

!! Continuations from Page 1 !!

Make national interest...

sole basis of every decision they take.

"As the world is saying that India's time has arrived, there is no time to waste for the bureaucracy of the country. The country has put its faith in you, work while maintaining that trust. National interest should always be the basis of all your decisions," he said.

Speaking on the theme of this year's Civil Services Day, 'Viksit Bharat' (Developed India), he said the concept is not limited to modern infrastructure.

"It is important for Viksit Bharat that India's government system supports the aspirations of every Indian and every government servant helps every citizen in realising their dreams and the negativity that was associated with the system in the previous years turns into positivity," he said.

Modi said the motto of his government is "nation first, citizen first" and its priority is prioritising the deprived.

He told the civil servants that there are two approaches to life -- first, getting things done and second, letting things happen.

"The first is an active attitude and the second reflects a passive attitude. People with faith in getting things done take ownership in a proactive manner and become the driving force of their teams.

"With this burning desire to bring change in the lives of the people, you will be able to leave behind a memorable legacy. You will not be judged by what you have done for yourself but by what changes you have brought in the lives of the people," he said. Therefore, Modi said, good governance is the key. "People-centric governance solves problems and gives better results," he added.

Highlighting the importance and necessity of political parties with different ideologies in a democracy, the prime minister stressed the need for the bureaucrats to assess whether a political party in power is using public money for its own growth or for the nation.

"It is the duty of the bureaucracy to analyse whether a political party is making use of taxpayers' money for the benefit of its own organisation or for the nation, whether it is using the money to create a vote bank or making the lives of the citizens easier, whether it is advertising itself with the government treasure or making the people aware, whether it is appointing its own party workers in various organisations or creating a transparent process for recruitment," he said.

Modi said the civil servants should keep these things in mind while taking any decision.

Recalling the words of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, India's first home minister, who termed the bureaucracy the steel frame of India, the prime minister said it is time to live up to the expectations and ensure that the dreams of youths are not crushed and taxpayers' money is not destroyed.

Modi also hit out at the corruption of previous governments.

"It was the legacy of the earlier system that there were over four crore fake gas connections. It was the legacy of the earlier system that there were over four crore bogus ration cards in the country. It was the legacy of the earlier system that one crore fictitious women and children were getting assistance from the Women and Child Development Ministry.

"It was also the legacy of the earlier system that lakhs of fake accounts were created under MGNREGA to transfer the benefits of workers who never existed," he said.

He credited the civil servants for the transformation of the system and preventing nearly Rs 3 lakh crore from landing in the wrong hands, which, he said, is now being used for the welfare of the poor.

Highlighting his government's initiative to do away with the protocol of hierarchy, Modi said he constantly meets secretaries, assistant secretaries and trainee officers.

He said this Civil Services Day is very significant as the country completed 75 years of independence this year.

"The century of independence will be the golden century of the country when we will give first priority to our duties. Duty is not an option for us but a resolution," he said.

During the event, Modi also conferred the Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration to recognise the extraordinary and innovative work done by districts and organisations of the central and state governments.

In his opening remarks, Dr Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; Minister of State (Independent Charge) Earth Sciences; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, said that in the past 9 years under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, many revolutionary changes have taken place, which were not just limited to being governance reforms but have wide societal impact and can infact also be described as social and economic reforms.

Principal Secretary to Prime Minister P K Mishra; Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba; and Secretary, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, V Srinivas were also present on the occasion.

J&K Mission Youth...

Last six months, Mission Youth clinched the top position in over 600 nominations from across all the States and Union Territories in the Innovation (State) category, while second position was bagged by Gujarat Government's State Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (SOTTO). Mission Youth was selected for innovations leading to empowerment of youth in Jammu and Kashmir which included schemes in education, Skilling, coaching, volunteerism and effective use of technology for a very transparent and effective service delivery. With more than 61,000 youth benefitted under schemes and close to 5 Lakh youth engaged over last two years Mission Youth earned the rare distinction of reaching out to maximum youth under any such initiative in the country.

The award carried Rs 20.00 Lakh special Cash Reward for Mission Youth, Citation , a Scroll and a Certificate of Appreciation in favour of CEO Mission Youth Dr Shahid Choudhary for placing in Performance Appraisal Dossier of the officer by the Deptt of Personnel and Trainings as the PMA scheme guidelines.

