

!! Continuations from Page 1 !!

Accountable, responsive administration...

governance, which should be followed in letter and spirit", said the Lt Governor.

The Lt Governor sought an immediate response from Administrative Secretaries, DCs, SPs and other senior officers of the various government departments and agencies pertaining to the grievances raised by the applicants.

Timelines were also set for taking requisite action for redressing the grievances projected by the applicants.

The Lt Governor directed the Administrative Secretaries to ensure that all Departmental Websites are updated with the latest information.

He asked the concerned officials to ensure that all educational institutions are connected with the Scholarship portals. He further directed for ensuring on-ground participation of the concerned officers during Block Divas.

During the interaction, the Lt Governor also assessed the implementation of directions passed during the previous interactions.

Earlier, Secretary, Public Grievances, Simrandeep Singh briefed the Lt Governor on the present status of grievances and gave a detailed overview of the overall functioning of the Jammu and Kashmir Integrated Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (JK-IGRAMS).

BVR Subrahmanyam, Chief Secretary; Nitishwar Kumar, Principal Secretary to the Lt Governor; Administrative Secretaries; Divisional Commissioners; Deputy Commissioners, Superintendents of Police, and other senior officers participated in the live public grievance hearing, in person and through virtual mode.

MV Inspector, Conductor...

have been placed under suspension with immediate effect.

The Deputy Commissioner, Ramban vide No. DC/R/JKLGGC /2021/1698 dated: 25-02-2021 has reported that the application for hypothecation deed of bike bearing registration No. JK19-5849 remained pending with effect from 05-03-2020 to 23-02-2021 in your office and same was issued by you on 23-02-2021 when it was known to you that the applicant has registered a complaint in the Lieutenant Governor's Grievance Cell.

The show cause notice to ARTO Ramban states "the applicant's file was disposed off after a gap of almost one year, which shows that there are sordid state affairs in your office".

"Now, therefore, in view of the facts elucidated above, you are directed to explain your position as why disciplinary action, as warranted under rules shall not be initiated against you for causing delay of almost one year in issuance of termination of hypothecation deed of bike bearing registration No. JK19-5849 in favour of Rajinder Singh in your office. This misconduct on your part as head of the office has caused not only mental agony and harassment to the applicant but also has severely dented the image of the department. The reply to this show cause notice should reach the office of Commissioner/Secretary (Transport) within seven days failing which it shall be presumed that you have nothing to say in your defence and action as warranted under law shall be taken against you", the show cause notice states.

Meanwhile, Pardeep Kumar, KAS, Transport Commissioner, J&K has been appointed as Inquiry Officer for conducting in depth Inquiry regarding the complaint and delay in redressal of the grievance of Rajinder Singh.

"He shall also enquire into the roles and responsibilities and conduct of the delinquent officers/officials and recommend the action to be taken against them, the order states, adding "the inquiry shall be completed and report shall be submitted within 15 days."

In the meantime, pending enquiry into the conduct, Chander Mohan Sharma, Motor Vehicle Inspector, in the office of the ARTO, Ramban has been placed under suspension with immediate effect, in-terms of Rule-31 of J&K, Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules-1956. The official shall remain attached in the office of Transport Commissioner; J&K, Jammu, till further orders, another order issued by Transport Department states.

"Pending enquiry into the conduct, Mohammad Yousuf Salaria, Conductor, JKRTC registration No. 2879, working in the office of the ARTO, Udhampur on deputation basis (working in the office of ARTO Ramban during the pendency of grievance of the applicant Rajinder Singh), has been placed under suspension with immediate effect, in-terms of Rule-31 of J&K, Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules-1956. The official shall remain attached in the office of Managing Director; JKRTC, till further orders", the order reads.

India, Pak militaries...

with Pakistan, as we have said earlier, India desires normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan. We have always maintained we are committed to addressing issues if any in a peaceful and bilateral manner," the spokesperson asserted.

Indian Army officials maintained that there will be no let-up in the troop deployment as well its operations along Pakistan borders against terrorism and infiltration.

The ceasefire, they said, does not mean that the army's fight against terrorism has come to a halt and its alertness and vigil will not be lowered. They said they are "cautiously optimistic" on the ceasefire.

India and Pakistan signed a ceasefire agreement in 2003, but it has hardly been followed in letter and spirit over past several years with more violations than observance of the pact.

The officials said acts of terror in the past have led to "deep distrust" between the two sides.

"There have been contacts between India and Pakistan on a hotline level since 1987. Frequently, the DGMOs of both countries stay in contact through this established mechanism," Pakistani army spokesman Maj Gen Babar Iftikhar was quoted as saying by Dawn newspaper.

