

CS reviews progress on implementation of RDSS across J&K

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta on Friday chaired a meeting to review the progress on implementation of Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) across Jammu and Kashmir at Civil Secretariat here.

The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary, PDD, H Rajesh Prasad; Managing Director, JPDCL/KPDCL, Managing Director, JKPDC, DG, Budget, DG Accounts and Treasuries, Chief Engineers and other concerned officers both in person and through video conferencing.

Chairing the meeting, the Chief Secretary said that the RDSS has been initiated with an objective of improving financial sustainability of Power Distribution Companies (DISCOMS) and therefore all the ongoing works under the scheme should be completed



Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta chairing a meeting.

timely so that the desired objective of scheme is achieved.

He called upon the officers that unnecessary delays should be avoided and due convergence and synergy should be maintained with other departments so that any kind issues are timely sorted.

While reviewing the financial position of both the corporations, Dr. Mehta emphasized upon the officers to reduce AT&C losses so that the expected revenue is generated. He asked the officers that the departmental dues should be adjusted with the corporation as the same has been already paid by the gov-

ernment.

The Chief Secretary called upon the officers that the revenue should be generated as per the electricity provided to the areas and number of hours of supply should be linked to AT&C losses. He urged upon them to ensure that quality power supply is provided to consumers with timely realisation of pending liabilities from the consumers. He called for responsible behaviour on part of both discoms and consumers.

Dr Mehta further stressed on the Managing Directors of both corporations to run a rigorous campaign among public that quality of power is dependent on timely payment of electricity dues.

During the meeting, both the Managing Directors informed the Chief Secretary about the progress achieved on implementation of RDSS in their respective corporations.



DAP delegation joins KPs' protest JKPCC Chief constitutes committees for smooth conduct of Bharat Jodo Yatra in J&K

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Hitting out hard on the state administration for failing the Kashmiri Pandits (KPs), the Democratic Azad Party (DAP) on Monday joined the protesting Pandits in Jammu led by the senior party leadership including Ex Minister GM Saroori, DAP Senior leader Salman Nizami, Gourav Chopra Corporator and others.

The DAP leaders said that the government must take immediate measures for the safety, security and rehabilitation of the minority community in Kashmir. "It has been several months that Kashmiri Pandits are protesting in Jammu, but unfortunately that state administration is totally unmoved. Afar all how long can the state administration remain insensitive to their genuine demands," they said.

The leaders further said that ever since the DAP has come into being, the party



DAP leaders extending support to protesting KPs at Jammu.

founder and Chairman Ghulam Nabi Azad has assured the Kashmiri Pandits for return and rehabilitation with dignity and security if it come to power.

The DAP leaders demanded that the Kashmir Pandit Government employees should be shifted back to Jammu till situation improves in Kashmir. They said DAP will continue to stand by them and will keep raising their voice at every

platform. It is unfortunate that their salaries have been withheld.

"They have families to feed and have no other avenues. Under such circumstances upholding their salaries is gross injustice to them. We urge the LG administration to ensure their salaries are released as soon as possible. Among others present in the protest were Ashwani Handa, Vishal Chopra, Anoop Khajuria, Anil Kohli and others.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: JKPCC President Vikar Rasool Wani on Monday said that Bharat Jodo Yatra which will reach J&K in next month is not merely a political Yatra but socio-political movement which is raising the voice of common citizen of this country.

Addressing a press conference at party headquarters, Wani, flanked with JKPCC Working President Raman Bhalla, gave detail about the various committees constituted for smooth conduct of Bharat Jodo Yatra in Jammu & Kashmir.

He said this Yatra is a move-



JKPCC President Vikar Rasool Wani addressing a press conference at Jammu.

ment against the hatred politics that has encouraged by the ruling regime in the country.

Raising the concern about the rising inflation, unemploy-

ment in the country, he said that this Yatra is giving a message for the sufferings of the youth of this country.

Wani appealed to the common masses of J&K to join

this historical Bharat Jodo Yatra.

Raman Bhalla said "Bharat Jodo Yatra" is an historical movement against all the Communal & hatred spreading

forces in this Country. This Yatra is heading with the message of peace & harmony under the Leadership of Rahul Gandhi.

Bhalla, while appealing to the common masses of J&K, said that he is hopeful & confident that the people of Jammu & Kashmir irrespective of their political ideology are going to join this sociopolitical Yatra for the cause of Common Citizen of this Country.

