Jaishankar speaks with EU counterpart, discusses Afghanistan, Myanmar

NEW DELHI, Jan 17:

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday discussed the strategic facets of the India-EU cooperation with European Union's (EU) High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell Fontelles and also deliberated upon global hotspots, including Afghanistan and Myanmar.

Jaishankar also spoke with his counterparts from Hungary and Sweden separately and discussed bilateral cooperation.

"A warm conversation with EU HRVP @JosepBorrellF, our first this year. Reviewed trade & investment, connectivity, climate action and strategic facets of India-EU cooperation," Jaishankar said in a tweet after speaking with the EU official.

"Discussed global hotspots, especially Afghanistan and Myanmar," he added.

In another tweet, Jaishankar said he had a good discussion with Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó.

"Discussed bilateral cooperation in trade, investment, education, mobility and health. Confident that the positive momentum of 2021 will grow further in 2022," the external affairs minister said.

"Look forward to welcoming him in India soon," he added.

In another tweet, Jaishankar said he also spoke with his Swedish counterpart, Ann Linde, and the conversation covered the COVID-19 situation, green transition and Nordic cooperation.

"Our bilateral relationship continues to advance steadily," he said.

Linde also tweeted about her discussion with Jaishankar, saying, "Good to talk to India's FM @DrSJaishankar. Confirmed the very close and broad partnership between Sweden and India and underlined our continued cooperation on many important issues, including climate." (PTI)

DDC Doda reviews progress on documentation of baseline database

Excelsior Correspondent

DODA, Jan 17: District Development Commissioner Doda Vikas Sharma today chaired a meeting of key officials of the line departments here in the Mini Meeting hall of DC office to review the implementation of Aspirational Block Development Programme in Blocks of Kastigarh and Chilly Pingal.

During the meeting, the DDC enquired from the block level nodal officers about the database compilation based upon the already identified 10 indicators in coordination with the concerned line departments. He also reviewed the progress made by the concerned authorities in improving the sectors under their control in the Aspirational Blocks of Kastigarh and Chilli Pingal.

While reviewing the progress made by the concerned departments, the DDC directed them to ensure that the activities are conducted in each Panchayat covering all the identified indicators. The CEO was directed to share the list of schools for which the funding for construction of separate toilet facility for girls have been sanctioned so that first priority shall be given to the blocks targeted under Aspirational programme.

Further, the DDC directed the BDOs of twin blocks to revisit the data of availability of playfields in the Panchayats of these blocks. He directed the ACD to take up the construction of playgrounds in the Panchayats and schools having no such facility. Construction of PMAY houses on war footing basis in all Panchayats of the two Blocks was also stressed upon.

The line departments were asked to submit the accurate baseline data for framing a comprehensive action plan for the overall development of these blocks covering all the identified indicators.

The meeting was attended by CPO Doda, SDM Gandoh, ACD Doda, DSEO Doda, DFO Bhaderwah, CEO Doda, CAO Doda, CHO Doda, DIO Doda, BDO Kastigarh, BDO Chilli Pingal, AD Employment, Tehsildar Chilli, AD Planning DC office, AD FCS &CA, TSWO Gandoh, besides other officers/Officials were also present.

Accountability Commission abolished to protect corrupt BJP leaders: Harsh

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Jan 17: Making a vociferous appeal to the Lt Governor to constitute a Commission of Inquiry (COI) against the corrupt MLAs and Ministers who have accumulated huge wealth and disproportionate assets in the last seven years, JKNPP Chairman and former Minister Harsh Dev Singh lambasted the Government for having grossly failed to take action against the blemished politicians of BJP and PDP who had looted public exchequer, encroached State lands and raised mammoth movable and immovable properties by abusing their position and authority.

While addressing a press conference, he said reminded that even erstwhile Governor SP Malik had referred to several scams in the J&K State in insurance contracts, power projects, J&K Bank besides large scale illegitimate back door appointments but the bigwigs continued to enjoy immunity in view of their political clout with no action whatsoever initiated against the corrupt politicians.