He said that from 2014 there was a spike in ceasefire violations along the LoC.

"Both the DGMOs have agreed that the existing 2003 understanding should be implemented in letter and spirit," he said.

Both officials have agreed on making it sustainable and have expressed the intention to act on it, he added, according to the newspaper.

The latest development is seen as a thaw after years of tensions between the two nuclear-armed neighbours, the paper said.

Army chief Gen M M Naravane on Wednesday had hinted at some development on the Pakistan front.

In a webinar, Naravane had exuded confidence that with continued engagement with Pakistan, there could be "some sort of an understanding because unsettled borders and violence on the borders help no one".

"We are always wanting peace and tranquillity in our border areas, whether it be the western front or the northern front and the LAC (Line of Actual Control). Or whether it is on the Indo-Myanmar border, we are always looking for peace and tranquillity and our role is to ensure that so as to the rest of the nation can develop," Naravane said.

In written response to a question in Lok Sabha earlier this month, Union Minister of State for Home G Kishan Reddy said a total of 10,752 cases of ceasefire violations have taken place along India's border with Pakistan in the last three years, in which 72 security personnel and 70 civilians were killed.

He said 364 security personnel and 341 civilians were injured in cross-border firings along the International Border

and the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir in 2018, 2019 and 2020.

Asserting that the armed forces enjoy freedom on operational deployment, officials said the Indian Army remains committed to fight the scourge of terrorism.

"Acts of terror will not be tolerated and a befitting response would await any misadventure. Our counter infiltration grid continues to be strong. We will continue to undertake counter infiltration and counter terrorist operations. All options remain open to mitigate the threat as deemed by (our) commanders on ground," officials added.

With troops remain deployed along the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh, the officials added that the situation along the northern borders has no bearing on the decisions along the LoC and the western front.

India desires normal...

the last few years, the Army's counter-infiltration grid along the LoC has further strengthened and terrorists have found infiltration across the LoC increasingly difficult.

"While there will be no let-up in counter-terrorism and counter infiltration operations in our endeavour is to achieve peace and stability which is beneficial for the region," an official said, adding the armed forces enjoy freedom on operational deployment.

"The Indian Army remains committed to fight the scourge of terrorism. Acts of terror will not be tolerated and a befitting response would await any misadventure," the official said.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of External Affairs has said India desires normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan and is committed to resolving all issues bilaterally in a peaceful manner.

"On key issues, our position remains unchanged. I don't think I need to reiterate it," MEA spokesperson Anurag Srivastava told reporters at a virtual media briefing.

His comments followed a joint statement issued after a hotline discussion between the Director Generals of Military Operations (DGMOs) of India and Pakistan during which the two sides agreed to strict observance of all agreements, understandings and cease firing along the Line of Control and all other sectors with effect from Wednesday midnight.

Asked about the development, the MEA spokesperson said, "As regards to the joint statement of the DGMOs and related issues, I would refer you to the Ministry of Defence."

"On relations with Pakistan, as we have said earlier, India desires normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan. We have always maintained we are committed to addressing issues, if any, in a peaceful and bilateral manner," he said.

India and Pakistan signed a ceasefire agreement in 2003, but it has hardly been followed in letter and spirit over the past several years with more violations than an observance of the pact.

Parra case: Police...

subsequently rejected on February 23.

"The investigations conducted reveal that the accused had been in touch with ANEs (Anti-National Elements) and OGWs (Over Ground Workers), which includes some accused persons who are presently lodged in jail in NIA case.

"These accused are also to be questioned in the instant case after seeking permission from NIA court Jammu," the counsel for the police had said in the court.

The National Investigation Agency had arrested and later charge-sheeted Singh, Syed Naveed Mushtaq alias Naveed Babu as well as the group's alleged overground worker Irfan Shafi Mir and its member Rafi Ahmad Rather. The other two named are Tanveer Ahmad Wani, a trader, and Naveed Babu's brother Syed Irfan Ahmad.

Singh along with Mir were arrested by the Jammu and Kashmir Police in January last year when they were ferrying Naveed Babu and Rather out of Kashmir to escape the harsh winter. Later, the case was taken over by the NIA and the agency filed charge sheet in July last year.

The CIK had registered the case in which it alleged that some "unscrupulous politicians, as part of a criminal conspiracy, had established clandestine connections and relations with different Pakistan-supported terrorist and secessionist organisations operating in Jammu and Kashmir for a number of reasons".

The conspiracy was hatched for furthering their political clout among local populace, countering the influence of rival political parties and their members, protecting their own financial and business interests and with medium term motives of winning the trust of "the Pakistani establishment, dealing with subversion in Kashmir, including those in the United Jihad Council".

