meri Mitti Mera Desh' in government offices to celebrate the 77th Independence day in Kashmir.

Potter Mohammad Umar, has bagged an order for 10,000 lamps from the Jammu and Kashmir administration for Independence Day celebrations. This is the biggest order; Umar has received in recent years. Last year on the eve of Deepawali, Umar received order of 20,000 earthen lamps. "My family has been doing pottery for generations and I have been doing it since childhood. Ahead of Independence Day, we received a bulk order for earthen lamps. I am very delighted to have received this order as it has generated a huge income for us," Umar told Initially, the administration had placed an order for 5,000 lamps but then they doubled it, he added.

"We have made more than 9,000 lamps and hopefully all lamps will be ready in the next couple of days," he added.

This "unexpected order" is what is keeping Umar's seven-member team busy these days. Umar said, pottery art is on the decline but when the oil lamps will be lit in front of the Tricolour; it will help create awareness about it and generate a demand for earthen products.

"A potter makes gold out of clay and now authorities are working to revive this craft by launching a number of schemes. In Kashmir, we do not get such big orders except for Deepawali," he added. The oil lamps will lit on the evening of August 13 at Zabarwan Park along the banks of the famous Dal Lake in Srinagar.

Another potter who works with Umar, said he is very happy with the order as it will lead to motivate and attract more and more young potters for their traditional work. Officials of the Handicrafts department said, "It is very important that the government extend support to artisans. The order given to the potters is not a one-time order: We are trying to promote local souvenirs in government events and we also want that every office should proudly display the art forms of Jammu and Kashmir." Such orders are very encouraging for the artisan community," the officials said.

Jammu Police organises Tiranga Rally to celebrate Independence Day

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A Tiranga rally was organised by Jammu police on Saturday under "Meri Mitti Mera Desh" campaign to celebrate Independence Day.

The rally, flagged off by SP Headquarters Jammu Ramnish Gupta, started from Daljeet Chowk R S Pura via main market and culminated at Suchetgarh BOP Octroi.



SP Hq Jammu Ramnish Gupta and others at Tiranga rally on Saturday.

While speaking on the occasion, SP Ramnish Gupta said that the main objective of organising such programme is to bring the sense of brotherhood and nationality among the common masses as a part of Meri Mitti Mera Desh under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav so that it inspires one and all to become best performers as citizen of the country,

strengthen unity, respect those who protect the country, celebrate our heritage, remove any trace of colonial mindset and make India developed and self-reliant.

Besides Police, CRPF, BSF, SSB, CISF, BDC Chairmen, Sarpanches, Panches and people from all walks of life also participated in the rally.

Power shutdown

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Chief Engineer (Distribution) JPDCL Jammu has informed that the power supply to Ghatti Industry, Barnoti, Rajbhag, Channi, Marheen, Logate and IID Industry shall remain affected on August 13 from 6 am to 12 noon. Similarly, the power supply to Gandhi Nagar, Bahuplaza, Parts of Trikuta Nagar, Bajalta, Kuper, Kamna Shargal, Malhori Jaggir, Floura, M/C Domana, Machallian and adjoining areas shall remain affected on August 16 from 6 am to 10 am. Likewise, the power supply to Shazadpur,

Gho Manhasa, Marh, Gajansoo, Karloop, Dataryal and adjoining areas shall remain affected on August 17 from 6 am to 10 am.

Meanwhile, Executive Engineer, Elect. Division-I, JPDCL Parade, Jammu has informed that the power supply to Parade Matador Stand shall remain affected on August 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 24 from 8 am to 1 pm. Similarly, the power supply to Denis Gate shall remain affected on August 18 from 8 am to 1 pm. Likewise, the power supply to Gujjar Nagar shall remain affected on August 17 from 8 am to 1 pm.

Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav: Tourism directorate organises mega event under Meri Maati Mera Desh

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: To commemorate the celebrations of "Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav" under the initiative of "Meri Maati, Mera Desh", the Directorate of Tourism Jammu in collaboration with District Administration Jammu on Saturday organised a mega promotional event at Panchayat Kalyanpur, Jhiri.

The event was presided by Panchayat Prabhari Sunaina Sharma Mehta, Joint Director Tourism, Jammu who was joined by Sarpanch Mulkh Raj Sharma and Major Amit Pathak from the Indian Army. Under the theme

"Meri Maati Mera Desh", various activities were organized included Plantation Drive, Symposium, Painting Competition, March Past by students, cultural activities on Desh ki Maati etc. which instilled feeling of patriotism amongst the viewers. Students from Government Higher Secondary School Jhiri took part in activities with great enthusiasm to spread the message of Patriotism and Nationalism.