"Even the Accountability Commission (AC) was abolished by the BJP Govt which alone was the forum for investigating the frauds and scams of politicians," he said and added that this was deliberately done to protect the corrupt leaders of the BJP-PDP rule.

Describing the BJP Govt's tall slogans of providing transparent, accountable and corruption free Governance to the people a hoax, Harsh Dev Singh said that all such rants were made to enchant the masses for political gains. He said that several Ex-BJP Ministers and MLAs had been reported to have created huge assets, taken loan from J&K Bank amounting to several crores and got it declared NPA besides having defied norms and procedures and violated Defence Acts besides other violations in constructing un-authorized structures and palatial bungalows.

Accusing several Ex-Ministers and MLAs of running illegal pollution creating units including stone crushers, brick kilns, hot mix plants etc in violation of the directions of High Court and Supreme Court and NGT, he regretted that authorities concerned had turned a blind eye to the same in view of the pressure of these powerful politicians running the unauthorized units.

Urging the Lt Governor to appoint 'Lok Ayukt' in conformity with the tall slogans of the Govt to probe into the involvement of Ex-MLAs and Ex-Ministers of erstwhile alliance in corrupt deeds, large scale bunglings and other acts of omission and commission, Harsh Dev Singh said that until noose was tightened around corrupt politicians, good and clean Governance would remain a distant dream.

Commissioner JMC, Avny Lavasa along with others starting developmental work of a park in Channi Himmat.

JMC Commissioner starts development work of park

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Jan 17: Commissioner JMC, Avny Lavasa along with Neena Gupta, Councillor Ward number 50 today started developmental work of a park in sector 6 of Channi Himmat and the work will be completed at an estimated cost of Rs. 60 lakh.

A handout stated that the park was owned by Housing Board and was in very bad shape.

After seeking NOC from Housing Board, the Councillor requested JMC authorities to develop the park as it was a long pending demand of the locals there.

Different works like jogging track, water tank, new boundary wall, canopy, watchman room etc will be made in the Park.

Speaking on the occasion the JMC Commissioner assured all possible help to develop the Park.

Prominent among those present on the occasion were Rajinder Motial, former secretary general CCI; Rajan Gupta, retd ExEn; Ishant Gupta, BJP state IT head; Pushpinder Charak, Trishula Gupta, Poonam Gupta, Kamlesh Mangotra, Nishant Gupta, Dr. S.K Gupta, Dr. Usha Attri, Amit Salgotra, Urvashi, Anita Gupta and others.

Senior BJP leader, Kavinder Gupta paying tributes to Shaheed Nain Singh at Jammu on Monday.

Sacrifices of martyrs will be remembered forever: Kavinder

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Jan 17: Senior BJP leader, Kavinder Gupta has said that sacrifices of martyrs will be remembered forever because it is due to these sacrifices of soldiers that people are living a life free of fear.

Speaking at a function here today after starting renovation work of Shaheed Nain Singh Jamwal Park at Sainik Colony, Kavinder informed that the work will be completed with an estimated cost of Rs. 75 lakh.

He claimed that BJP has eliminated corruption, black money and other evils from the society making all round developments possible without any extra effort.

It is pertinent to mention that Shaheed Nain Singh Jamwal attained martyrdom while fighting terrorists in Rajouri area of J&K in the year 2000.

JMC Mayor, Chander Mohan Gupta; JMC Commissioner, Avny Lavasa; Councillors-Narinder Singh Jamwal, Gurmeet Kour Randhawa and Neeraj Puri along with president Gandhi Nagar Mandal, Vinay Gupta; president BJP District Jammu, Ankush Gupta; general secretary District Unit and Col. Retd Gurbakh Singh, president Ex-Servicemen Cell BJP were also present on the occasion along with Rajkumari, Veer Nari (wife of Martyr Shaheed Nain Singh) and Rekha, daughter of Shaheed Nain Singh.