These politicians have supported the terrorists and secessionists, directly and sometimes through middle-men, by way of paying money, organising select physical attacks through terrorist elements.

These politicians also facilitated movements of terrorists and transporting their arms and ammunition.

In furtherance of the criminal conspiracy, these "unprincipled political parties functionaries" assisted and aided the terrorists and secessionists in intensifying the war against the Union of India with the main objective of ultimately making Jammu and Kashmir cede from the Union," it alleged.

First-Class Magistrates...

revelation, another Tehsildar in Anantnag district has gone a step further in issuing an income certificate, a copy of which lies with STATE TIMES, even without mentioning the name of the beneficiary.

According to sources, "The certificate has been issued deliberately to a known person without mentioning the name on it so that he/or she can fill in all the details on this certificate as per his/her choice, the certificate contains the seal and signature of the concerned official."

According to the government, the objective of the scholarship scheme is to provide financial assistance to meritorious students coming from economically weaker sections of the society. The criterion is that the annual income of the beneficiary family should be less than Rs 1-lakh from all sources.

Once a Tehsildar certifies and issues an income certificate in favour of an individual, he/she becomes eligible to obtain benefits of the prescribed scheme. The procedure for cross-checking gross income of an individual from all sources has to be done meticulously by checking all relevant documents.

LG picks top...

has been ED (Tourism & Catering) and Divisional Railway Manager, Danapur; Thakur has had multiple assignments outside the railways as well.

An alumnus of Delhi's prestigious St Stephen's college, IIFT and IIM Indore, he was Executive Director (Fuel Transportation) at NPTC, PS to then I&B Minister Ambika Soni, ADG Doordarshan (DTH), and Brand Head, Shatabdi Express.

Alongside the appointment of Thakur, the J&K administration said IAS officer Manoj Kumar Dwivedi, who was Commissioner/Secretary to the Government, Industries and Commerce Department, holding additional charge of Administrative Secretary, General Administration Department and Mining Department, has been transferred and posted as Commissioner/Secretary to the Government, General Administration Department.

"He (Dwivedi) shall continue to hold the charge of Administrative Secretary, Mining Department, in addition to his own duties, till further orders," it said.

Govt tightens rules...

public order. The intermediary, however, will not be required

to disclose the contents of any message.

Beyond streaming and messaging, the code will also set guidelines for digital publishers of news and current affairs content, requiring them to disclose their ownership and other information.

Releasing the guidelines, Prasad said the code was needed to make social media and OTT companies accountable for "mis-use and abuse".

Social media firms should be "more responsible and accountable," he said.

The new guidelines follow the government's spat with Twitter over allegedly inflammatory tweets and hashtags supporting farmer protests, with the microblogging service initially refusing to comply with orders to take down about 1,500 such posts and accounts. Twitter complied after it was threatened with the penal action.

Separately, an Amazon Prime Video original series 'Tandav' was ordered by authorities to be re-edited following protests over its depiction of Hindu gods and goddesses.

Freedom-of-speech activists and technology trade groups had previously criticised the draft version of the new rules, which replace a previous code from 2011, saying they would result in increased censorship and reduced user privacy.

The new rules take effect immediately, though significant social-media providers (based on number of users) will get three months before they need to start complying.

Prasad said concerns have been raised over the rampant abuse of social media platforms and the spread of fake news.

"Social media companies are welcome to do business in India and empower Indians. We welcome criticism and dissent but it is important that users of social media are given a proper forum for the resolution of their grievances in a time-bound manner," he said.

India is a large market for digital and social media companies and is witnessing strong growth on the back of booming smartphone sales and the availability of dirt-cheap data.

The country has 53 crore WhatsApp users, 44.8 crore YouTube users, 41 crore Facebook users, 21 crore use Instagram and 1.75 crore are on Twitter.

Prasad said the rules require the 'significant' social media intermediaries to follow additional due diligence including the appointment of a chief compliance officer, a nodal contact person and a resident grievance officer. All three officials will have to reside in India. They will have to publish monthly compliance report and detail contents removed proactively.

The rules also state that users who voluntarily want to verify their accounts should be given an appropriate mechanism to do so and be accorded a visible mark of verification.

Users will have to be provided with a prior intimation and explanation when a significant social media intermediary removes content on its own. In such cases, users have to be provided an adequate and reasonable opportunity to dispute the action taken by the intermediary.

Rules related to social media will be administered by the Ministry of Electronics and IT, while those related to Code of Ethics and procedure and safeguards in relation to digital media will be administered by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. On rules related to over-the-top (OTT) and digital media, the government said, guidelines have been framed keeping in mind the difference between viewership in a theatre and television, as compared to watching it on the internet.

