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Kashmir to be...

the new India which is fast moving towards the goal of Viksit Bharat is on the onset of Amrit Kaal. "There is new energy, new inspirations and new resolutions", the Prime Minister said underlining that it is the beginning of a new chapter in the history of Indian Railway. He informed that almost 1300 prime railway stations in the country will now be redeveloped with modernity as 'Amrit Bharat Stations' and will get a new lease of life. Out of the 1300 railway stations, the Prime Minister informed, the foundation stone for 508 Amrit Bharat Stations is being laid today at the cost of approx Rs 25,000 crores. He emphasized that the redevelopment project will be a huge campaign for infrastructure development in the country along with the railways as well as the common citizens. Noting that its benefits will be spread to all states in the country, the Prime Minister mentioned that 55 Amrit Stations will be developed at the cost of approx Rs 4,000 crores in Uttar Pradesh, and in Rajasthan also 55 stations will become Amrit Stations, 34 stations in Madhya Pradesh at the cost of approx Rs 1,000 crores, 44 stations in Maharashtra at the cost of 1,500 crores, and prime railway stations in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala among others will be redeveloped. The Prime Minister praised the Ministry of Railways and congratulated the citizens for this historic project.

The Prime Minister underlined the growing stature of India in the world and highlighted the growing global interest in India. He credited two major factors for this. First, the election of a stable full majority government by the people of India and, second, the government took ambitious decisions and worked relentlessly for the development of the people in accordance with their aspirations. He emphasized that Indian railways too symbolizes this. He presented the facts of the expansion of the rail sector to illustrate his points. He said that in the last 9 years, the length of track laid in the country is more than the combined railway network in South Africa, Ukraine, Poland, the UK and Sweden. Putting the scale of expansion in Indian railways in perspective, the Prime Minister further said that in the last year alone, India laid more railway tracks than the combined railway network of South Korea, New Zealand and Australia. Today, he said, the government is working to make the rail journey accessible as well as pleasant. "The effort is to provide the best possible experience from train to station", he added. He mentioned better seating on platforms, upgraded waiting rooms and free wifi on thousands of stations.

Underlining the vast developments that have taken place in Indian Railways, the Prime Minister said that any PM would want to speak about these achievements from the Red Fort. However, the Prime Minister also emphasized that it is due to the grand organization of today's event that he is reflecting on the achievements of Railways in great detail today itself.

The Prime Minister referred to the railway's status as the lifeline of the country and said along with this, the identity of the cities is also linked with the railway stations which have become the heart of the city with the passing of time. This has made it imperative to provide a modern form to the stations.

The Prime Minister said that the modernization of so many stations will create a new atmosphere for development in the country as they will create a good first impression among the visitors. Upgraded stations will not only increase tourism but will also give a push to economic activities in the nearby areas. He said the 'One Station One Product' scheme will help the artisans and will help in the branding of the district.

The Prime Minister emphasized that the country has also taken the resolution to take pride in one's heritage in the Azadi Ka Amrit Kaal. "These Amrit Railway stations will be a symbol of taking pride in one's heritage and instill pride in every citizen", Shri Modi said. The Prime Minister said that the Amrit Stations will present a glimpse of India's cultural and local heritage. Giving examples, the Prime Minister mentioned that Jaipur Railway Stations will have glimpses of Hawa Mahal and Amer Fort from Rajasthan, Jammu Tawi Railway Station in Jammu and Kashmir will be inspired by the famous Raghunath Mandir and Dinapur Station of Nagaland will showcase the local architecture of 16 different tribes from the region. He stated that every railway station will be a symbol of the modern aspirations of the country along with its ancient heritage. The Prime Minister mentioned strengthening the 'Bharat Gaurav Yatra Trains' which connects places of historical relevance and pilgrimages.

Underlining the Railways' role in giving momentum to the economic growth of the country, the Prime Minister said that record investment has been done in railways. This year, Railways received a budget of more than Rs 2.5 lakh crores, a five-fold increase as compared to 2014. Today, he said, work is being done for the complete development of Railways with a holistic approach. Locomotive production increased by 9 times in the last 9 years. Today 13 times more HLB coaches are being manufactured.