Extraordinary powers have to be exercised with great care: HC

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Jan 17: High Court today refused to quash the plea seeking quashing of FIR by invoking inherent powers and said that extraordinary powers have to be exercised with great care.

Justice V C Koul has refused to quash the FIR which has been registered in Police Station Batmaloo for commission of offence under Section 366 IPC (Kidnapping, abducting or inducing woman to compel her marriage) against the accused involved in the offence.

The plea was filed under section 482 of criminal procedure code, seeking quashing of FIR and the court while refusing to quash the FIR against the accused has recorded that Section 482 CrPC, preserves the inherent powers of the High Court to prevent an abuse of the process of any court or to secure the ends of justice.

The provision of section 482, court added, does not confer new powers and only recognises and preserves powers which inhere in the High Court. "The High Court, while forming an opinion whether a criminal proceeding or complaint or FIR should be quashed in exercise of its jurisdiction under Section 482 Cr. P.C., must evaluate whether the ends of justice would justify the exercise of the inherent power", Justice Koul recorded.

Court said, the inherent power of the High Court has a wide ambit and plenitude, it has to be exercised to secure ends of justice or to prevent an abuse of the process of any court and the instant case, when looked from all angles, requires and demands meticulous analyzation of facts by this Court.

Court while elaborating the essence and importance of section 482 of CrPC which provides the inherent powers to high court to prevent the abuse of process of law by the courts below said, this is not the aim and objective of provisions of Section 482 Cr. P.C. more particularly when petition on hand does not make out any case that inherent powers are to be exercised to prevent abuse of process of law and to secure ends of justice.

Hospitalization rate should determine lockdown: DAK

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Jan 17: Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) today said lockdown should be decided based on the number of patients hospitalized with Covid rather than the number of positive cases.

In a statement, DAK president Dr Nisar ul Hassan said that the hospitalization rates, not case count should determine curbs and restrictions

He said that the number of cases should not be the metric for imposing restrictions.

"Daily case count was used as a barometer early in the pandemic to impose restrictions because that time a rise in cases inevitably led to increasing in hospitalizations," he said

DAK president said while the Omicron variant causes a lot of infections, most of the infections are mild. "Even though the positivity rate is high, most of the cases do not require hospitalization."

"Case counts have lost relevance; hospitalization numbers are now reliable markers when it comes to assessing the threat from the pandemic," he said.

He said that there is a need for shifting the focus on Covid-related hospitalizations, bed occupancy and the number of patients on ventilators

General Secretary DAK Dr Arshad Ali said the reason why we were tracking cases was that we were hoping we could eliminate the virus. "But it is not in the nature of the virus to get eliminated," he said adding "we have to live with the virus and it is going to stay with us."

Spokesperson DAK Dr Riyaz Ahmad Dagga said we have reached a point in pandemic where policy should no longer be based around the idea that we cannot resume normal life until the case number is below a particular level.

Two drug peddlers arrested with intoxicant tablets

Excelsior Correspondent

KISHTWAR, Jan 17: Police arrested two drug peddlers and recovered 280 intoxicant tablets from their possession.

As per police sources, on specific information a team from Police Station Kishtwar led by SHO Inspector Abid Bukhari under the supervision of DySP Headquarters Kishtwar Satish Kumar conducted raid and apprehended two drug peddlers along with 280 intoxicant tablets.

The arrested persons were identified as Mohammad Imran alias Soni, son of Ghulam Mohammad of Horna Mughal Maidan, at present Wasserkund District Kishtwar and Kousar Nazir Butt, son of Nazir Ahmed Butt of Ward Number 5 near Usmaniya Masjid District Kishtwar.

A case FIR Number 04/2022 under Section 8/21/22/29 NDPS Act has been registered at Police Station Kishtwar and investigation started.

