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Rijiju arrives today on 2-day visit

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 7: Union Minister for Law and Justice Kiren Rijiju is visiting Jammu and Kashmir on a two-day visit on April 8 and 9.

On April 8 morning, Rijiju will attend function for publication of the Constitution of India in Dogri Language at Brigadier Rajinder Singh Auditorium, University of Jammu.

Later, he will also visit Udhampur.

Dr Reeta Vasishtha, Secretary Legislative Department, Ministry of Law and Justice, Special (Contd on page 4 Col 1)

Cop posted at BJP leader's house dies

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Apr 7: A policeman posted at the residence of Bhatti Janta Party (BJP) leader died today afternoon after his service rifle went off accidentally in Kupwara district.

*Watch video on www.excelsionews.com

An official said that the cop, who was posted at the residence of BJP district president Kupwara, Abdul Rehman Lone,

(Contd on page 4 Col 2)

Weather to remain dry

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Apr 7: After a week of intermittent rainfall, weather improved in Kashmir today and is likely to be mainly dry till April 10 while the administration issued an avalanche warning for the hills of Kupwara.

Meteorological Department official said that light rain at isolated places towards late afternoon/evening was expected on April 11.

Jammu and Kashmir Disaster Management Authority (JKDMA) issued an avalanche (Contd on page 4 Col 5)

95 test +ve for COVID in J&K

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 7: A total of 95 new COVID-19 positive cases were reported today in Jammu and Kashmir, 38 from Jammu Division and 57 from Kashmir valley.

According to the reports, highest number of 24 cases were reported from Jammu district, followed by 17 from Srinagar, 11 from Kulgam, 6 from Ganderbal, 5 cases each from Baramulla and Budgam districts, 4 each from Kupwara and Bandipora, 3 each from Samba, Ramban and Pulwama (Contd on page 4 Col 1)

Govt to support poor prisoners

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 7: A total of 95 new COVID-19 positive cases were reported today in Jammu and Kashmir, 38 from Jammu Division and 57 from Kashmir valley.

In a move expected to decongest the prisons, the Centre has decided to launch a special scheme to provide financial support to poor people languishing in jails as they are unable to afford the penalty or the bail amount.

"This will enable poor prisoners, majority of whom belong to socially disadvantaged or marginalised groups with lower education and income level, to get out of prison," the Home Ministry said in a statement today.

(Contd on page 4 Col 3)

India logs 6,050 Corona cases

Excelsior Correspondent

NEW DELHI, Apr 7: India has logged 6,050 fresh Coronavirus cases, the highest in 203 days, while the active cases have increased to 28,303, according to Union Health Ministry data updated today.

On September 16 last year, 6,298 cases were recorded.

The death toll has increased to 5,30,943 with 14 deaths -- three reported from Maharashtra, two each from Karnataka and Rajasthan, one each from Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, (Contd on page 4 Col 5)

'Benefits of growth reaching all sections' Will address public complaints in time-bound manner, speedily: LG

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 7: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha interacted with the citizens, who had submitted their grievances on JKIGRAMS portal during "LG's Mulaqaat" today.

The Lt Governor said that it is our firm resolve to address public complaints in time-bound manner and speedily bring about change for all round progress.

"We have embarked on several major initiatives in developing efficient public service delivery mechanism & it has improved ease of living of common man," he observed.

Transparent & accountable governance is ensuring that benefit of growth reaches all sections, especially last man in queue, he said.

While interacting with the citizens, Sinha took appraisal of their grievances and action taken by the concerned Deputy Commissioners.

He also sought details of the action taken on the directions

passed in the previous meeting.

On the grievance of a person from Srinagar regarding environment protection and sanitation at the foothills of Shankaracharya top, the Lt Governor directed



Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation to look into the issue on priority for appropriate action.

Responding to a complaint regarding wards and bathrooms of the District Maternity & Child care Hospital Sheerbagh, Anantnag, the Deputy Commissioner, Anantnag

apprised the LG that the renovation and facelifting work of the bathrooms of the hospitals has already been done and the grievance was resolved.

