

J&K Cong aghast over downgrading of security of its leaders, threatens agitation

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Expressing serious concern over downgrading of security of senior party leaders including former ministers and legislators, Jammu and Kashmir Congress president G A Mir on Wednesday demanded an immediate review of the decision to facilitate a level-playing field to the opposition parties.

He threatened to launch an agitation on the issue, alleging that while ordinary political activists of the parties created overnight by the government or affiliated with the ruling party are enjoying adequate security, government accommodation and free movement, Congress leaders especially in Kashmir are only allowed to move out of their homes once in a week to meet the public.

Congress is about 137-year-old political party which has a history of sacrifice before and after independence to take the country to new heights. But today the government in power is withdrawing our security deliberately to stop us from



JKPCC Chief G.A. Mir talking to reporters at Jammu.

meeting the public or raising the public issues, Mir told reporters here.

The Congress leader said the security of senior party functionaries including former legislators, ministers, former Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) presidents and former Members of Parliament was downgraded, exposing them to the danger of terror attacks.

However, he said the party would not be cowed down by such measures and will continue to stand by the people.

Now by withdrawing and downgrading the security of our leaders, the government has crossed the limit and we will not stay silent as the lives of our

party leaders are in danger: We request the Lt Governor (Manoj Sinha) to stop differentiating people on the basis of their party affiliation, he said.

He accused officers involved in providing security to the political activists of taking unilateral and wrong decisions purely on partisan bias.

Congress party always tried to play the role of a constructive and vibrant opposition as we do not believe in negative politics, Mir said, adding the party despite the August 2019 development when the erstwhile state of J&K was bifurcated into union territories adopted a democratic way of protest to become the voice of the public.

He said the Congress does not believe in disturbing law and order or be campaigners for disturbance. After the August 2019 development, the government is saying that everything is alright in J&K. The ground situation is that our district presidents in the valley are only allowed to move out of their homes once in a week to attend public functions. In case of inclement weather or weekend lockdown, then they have to cancel all the programmes of that day as well, he said.

On the other hand, he said the government's created stooges are free to meet the public all seven days of the week. They are enjoying security and accommodation but the people are wise enough and they will decide their fate (during elections). He said the Congress cannot be pushed back by such measures as it is living in the hearts of the public.

We request the Lt Governor to review the security of all our

leaders otherwise we have no option but to flood the roads with our activists and supporters, he said.

Working President Raman Bhalla, Chief Spokesperson Ravinder Sharma, Th. Balwan Singh (Ex-MLA), T.S. Bajwa (Ex-MP), Rajnish Sharma-Treasurer, Th. Manmohan Singh, Shah Nawaz Choudhary and other were also present. Earlier, Congress chief spokesperson Ravinder Sharma said the security is related to the issue of threat and there should be no politics over it.

Congress has always remained in the forefront in the fight against Pakistan-sponsored terrorism. We are playing the role of constructive opposition and therefore our leaders should be given adequate security as per the threat perception, he said, adding there should be no pick and choose policy with regard to the security cover in a democracy.



DC Doda withholds salary of XEn, asks SE Hydraulics to blacklist non-performing contractors

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

DODA: District Development Commissioner Doda Vikas Sharma on Wednesday chaired the day-long meetings of RDD, PHE, PDD and Irrigation departments to review their performance under different vital heads including Area Development Plan of PRTS, NABARD and District Capex here at conference hall of DC office today.

Earlier in the morning the DDC took the detail review of RDD under Area Development Plan under which DDC enquired about the updated status of tendering of works, status of allotment, physical and financial completion as of ending January 2022, besides reviewed the block wise review of works and expenditure incurred and other issues.

In addition to the expenditure the DDC directed the ACD and BDOs to ensure that all the bills pending for payment at treasury level shall be got released in coordination with the concerned treasuries with immediate effect, besides asked to mobilise the contractor of their respective areas to expedite the execution of works for time bound completion in all aspect. He instructed that in respect of works held up in snow-bound area the contractor should be in a state of readiness with men, machinery and material to be able to start / resume work on first opportunity where the weather conditions become conducive for work and complete all the works before 15th of March, 2022.

The DDC informed the BDOs to mobilise their field functionaries, besides asked them to expedite the framing of bills of all the physically completed works simultaneously so that timely expenditure shall be incurred on priority basis.