A Code of Ethics and three-tier grievance redressal mechanism would be applicable for news publishers, OTT platforms and digital media.

OTT platforms would have to self-classify the content into five age-based categories - U (Universal), U/A 7+ (years), U/A 13+, U/A 16+, and A (Adult).

Information and Broadcasting (I&B) Minister Prakash Javadekar said such platforms would be required to implement parental locks for content classified as U/A 13+ or higher, and reliable age-verification mechanisms for content classified as 'A'.

The publishers of online curated content will also have to prominently display the classification rating specific to a programme together with a content descriptor, he added.

Publishers of news on digital media would be required to observe Norms of Journalistic Conduct of the Press Council of India and the Programme Code under the Cable Television Networks Regulation Act, providing a level-playing field between the offline (print, TV) and digital media, an official statement said.

"Digital media portals have no right to spread rumour. The media's freedom is absolute but with reasonable restrictions. Content matter, especially media, OTT and digital media will be administered by I&B ministry. Intermediary platforms monitoring will be done by the IT ministry in the manner they have been doing it," he said.

J&K parties welcome...

the party said in a statement.

"This will allow people living along the LoC & IB (International Border) to go about their normal lives with minimal disruption & risk," the party said.

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti in a tweet welcomed the ceasefire announcement and said dialogue was the only way forward.

"A big & welcome development that India & Pakistan have agreed to a ceasefire along the LoC. Dialogue is the only way forward if both countries want to stop the unending cycle of violence & bloodshed across the borders and J&K," Mehbooba said.

India and Pakistan have agreed to strictly observe all agreements on ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) and other sectors, according to a joint statement on Thursday.

The moderate faction of the separatist Hurriyat Conference also welcomed the agreement between armies of India and Pakistan on ceasefire, and said it will provide a huge relief to the "beleaguered" people.

"It is a move in the right direction, which will provide huge relief to the beleaguered people living under constant threat on the LoC and end the bloodshed there," the Hurriyat faction led by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq said in a statement.

The Hurriyat said the governments of India and Pakistan need to address the core concern of Jammu and Kashmir in keeping with the aspirations of its people.

The separatist conglomerate said that "talks are the best means to address this concern and we have always advocated it".

Modi underlines support...

"It has been our honour to work for the small farmers of India. In the past seven years our efforts for the small farmers are aimed at giving them a life of prosperity and dignity."

"From kisan credit cards to soil health cards, from eNAM (National Agriculture Market) to an effective crop insurance scheme we want to bring a paradigm shift in the agriculture sector," he said.

"We don't want our small farmer to be dependent on anyone or feel suffocated due to middlemen," Modi said.

While farmers had for many years demanded rise in Minimum Support Price (MSP), "it was our government which had the opportunity to bring a holistic MSP rise."

In the last six years MSP for copra has nearly doubled, the PM said.

Hitting out at the opposition, he said while its style of politics was "misgovernance with corruption" that of NDA was "governance with compassion."

"Both methods are very different. For the opposition what matters is personal gains. They want to capture power to fill their pockets," he alleged.

The only politics people will accept is politics of development and good governance and they want a government where

fruits of progress reach the public, he said.

"They want the anti-development forces (to be kept) at a distance," he said.

Taking a swipe at the DMK-Congress combine in Tamil Nadu, Modi said their "meetings are like corruption hackathons" where "their leaders sit and brainstorm on how to loot."

"Those who are given the most innovative ways are given posts and ministries. The opposition style of politics is based on bullying and harassing. Whenever DMK comes to power, they promote a strongman culture," he alleged.

Ignoring merit in...

selection process. Unsuccessful candidates filed petitions in the High Court of Jharkhand at Ranchi.

During the pendency of the petitions in the high court, the appointments of 42 candidates made on the basis of the original select list were cancelled.

As many as 43 people were appointed on the basis of the revised select list that was prepared in accordance with the recommendations of the Committee headed by the Director General of Police, Jharkhand.

The high court had observed that 43 petitioners cannot be held responsible for the irregularities committed by the authorities in the matter of their selection and there is no allegation of fraud or misrepresentation on their part.

The top court rejected the plea filed by some intervenors saying that they have no right for appointment to posts beyond those advertised.

"There is no doubt that selections to public employment should be on the basis of merit. Appointment of persons with lesser merit ignoring those who have secured more marks would be in violation of the Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution of India," the bench said in last week's judgment.

It said that relief granted to 43 petitioners is mainly on the ground that they have already been appointed and have served the State for some time and they cannot be punished for no fault of theirs.

