Chief Minister Omar Abdullah chairing a meeting at Srinagar on Thursday.

Omar for North-South Cold Chain Link for horticulture produce

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Sept 5 : Stressing on the need for a comprehensive Mission Mode Programme for improvement of apple production and its marketing, Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah today said that the concept of Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) for strengthening the apple value is an encouraging initiative in this direction. He directed for converting the Vision Document in a viable and feasible Detailed Draft Report (DPR) taking care of all aspects and financial implications.

The Chief Minister said the presentation on SPV made by the NABARD is a welcome step towards addressing the issues of improving production, productivity and marketing of apple on remunerative prices. He said the document needed to be converted into a comprehensive DPR so that it is launched in the State taking all stakeholders of the trade and production on board.

Chairing a high level meeting to receive the brief on various programmes aimed at horticulture and agriculture development, the Chief Minister said that besides various schemes under implementation in the State to give boost to farm production and enhance production and marketing of horticulture produce, the concept of SPV for apple would be yet another effective measure to achieve the desired results in the development of horticulture sector.

Omar Abdullah laid stress on North-South Cold Chain Link in Kashmir Valley, adding that investors need to be encouraged and supported to establish Controlled Atmosphere Stores in industrial estates and fruit markets in Sopore, Baramulla, Rafiabad and other places to provide facility to the fruit growers to store their fruit for timely marketing.

The Chief Minister also underlined the importance of adopting modern methods to enhance the per hectare production of apple by rejuvenating old orchards and providing high-density and disease resistant planting material to the horticulturists.

The meeting among others was attended by Minister for Agriculture, Ghulam Hassan Mir, Minister for Horticulture, Raman Bhalla, Chief Secretary, Mohammad Iqbal Khandey, Principal Secretary Planning and Development, B. R. Sharma, Principal Secretary Finance, B. B. Vyas, Commissioner Secretary Agriculture, Asgar Samoon, representatives of NABARD and SKUAST, Director Horticulture P&M, Showkat Ahhmad Zargar, Heads of the Departments of Horticulture, Agriculture, SIDCO, J&K Horticulture Produce Marketing Corporation and various senior officers.

In a PowerPoint presentation, Commissioner Secretary Agriculture, Asgar Samoon presented the present status of horticulture and agriculture scenario in the State and gave resume of the schemes and programmes in pipeline to catapult these sectors and improve the lot of farmers and growers.

The representatives of SKUAST and NABARD also made presentation in the meeting on improvement of root stock for high-density plantation and SPV to address horticulture in a holistic and comprehensive manner.

Multi crore scam of Dutta Finance Companies

DB restrains MD, others from selling property, operation of accounts

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Sept 5: In a Public Interest Litigation filed by Trilok Singh and others against Dutta Finance Companies, which have allegedly cheated the depositors to the tune of more than Rs 20 crore, Division Bench of High Court comprising Chief Justice MM Kumar and Justice Hasnain Massodi has directed the Managing Director Harpal Singh Dutta and other Directors of six companies not to enter into any transaction of 20 kanal of land at Kud, 11 kanal of land at Jhajjar Kotli and godown at Yard No 6 Narwal and the oil tankers, which might be in their possession.

Division Bench also restrained them from operating their bank accounts in the name of these companies. "The status report filed by respondents discloses that the challan has been filed before the Chief Judicial Magistrate Jammu on July 19, 2013 where M/s Gurcharan Singh Dutta, Harpal Singh Dutta, Bhajan Kour and Gurdeep Singh have been named as accused for running different fictitious companies under the name and style Dutta Financers India Ltd, Dutta Trading Corporation, Bhana Financers India Ltd, GESESS Associates, Dutta Financers and Traders and Dutta Wine Trading Companies", the DB said.

The report further disclosed that after accumulating about Rs 20 crore from different depositors they (accused) allegedly purchased the land and 12 oil tankers out of which two were seized in the case. Moreover, these accused persons had issued fictitious fixed deposits receipts to different depositors which were neither reflected in the ledgers of the companies nor the money taken on such cash receipts was reflected in the Income Tax Returns or balance sheet of the companies.

