

!! Continuations from Page 1 !!

J&K has potential...

to progress and production of industries. With the exponential growth of technology and emergence of new sunrise sectors, ITIs need to be transformed to meet the demand of skilled workforce," the Lt Governor said.

At the Convocation, the Lt Governor directed the Skill Development Department to assess the demand for district-wise skills, carry out mapping of existing skills and demand to make necessary changes in the curriculum or to introduce new vocational training courses keeping in mind the demand and aspirations of the youth.

All ITIs should have direct links with the local job market and industries, and relevant departments must support the ITI graduates who want to start their own enterprises, he said.

The Lt Governor further advised for roping in experts for training in Industries 4.0 and started a Training of Trainers program so that the trainers of both ITI and Polytechnic institutions are fully skilled and capable of producing the workforce of the future.

We need to put special focus on the hospitality sector, promotion of agri-preneurs and support to Self Help Groups. Every ITI should also establish linkage with one industry and it should ensure the passing out students of ITIs get employment, he added.

Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, Advisor to Lt Governor lauded the contribution of skilled workforce in the development of J&K and the country.

Saurabh Bhagat, Commissioner/Secretary, Skill Development Department highlighted the ongoing programmes of the department and the key features of new initiatives launched today.

The Lt Governor also felicitated the young entrepreneurs and presided over the Memorandum of Understanding signing ceremony between the Skill Development Department and J&K Energy Development Agency (JKEDA) for the training of 500 Suryamitras.

A Booklet on Skill development in J&K was also released on the occasion.

Aftab Malik, Chairman, District Development Council Srinagar; Dr Nazir Ahmed Ganai, Vice Chancellor SKUAST Kashmir; Vice Chancellors of various Universities, senior officials, Heads of ITIs and Polytechnics, teachers, and the parents of the graduating students were present.

3 DCs among...

J&K Financial Corporation, has been transferred and posted as Registrar, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University, Katra, J&K, on deputation basis; Mussarat-ul-Islam, JKAS, Deputy Commissioner, Ramban, has been transferred and posted as Managing Director; Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited; Ram Savak, JKAS, Director, Horticulture, Jammu, shall hold the charge of the post of Director Agriculture Jammu in addition to his own duties, till further orders.

Nagendra Singh Jamwal, JKAS, Registrar, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University, Katra, J&K, has been transferred and posted as Director, Command Area Development, Jammu; Khalid Majeed, JKAS, Director, Panchayati Raj and ex-officio Special Secretary, Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, has been transferred and posted as Director; Industries and Commerce, Kashmir; Mohammad Mumtaz Ali, JKAS, Director, Rural Development, Jammu, shall hold the charge of the post of Director, Panchayati Raj and ex-officio Special Secretary, Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, in addition to his own duties, till further orders.

Vishesh Paul Mahajan, JKAS, Deputy Commissioner, Doda, has been transferred and posted as Deputy Commissioner, Reasi; Gurvinderjeet Singh, JKAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the GAD, has been posted as Registrar, District Udhampur; Kapil Sharma, JKAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the GAD, has been posted as Special Secretary, Youth Services and Sports Department; Kishori Lal, JKAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the GAD, has been posted as Director, Estates, Jammu; Rakesh Magotra, JKAS, Special Secretary, Youth Services and Sports Department, has been transferred and posted as Director; Geology and Mining, J&K; Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone, JKAS, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Budgam, has been transferred and posted as Additional District Development Commissioner, Shopian; Bal Krishan, JKAS, Deputy Commissioner, State Taxes, Judicial, has been transferred and posted as Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Development Authority, Bhaderwah; Mushtaq Ahmad Rather, JKAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the GAD, has been posted as Programme Officer, ICDS Project, Srinagar; Jagdish Chander, JKAS, Joint Chief Executive Officer, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, has been transferred and posted as Secretary/Chief Executive Officer, J&K Khadi and Village Industries Board; Veveik Puri, JKAS, Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Development Authority, Rajouri, has been transferred and posted as Joint Director, Information (Hqr) in the Directorate of Information, J&K; Rajeev Kumar Khajuria, JKAS, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Rajouri, shall hold the charge of the post of Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Development Authority, Rajouri, in addition to his own duties, till further orders.