Absconder arrested

Excelsior Correspondent

RAMBAN, Jan 17: Police arrested an absconder, who was evading his arrest since long.

As per police sources, on specific information a team from Police Station Ramban led by SHO Inspector Sandeep Charak under the supervision of DySP Headquarters Ramban Pardeep Singh Sen and SP Ramban Mohita Sharma conducted raid and apprehended an absconder, who was at large since long.

The arrested absconder was identified as Sudesh Kumar, son of Dena Nath of Kundab, Jhat Gali, Tehsil Rajgarh, District Ramban.

He was wanted in a case registered FIR Number 125/2021 under Sections 498-A, 323, 452, 504, 506 and 34 IPC with Police Station Ramban.

Further investigation into the case is going on.

DDC Rajouri reviews achievements under RDD sector

Excelsior Correspondent

RAJOURI, Jan 17: District Development Commissioner Rajouri, Vikas Kundal today called for expeditious completion of developmental works to meet the aspirations of the general public.

He was taking a review of the performance of the RDD sector under different schemes here at a meeting held in the Conference Hall of the PWD Dak Bungalow.

Officers, who attended the meeting included ADDC, Pawan Kumar; CPO, Mohammad Khurshid; ACD, Sushil Khajuria; DSEO, Bilal Rashid Mir; ACP, Abdul Rashid Kohli; ExEn REW, Bashir Ahmed and BDOs.

The meeting held a threadbare discussion on several points including person-days generated, houses condtructed under PMAY-G, geo-tagging of assets, FTOs generation, Border bunkers Constructed and payments made.

Taking stock of progress achieved under man-days generation, the DDC sought a detailed report from the concerned officers in this regard and expressing dismay over poor achievement of some of the blocks. He asked the concerned officers to expedite the progress to achieve the yearly target of Man Days generation at the earliest.

Discussing the progress achieved under PMAY-G, it was informed that against the target of 30534 houses, as many as 11793 houses have been constructed to date. He also took stock of the payment of installments to the beneficiaries under PMAY-G and asked for filling up the gaps, if any.

While taking note of progress concerning the allotment of tenders, the DDC asked the concerned officer to ensure that all the tenders are immediately allotted for the expeditious completion of the works.

Regarding blockwise geo-tagging, the concerned officers were directed to work on a war footing basis to ensure that all the assets are geo-tagged at the earliest.

The DDC also took stock of the progress regarding the construction of border bunkers and directed the concerned officers to expedite the progress to achieve the target within set timelines.

He laid specific emphasis on close coordination and synergy among the officers for removing the bottlenecks and completion of works in a time-bound manner.

Gupta, Tarkhan, Mankotia elected Chairmen to Standing Committees

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Jan 17: Election for the post of Chairmen to the three Standing Committees of Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) were held here today in which BJP Councillors were elected unopposed.

Ajay Gupta, BJP Councillor of Ward number 52 was elected as Chairman to the Social Justice Standing Committee after all the eight members including him voted in his favour.

It is pertinent to mention here that all the three Standing Committees have nine members each who vote for the post of Chairman.

One member of the Social Justice Standing Committee Raj Rani has died last year so there were only eight members left in the Committee who casted their voted to elect Gupta as Chairman.

Similarly, Raj Kumar Tarkhan, another Councillor of BJP was elected as the Chairman of Health and Sanitation Committee while Hardeep Mankotia, also BJP Councillor was elected as Chairman of Swachch Bharat Standing Committee.

Bovines smuggling bids foiled, 54 cattle rescued

Excelsior Correspondent

RAMBAN, Jan 17: Police foiled bovines smuggling bids by rescuing 54 cattle and seizing 13 vehicles.

