

DLO meeting held

DIPR
Ccpur, Oct. 7.

Protection of land belonging to various Government departments, studying/assessing feasibility of setting up a detention cum rehabilitation centre for drug addicts, action plan to contain outbreak of locust at Lungthul area are among others issues discussed today during a District Level Coordination Committee (DLCC) meeting chaired by Shri Shyam Lal Poonia, Deputy Commissioner, Churachandpur yesterday at the Conference Hall of DC's office here.

It was resolved in the meeting that land belonging to various Govt departments/offices in the district be protected against encroachers. Towards this end, the DC has instructed concerned DLOs to conduct proper demarcation of the land allotted to their departments and submit a copy of their patta to the district administration.

Taking cognizance of drug addicts and their menace in the society, the DLCC meeting today decided to hold another meeting of concerned departments such as DSWO, CMO, Police, etc on Monday at 11 AM at SP's Office to study or assess the feasibility of setting up a detention cum rehabilitation centre for drug addicts. As a security advisory, Sr SP Shri Kabib K has also urged all concerned DLOs to install CCTV cameras within their respective premises in order to keep the offices premises under surveillance round the clock. Besides, it will also facilitate swift tracking of criminal activities, if any, in and around Govt offices. Expressing serious concern over the reported infestation of locust in Lungthul area under Singat sub-division, the DC has instructed the District Agriculture Officer to send a team of officials to survey and assess the situation at the earliest.

Women prisoners, open jail inmates can now make video calls to kin in Maharashtra

Agency
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Women prisoners and inmates of open jails across Maharashtra can now make video calls to their families and relatives, said a senior official of the prison department of the state government. This could be the first-of-its-kind initiative for prisoners in the country, claimed the official.

Under the initiative, the prison department has started a smart video calling facility for inmates lodged in women's jails and open prisons, the official said. A prisoner can talk to his/her family members for five minutes and is charged Rs 5 for availing the service, he said. "It was initiated on a pilot basis at the Central Prison at Yerawada in Pune and now it has been started

in women's jails and open prisons across the state," he said.

Through the video calling facility, prisoners can speak to their relatives or family members for five minutes on a given day on mobile phone numbers registered with the department, he said. Smartphones being used for the video facility, which brings inmates and their family members face to face, have been purchased by dipping into the Prisoners Welfare Fund, the official said. The whole conversation is monitored by a police constable to ensure the video chat centres only around family issues and well-being of each other, he said. Earlier, the department had installed coin box phones inside jails to enable inmates to speak to their family members. These phones were

installed on court orders and prisoners could use them for five minutes, he said.

Around 28,000 prisoners, including convicts and undertrials, are lodged in 54 jails across the state. Among them, 13 are open prisons and two are women's jails, he said. Besides, the department has set up high-tech rooms in all the prisons with thick glass partitions separating inmates and visitors, the official said. In these rooms, inmates and their family members can see each other and converse through a mike, he said. Maharashtra has taken a lead in using video conferencing facility to produce undertrial prisoners in courts for hearings, the official said. Last year, 1.11 lakh undertrials were produced before various courts through video conferencing, he said, adding, "This year, we are expecting

this number to top 1.5 lakh."

In another initiative called 'Galabhet' (embrace your child), children aged below 16 years are allowed to meet their parents lodged in jails, the official said. "We have also started tele-medicine initiative for prisoners, under which they can get medical advice over the telephone from doctors," he said. The Maharashtra prison department, headquartered in Pune, oversees nine central jails, 31 district jails, 13 open jails and 172 sub-jails. There are two separate prisons for women at Pune and Mumbai, according to the department's website. Two open prisons for women are located in Pune and Akola, it said. Open jails give the prisoners freedom of movement. They are also allowed to work on farms or factories while serving their sentence.

Arun Jaitley says scope to link Aadhaar with mobile phone numbers

Agency
New Delhi Oct 7,

Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley Saturday said that it was still possible to link mobiles to Aadhaar and so allow private sector to use the unique identity, provided there was statutory backing to it and the test of proportionality could be satisfied.

Speaking at the Hindustan Times Leadership Summit here, Jaitley said the Supreme Court had upheld "most of what Aadhaar does". He added, "What has not been upheld falls in two categories. Bulk of that has been struck down on two principles — one is the principle of proportionality, that Aadhaar will help in these cases, please weigh the pros and cons and then do it by an appropriate law. So this whole argument which was being given, that private companies can't use it... For instance there is a Section 57 which says you can authorise others either 'by law' or 'by contract'. So what has been struck down is 'by contract'. By law it can still be done, provided you do it under adequate provision of law and you do it on the basis that, in this field, it is necessary."

Asked if Aadhaar would be extended to bank accounts and mobile phones, Jaitley said, "I don't know, but in several areas, for instance income tax, they (the Supreme Court) permitted it. Because they said on the principle of proportionality, income tax you do it by law. The Act has already been amended. And since there was largescale violation, it was permitted. So if you are able to show the kind of data that, in mobile telephony, it will help, it can happen... So these are the two critical areas, one is bank accounts, the other is mobile telephony. So you will then have to decide where it can't be done and where on basis of intrinsic data available, you can say that proportionality then demands that it can be done."