Others present in the press conference were Thakur Manmohan Singh, Rajnish Sharma, Pranav Shagotra, Bilal Rashid, Dr. Jahanzaib Sirwal and Sahil Sharma.

Power shutdown

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Chief Engineer (Distribution) JPDCL Jammu has informed that the power supply to Arnas, Dharmari, Pouni, Ransoo, Sarh, Bagga, Dadua, Mahore, PHE Reasi and adjoining areas shall remain affected on December 13 from 9 am to 4 pm. Similarly, the power supply to Areas feed from R/Station Bani & Duggan, adjoining areas shall remain affected on December 13 from 10 am to 2 pm.

Likewise, the power supply to Ramban, Sangaldan, Gool and adjoining areas shall remain affected on December 13 from 10 am to 3 pm. Similarly, the power supply to Dumti, Thatthi, Pargval, Channi, Tanna, Rajpura, Bhalwal, MES, Malpur, Sobka, Sua No.-1 and adjoining areas shall remain affected on December 13 from 8 am to 2 pm.

Meanwhile, Superintending Engineer (Distribution) JPDCL, O&M Circle, Kathua has informed that power supply to Parangoli, Pacea Kottha, Mela, Sallan and adjoining areas shall remain affected on December 13 and 14 from 10 am to 5 pm.

HC refuses to quash FIR registered against MD SFC in corruption case

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High refused to quash FIR in alleged engagement/appointment of close relatives and others for extraneous and under-hand considerations by Abdul Qayoom Khan.

Justice Vinod Chatterji Koul, while dismissing a petition seeking quashment of FIR 16/2014 under Section 5(1)(d) read with 5(2) of PC Act and 120-B, 467, 468 and 471 of RPC, registered at Police Station VOK, observed that case in hand when examined on the touchstone of law laid down by the Supreme Court, does not at all persuade the Court to grant the relief prayed for by petitioner in the instant petition as it requires and demands full dress trial and examination of facts by this Court as if it is in appeal and acting as an appellate court and to draw its own conclusion vis-a-vis impugned FIR, and proceedings emanating there from. As far as earning of judgement in SWP no.352/2012 c/w SWP no.354/2012, is concerned, the same would not be a ground to quash an FIR, more particularly when the judgement is already under challenge in an appeal, being

LPA no.161/2020. In that view of matter, impugned FIR does not call for any interference qua petitioner and as a consequence of which, petition on hand is liable to be dismissed, the Court observed.

According to FIR, a verification conducted by Vigilance Organization Kashmir into allegations of engagement/appointment of close relatives and others for extraneous and under-hand considerations by Abdul Qayoom Khan revealed that officer as Managing Director, J&K State Forest Corporation has engaged twelve persons as Grading Attendants on casual basis vide Order No. 238 of 2010 dated 26.4.2010 and then regularised them as Class IV employees vide Order No.468 of 2010 dated 30.6.2010. Verification has revealed that filling of Class IV vacancies having experience in Khatamband manufacturing had not been advertised and the engagement/appointments have been made on pick and choose manner. No criteria whatsoever had been adopted for appointment except possession of experience in Khatamband manufacturing. The applicants have not produced even certificates like

state subject, qualification, date of birth etc. Nothing has been found on record to suggest that the applicants were subjected to any experience test in Khatamband manufacturing as projected by the Divisional Manager Saw Mills vide letter No.41/DM/SM/SFC dated 17.04.2010 or any performance test as projected by him vide his letter No.237/DM/SFC dated 29.06.2010. It was further revealed that all the Grading Attendants were subsequently transferred to territorial Divisions of SFC by the aforementioned Managing Director questioning the objective of their appointment against sanctioned posts of Common Facility Centre at Saw Mill Division Shalteng Srinagar. During verification it was found that then Managing Director had sought approval of the Forest Minister (Chairman of SFC) vide his U.O.No.01/MD/SFC dated 17.04.2010 on the basis of misrepresentation of facts and false documents that the appointees were subjected to work experience test and were found possessing necessary experience in Khatamband manufacturing. It was also that the appointment of