At this stage, Senior Advocate S S Lehar appearing for the PIL pointed out that one Amarjeet Singh Dutta, son of accused Gurcharan Singh Dutta has been accepting cash from the petitioners at Jammu. He said that the petitioners appeared to have deposed before the Magistrate under Section 164-A CrPC or made statement before the IO under Section 161 CrPC about the role of Amarjeet Singh Dutta.

About the role of Amarjeet Singh Dutta, Advocate Lehar submitted, "mere fact that he is residing in Nepal doesn't make any difference because he has been visiting Jammu and accepting deposits from the petitioners and other depositors".

On this, Division Bench said, "we would expect the IO to proceed further in the light of the statement made by Senior Advocate SS Lehar. In the meanwhile, the Magistrate, who is seized of the trial, shall proceed with the trial and the pendency of the PIL shall not be construed as an impediment in proceeding with the trial".

CJM directs police to submit status report on SDA land encroachment

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Sept 5: Chief Judicial Magistrate, Srinagar, has directed the Kothibagh police to file status report regarding the steps taken by him on the encroachment of Srinagar Development Authority (SDA) land by some Taxi drivers on Maulana Azad Link Road earlier this week.

The SDA authorities were compelled to knock the court after police and district administration failed to remove encroachers from the land.

Police registered the FIR 67/13 under Sections 447A/ 379 and 427 after directions from the CJM.

The dispute arose after some taxi drivers with the backing of some ruling party politicians illegally occupied a prime plot of land worth over Rs 100 crore belonging to Srinagar Development Authority (SDA) to set up a Taxi Stand.

Forcing their way into the compound, the taxi drivers bulldozed the SDA constructions in the compound housing the store of SDA on Maulana Azad Link Road on the intervening night of August 24 and 25 and parked their vehicles there.

The Taxi drivers have put up banners declaring the plot, measuring around 1.6 acres and valued at over Rs 100 crore, as a Taxi Stand.

PDA, DDA meets held

Mughal Road-Poonch tourist circuit to be developed: Mir

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Sept 5: The State Government has prepared Rs. 8 crore plan to create the Mughal Road-Poonch tourist circuit via Kashmir valley to boost the economic activity in the area, revealed Tourism Minister, Ghulam Ahmad Mir while chairing a Poonch Development Authority meeting held here today.

Minister for Tourism Ghulam Ahmad Mir chairing DDA meeting at Srinagar on Thursday.

The Minister said that another detailed project report would be formulated to create way side amenities along Mughal Road via Jammu and directed the concerned authorities to formulate the DPRs for early submission to the Centre for approval of funds.

"The creation and the upgradation of the necessary tourist infrastructure facilities are underway. New scenic spots like Pushana, Doogron, Chadinarh, Sailan, Bhuriekhat, Buffliaz, Mandi Phegla, Mandi Laran and Bhimber Gali, would be brought under the jurisdiction of the PDA for their development," he said.

Mir said a lake circuit is also being developed in the area as a tourist attraction, adding that in this regard the Centre has approved funding of Rs. 4.19 crore and already released Rs. 83.82 lakh as a first installment.

Mir said that the promotion of heritage tourism in the area is also receiving focused attention of the Government, adding that renovation of Poonch Fort was taken up at a cost of Rs. 3.79 crore and Government would submit another project to the Centre for funding so that complete renovation of heritage sites in the area is carried out.

Mir said that historical tourist spots of Poonch district are also being fully explored by expending Rs 20.00 crore under Poonch Tourism Development Authority (PTDA), funded under Prime Minister's Reconstruction Plan (PMRP). He said tourist spots along the way side of Mughal Road like Noori Chamb, Peer-ki-Gali, Tatta Panni would be developed on priority.

MLA Poonch Aijaz Jan, Commissioner Secretary Tourism and Culture, Atul Duloo, District Development Commissioner Poonch, Special Secretary Planning Department, Director Tourism Jammu, Managing Director Cable Car Corporation, Managing Director JKTDC, Chief Executive Officer PDA, Chief Town Planner, Jammu, Additional Secretary Tourism, Joint Director Planning Tourism Department besides other senior officers of concerned departments attended the meeting.