Ansuya Jamwal, JKAS, Joint Director, Hospitality and Protocol, Jammu, has been transferred and posted as Additional Deputy Commissioner, Jammu; Ravi Mohan Khajuria, JKAS, Registrar, District Udhampur, has been transferred and posted as Additional Secretary, Health and Medical Education Department; Rajesh Kumar Basotra, JKAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the GAD, has been posted as Registrar, Sales Tax Tribunal, J&K; Naresh Kumar, JKAS, Joint Director, Information (Hqr) in the Directorate of Information, J&K has been transferred and posted as Joint Director, Hospitality and Protocol, Jammu; Shahid Mehmood, JKAS, Additional Secretary, Public Works (R&B) Department, has been transferred and posted as Programme Officer, ICDS Project, Budgam; Navdeep Wazir, JKAS, Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Development Authority, Bhaderwah, has been transferred and posted as Deputy Commissioner, State Taxes, Judicial; Farukh Qazi, JKAS, Secretary/Chief Executive Officer, J&K Khadi and Village Industries Board, has been transferred and posted as Additional Secretary, Department of Forest, Ecology and Environment; Vivek Phonsa, JKAS, Additional Secretary, Department of Forest, Ecology and Environment, has been transferred and posted as Additional Secretary, Public Works (R&B) Department; Abdul Rashid Dass, JKAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the GAD, has been posted as Programme Officer, ICDS Project, Kulgam; Mehraj-ud-din Shah, JKAS, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Ganderbal, has been transferred and posted as Additional Deputy Commissioner, Budgam; Ajaz Qesar Malik, JKAS, Assistant Commissioner in the State Taxes Department, Jammu, has been transferred and posted as Additional Secretary, Information Technology Department; Kaiser Ahmad Bhawani, JKAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the Revenue Training Institute, Jammu, has been posted as Principal, Revenue Training Institute, Srinagar; Gulzar Ahmad, JKAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the GAD, has been posted as Additional Deputy Commissioner, Ganderbal; and Shaheena Khan, JKAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the GAD, has been posted as Joint Director, Food, Civil and Consumer Affairs, Kashmir.

As per another order, Jugal Kishore Anand, JKAS, Additional Secretary, Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, has been transferred and posted as Secretary, J&K Socially and Educationally Backward Classes Commission; and Paramjeet Singh, JKAS, Secretary, J&K Socially and Educationally Backward Classes Commission, has been transferred and posted as Programme Officer, ICDS Project, Doda.

"Dr. Narupa Rai, JKAS, Additional Registrar, Cooperatives, Jammu, has been transferred and posted as Special Secretary in the office of Chief Electoral Officer, J&K and Champa Devi, JKAS, Joint Registrar, Cooperatives (Audit), Jammu, has been posted as Additional Registrar, Cooperatives, Jammu," reads another order.

Women in J&K...

with the twin objectives of women empowerment and reducing dependence on plastic-made products during the festival.

Rajat Salgotra, who launched his start-up Samast Eco-Alternatives Private Limited in November 2021, was the first to introduce diyas made of cow dung in the Jammu market last year and plans to make available more than 20,000 pieces for the festival of lights being celebrated on November 12 this year.

"We have been using cow dung for puja since time immemorial. Our objective is to empower village women and safeguard the environment by producing eco-friendly products like idols and cow dung diyas. Last year, we sold 8,000 pieces (of diyas made of cow dung)," Salgotra, a member of NGO Disha Foundation, told PTI here.

Supervising the making of diyas by women in Mishriwala village - 20-odd km from here along the Jammu-Akmoor road - he said his company trained the rural women and provide them with locally available raw material to make both plain and attractive diyas.

"Diyas made of cow dung are different from earthen diyas. It is burnt completely and the ash or the product can be used as insecticide or fertilizer, having zero wastage. The product is sun dried and no chemicals or artificial colours are used to make these leak proof," Salgotra said.

He said the entire process from manufacturing to disposal is environment friendly and the village women are getting employment.

"We want more people to join us as we are making various products such as incense sticks and Ganesh Chaturthi idols," he said.

Salgotra said his initiative will also encourage people not to abandon their unpro-

ductive cattle on roads.

He lauded the support of Jammu Municipal Corporation, Pollution Control Committee and various educational institutions to various pro-environment campaigns and seminars.

Lovely Devi, one of the women engaged by Salgotra, said the initiative was beneficial to women. "We have been mostly sitting idle after house chores but now we are able to work and earn as well," she said.

Police inspector playing...

Dar and he hails from Kulgam. He has been active for quite some time and working at the behest of his masters across the border," Kumar said, adding that a Turkish revolver was used in carrying out the attack.

He said multiple teams have fanned out and raids are being conducted to nab the terrorist. "I am sure we will be catching him soon," he said.

Believed to be in his late thirties, Wani was rushed to a hospital in Soura where he was undergoing an operation, the officials said, adding his condition was stated to be critical.

He was posted in the district police lines.