"The intervenors are not similarly situated to them and they cannot seek the same relief. The other ground taken by the intervenors in the petitions before us is that relief was denied to them only on the basis of a wrong statement made on behalf of the State Government that there were no vacancies.

"No doubt, the intervenors have placed on record material to show that there was no shortage of vacancies for their appointment. One of the reasons given by the High Court for not granting relief to the intervenors is lack of vacancies. However, we are not inclined to direct appointment of the intervenors as selections pertain to an advertisement issued in 2008," the bench said.

Prppl Secy to...

Common Facility Centres to act as one stop solution for design, finance, operations, logistic, documentation, professional advice, branding and marketing etc, he added.

The Principal Secretary was of the view that the UT government must identify potential exporters and facilitate export of their products through containers or air cargo to global markets. The Industries & Commerce Department was further asked to address land issues pertaining to setting up of logistics parks.

Organising regular buyer-seller meets; marketing, promotion and publicity of handicraft and handloom products in the Gulf markets was also discussed in the meeting.

In the agriculture and horticulture sector, direct air connectivity between Srinagar-Dubai, subsidy on international freight, enhancement of cargo handling capacity of Srinagar airport terminal among other factors were also discussed in the meeting. Principal Secretary, Agriculture Production & Farmers' Welfare, Navin Kumar Choudhary shared his experience and observations from last year's visit to UAE-India Food Security Summit-2020. He informed that the Lulu Group and other major players from Dubai are ready to invest heavily in Jammu & Kashmir and open their supermarkets also. A detailed proposal for imparting Skill Development & Digital Marketing among the youth of J&K by Global KP Business Foundation, having members across the globe, was also discussed at the meeting who were connected through weblink. The Principal Secretary laid stress on organising Vocational Leadership Skills, training sessions, awareness seminars and other programmes for the youth of UT.

J&K reports 108...

said Srinagar district recorded the highest number of 47 new cases, followed by Udhampur district with 23.

While eight districts did not report any fresh cases, 10 districts had cases in single digits.

The number of active has risen to 820 in the union territory, while 1,23,426 patients have recovered so far, the officials said. The death toll in the union territory due to the pandemic stands at 1,955, they added.

2,429 ASHAs appear...

Theory Examination for Certification by NIOS.

The examination was conducted by NIOS in all the districts of the UT amid strict observance of COVID-19 protocols in the designated Centers in which 129 ASHAs appeared in Jammu district, 119 in Doda, 123 in Kathua, 116 in Kishtwar, 126 in Poonch, 178 in Rajouri, 116 in Ramban, 143 in Reasi, 129 in Samba, 123 in Udhampur, 125 in Anantnag, 141 in Bandipora, 152 in Baramulla, 129 in Budgam, 7 in Ganderbal, 120 in Kulgam, 121 in Kupwara, 180 in Pulwama, 97 in Shopian and 55 appeared in Srinagar district.

Pertinently, despite the COVID-19 pandemic J&K is at the topmost position among states and UTs where 20% of ASHAs appeared in the All India level NIOS examination held across the country today. Till date, 24.69% ASHAs of J&K have been certified by NIOS and the NIOS certification in J&K is likely to touch 41% which is proportionately the highest in the country. ASHA certification project is a Government of India initiative and third party accreditation for stabilizing level of quality in ASHA and their cadres as they deal with all the National Health Programmes for Pregnant ladies, vaccinations, communicable diseases, Tuberculosis, Leprosy etc. There is a tripartite arrangement between the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), National Health Systems Resource Centre (NHSRC) and the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) to undertake the process of accreditation of State and District trainers, State and District training sites and certification for ASHAs.

The certification of ASHAs has been envisaged to provide a legal and administrative framework within which the ASHA would be eligible and responsible for providing community level care for a range of illnesses. This would enhance the competency and professional credibility of ASHAs, allow her to use a set of drugs and point of care diagnostics appropriate to that level of care and also provide an assurance to the community on the quality of services being provided by the ASHA.

At present, about 13000 ASHAs have been engaged in the UT of J&K who shall be certified in a phased manner by NIOS in a period of two years. The department is targeting that 3000 ASHAs would appear in the All India Level ASHA Certification Examination in every six monthly session by National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) to create a pool of health activists in J&K. The focus is that after 2022, no ASHA is left uncertified in the Union Territory.

This flagship project is being closely monitored and reviewed by Atal Dulo, Financial Commissioner, Health & Medical Education, J&K and Choudhary Mohammed Yasin, Mission Director, NHM, J&K with active support from Chairperson, NIOS, Professor Saroj Sharma and National Project Director, NIOS, Alok Mishra.