Talking about the railway extension in the Northeast, the Prime Minister said, work is going on rapidly on doubling of the lines, gauge conversion, electrification and new routes. "Soon, all state capitals of the Northeast will be connected by railway network", Shri Modi said. He informed that Nagaland got its second station after 100 years. "Commissioning of new railway lines in the region has increased three times", he said.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha attended the ceremony at an event at Budgam Railway station.

In his address, the Lt Governor expressed gratitude to the Prime Minister for including three stations of J&K UT, Jammu Tawi, Udhampur and Budgam under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme.

He said, the redevelopment of Railway stations in the UT will give huge boost to connectivity and ease of travel for passengers.

"I believe railway connectivity is the lifeline of a society. A railway line not only strengthens connectivity with different regions but it also brings economic prosperity and transforms standard of living and creates a new destiny of the concerned region," the Lt Governor said.

The Lt Governor highlighted the ongoing railway projects and the overall transformation taking place in the railway sector. Under the guidance of Prime Minister, we are witnessing rail projects of unprecedented magnitude in Kashmir Valley, he said.

"Kashmir will be connected to Kanyakumari by the end of this financial year. It will connect the valley with all important commercial centres of the country," the Lt Governor added.

He further informed that the Railway Board has sanctioned five Final Location Survey works in Kashmir-Doubling of Baramulla-Banihal Railway Line, New Baramulla-Uri, Awantipora-Shopian, Sopore-Kupwara and Anantnag-Bijbehara-Pahalgam Rail Line. Once approved, the new networks will boost rail connectivity in the valley, he added.

He also shared the reforms introduced by the UT Administration to strengthen the air and road connectivity catering to the growing aspirations of the people.

Nazir Ahmad Khan, Chairman, District Development Council, Budgam; Vijay Kumar, ADGP Jammu Vijay Bidhuri, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; Akshay Labroo, Deputy Commissioner Budgam; Vijay Pratap Singh, Principal Chief Engineer Northern Railway, PRI members, youth and people in large numbers were present.

UP ATS arrests...

medically examined here on Saturday.

His arrest came a day after the ATS arrested one Ahmed Raza alias Sharukh, who hails from Muilak Gudia village of Moradabad district, over alleged links with banned terror group Hizbul Mujahideen.

During preliminary interrogation, it was found that Dar had called Raza to Anantnag for terror training, the ATS said.

It was Dar who got Raza the membership of Hizbul Mujahideen. Based on this information, the ATS sought 14-day police custody of Dar, which was accepted by the court.

Assembly polls ‘for...

the restoration of statehood.

To a question about incidents of 'targeted killings', at times aimed at Kashmiri Pandits and migrant workers, Sinha emphasised on the overall decline in such terror attacks.

While people had earlier reconciled to frequent terror incidents, now the expectation is that there should be no such act under Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government, he said.

"Such an expectation is natural. We are working to create an atmosphere that no such incident happens," he said even as he noted that "chhitput" (sporadic) incidents do happen at times.

In a swipe at the previous non-BJP governments, he said efforts were made earlier to buy temporary peace in Jammu and Kashmir while the change under Modi is that his dispensation wants to completely dismantle the "ecosystem" compromising of not only armed terrorists but also those who harboured and supported them.

It was after 34 years that the Ashura procession was allowed here during

Muharram, he said to highlight changing scenario.

Now people are free to take out any religious procession and the only condition is that there should be no negative reference to the country's unity and integrity, he said.

It was on August 5 in 2019 when the Modi government in its second term abrogated Article 370, which gave J-K special rights, and turned the state into a Union territory.

While opposition parties have criticised these moves, the ruling BJP has insisted that they have ushered in a period of peace and development, ending frequent strife, especially in the Valley.

"A very big change is the common man is free to live his life on his terms. Nobody's diktats run here any longer," Sinha said.

Street violence has fully ended, he asserted, adding that the period when over 150 days in a year were marked by calls of strikes by separatist and terrorist organisations or by others on Pakistan's prodding has been relegated to history.

One can go to Jhelum Riverfront or Polo View Market at night to see people enjoying themselves and witness the change first-hand, he said and also referred to the beautification drive in several parts of the UT's capital city.

To a question about two main regional parties, National Conference and PDP, being critical of the Centre's handling of the region, he said in a dig that their statements highlight the role they have been playing.

A former Union minister who enjoyed a reputation for efficiency and probity as part of the first Modi government, Sinha cited a host of development initiatives to highlight the changes in J-K.