In a post on X, formerly Twitter, the Kashmir Zone Police stated, "Terrorists fired upon and injured Inspector Masroor Ahmad near Eidgah, Srinagar. He was immediately shifted to hospital for treatment. Preliminary investigation reveals that a pistol was used in this terror crime. Area cordoned off, case registered."

The Resistance Front, a shadow outfit of the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorist group, has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Kumar later went to the hospital and enquired about the condition of the officer from the doctors. "Doctors have conducted one surgery and are planning another. Let us all hope and pray for him," he added.

Meanwhile, security has been beefed up as police and the CRPF have intensified checking in Srinagar and other towns of Kashmir following the terror attack on a police officer.

The security forces have intensified the checking of vehicles and pedestrians in several parts of Srinagar city and other towns, especially in the south Kashmir district of Pulwama, following the attack on Inspector Masroor Ahmad Wani in the Eidgah area of the city earlier in the day, the officials said.

Mobile vehicle checkpoints have been established at all major intersections in Srinagar as well as at the city's exit points, they added.

Jammu cricketer handed...

Gupta, Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association (JKCA) chief, said.

"He was originally registered by us in 20-21 as U19 player. He has never played for JKCA. He re-enrolled himself as a player of Bihar Cricket Association. He was registered by BCA as U-23 player with a different DOB (date of birth). He has been caught by BCCI and banned for submitting multiple DOB certificates."

In a release, JKCA said that Sharma has been banned from participating in all BCCI tournaments for a period of two years effective from October 27.

"...after completing the two-year ban, the player can only participate in the Senior Men's Tournament conducted by the BCCI and will not be allowed to play in any age group tournaments of the cricket board."

Sharma had migrated to Bihar and applied from there as a member of the U-23 men's team. "...since he was first registered by the JKCA in 2021-22, his data was available with the BCCI and despite him having changed the Association, he was caught submitting multiple birth certificates," the release said.

"JKCA has been informing from time to time that the players should not resort to such acts as the punishment given by the BCCI adversely affects the career of the player."

Don't allow religion...

in Jammu and Kashmir are actually benefiting all the human beings and not any particular community.

He said if he is elected to power, he will give a boost to his developmental agenda and ensure all the left out works are done on priority basis.

He said he aims to work for the people of all faiths and social class where no discrimination is practiced and all humanity is benefited.

"I will focus on further building hospitals and colleges in those areas which are far away and people are suffering for such facilities. Road networks shall be further expanded and the rural pockets will be connected with cities and towns. This will in turn ensure economic growth and job opportunities for our people," he said.

He said he would never ever play the politics of hatred and invoke religion for votes.

"This is not what my ideology stands for. I strictly believe in the politics of merit and work. I will place my report card in front of my people and they will judge me instead of instigating communal flames to secure power," he said.

He said without playing communal cards people appreciate developmental and positive politics as reflected in the rally.

"Today thousands of people turned to my rally here since they admit and appreciate my developmental projects in the area when I was the Chief Minister of erstwhile J&K state. I assure you all that more such projects will come up and Ramban will be one of the modern districts in the country if I am given a chance to serve my people again," he said.

Among those present on the occasion included G.M Saroori Vice Chairman, R.S Chib General Secretary, Jugal Kishore Sharma Provincial President, Ab Majeed Wani Gen Secretary, Salman Nizami Chief Spokesperson, Anita Thakur Gen Secretary, Arun Singh Raju Secretary, Th Dharam Chand Dist President, Riyaz Naz Secretary, Sobat Ali Provincial Gen Secretary ST wing, Shakeel Singh Bhagat ST wing GS, Prabha Salathia Mahila President, Sunita Arora Spokesperson, Ch Farooq Secretary, Dr Asif Khanday, Fayaz Naik and Sheikh Shabir.

Two dead, 51...

prayer meeting. A few hours after the incident, a man claiming to be a member of Jehovah's Witnesses, surrendered before police in Thrissur district of the state, saying that he carried out the multiple blasts.

Police has registered an FIR against unknown persons under Sections 302 (murder) and 307 (attempt to murder) of the IPC as well as provisions of the Explosives Act and the anti-terror law Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

Later in the day, state Health Minister Veena George said that of the 51 injured, 30 were admitted in various hospitals in the state and of them 18 were in ICUs.

Of the 18, six -- including a 12-year-old child -- were in critical condition with three of them having suffered over 90 per cent burns, the minister said.

She said teams of plastic surgeons and general surgeons arrived at Kalamassery Medical College from Thrissur and Kottayam medical colleges.

Besides that a 14-member medical board was also constituted to supervise the treatment being provided to the injured.