Meanwhile, 5th meeting of Doodhpathri Development Authority (DDA) was also held here under the chairmanship of Tourism Minister. During the meeting detailed review was held on physical and financial achievements registered by DDA for the holistic tourism development of Doodhpathri destination.

MLA, Khan Shahib, Hakim Yasin was also present in the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, the Tourism Minister said that tourism potential of Doodhpathri is being explored fully. He said to upgrade infrastructure facilities at the destination, the Centre has sanctioned another project of Rs 4.09 crore for Doodhpathri and already released Rs. 81.88 lakh for the purpose.

On the occasion, the CEO PDA gave power point presentation depicting scenic spots and tourist infrastructure facilities at the destination.

Sibal seeks report from JK High Court on opening of branch in Leh

Excelsior Correspondent

NEW DELHI, Sept 5: Union Minister of Law and Justice & Communications & IT, Kapil Sibal has sought a report from State Government regarding opening of permanent or Circuit Bench of High Court of Jammu and Kashmir at Leh in Ladakh region as was demanded by BJP MP in charge J&K Avinash Roy Khanna.

Mr Sibal has forwarded a copy of the representation made by Mr Khanna to Jammu and Kashmir High Court for such action.

Mr Sibal in his letter to Mr Khanna informed him that Government of India only considers setting up of branches of a High Court after receipt of a complete proposal from the State Government, which has to have the consent of the Chief Justice of the concerned High Court and the Governor of the State.

He said the copy of your letter has been forwarded to Jammu and Kashmir High Court for appropriate action.

It may be recalled that Mr Khanna in view of the problems faced by the people of the Ladakh region in visiting Jammu or Srinagar cities respectively to pursue their cases in State High Court especially during the winter months when the road remains closed for over five months has demanded opening of Branch of State High Court in Leh.

Mr Khana said opening of the High Court Branch in Leh has been a long pending demand of the people of the region. He has made an appeal to Union Government to take a decision in this regard at an earliest.

Power shut down

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Sept 5 : In order to carry out urgent work of shifting of 33 KV line passing over the new bridge at km 31+650 at Jhajjar Kotli, the power supply to Dansal, Jandrah, Jhajjar Kotli, Surinsar, Katra Moori, Kanyala, Kishanpur and Battal will remain affected on September 6, 2013 (Friday) from 9 a m to 2 p m and September 8, 2013 (Sunday) 9 a m to 5 p m.

Governor for enlarging awareness about heritage routes

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Sept 5 : Prof. Poonam Chaudhary, Director, Centre for Studies in Museology, University of Jammu, called on N. N. Vohra, Governor, at Raj Bhavan here today.

Prof. Chaudhary presented a copy of "Heritage and Cultural Routes: An Anthology" to the Governor. This volume, edited by Prof. Chaudhary, is a compilation of papers which were presented by known experts at the International Conference on "Global Cultural Routes: Tourism and Socio-Economic Viability". This Conference was organized by the Centre for Studies in Museology, University of Jammu, in March 2012.

Prof. Chaudhary briefed the Governor, who is Chancellor of the Jammu University, about the functioning of the Centre for Studies in Museology and the initiatives being taken for the study of heritage cultural routes. She stated that the Centre is presently running an M. Phil programme in Museology and Heritage Studies.

The Governor observed that there is urgent need for taking up subject and route specific projects for studying the contribution and influence which historical heritage routes have had on the evolution of cultural traditions and exchanges, promotion of trade and commerce and communication and development in the centuries past. He said that steps are also required to be taken to enlarge awareness about the historical routes, adding that the revival of these routes could help in the promotion of greater understandings, besides giving a boost to tourism.

Referring to the book, the Governor lauded the initiative of Prof. Chaudhary.

Governor NN Vohra being presented book by Prof Chaudhary at Raj Bhavan on Thursday.