There was universal praise of the way Srinagar hosted the recent G20 meeting, he said, adding that the region has become number one in e-governance in the UT category.

Sinha, who took over as LG on August 7, 2020, said his administration has brought more and more services under the Public Services Guarantee Act. From 35 in 2019, there are 675 services are now provided online.

It has also introduced an auto-escalation process, meaning that if a service is not provided to a citizen within the stipulated time, it is automatically escalated to a higher authority and action is initiated against the official concerned.

The UT's last budget was Rs 1.18 lakh crore, 2.5 times more than what it was before 2019, and over 85 per cent of the work under the PM's Development Package has been done, he said.

While the region saw private investment of around Rs 14,000 crore from 1947 to 2021, when the new industrial scheme was unveiled, projects worth Rs 26,000 crore to 27,000 crore are going on currently and this will rise to Rs 75,000 crore in the next two years, providing direct employment to 5 lakh people, he claimed.

The administration has allotted land to around 1,700 firms and nearly 1,000 of them have paid the premium. Over 127 of them have begun production, official sources said.

PM Modi creates...

for which Rs 1057 crore will be spent. Railways are constantly making efforts to provide better connectivity of railways and hi-tech facilities at stations to the common man in the country. In this episode, Prime Minister Narendra Modi released an amount of Rs 24152 crore for the development of these stations through video conferencing on August 6 under the Amrit Bharat Railway Station Scheme to rejuvenate all the selected railway stations.

Chugh told that railways were called the fate line of India and now under the leadership of the Prime Minister, railways will take the states on the path of progress as a fortune. A new policy has been created by the name AMRUT Bharat Station Yojana envisages development of stations with a long term vision and rejuvenation of railways as per station needs and patronage. The objective of the scheme is to prepare master plans of railway stations and implement them to enhance facilities including minimum essential facilities.

The scheme will complete it with state-of-the-art facilities by introducing new facilities as well as upgradation and replacement of existing facilities.

Chugh told that with the rejuvenation of the railways, the fate and picture of the concerned area will also change where the traffic of that area will be easy, employment opportunities will also be generated there.

He informed that the following broad work areas have been envisaged for the selected stations under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme. The plan includes expansion of the station, improvement of station entrances to ensure easy access by removal of unwanted structures, properly designed signage, dedicated walkways, well-planned parking areas, better lighting etc.

Landscaping, green patches and elements of local art and culture will be used to create a pleasant experience for station users.

Chugh said the scale of facilities and amenities to be provided would be finalized based on broad guiding principles, number of passengers at the station, users, various departments and consultations with stakeholders including local authorities.

Search operation extended...

leading to the recovery of a huge cache of arms and ammunition including an AK assault and two pistols, the officials said.

They said the exchange of firing stopped during the day but the search operation was further intensified and extended to nearby forest and adjoining areas to neutralise the terrorists.

Earlier, Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) Mukesh Singh and General Officer Commanding of Army's Romeo Force Major General Mohit Trivedi addressed a joint press conference in Rajouri and said they are determined to wipe out terrorism from the region.

"Some terrorists were noticed in the Gundah-Khawas around 1.30 pm on Saturday and, accordingly, a police party rushed to the village, besides informing the Army. When a cordon-and-search operation was launched, the terrorists opened fire, which was retaliated by the joint troops of the police, Army and the CRPF, resulting in the killing of a terrorist," Singh said.

He added the slain terrorist is believed to be from Pakistan and that it was evident from the material, including medicines and shoes, recovered from him.

"One more terrorist is present in the village and an encounter is on," he said, adding the seizure from the encounter scene, including raincoats and food items, indicated that they were trained to survive in jungle conditions.

Singh said strict action is being taken against overground workers of the terror groups. "Several of them have already been booked under the Public Safety Act while we are also keeping a constant vigil on suspected persons."

"Action will be taken against any overground worker whose linkage will be established during the investigation of the latest encounter," he said.

The ADGP added that about three groups of terrorists, each comprising two to three ultras, are operating in Rajouri and Poonch districts, asserting that security forces are determined to wipe out terrorism from the region.

Mukesh Singh also said security agencies are making twice the effort to thwart the attempts to push terrorists from across the border.

"Two or three groups of terrorists are believed to be present in the (Pir Panjal) region. Each group comprises two to three terrorists but divulging their exact number is difficult," Singh, flanked by the Army's Romeo Force Major General Mohit Trivedi, told reporters in Rajouri.