Addressing the grievance of Irfan Rasool from Baramulla regarding dumping of solid waste in Nignli Nallah and its harmful impact on environment, Sinha asked the Deputy Commissioner to formulate a comprehensive strategy through the local PRIs for a robust waste management.

Farooq Ahmad from Pulwama had submitted a complaint regarding illegal sand extraction in Hajibal, on which the Lt Governor directed the Deputy Commissioner to take strict and immediate action.

Responding to the grievance of non-availability of Gynaecologist specialist at CHC Bani, Administrative Secretary, Health & Medical Education Department apprised the LG that the specialist will be arranged immediately on rotation basis.

On the sidelines of the LG's Mulaqaat, discussion was also

held on successful implementation of training programme for holistic development of agriculture and allied sector. The training programme is being executed by the Agriculture Production Department for farmers in all 20 districts.

Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture Production Department gave the detailed presentation of the training programme scheduled to be held between 24th April to 31st August, 2023.

Rehana Batul Commissioner/Secretary, Public Grievances conducted the proceedings of the LG's Mulaqaat.

Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary; R K Goyal, Additional Chief Secretary, Home Department; Administrative Secretaries; Divisional Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners, Superintendents of Police, Heads of the Departments, and other senior officers were present during the interaction, in person and through virtual mode.

'Venue, places of visit by Intl leaders to be fully secured' MHA, IB team to review security arrangements for G20 meeting

Sanjeev Pargal

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 7: A team of Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and Intelligence Bureau (IB) reached Srinagar today to review arrangements for G20 meeting and security scenario in Jammu and Kashmir.

The visit of the high-level team will be followed by another two-day meeting in New Delhi, most likely on April 15 and 16 on Jammu and Kashmir security scenario with particular reference to G20 meeting in Srinagar scheduled to be held in May.

Official sources told the Excelsior that the Ministries of External Affairs and Home besides the Jammu and Kashmir Government have geared up to ensure peaceful G20 meeting in Srinagar and security arrangements are being made well in advance to ensure that there is no untoward incident in the Valley.

"In view of this, a team of MHA and IB comprising senior officers reached Srinagar this evening and soon after their arrival closeted with top officers of police and Intelligence agencies to review security situation," sources said.

The Intelligence agencies have reports that the militants

Venue of the meeting and places where G20 delegates will visit will come under 24x7 security net nearly week ahead of the scheduled summit date, sources said, adding along with Jammu and Kashmir Police, the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) will guard the venue, places the delegates will visit and other vulnerable areas where the militants could strike. All such places will be fully secured, sources said.

The Central and Jammu and Kashmir Governments were determined to make fool-proof security arrangements for G20 meeting.

Sources said the visiting team will also review general security situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Intelligence agencies are of the view that there is also little presence of militants in some districts of the Jammu region and they could also strike there just for the sake of making a news ahead of G20 meeting. Worthwhile to mention here that two Pakistani militants involved in

(Contd on page 4 Col 1)

Next meet to be held in New Delhi by top officials

and their mentors sitting in Pakistan were badly frustrated due to elimination of militants especially their top commanders and their inability to strike in the Valley. In such a situation, the militants could strike at soft targets ahead of G20 meeting, which is a major international event in the Valley, they added.

According to them, the high-level MHA and IB team will be meeting senior civil and police officers also to finalize security arrangements comprehensively ahead of G20 meeting as well as during the meeting in entire Jammu and Kashmir especially the Valley.

'Drug abuse is serious issue, no scope for slackness' Start focusing on tasks assigned to eradicate menace of drug addiction: CS to all deptts

Mohinder Verma

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 7: Noting that menace of drug addiction in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is a serious issue, Chief Secretary Dr Arun Kumar Mehta has directed all the departments to start focusing on the tasks assigned by the General Administration Department in the month of September last year and periodically assess the outcome of different activities to be conducted by the field functionaries.

Vide Circular No.30-JK(GAD) dated September 3, 2022, detailed instructions were issued to almost all the Government departments for generating awareness about the drug addiction, identification of drug users and suppliers as also rehabilitation of victims.