Grading Attendants had not been placed before the Board of Directors in its 61st Meeting held on 03.06.2009 wherein creation of 'Khatamband Raw Material Bank' and establishment of 'Common Facility Centre' have been discussed and approved. Verification has also revealed that one of the 12 Grading Attendants Farooq Ahmad Changa is the cousin of the then Managing Director Abdul Qayoom Khan and two more appointees namely Riyaz Ahmad Sheikh and Intikhab Ahmad Lala had been employees of the Unit M/s Zum Zum Cement Products registered in the name of sister-in-law of the said Managing Page 4 OWP no.1020/2015 Director. The above mentioned 12 Grading Attendants have been paid a total salary of Rs.23,08,728/- upto March, 2012. By acting in the afore-said manner, Abdul Qayoom Khan, the then Managing Director State Forest Corporation and Ghulam Ahmad Mir, the then Divisional Manager Saw Mills Shalteng Srinagar and others have by abuse of their official position as public servants conferred undue pecuniary advantage upon 12 beneficiaries under a well-knit conspiracy.

Implementation, penetration of drug & Vaccine Distribution Management System reviewed

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Secretary, Health and Medical Education, Bhupinder Kumar, on Monday chaired a meeting to review implementation and penetration of Drug and Vaccine Distribution Management System (DVDMS) here.

MD J&KMSCL apprised the meeting about the usage of DVDMS portal by various users.

Secretary reviewed status of district wise penetration of DVDMS. He issued on spot instructions for effective utilization of the portal for generation of demands, acknowledgement of supplies and distribution at all levels.

Secretary, while dismaying over poor performance of health institutions in effective utilization of the

portal, directed for making acknowledgement of receipts and distribution through the portal. He asked the J&KMSCL to hold regular meetings with the stakeholders to ensure full functionality, operationalisation and effective utilization of DVDMS portal.

He directed the Jammu and Kashmir Medical Supplies Corporation not to entertain offline receipts of supplies so that online acknowledgement is ensured at all levels.

Secretary also asked the Heads of health institutions to project their requirements for drugs and disposables to J&KMSCL in their annual demand for the complete year instead of staggered demand so that precious time in purchase

and procurement process could be saved. In respect of demand of machinery and equipments, he directed them to preferably project the same in annual demand through DVDMS portal.

Secretary reiterated that active utilization of DVDMS portal shall not only streamline the distribution network for machinery and equipments, drugs and disposables but shall also ensure timeliness and transparency.

The meeting was attended by Principals of Government Medical Colleges, Director Health Services Jammu and Kashmir, CMOs of all districts along with their respective BMOs, Medical Superintendents of District Hospitals and GMCs among others.

In view of nature of role of AWWs, it is feasible to declare them as regular Government employees? Anganwadi workers are ‘Soul’ of 47-yr old ICDS of GoI but why are they not regular employees? Why engage over 25 Lakh AWW/AWH on honorarium & not as regular employees when their job is regular type?

■ DAYA SAGAR

In terms of Information given in a written reply in Rajya Sabha on March 23, 2022 by the Union Minister of Women and Child Development, Smriti Zubin Irani and shared in media by Government of India as regards Implementation of Anganwadi Services Scheme (now renamed as Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0), a Centrally Sponsored Scheme implemented by States/UTs, s for providing a package of six services, namely, (i) Supplementary Nutrition; (ii) Pre-school Non-formal Education; (iii) Nutrition & Health Education; (iv) Immunization; (v) Health Check-up; and (vi) Referral Services to all eligible beneficiaries, namely, children in the age group of 0-6 years, pregnant women and lactating mothers through the platform of Anganwadi Centres across the country. It was also conveyed that various interventions are being taken from time to time for effective implementation of the Scheme and ensuring that the intended benefits reach the last mile beneficiary for which Streamlined guidelines were issued on 13.01.2021 and a robust ICT enabled platform named Poshan tracker has been designed to capture real-time data on implementation and monitoring of Anganwadi Services across the country which pro-

vides a 360 - degree view of the activities of the Anganwadi Centre (AWC), service deliveries of Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) and complete beneficiary management. Going by what Union Minister of Women and Child Development, Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani had opined it could be well inferred that GOI intends to take this 47 year old programme in more activated mission mode. One of the very important and core functionary of the programme (AWC of ICDS) so far has been the Anganwadi Worker (AWW) and still will remain. But this Functionary has remained undressed in terms of the job security / wages for which the AWW community has been requesting and representing for decades.