As per police sources, teams from Police Station Ramban, Police Station Chanderkote and Police Station Batote laid check points in their respective jurisdictions and intercepted 13 Kashmir bound vehicles bearing registration numbers JK02CH-7592, JK02CN-4734, JK02B-5221, JK14D-9987, JK02CE-4146, JK02CJ-8284, JK19-7061, JK02CS-4131, JK02CR-2486, JK02CS-8051, JK02CR-6093, JK14G-5697 and JK14H-2888.

During checking, police team rescued 54 bovine animals and seized all the thirteen vehicles.

Cases under relevant Sections have been registered at Police Stations Ramban, Chanderkote and Batote and investigation started.

Police teams led by SHO Ramban Inspector Sandeep Charak, SHO Chanderkote Inspector Afzal Wani and Incharge SHO Batote PSI Harish Kumar foiled the bovines smuggling bids under the supervision of DySP Headquarters Ramban Pardeep Singh Sen and SP Ramban Mohita Sharma.

BWJA forms Working Committee

Excelsior Correspondent

BARAMULLA, Jan 17: Core Group of Baramulla Working Journalists Association (BWJA) held a meeting under the chairmanship of BWJA chairman, Karamat Qayoom and president, Gulzar Ahmad Zargar.

After long discussions and deliberations, the working committee and executive body of BWJA was constituted.

The BWJA members reaffirmed that they will work for the welfare of media persons besides safeguarding the interests of working journalists.

The working committee constituted has Karamat Qayoom as chairman/patron; Gulzar Ahmed Zargar, president; Sajad Hussain Pir, vice president; Altaf Baba, chief advisor; Anzhar Mahjoo, general secretary and Iqbal Amin, treasurer.

The executive body members include Rahi Nisar, president Pattan Media Association, Ishfaq Dar, president Tangmarg Media Association, Suhail Khan and Majid Sheeri while Abid Nabi was made organizer.

Covid treatment: Govt issues revised guidelines on use of drugs, therapies

NEW DELHI, Jan 17:

There is no evidence of injectable steroids benefitting Covid patients not requiring oxygen supplementation or in continuation after discharge, according to the revised 'Clinical Guidance for Management of Adult COVID-19 Patients'.

The revised guidelines issued by AIIMS, ICMR-COVID-19 National Task Force and Joint Monitoring Group (DGHS) under the Union health ministry also stated that anti-inflammatory or immunomodulatory therapy, such as steroids, can have the risk of secondary infection like invasive mucormycosis, when used too early, at higher dose or for longer than required.

Injection methylprednisolone 0.5 to one mg/kg in two divided doses, or an equivalent dose of dexamethasone, can be given usually for a duration of five to 10 days in moderate cases, the guidelines stated. The same drug in two divided doses of one to two mg/kg can be given for same duration in severe cases.

"Inhalational budesonide (given via metered dose inhaler/dry powder inhaler) at a dose of 800 mcg BD for five days can be given in mild cases if symptoms (fever and/or cough) are persistent beyond five days of disease onset," it was stated in the guidelines.

If cough persists for more than two-three weeks, one should opt for investigation for tuberculosis and other conditions, they stated.

The revised guidelines continue to recommend emergency use authorization (EUA) or off-label use of remdesivir in patients with "moderate to severe" disease and those with no renal or hepatic dysfunction within 10 days of the onset of any symptom.

It warned against use of the drug for patients who are not on oxygen support or in home settings.

According to the guidelines, EUA or off-label use of the tocilizumab drug may be considered for use in the presence of severe disease, preferably within 24 to 48 hours of onset of severe disease or intensive care unit (ICU) admission.

Tocilizumab may be considered for patients with significantly raised inflammatory markers, and not improving despite use of steroids with there being no active bacterial, fungal or tubercular infection, they stated. Coronavirus patients have been classified into those affected by mild, moderate and severe disease, the guidelines stated.