ADGP Law and Order M R Ajith Kumar told reporters here that a man named Dominic Martin had surrendered at Kodakara police station in the morning, claiming he was the one who set off the blasts.

The officer said the man gave evidence supporting his claim and the police were examining that as well as his claims and the reasons he gave for carrying out the act.

Prior to surrendering before the police, the man also put out a video message on a social media platform claiming responsibility for the blasts and stating his reasons. In the video, which was aired on various TV channels, the man claimed that he took the decision as the teachings of the organisation were "seditious."

No one from the organisation has reacted to his allegations.

Meanwhile, a person claiming to be a member of the religious group told a TV channel that no such person was part of their organisation presently.

Martin further claimed that Jehovah's Witnesses and its ideology were dangerous for the country and therefore its presence had to be ended in the state. He claimed that he had told the organisation several times to correct its teachings, but it was not ready to do so.

"As I had no other option, I took this decision," the man said.

Earlier, State Police Chief Shaik Darvesh Saheb told reporters in Thiruvananthapuram that according to the preliminary probe, an improvised explosive device (IED) was used to carry out the blasts.

Jehovah's Witnesses is a Christian religious group that originated in the United States of America in the 19th century.

"This morning at 9.40 am approximately, there was an explosion in Zamrah International Convention Centre in Kalamassery in which one person died and 36 people are undergoing treatment as per our information," the DGP said.

"We are examining it," he said, adding that a Special Investigation Team (SIT) will be constituted once he reaches the site.

A police source told PTI that there were three blasts, of which two were strong and the third was of low intensity.

On being asked whether tiffin boxes were used for packing the explosives as claimed by some news reports, the source said that it cannot be confirmed at this stage as the blast site was being examined by multiple agencies, including the state anti-terrorism squad and the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

Earlier, before Dominic Martin had surrendered, the DGP said he cannot say anything at this stage, and only after further investigation can he confirm whether it was an act of terror.

"Only after the investigation can I confirm the details. We are examining all the angles. We will find out who is behind this and take stringent action against them," the top police official said.

He also urged people to maintain peace and remain calm and asked them not to spread provocative or hateful messages on social media.

The spreading of provocative or hateful messages on social media would invite strict action, he warned.

The incident was termed as "shocking" by Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan and "extremely unfortunate" by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

"Shocked to hear about the blast at a religious gathering at #Kalamassery, Ernakulam district, Kerala, killing one person and injuring over 20. "Heartfelt condolences to the kin of the deceased and prayers for speedy recovery of the injured," the Governor said in a post on social media platform X.

Speaking to reporters in Delhi earlier, before reports of the second death in the blast, Vijayan said, "It is an unfortunate incident. One person died, and two others are in serious condition. An investigation has been launched, and further details will be available later. The incident is being viewed very seriously."

The CM also convened an all-party meeting on Monday in the wake of the blasts at the convention centre.

CPI(M) State Secretary M V Govindan, who is in Delhi along with Vijayan for some party programmes, said any terrible actions aimed at diverting attention from the Palestine issue would entail strict action.

"When Kerala stands united with the people of Palestine, any terrible action to divert attention from it will entail strict action. The government and all democratic persons will together condemn it," he said.

Govindan also said that on viewing the incident politically in the prevailing situation, it appears to be part of a terror act.

"That needs to be examined seriously," he said.

Kerala Revenue Minister K Rajan said no one, including the media, should take any steps or circulate information based on misconceptions about the incident.

Eyewitnesses recounted the terrifying moments following the blasts which occurred minutes after attendees began praying with their eyes closed.

Recounting her shocking experience, an elderly woman said, "When I opened my eyes after hearing the first blast, all I saw was a fireball in front of me.

"Nothing...nothing more...just a fireball. Everybody ran, scattered here and there. It was a sprawling hall, and a large number of people were inside."

Among the distressed crowd at the venue were senior citizens, including women who had participated in the morning prayers.

J&K border residents...

first major ceasefire violation since 2021, started around 8 pm Thursday in the Arnia area of R S Pura sector and lasted around seven hours, leaving a BSF jawan and a woman injured.

On October 17, two BSF personnel were injured when their post came under fire from Pakistan .

Many panic-stricken people, including migrant labourers engaged in harvesting paddy, fled to safer places amid heavy firing and mortar shelling Thursday night but returned to their homes next morning after the guns fell silent.

BSF has already lodged a strong protest with their Pakistani counterparts at two flag meetings in the past 10 days, with both sides highlighting the need to maintain ceasefire in the larger interest of peace and tranquility on the border.