The Union minister added that, in his view, the majority opinion in the Aadhaar case "is a very sound judgment". "Because, after all, you have a system where you give a lot of government moneys on various subsidies to all kinds of people. And that was the principal object of Aadhaar. Aadhaar is not a citizenship card. Aadhaar was that those who want benefits from the State... and that's how it became a Money Bill."

Noting that he was criticised for introducing the Aadhaar legislation as a Money Bill, Jaitley added, "I said it's pure and simple distribution of monetary resources by the State, in terms of subsidies etc, which will directly reach bank accounts... And if it is reaching people, in the absence of Aadhaar, it was reaching people who were never born in this world. We had people who were not deserving getting it, we had people who got it twice and thrice over."

The use of Aadhaar had saved the government Rs 90,000 crore last year, he said, "four-five times the amount that is being spent on Ayushman

Bharat". "So that's the kind of resources you save. And therefore, to bring out arguments (that) it may encroach on liberty and so on... I think it was a bit too overstated. Therefore I'm glad that the majority (opinion) didn't accept it." On the Supreme Court verdict decriminalising Section 377 of the IPC which penalised same-sex relations, Jaitley noted that he had said in the past that the time had come for this change. However, he expressed reservations on some of the observations in the judgment. "The debate on 377 was on for a long time, it was a global debate, and on the issue of decriminalisation, there was an international trend. In fact I was one of the first persons in political life years ago who commented that time had come to decriminalise it. In society many have accepted it. It took some time. There was a favourable judicial verdict, an adverse verdict. And then finally it came to the Constitution bench. And I think it's been received fairly okay and fairly well."

However, he added, while he agreed with the court's findings that same-sex relations were not against the order of nature, and that there should be no discrimination on this basis and that sexual activity was a part of Article 21 guaranteeing right to life and personal liberty, he disagreed with the view that it was also part of free speech. "I think the problem comes when, writing these historical judgments, you get carried away and want to be a part of history and therefore you go a step further. So whereas these three reasonings I fairly agree with, the fourth one I completely disagree with — that it's also a part of free speech."

Justifying this, the Union minister said, "I think it is a little excessive and the consequences of that may not be on decriminalisation. Free speech is an entirely different campaign. It can be restrained only on reasons of sovereignty, security, public order and so on. And, mind you these, because there is a tendency to keep on creating new fundamental rights every day. So when you convert this into a fundamental right and say it's free speech, then how do you restrain any form of sexual activity, homosexual or bisexual, in a school hostel, in a prison, on an Army frontier. And unless in a subsequent view it's clarified, that court observation which was not necessary for the purpose (of) deciding this case, I think is something which requires further debate."

On the Supreme Court judgment regarding Section 497 of the IPC, which punished only a man for adultery, he said, "the section itself was very, very badly worded" and was "rightly quashed". But again, Jaitley did not favour the court saying it was only a "matrimonial offence", a private wrong and not a public wrong, and wondered if the logic could then be extended to bigamy and polygamy too. "... then it would be a wholly anti-woman judgment," he said.

J-K local body polls: Ahead of election tomorrow, security stepped up in valley

Agency
Srinagar Oct 7,

Security forces have intensified checking and area domination as part of an elaborate plan to provide a sense of security for the smooth conduct of local body polls in the Kashmir Valley, officials said Sunday. The first phase of the polls start Monday.

"An elaborate security plan has been put in place for the smooth conduct of the polls," a senior police official said. He said security forces have intensified vehicle checking, frisking and area domination in the city as well as in the other areas of the valley in the run up to the polls. "Many check-points have been placed in the city where vehicles are being checked. Sniffer dogs are also being used to check vehicles. We are making sure that no untoward incident happens," he said. The official said while

providing a secure atmosphere for the polls was a challenge, there is a good synergy between various security agencies and several steps have been taken to provide a general sense of security in the valley. "We are providing cluster security. Most of the candidates have been taken to secure locations and some have been given a security cover. The areas are being made safe through operations and increased presence of forces as well as through area domination," the official said. He said deployment of forces has been worked out and sensitive areas have been taken care of.

The official said polling booths have been secured and a thick layer of security has been thrown around them. "The focus is to keep trouble makers at bay so that there is untoward incident and people come out to vote without any fear," he said. Inspector General of CRPF,

Kashmir, Ravideep Singh Sahi said the "environment" in the entire Kashmir Valley is under control and the endeavour is to create a sense of security so that the people come out to vote. "We have made elaborate arrangements for the security. Whatever force was required for the elections, has come and they are being deployed. They have been here for some time and they are adequately familiarised with the area. We have started area domination, check-points have been installed in various areas and we are working in close coordination with the police and army," Singh said.

He said operations were being conducted to arrest trouble mongers so that a secure environment is provided to the people. "We have made adequate arrangements for the security of the candidates, their personal security as well as

the accommodation arrangements, we have elaborate plan for that. Area domination, checking and operations have been going on so that trouble mongers are arrested and there is a general sense of security," the IG CRPF said.

Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik Saturday took a detailed review of the security situation in the state ahead of the first phase of the municipal elections.

The meeting was attended by Northern Army Commander, Lt Gen Ranbir Singh, Director General of Police Dilbagh Singh, GOC 15 Corps, Lt Gen A K Bhat, and top officials from police, CRPF and civil administration.

The meeting discussed security arrangements made for the smooth conduct of the forthcoming elections to urban local bodies and panchayats and the need of a safe environment for the elections.

Rape backlash: Fearing for lives after attacks by mobs, UP, MP and Bihar migrants flee Gujarat

Agency
Ahmedabad Oct 7,

UNDER AHMEDABAD'S Chanakyapuri flyover with their bags and small children, they waited for a bus that would take them on a backbreaking 24-30-hour journey home to Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. From Ahmedabad and its neighbouring districts, Hindi-speaking migrants who have lived in Gujarat for years, are fleeing — driven by fear after mobs, seemingly angry over the alleged rape of a 14-month-old girl, started to attack "non-Gujaratis" earlier this week.

In some cases, landlords had asked them to leave, said some of the migrants waiting for a bus in the afternoon sun Saturday. At least 180 people had been arrested in the districts of Gandhinagar, Ahmedabad, Sabarkantha, Patan, and Mehsana for targeting migrants, especially those from UP and Bihar, police had said Friday.

"My children were playing in the lane outside our house

when the mob attacked on Thursday night. They are still in shock. I took my four-year-old son to the doctor to calm him down that night," said Rajkumar Jataw, 30, waiting for a bus to return to her village in Bhind district of Madhya Pradesh. Rajkumar's three children and her husband, who does paint jobs to sustain the family, live in Mahadev Nagar, a colony of migrants in Ahmedabad's Chandoliya area. Several other migrant families who are their neighbours, are fleeing too — in their seven years in Gujarat, none of them has ever felt a fear like this, Rajkumar said.

Dharmendra Kushwaha, who too is from Bhind and lives in Mahadev Nagar, said some 1,500 UP, Bihar, and MP migrants may have fled from their homes in the colony over the last few days. "Two hundred people left today," said Kushwaha, 20, a labourer who works with painters, and arrived in Ahmedabad two years ago after spending seven years in Surat. He said masked men had told him to "leave Gujarat before 9am" Saturday, or he would be dead.

Some 20 buses, each packed with more than 80 passengers, left for UP, MP and Bihar Saturday. Normally, no more than a handful of buses leave on these long-distance routes every week.

"A bus would leave for UP, Bihar, or MP once in two days, with perhaps 25 passengers. But now, I am having to accommodate 80 or 90 people in each bus. And 20 such buses are leaving every day," said Pintoo Singh of Satyam Tomar Travels, an agency that has been operating private buses on these routes for several years. Krishnaachandra Sharma, a 42-year-old building construction contractor who says he has lived in Ahmedabad for the last 22 years, cannot recall having witnessed seen a situation earlier. "There have been Hindu-Muslim riots, but never something like this. The news spread like wildfire on Facebook and WhatsApp, which everyone has on their phones," he said.

Manju Singh (27), who does paint jobs in Gandhinagar, said his bike was stopped by a group of seven men on Thursday evening. "They

asked me where I was from. Sixth sense told me to lie, and I said I was from Rajasthan. When they probed further, I mumbled the name of a district. They let me go only after they had satisfied themselves I was not from UP, MP or Bihar. Immediately after I left, they burnt a vehicle at that very spot," Manju Singh said.

Manju Singh and several others left for their homes in Madhya Pradesh Saturday. All of them are painters, and this is peak business season for them, with Gujaratis painting and decorating their homes ahead of Diwali.

Waiting for a bus to Jalaun district in UP, Urmila Devi, who has been living in Kalol in Gandhinagar district for the last two years, said she did not know why people from her state were being attacked, or who was targeting them.

"Some 50-60 people stormed our settlement, shouting, 'Sab bhayiya log nikaal jo nahin to mar-peet karenge'," she said. "They set all the pani puri stalls in the lane outside our homes on fire. My son-in-law now has a fractured arm. Our

landlords asked us to leave as soon as possible," Urmila said. Mannabhai Prajapati (26), who has been selling pani puri in Visnagar in Mehsana district for the last 11 years, fled home with his family and reached Ahmedabad Friday morning. On Saturday, he said he was boarding the first bus he could get for his village in UP, along with his wife and three children, ages eight, two, and one.

"We do not know why they are doing this to us. We have locked our rented rooms and left with only our clothes. What else could we do? We do not know when we will be able to return. We never thought we would have to run away like this," he said.

Meanwhile, the child whose alleged rape by a man from Bihar on September 28 in Sabarkantha district triggered the violence against Hindi-speaking migrants, was discharged from hospital in Ahmedabad Saturday. Her condition was stable and she was out of danger, a senior official of the hospital said. The alleged rapist had been arrested on the same day.