While addressing the gathering, Sunaina Sharma laid stress on teaching fraternity to imbibe the spirit of patriotism amongst students by



Sunaina Sharma Mehta, Joint Director Tourism, Jammu and others planting sapling.

organizing such programmes at regular intervals. She laid special emphasis on carrying out mega Plantation drives involving the young participants. She also kick started

the campaign of planting 75 plants at Panchayat level to save the environment and overcome the threat of Global Warming. She urged the PRIs and general public to partici-

pate in such events and celebrate the spirit of patriotism with zeal and enthusiasm. The meritorious students were felicitated on the occasion by presentation of Appreciation

Certificates. The function culminated with a massive rally wherein the participants chanted 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' and displayed banners on the themes of 'Meri Maati Mera Desh, Save Water Save Earth, Jal Hi Jeevan Hai, Desh ke Veero Ko Salaam', etc with loud chants of patriotism. Large number of people took part in the rally including PRI members, Army Personnel and employees from different departments besides students and teachers.

Among others present in the programme included BDO Marh Urvi Singh, Principal GHSS Jhiri Shashi Badyal, Panchayat Secretary

Rajesh Dutta besides Officers/ officials from Line Departments. At Tourist Reception Centre Jammu, Pledge taking ceremony was organized which was led by Director Tourism Jammu Sh. Vivekanand Rai and all employees of the Directorate participated in the event including Dr. Umesh Shan Deputy Director Tourism Jammu, Sugandhi Banotra Assistant Director Tourism Jammu, Ms. Ambika Bali Assistant Director Tourism Katra among other senior officers and Officials of the Department. The Directorate of Tourism Jammu also organized a massive 'Tiranga Rally' in

Samba District in collaboration with District Administration Samba which was attended by Deputy Commissioner Samba Sh. Abhishek Sharma, SSP Samba Sh. Benam Tosh, Tourist Officer Samba Muntaz Ahmed and other senior officers of the District Administration Samba.

Pertinent to mention here that all these initiatives are a part of the celebrations of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav and Meri Maati Mera Desh campaigns of the Government and the Directorate of Tourism Jammu is organizing all these events with commitment and zeal all across the Jammu region.

Unveiling the sinister terror financing scheme How Kashmir fights Pakistan's Drug Warfare

Kashmir's terrorist grip weakens as people turn away, bank accounts are frozen, and hawala networks are dismantled. Pakistan resorts to drug smuggling to fuel terror funding and unravel the valley's social fabric

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: On October 12, 2022, the State Investigating Agency (SIA) Wing of J&K Police took a significant step forward in exposing criminal enterprise in the state. Some startling details have started to come to the limelight after a case was registered under FIR No. 19/2022 U/S 21, 29 NDPS Act, Section 13, 17, 18, 39, 40 UA (P) Act, r/w Section 120-B, 121, 121-A IPC at Police Station CIK/SIA Srinagar. Upon investigation, a well-orchestrated conspiracy involving overground workers (OGWs) of proscribed terrorist organizations within and across the Line of Control (LOC) emerged. These OGWs, along with the members of such organizations and with active support from Pakistan-based agencies, have established a cross-LOC smuggling route for narcotics. The proceeds from this illegal trade are then funnelled to terrorists and OGWs, enabling them to further commit atrocities in the Union Territory (UT) of Jammu & Kashmir.

ments of narcotic substances/drugs and proceeds thereof, and on the directions of members of terrorist organizations within and across the LOC, these have been passed on to proscribed terrorist organizations in the UT of J&K for furthering terrorist and unlawful activities."

According to the officer, law enforcement searched and raided six places throughout the course of the investigation, yielding crucial evidence. A total of 19 accused individuals have been identified. Six of them are in charge of various terrorist groups with headquarters in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (POK), and the other 13 are citizens of the UT of J&K. Of these, six have been apprehended and are currently being held in judicial custody. Assets totalling Rs 569,289 across 16 accounts have been frozen in an effort to stifle their funding. Furthermore, illegal cash totalling Rs 198,800 have also been seized during the investigation.