"After 2018, our villages were pounded with mortars but we could not use most of the bunkers as we paid no attention to their cleaning," Kour said, appealing to the residents to maintain the bunkers like their houses.

She said the people saw the worst of times before the ceasefire came. "My concern is that the people living in this panchayat remain safe. We have 15 individual and seven community bunkers, but more bunkers are needed to cover all households who are living in the Pakistani shelling range."

According to locals, the majority of the bunkers are inundated and thick with wild vegetation, which work as a cover for snakes and other poisonous insects. They also lack toilets and electricity.

"We have cleared almost all the community bunkers," Prerna, a resident of ward number 5, said. For Nirmala Devi, the Pakistani firing was her first experience of such kind. "If we keep the bunkers clean, we need not flee our villages amid shelling."

Jammu Divisional Commissioner Ramesh Kumar, who along with a team of senior civil and police officers including Inspector General of Police, Jammu Zone, Anand Jain, visited the border villages on Saturday to assess the loss.

Not only Arnia, the border dwellers in other parts of Jammu, Samba, and Kathua, have also started cleaning security bunkers in their areas.

A delegation of National Conference led by Jammu provincial president Rattan Lal Gupta during his visit to the Pakistan-affected villages criticised the government for "not doing enough" to safeguard the border population.

"Bunkers which were constructed with much fanfare are proving to be useless as they are inhabitable due to poor maintenance and as most of these constructions have been inundated due to rain water. The public exchequer has been drained by the lethargic government in the case of bunkers as they are proving to be worthless," Gupta said.

Illegal vehicle modification...

During the joint operation, several items were seized as evidence of illegal activities taking place at the raided establishments. These items included two High-Security Registration Plates, modified and high-pressure horns, electric shutters designed to conceal HSRPs, tinted films used in contravention of the law and one dismantled motorcycle found within the premises of Prince Accessories.

Both Prince Accessories and Quickway Modifications have been seized and subsequently the illegal paraphernalia submitted to the concerned Narwal Police Chowki.

SSP Traffic and RTO have said that the action taken aims to send a strong message to those who engage in unauthorised vehicle modifications that such activities will not be tolerated and the law will be enforced rigorously.

Snow-skiing event organised to promote winter sports in Kishtwar

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A snow-skiing event was organised at picturesque Sinthan on Sunday in an effort to promote adventure tourism and winter sports in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district, officials said.

The thrilling event witnessed the active participation of more than 50 skilled skiers, including enthusiastic trainees from the Jawahar Institute of Monitoring and Winter Sports, the officials said.

They said a significant portion of the participants were girls, underscoring the growing interest and participation of women in winter sports. "Kishtwar is a hidden gem with enormous potential for adventure tourism and winter sports. Today's event is a testament to the talent and enthusiasm of our youths.

"We aim to make Kishtwar a renowned destination for winter sports, and we are committed to providing the necessary infrastructure and support for this purpose," Kishtwar Deputy Commissioner Devansh Yadav said.

The snow-skiing event was a captivating spectacle, with participants showcasing their skiing skills, gliding down the snowy slopes of Kishtwar, the officials said.

They said it was heartening to see both experienced skiers and newcomers come together to celebrate their passion for winter sports.

First Lavender Farm comes up in J&K

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Expanding the purple revolution to new areas, the first-ever Lavender Farm is coming up at Challa village in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district, officials said on Sunday.

Spread over two hectares of land owned by the Department of Agriculture Production and Farmers Welfare, the farm witnessed the planting of the first sample of lavender by District Development Council (DDC) member Reeta Thakur on Sunday, Chief Agriculture Officer, Kathua, Sanjeev Rai Gupta said.

A native of Europe, lavender was introduced by the Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (IIIM) in the temperate regions of the Jammu division under the CSIR-Aroma Mission in 2018, which led to Doda becoming the birthplace of India's purple revolution.

"This farm (in Bani) will raise awareness about lavender cultivation among the farming community and will set examples in future as an alternate source of income, which will also boost the economy of the region," Gupta said.

He thanked the Director Agriculture Kashmir for his support in providing 30,000 lavender saplings for the establishment of the Lavender farm in Kathua. Gupta said the lavender farm at Challah will be a source of quality planting material to farmers of adjoining Bani and Duggan blocks, besides supplying saplings to other areas of the Union Territory.

Appreciating the efforts of the agriculture department, Thakur said it is already doing excellent work in mushroom, Apiculture and off-season vegetable cultivation in areas of the Bani region.

"This lavender farm at Challa will raise the income of farmers of Bani and its adjoining areas. This will also be a famous tourist spot in the near future," she said.