Singh reached Rajouri where an encounter between terrorists and security forces is going on since Saturday. A suspected Pakistani terrorist in combat uniform was killed and a huge cache of arms and ammunition, including an AK assault rifle and two pistols, were recovered from him.

"Some terrorists were noticed in the Gundah-Khawas village of Budhal and, accordingly, a police party rushed to the village, besides informing the Army. When a cordon-and-search operation was launched, the terrorists opened fire, which was retaliated by the joint troops of the police, Army and the CRPF, resulting in the killing of a terrorist," Singh said.

He referred to the killing of six terrorists in recent encounters, including four in the Surankote area of Poonch on July 18, and said attempts to disturb the peaceful atmosphere by pushing terrorists into the Indian side is going on unabated from across the border.

"We are making double efforts to thwart their attempts and wipe out terrorism from the region," Singh said.

Asked about the plan of the terrorists, he said it is a matter of investigation. "A thorough investigation and analysis will be carried out after the encounter."

On the possible involvement of the slain terrorist in the Dhangri attack where seven civilians were killed in January, the officer said, "It is also part of the investigation. We will call the eyewitnesses for identification of the slain terrorist."

Major General Trivedi credited the success against the terrorists to the synergy among the Army, police and other sister agencies and the cooperation of the people.

"The operations against terrorists will continue to ensure they do not get a foothold. The terrorists were feeling that they will operate with ease but we have cornered them," he said, adding anyone having any ill will against the region or the country will be dealt with sternly.

In the morning, Jammu-based Army PRO Lt Col Suneel Bartwal said two to three terrorists are believed to be holed up in the besieged village and their repeated attempts to break the cordon have been thwarted by controlled fire

throughout the night.

"After the initial contact, Army troops moved to the area and pinned down terrorists assessed to be up to two-three. Additional troops of the Rashtriya Rifles mobilised as the terrain is undulating and forested," he said.

He said special forces were brought in by an Indian Air Force helicopter on Saturday, while night-enabled quadcopters, unmanned aerial vehicles and sniffer dogs were also pressed into service.

Infiltration bid foiled...

in Kupwara based on information about possible infiltration attempts.

"During the search operation, movement of terrorists, trying to infiltrate to our side, was observed. They were challenged by the joint party in which one terrorist was neutralized," he said.

Taking advantage of the thick bushes and rugged terrain, two to three other terrorists escaped back to the Pakistan side of the Line of Control, the spokesperson said.

"Army and Kupwara police in a joint operation foiled an infiltration bid by neutralising a terrorist on LoC in Amrohi area of Tangdhar Sector. Incriminating materials, arms and ammunition were recovered. Search operation in progress. Further details shall follow," the police tweeted.

The police spokesperson said that from the incriminating materials recovered from the site of the encounter, it is believed that the killed terrorist was a Pakistani national.

The arms and ammunition seized include an AK rifle, an AK magazine, 15 AK rounds, five 9mm pistols, one 15mm pistol, eight pistol magazines and 32 bullets of 9mm pistol. "The recovery of these materials underscores the nefarious intentions of the infiltrators and their attempts to disrupt peace and stability in the region," the spokesperson said.

Azad pins hope...

they don't understand the situation in Jammu and Kashmir, its history and geography.

"Article 370 was not for any region or religion as its benefits were the same for Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh. The advantages or disadvantages were equal for urban or rural areas too," he said.

Laying stress on structured work culture adopted by him to run DPAP, Azad took jibe on non-performing leaders as his party has more accountability of leadership than its rivals. "DPAP has no place for lethargic and non-performing leaders as I check the progress of each party leader by making him or her accountable. We seek details from leaders on outreach at the block or village level," Azad said. On rising cases of terrorism in Rajouri for the past six months, chairman DPAP expressed his concern at the number of terrorist attacks on civilians and security forces. "It's a matter of concern that Rajouri is witnessing a surge in terrorist incidents during the past six months," Azad said, urging people and security forces to remain vigil against anti-national elements in border areas.

Earlier, he told DPAP workers at Assesi that Chenab Valley will be the focus of his policies once the party comes to power. "My tenure of two and half years as the chief minister stands testimony to the fact that development was the only agenda of my politics in Jammu and Kashmir and would continue to remain so in future," Azad argued. Those who addressed the public meeting include G M. Saroori, Chairman, vice-chairman Abdul Majid Wani, General Secretary, P.R Manhas Rtd. IGP and Zonal President. Asif Gattu, District president and others.