Before 23-03-2022 also in a written reply to a Lok Sabha question on 07-02-2020 Minister of Women and Child Development, Smriti Zubin Irani had informed (i) that the Central Government is providing honorarium of Rs 4,500 per month to Anganwadi Workers (AWWs), Rs 3,500 per month to AWWs at mini-AWCs & Rs 2,250 per month to Anganwadi Helpers (AWHs) adding that (i) there was no proposal under consideration to increase the honorarium of Anganwadi Workers (ii) that AWWs/AWHs are honorary workers who come forward to render their

services on payment of monthly honorarium, (iii) in view of the very nature of the role of Anganwadi Workers/Helpers, it is not feasible to declare them as regular/permanent employees and (iv) 14 Out of 16 recommendations /observations made by the Dr. Chandresh Kumari Committee have been implemented by the govt {Eighth Report 15th Lok Sabha} of the Committee on Empowerment of Women on the subject "Working Conditions of Anganwadi Workers ?pertaining to Ministry of Women & Child Development presented to Lok Sabha & Rajya Sabha on 10/08/ 2011).

How far the opinion given by the Minister on 07-02-2020 disposing the requests for increase in honorarium / wages of AWWs and making AWWs regular government employees concluding (i) that AWWs/AWHs are honorary workers who come forward to render their services on payment of monthly honorarium, (ii) in view of the very nature of the role of Anganwadi Workers/Helpers, it is not feasible to declare them as regular/permanent employees is justified needs to be reconsidered by the Ministry keeping in view the references made in from "2017- Integrated Child Development



A Look through the Mist

Scheme (ICDS) Manual "for District- Level Functionaries as regards the duties & role of the AWWs" where it is said that (4.2 Role of Functionaries at Village Level / Cluster Level & Block Level) that Anganwadi level, is the grassroots level of the project implementation which is manned by Anganwadi Worker assisted by Mini Anganwadi Worker and / or Anganwadi helper. The registers and records to me maintained by the AWW are listed as : Registers & Records by Anganwadi: oFamily Register oSupplementary Food Stock Register oSupplementary Food Distribution Register oPre-School Education Register oPregnancy and Delivery Register oImmunisation and Village Health and Nutrition Day (VHND) oVitamin A Biannual Rounds Register oHome Visits Planner oReferrals oSummaries (Monthly & Annual) oWeight Records of Children. The responsibility to be taken by AWW both as regards operation of the AWC as well as building up the ground data / review information / shortfalls/ indicators /performance /limitations data for overall assessment / monitoring of the programmes / organise non formal preschool activities for children of 3 yr- 6 yr could well be weighted with the number and type of registers and

records mentioned herein. More favourable points in support of the AWWs demand for increase in emoluments and treating them as regular employees could be sensed by any one by contents of the handbook as regards roles and responsibilities. The AWWs responsibility and workload appears no less than that of a Jr Clerk in Govt. Department (although Jr. clerks are not supposed to shoulder direct responsibilities) for which the pay scale Level could be L-4 VII PC 25500-81100 (old 5200-20200 GP 2400). To be more conservative even if Grade is taken as 5200-20200 GP 1800 old (Level-2 VII PC 19900-63200) still minimum wages& allowances per month as on 01-07-2022 with 38% DA, 9 % HRA , Rs.900x1.38 TPA would be approximately Rs. 32485/pm (19900+DA 7562+ HRA 3781 + 1242 pm).

The Minister had also informed the Rajya Sabha on 23-03-2022 that the reference Scheme 'on date' operated through a network of 7075 fully operational Projects and 13.89 lakh AWCs as on June, 2021 through 13.14 lakhs Anganwadi Workers and 11.74 Anganwadi Helpers to 906.17 lakh beneficiaries of which 736.91 lakh are children under six and 169.26 lakh are pregnant women & lactating mothers. Till June 2021, a total number of

200.44 lakh children of 3-6 years were covered under pre-school education of which 102.40 lakhs were boys and 98.04 lakhs were girls. Government has even designed a robust ICT enabled platform named Poshan tracker to capture real-time data on implementation and monitoring of Anganwadi Services across the country. The Poshan Tracker management application is to provide a 360 - degree view of the activities of the Anganwadi Centre (AWC), service deliveries of Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) and complete beneficiary management.

So going by the status of the needs of the programme , socio- economic needs of the rural / suburban Indian masses / urban weaker habitations and intentions of the Government to take it further with more inputs the NDA-III in Delhi (India) must reconsider for increasing the emoluments of the AWWs and treating them as regular government employees with social/ economic security like other regular government employees since it is not fair for the Government to say that in view of the very nature of the role of Anganwadi Workers/Helpers, it is not feasible to declare them as regular/permanent employees.

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