According to the guidance note, upper respiratory tract symptoms without shortness of breath or hypoxia has been categorised as mild disease and have been advised home isolation and care." Those suffering from mild Covid should seek medical attention if they have difficulty in breathing, high grade fever, or severe cough lasting for more than five days.

Those having breathlessness with SpO2 fluctuating between 90-93 per cent, can get admitted to a ward, and they will be considered moderate cases. Such patients should be given oxygen support and awake proning should be encouraged in all patients requiring supplemental oxygen therapy, in sequential position changes every two hours, the guidelines stated.

Respiratory rate over 30 per minute, breathlessness or SpO2 lower than 90 per cent on room air should be considered as severe disease and such patients have to admitted to an ICU as they will need respiratory support, they stated.

Such patients should be put on respiratory support. Non-invasive ventilation (NIV) -- helmet or face mask interface depending on availability -- may be considered in those with increasing oxygen requirements if work of breathing is low. (PTI)

Bail denied to fake media person in fraud case

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Jan 17: Railway Magistrate Jammu R K Lalhal today rejected the bail application of one Umran Akram, son of Mohd Akram of Rajouri claiming to be a media reporter, who has been arrested for preparing false and fake documents with intent to deceive innocent unemployed youth.

During the course of investigation, accused was arrested and 59 fake degrees, mark cards, diplomas, registrations certificates from Universities and BOSE were seized. Statements of witnesses under Section 161 CrPC were also recorded. Stamps from the residence of the accused and certain documents were also recovered ascribed in the name of Bundel Khand University, Punjab Technical University and IFTM University and Monad University etc.

After hearing APP Vikram Parihar for the police, the court observed, "a society expects responsibility and accountability from the member and it desires that the citizen should obey the law. Therefore, when an individual behaves in a disharmonious manner, ushering in disorderly things which the society disapproves, the legal consequences are bound to follow".

"At that stage, the court has a duty. It cannot abandon its sacrosanct obligation and pass an order at its own whim or caprice. It has to be guided by established parameters of law. In the case on hand, the accused is involved in heinous offence/s and prima facie there are reasonable grounds to believe that he has committed the offences", the court said, adding "investigation is still going on and in case he is enlarged on bail at this stage, there is every possibility of accused fleeing from the course of justice".

NSUI activists protesting for online examinations by Jammu University.

NSUI protests for online exams

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Jan 17: Demanding online mode of examinations, NSUI activists today held a protest demonstration in front of the Jammu University main gate.

Carrying placards in support of their demand, the protesting NSUI activists raised slogans for conducting online and timely examination of BE and PG courses.

The protest demonstration was led by NSUI Vice-President J&K, Choudhary Irshad Khatana who alleged that the Jammu University was playing with the career of PG and BE students.

"Because of delay in conducting examinations, the PG courses have stretched to three years while the BE students are also facing problem because of delay in exams," he said and reiterated the under the prevailing Covid pandemic situation and rising number of cases, the mode of exams should be online only.

'BJP selling J&K to Dubai Sheikhs'

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Jan 17: Mission Statehood Jammu Kashmir (MSJK) has demanded that conditions signed in Memorandums of Understanding with outside investors in J&K should be brought in public domain.

Addressing a press conference here today MSJK leader, Sunil Dimple demanded restoration of statehood with special status to J&K.

He claimed that BJP is selling J&K to outsider Dubai Sheikhs and real estate investors without lease period, PRC, state subjects and domiciles.

The MSJK leader said that they never demanded such developments which may change the demography of J&K.

He also demanded integration of J&K with PoK and Gilgit-Baltistan.

Dimple said, signed in Dubai with EMRA, LULU and others, the Memorandums of Understanding giving land without the domicile certificates to non-residents is not acceptable.

MSJK leader, Sunil Dimple addressing a press conference at Jammu on Monday.

He claimed that these Memorandums of Understanding with Dubai investors are a big threat for the security of J&K also as possibility of Gulf countries having nexus with ISI and Hawala rackets can't be ruled out.