Moreover DDC directed the constitution of a fresh committees at Block levels for the material payment liability works verification of 2017-18, 19, 20. The process shall be completed within next 15 days, he asserted.

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with immediate effect, besides sought explanation from Ex En PHE Doda for showing poor performance of expenditure under regular component schemes, besides failing to apprise the chair about the updated progress report against all the approved works.

While reviewing the progress of PDD under capex and rural and urban electrification, the DDC directed the AEE project wing to submit the updated status of work done by Transrail within next seven days, besides asked the Shalaka Infra to hand over all the 71 completed sites fully charged to JPDCL within seven days, in addition to this directed the EX En JPDCL Doda to devise a 10 day schedule of handing over of these 71 sites.

Further the DDC directed the concerned to submit the list of habitations which have been covered under these 71 sites, besides asked them to submit the list of habitations yet to be electrified.

The meeting was attended by CPO DODA, ACD Doda, BDOs, Ex Ens, besides AEEs and JEs were also present.

Contractors Association Leh meets LG Ladakh to brief local contractors' issues



Chairman Contractor Association presenting a memorandum to LG Ladakh

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

LEH: A delegation Contractors Association Leh Ladakh led by its chairman Tonyot Tashi Chulichen called on the Lt. Governor of the Union Territory of Ladakh R K Mathur on Wednesday and apprised him of the problems being faced by local contractors in Leh Ladakh.

The delegation included Senior Executive Member Dorjay Nangail Shangstot, Treasurer Tsewang Dorjay Gasha and Senior Member Sonam Gyaltsen Barzi.

On behalf of the over 650 members of the association, the delegation raised many issues being faced by them. It pointed out the existence of an outdated 2012 SOR (Schedule of Rates) still being used by the Rural

Development Department (RDD) to execute its works. Whereas the PWD is working as per an updated SoR of 2020 of Jammu and Kashmir and it is being revised and adapted to UT structure, the delegation added.

Tonyot Tashi brought up the current phase of uncertainty among Ladakh based contractors in view of bigger companies taking over the conventional projects in the UT scenario. This, he said, is most detrimental to the morale of individual contractors in particular and an unhealthy trend being set having potential long term socio-economic ramifications. In this regard, he sought LG Ladakh's intervention towards involving the Ladakh contractors and evolving ways

such as encouraging joint venture (JV) approach enabling the contractors to work with bigger companies and thereby gain experience to enhance their level of experience in times to come.

"Ladakh based contractors have a unique experience of working in high altitude conditions of Ladakh, which must be taken into account while setting guidelines for participation in tenders," Tashi urged.

Contractors also demanded relaxations in work done experience, having experience on high altitude must be made mandatory for participating in the projects of UT Ladakh, every firm be registered with U T Ladakh GST Department to participate in UT Ladakh tenders, and reserve up to Rs 10 core of tender without any terms and conditions for the local contractors in (CPWD, WAPCOS, NHIDCL, NPCC, PWD, NHPC, PMGSY etc.).

The meeting was said to be a fruitful one Lt. Governor is reported to have given a patient hearing to the issues raised and assured solutions. Many long pending issues were also discussed in the meeting.

Union budget nothing more than lollipop: Manohar

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

BILLAWAR: Former Minister and senior Congress leader Dr Manohar Lal Sharma termed the budget is nothing, but only Lollipop to five states under elections.

While commenting Dr Sharma said that there is no solid commitment to solve basic problems/ issues like no focus on employment generation to address unemployment problem, no attention has been paid on issue of controlling price rise of essential commodities, no adequate allocation budget to complete previous commitments and targets i.e. Housing for all up to financial year 2022 and double income of farmers up to 2022. Manohar further said that Finance Minister has proudly announced that Rs 2,37,1Cr as MSP on



wheat & paddy has been directly credited to farmers accounts but she forget that this is less than the MSP payments in 2020-21, which was Rs 2,47,8Lcr thus Criminal assault on farmers continues. There is nothing special in union budget for UT of Jammu & Kashmir on developmental front, employment generation, Industrial development.