Fresh batch of pilgrims leaves for Amarnath yatra

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

BANIHAL/JAMMU: Pilgrims on way to the Amarnath cave shrine were stopped briefly in Ramban district on Sunday after a landslide blocked the Jammu-Srinagar national highway near Keela Morh, the officials said.

After a day-long suspension, the Amarnath Yatra had resumed from Jammu early Sunday, with a fresh batch of 1,626 pilgrims leaving the base camp here to join the annual pilgrimage in the south Kashmir Himalayas.

However, the pilgrims were stopped for a couple of hours at the Chankerkote Yatri Niwas in Ramban district at 6:15 am.

The agency concerned pressed its men and machinery and managed to clear the road of the debris to ensure its reopening by 9 am, the officials said.

They said the pilgrim convoy was allowed to move towards its destination and have crossed the landslide-hit area.

Earlier in the day, the 34th batch of 1,626 pilgrims left the Bhagwati Nagar base camp in a convoy of 64 vehicles between 3.30 am and 3.45 am.

While 1,092 of them are heading for the Pahalgam base camp in Anantnag district, the remaining 534 devotees are on their way to the Baltal base camp in Ganderbal district, they said.

More than 4.17 lakh pilgrims have so far visited the 3,888-metre-high Amarnath cave shrine since the commencement of the 62-day-long annual yatra on July 1.

MOSAJ clinches 30 medals in Shooting

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

UDHAMPUR: Mission Olympics Shooting Academy Jammu (MOSAJ) players



MOSAJ officials along with medal winner players.

great performances and clinched 30 medals including 15 gold, 8 silver and 7 bronze in 12th Shooting Championship-2023.

Chairman Jammu and Kashmir Rifle Association Kuldeep Jamwal congratulated shooter Aneesha Sharma for begging three individual medals in 21st Kumar Surendra Singh Memorial Shooting Championship and Himanshu Gupta for begging a silver in 66th National School Games.

CEO JKRA DySP Sharat Chander and Treasurer JKRA Arun Mansotra also applauded the young shooters. Chief Guest, DIG Mohd Suleman Choudhary and President JKRA, S.S Sodhi complimented the hard work of the players of MOSAJ and for being the champions of UT Championship.

He also congratulated MOSAJ coaches Vishal Mehra and Aman Singh for working endlessly in training the great shooters.

Scout Guide training camp concludes at CSU Jammu

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A seven-day Scout Guide training camp for the students of Shiksha Shastri Department concluded on Sunday at Central Sanskrit University, Jammu.

Maitreyi Jain, Guide Commissioner, Jammu and Kashmir was the Chief Guest at the valedictory ceremony of the Scout Guide training camp.

Addressing the students, Campus Director Prof. Madan Mohan Jha said that the basic objective of training of Scout Guide is to prepare a responsible citizen who dedicate himself to the country and society, this way invoking in him a patriotic and social spirit. After that, the Trainer of Jammu Scout Guide announced the closure of the camp by lowering down the flag. Team of Scout guides along with Dr. Rishiraj, Dr. Devendra Mishra, Dr. Anoop Pandey, Dr. Vivek Kumar, Dr. Hariom, Dr. Madan Singh, Dr. Snehlata, Dr. Shubhashree Dash, Dr. Shibashish, Dr. Praveen Mani Tripathi were present. Instructors RP Kotwal, Purshottam Lal Dubey and Dr. Ashish Kumar were also present.

JKGPA urges Govt to fulfill pharmacists' demands

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Jammu Kashmir Govt Pharmacist Association (JKGPA), Jammu urged Union Territory Govt to consider demands of Pharmacists who felt aggrieved after implementation of Central Pharmacy Act 1948.

Briefing the media, Bharat Bhushan Bhagat, provincial president JKGPA sought change of nomenclature of Pharmacists as Pharmacy officers on the analogy of other state, upgradation of post of District Pharmacy Officer at district level Hospital and Block Pharmacy Officer at block level Hospital in the UT of J&K, and creation of Post of Technical Officer Recently Govt. issued order no. 457/JK(HME) of2023 dated June 2, 2023 for Recruitment and Amendment in medical colleges of UT .