Thrust laid on inter-departmental, multi-level campaign

However, the departments focused on the assigned tasks only during the month of September 2022 and thereafter very few activities were conducted and this was exclusively highlighted by EXCELSIOR in its edition dated February 18, 2023. It was pointed out that several departments and majority of the Urban Local Bodies and Panchayati Raj Institutions are not strictly following the instructions on checking substance abuse.

Few days back, Chief Secretary Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, while chairing a high-level meeting, noted that the menace of drug addiction is a

serious issue as such there should not be any let up in the activities/tasks assigned to the departments by the General Administration Department in the month of September last year, official sources told EXCELSIOR.

Accordingly, the Chief Secretary has directed all the departments to ensure that the specific tasks assigned to them under the Nasha Mukh Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan initiative are re-activated and strictly followed to combat/eradicate the menace of drug addiction.

Detailed instructions have already been issued to 17 (Contd on page 4 Col 1)

Surge in COVID cases Stay alert, prepared; identify emergency hotspots: Health Minister to States

NEW DELHI, Apr 7:

Amid rising cases of Coronavirus, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya today held a review meeting and advised states to stay alert and be prepared for COVID-19 management.

In the meeting with state Health Ministers and Principal and Additional Chief Secretaries held virtually, Mandaviya stressed on identifying emergency hotspots by monitoring trends of influenza-like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infection (SARI) cases, ramping up testing and vaccination and ensuring readiness of hospital infrastructure.

Along with enhancing

genome sequencing and ramping up whole genome sequencing of positive samples, he also emphasised on creating awareness about following COVID-Appropriate Behaviour.

The Centre and the states need to continue working in collaborative spirit as was done during the previous surges for COVID-19 prevention and management, Mandaviya said.

He also urged the State Health Ministers to conduct mock drills of all hospital infrastructure on April 10 and 11 and review the health preparedness with district administrations and health officials on April 8 and 9.

States and Union Territories were further informed that currently WHO is closely tracking

one variant of interest (VOI), XBB.1.5 and six other variants are under monitoring (BQ.1, BA.2.75, CH.1.1, XBB, XBF and XBB.1.16), a Health Ministry statement said.

It was highlighted that while Omicron and its sub-lineages continue to be the predominant variant, most of the assigned variants have little or no significant transmissibility, disease severity or immune escape. The prevalence of XBB.1.16 increased from 21.6 per cent in February to 35.8 per cent in March, 2023.

However, no evidence of an increase in hospitalisation or mortality has been reported, the statement said.

(Contd on page 4 Col 3)

LG Admn seeks immediate report from DCs on illegal leasing out of temple properties in Kashmir

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 7: The Lt Governor's administration has sought immediate report from Deputy Commissioners in the Valley on the temples and shrines properties of Kashmiri Hindus and Gurdwaras etc asking them to file the update inventory within week's time.

A communiqué in this regard has been sent to all Deputy Commissioners of Kashmir by Divisional Commissioner's Office, Srinagar. The letter, while quoting the communication received from Lt Governor's Secretariat asked them to ascertain any such instance like illegal lease of temples and shrines properties in their respective districts or nexus in temple proper-

ties being used illegally.

The Divisional Commissioner has asked the DCs to take appropriate and necessary action under rules with an intimation to his office. The letter has further asked all the DCs to furnish the updated inventory of religious minority properties in their respective districts including temples, Gurdwaras and others to his office within week's time.

When contacted, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri told Excelsior that no Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been constituted as such. He said a misinterpretation is being given by some people that SIT has been constituted for probe. "If there is SIT will you tell me who is heading that?" he asked.

There is no CBI or SIT probe, he added.

The Divisional Commissioner Kashmir said that some body has given an application to the Lt Governor who forwarded the same to my office. "And in a normal routine I forwarded that to DCs concerned to seek status report from them besides asking them to take action under rules and furnish the report within a week," he added.

It may be recalled that the Lt Governor's Secretariat on the basis of an application submitted by the J&K Peace Forum demanding probe into what it called the illegal lease of temple properties in Kashmir and nexus in these properties for illegal use, has appealed the Government to

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