He said here local BJP leaders only give false promises as no budgetary allocation is proposed for

regularization of Daily wagers and adhoc employees working in different departments of UT of Jammu & Kashmir and also to improve health infrastructures in country as well in Union Territory of J&K, which is need of hour. Explaining further Manohar said people had high expectations from the budget especially during the COVID pandemic. The budget disappointed the people. There is nothing in the budget for the general public. No Wealth Tax introduced to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor. Pandemic has made life difficult for commoners but providing any relief is not on the government's agenda. The rich stands to gain more.

20 JKP personnel martyred in terror attacks last year

■ SHAKEELA ANDRABI

SRINAGAR: In Kashmir, terrorists are constantly targeting policemen and during first 33 days of year 2022, four attacks were held in which two policemen got martyred while one was critically injured and another had a narrow escape.

According to reports, on January 29, terrorists opened fire on a policeman in Batamalo area of Srinagar but he escaped unhurt and after 24 hours, another policeman was targeted in Bijbihara area of Anantnag. On February 1, terrorists opened fire on another policeman in Anshipora, Shopian injuring him seriously and presently undergoing treatment. The martyrdom of a policeman in Bijbihara of Anantnag was the second to fell prey to terrorism during present year, while 20 cops were martyred in different terrorism-related incidents in Kashmir last year.

The first incident took place on January 13 in Kulgam when a cop, identified as SGCT

Rohit Chib martyred during an encounter in Pariwan village. As per Police, he received bullet injuring after a joint team entered a house to evacuate terrorists, where they had taken shelter. One of the biggest terrorist attacks took place in Pantha Chowk area of Srinagar on December 13, wherein a police bus was ambushed by terrorists and three policemen got martyred including an Assistant Sub-Inspector besides injuring 11 others. Three days before Pantha Chowk attack, two policemen were martyred in a surprise terrorist attack in Bandipora district. The attacker, whom J&K Police identified as a Pakistani terrorist, was caught on camera after he shot the cops. Later, police said the terrorist was also killed.

Last year, there was a series of targeted attacks on security personnel and civilians in Kashmir. October turned out to be the bloodiest month as 45 persons lost their lives in terrorism-related incidents in J&K.

In October, 20 terrorists were neutralised though the highest number of terrorists killed this year was in July, when the count was 31. On June 17, a cop, identified as Javaid Ahmad, was martyred in a terrorist attack near his home at Saidapora, Srinagar. He was working as a Personal Security Officer of a retired judge and was on leave and unarmed, when attacked.

On 23 June, Inspector Parvaiz Ahmad Dar, working with Criminal Investigation Department (CID) wing of police, was attacked near his home in Nowgam, Srinagar when he was returning home after offering evening prayers. On August 7, a policeman was martyred in a terrorist attack at Kulgam. On November 8, terrorists martyred a policeman, namely Tawseef Ahmad in Batamalo area of Srinagar while on December 22, terrorists martyred an Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Muhammad Ashraf in Bijbehara area of Anantnag.

Power shutdown

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Chief Engineer (Distribution) JPDCL, Jammu has informed that the power supply to Gandhi Nagar, Auqaf Market, Green Belt, Apsara Road RBI, Bahu Plaza, Vaishni Dham, Nanak Nagar, Gandhi Nagar Hospital, PHE Trikuta Nagar, Raghunath Bazar, Residency Road, Wazarat Road, Kanak Mandi, Rajinder Bazar and adjoining areas shall remain affected on February 03 from 10 am to 2 pm.

Similarly, the power supply to Roop Nagar, Janipur, Muthi, Subash Nagar, New Subash Nagar and adjoining areas shall remain affected on February 03 from 9 am to 3 pm on rotation basis.

Likewise, the power supply to Raya, Smailpur, Gurah, Mandal and its adjoining areas shall remain affected on February 03 and 04 from 10 am to 11 am.

Meanwhile, Superintending Engineer O&M Circle, Jammu JPDCL has informed that the power supply to Krishna Colony, Hazi Colony, Karan Nagar shall remain affected on February 03 from 9 am to 2 pm.

Likewise, the power supply to Saidpur, Khukhiyal and Mirpur Ram shall remain affected on February 03 from 9am to 2 pm.

Similarly, the power supply to Logate Industry, PHE, Sahar, and adjoining areas shall remain affected on February 03 from 10 am to 2 pm.