Speaking exclusively to State Times, the Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) for Kashmir Zone, Vijay Kumar, has issued a fervent declaration that "stringent action has been taken" to curb narco-terrorism within the region. He also acknowledges that there has been

a significant recovery and that the force has achieved remarkable success, not only thwarting narco-terrorism but also upending weapon trafficking operations originating from Pakistan.

ADGP Kumar underscored the amplified scope of operations, detailing the extensive crackdown on the narco-terrorism network. The formidable clampdown has resulted in numerous arrests, executed under the stringent provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, along with the robust Prevention of Illicit Traffic (PIT) Act. According to him, the civil administration and police are making joint efforts to rehabilitate the youth ensnared in the clutches of drug abuse.

Another senior police official from North Kashmir's Baramulla recently disclosed some statistics, shedding light on the dedicated strides against narco-terrorism. He reveals, "08 cases of narco-terrorism were registered by the Kashmir Police in the Year 2022, and 03 cases of narco-terrorism have been registered in the Year 2023 from January to June."

He added, "Under the Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (PIT), 142 detentions have taken place in 2022, and

85 detentions have taken place in 2023 from January to June. During 2022-2023, 111 bank accounts were also frozen in 80 NDPS cases until June 2023. In the NDPS - 1021 cases have been registered in 2022 and 1734 persons have been arrested, whereas in 2023, 735 cases have been registered until June and 935 persons have been arrested. Land measuring 02 kanals and 18 Marlas at Kawari and Sulkote area in the name of Ghulam Mohammad Bhat, alias Gul Bhat, has been attached in Case FIR No. 13/2022 U/S 8/21 NDPS Act of PS Trehgang Kupwara. Similarly, land measuring 01 kanal and 1.5 Marlas, vehicle Scorpio bearing Regd No. JK01T-6226, Mini Bus Regd No. JK05-7707 in the name of Ms Pasha Begum W/o Khurshid Ahmad Waza R/O Ward No. 5, Bandipora in Case FIR No. 148/2022 U/S 230, NDPS Act PS Bandipora."

In a revelation, the Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) for Kashmir discloses the extent of District Baramulla's drug crisis. Properties and cash confiscated till July 2023 tally up to Rs 68.05 lakhs. Yet, the true staggering blow comes from the contraband, including cash-a whopping Rs 11 crores, 71

lakhs, and 64 thousand, all seized within the same period. Speaking exclusively to the State Times, Dr Yasir Hassan Rather, Professor and Incharge of IMHANS Department of Psychiatry, paints a grim picture. "The majority of the consumers of substance abuse are Heroin consumers," he asserts. Dr Yasir also mentions a 2022 survey across 10 districts of Kashmir that exposes a chilling reality-a prevalence of 2.87 in substance use disorder. It also revealed a sobering initiation age: 22.88 years on average, with a standard deviation of 5.93. The vice strikes hardest among the unemployed, constituting 25.2% of cases.

As Dr. Rather delves deeper, he says, "Substance abuse overwhelmingly plagues the young male demographic, and a whopping 61.7% are unmarried." However, a glimmer of hope surfaces. Dr Yasir Hassan asserts, "The situation is challenging, but in the last 6-8 months since the Narcotic Coordination Committee has come into existence, the patient flow has increased, which is a positive sign. New patients seeking first-time treatment are increasing, and on questioning and interacting with them, we come to know through them that because

of the strictness on drugs by law enforcement agencies, there are economic, social, and health issues that come up. Nowadays, when you ask drug consumers, they say that the rate has doubled because of the strictness and confiscation of huge amounts of drugs by law enforcement agencies. Demand is more and price is huge/increasing. A heroin consumer spends Rs 80000 to 90000 every month, which means Rs 3000-4000 per day for 1 gram of heroin."

In the epicenter of the storm, Dr. Yasir boldly addresses the onslaught of addiction. "Average footfall hits 150-300 daily," he declares. The numbers as revealed by him are stark, as a colossal 41,110 patients visited between April 2022 and March 2023, while 22,552 more came from April 2023 to July 10, 2023. Lastly, Dr. Yasir stated that "There are 8 ATF hubs that have been established in District Hospitals in 8 districts of the valley. Another ATF with IPD (10 beds) in the Government Psychiatric Diseases Hospital is coming up soon. We have already received approval from AIIMS. There is also a full-fledged drug de-addiction center (20 beds) with both IPD and OPD that is functional at SMHS."

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