Even after 2015 ‘Smalls’ like Macleodganj & Khajjiar receive more tourists than Bhadarwah- ‘Mini Kashmir’

■ DAYA SAGAR

Even after there had been a very lean period of about 15 years of reduced tourist flow to Kashmir Valley, what to talk of creating more of alternate tourist resorts outside Kashmir valley, even Bhaderwah has not been made to register as a favourite summer resort.

Bhaderwh only finds a reference as "Mini Kashmir" in seminars and speeches. State Government can not take refuge under the plea that state has not sufficient funds and Government of India too can not plead that tourism is/was a state subject.

Large pilgrim tourism potential in Kishtwar, Doda, Bhaderwah, Rajouri, Poonch, Udhampur, Kathua areas can provide supporting key inputs/arms for development of commercial tourism.

Over the years neither government of India has taken care of Jammu Region for

development of local tourism and crafts nor has been J&K Government serious about Jammu Region. If at all some thing is done it is announcing of some small sums of 5 to 10 crores arbitrarily for local circuits where as for reaching the reference areas and stay there the infrastructure remains totally primitive.

This has been the routine for decades now and on ground position on ground is no different even after 2021, for test check one could have view of the slogans, statements, claims and 'progress' made on Basoli - Bani - Bhaderwah 'tourist route' and tourist conveniences created after 2015.

So rich a cultural and scenic potential of Jammu province has been treated unfairly for last more than nearly seven decades even after independence. Tara Chand the then Dy CM while making reference to promotion of tourism too had said in January 2009 that "Hard

efforts are required to upgrade the basic amenities in the cities and towns and make these palatable".

But it was all said and forgotten like had been the case with other leaders, and position is same in 2021 Many high commercial summer tourism, winter tourism, adventure tourism and pilgrim tourism potential areas of Jammu region lie particularly in the valleys and mountains of Bhaderwah, Rajouri, Poonch, Kishtwar, Doda, Udhampur, Kathua and even Samba district of Jammu Region. Even Tourist spots like that of Sanasar and Bhaderwah have been neglected on ground. Patnitop to Sanasar road was there in Maharaja Hari Singh's time (though a fair weather road). But even in 2021 tourist could venture on this road only with risk and road during rainy season is safe only for



A Look through the Mist

one way traffic. Question is when will local leadership of Jammu Region work with a difference for demanding and creating the

needed infrastructure to also make the Tourist resorts outside Kashmir Valley palatable for the potential tourists from outside J&K ?

No one can deny that in the remote / hilly areas at places it may take 5 to 10 cr INR just for making a kilometer of two lane motorable pucca road and arbitrary investments of 5 to 7 cr INR are just a waste. To make good the deficiencies left over last 7 decades may be projects for Rs.1000 Cr to 5000 Cr INR each will have to be designed and implemented in some circuits like Bani - Bhaderwah over a period of maximum 5 years to make good the short fall.

After PDP-BJP alliance took over in March 2015 some hopes were raised as

some references were made in the Agenda for Alliance March 2015 for development of Jammu as an independent tourism circuit with specific plans for: *Suchegharh - Samba - Hiranagar border tourism,* Katra - Patnitop - Bhaderwah sector, Parmandal - Uterbeni - Surinsar - Mansar sector* Katra - Majalta - Billawar- Basohli sector* Bani - Sarthal- Jai circuit and Rajouri - Poonch (seven lakes) sector and * Enhancing connectivity by building Basolli-Bani-Baderwah road but six ears have passed and even Bhaderwah is not in the sight of potential national level tourist operators what to talk of foreign operators. The commercial tourism infrastructure is no where in sight worth attracting the tourist for a week or 10 days stay during summers even in and around Bhaderwah what to talk of other areas. Himachal Pradesh has been able pro-

mote even Meleodganj where tourist can stay for a week or 10days and a village Dharamkot has become a camping place for even foreign tourist who even come there to stay for a couple of months. Much like that could be done around Sanasar and even that has not been done by J&K Government.

After BJP had come in power both in Center and in State it was being expected that process will start to undo the neglect suffered by areas outside Kashmir valley by pumping in extra financial and human resources but even after 6 years no special input in shape of a new project / special marked priority allocation has taken physical shape . One would Ask why ? It is time for "common man"to find an answer from "innerself"Continued

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