Chief Secretary Dr Arun Kumar Mehta described the occasion as momentous for Jammu and Kashmir UT especially the youth. He complemented CEO Mission Youth Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary and his team for outstanding performance and contribution leading to such a rare feat in a short span of over last two years. He reiterated the commitment of administration for taking every step to empower the youth and steps for a very meaningful engagement.

CEO Mission Youth, Dr Shahid Choudhary expressed great satisfaction over the very positive response to the initiatives by youth of Jammu and Kashmir, and proactive measures by the departments and especially Deputy Commissioners in making the scheme a grand success at the ground level. Pertinently, Mission Youth has been picked up as a unique cases study by the Capacity Building Commission of India in collaboration with Harvard Business School for inclusion in courses of top management and public policy schools. Dr Shahid thanked Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha for leadership of Mission Youth and personal efforts to bring stakeholder companies and organisations to Jammu and Kashmir. He expressed gratitude to the Chief Secretary for complete administrative oversight and support, effective role played by Administrative Secretaries, Dy Commissioners, DECCs and HoDs besides the OSDs and DD Mission Youth

DC Baramulla Dr Syed Sehrish also received prestigious prime minister's award for excellence in public administration 2022 during the ceremony.

The Citation of Honour underlines the special initiatives like Youth Portal, customised livelihood linked schemes like Mumkin and Tejaswini, education support like Parvaz, Youth clubs and the effectiveness of District Level Task Force headed by DCs as many of the unique features of Mission Youth leading to a sustainable and effective platform of youth empowerment in Jammu and Kashmir.

Mission Youth awarded under the Innovation (State) category for PM award has launched more than 15 schemes for youth which include Mumkin, Tejaswini - for women, Parvaz (Graduate): UPSC Coaching, Parvaz (XII): NEET/JEE coaching , Rise Together, Tourist Village Scheme, Spurring Entrepreneurship, Protsahan, LG Super-75 (Girls & Boys), LG Rolling Trophy in sports, Know-India Love-India: Bharat Darshan, Skill Development courses scheme , Youth Innovation Scheme , SAHAYETA: youth with disabilities, Scheme for youth in distress: Psycho-Social counselling and Hausla among others.

LG greets people....

brotherhood, compassion and joy of sharing".

May Eid-ul-Fitr usher in peace, prosperity and happiness for all, he said.

Meanwhile, the Lieutenant Governor has also greeted the people on the eve of Bhagwan Parshuram Jayanti and Akshaya Tritiya.

In a message, the Lt Governor said: "On the auspicious occasion of Bhagwan Parshuram Jayanti & Akshaya Tritiya, I convey my warm greetings and good wishes to the people. It is an occasion to rededicate ourselves to living virtuously".

"May the festival bring joy and happiness for all," added the Lt Governor.

BSF DG reviews...

in Jammu to take stock of the security situation, they said.

He was welcomed by Additional Director General (ADG), Western Command, P V Rama Sastry and IG BSF D K Boora and other officers.

Boora gave a detailed presentation to the DG, covering all the critical aspects of border security and domination on the Jammu IB & Line of Control in the wake of the terror attack on Thursday, they said.

The IG briefed the Director General about the general security scenario in the area of operation, covering the deployment pattern of BSF battalions and their robust domination on the IB on the Jammu frontier, they said.

The BSF DG also talked to the field commanders about recent threats being faced by the BSF on the LoC and the IB.

A special emphasis was given to the domination on the LoC and the IB in the wake of recent incidents in Jammu and Rajouri area, they said.

Young generation main...

change in society especially by serving vulnerable section of the community and enabling the youth leaders to drive transformative change," said the Lt Governor.

The Lt Governor called upon the youth to follow the rich legacy of Mahamana Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya and dedicate themselves in the service of the nation.

In the fast-changing world, Scouts & Guides will have to turn their voice into action. In the partnership with local administration, they must engage in social welfare works to complement the government's efforts and to develop new youth networks to promote peaceful, equal and just communities, he added.

The Lt Governor also urged the trainers and teaching community to nurture individual growth and leadership qualities amongst the youth.

The Lt Governor asked the J&K Bharat Scouts and Guides to actively contribute to drug abuse prevention programmes.

The Lt Governor also reiterated the UT Administration's commitment to facilitate the smooth operations of J&K Bharat Scouts & Guides.

On the occasion, the Lt Governor felicitated the Scouts and Guides from various schools with Rajya Puraskar Award Certificates.

Jugal Kishore Sharma, Member Parliament; Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Wg. Cdr MM Joshi, Commissioner J&K Bharat Scouts and Guides; Nasreen Khan, Administrator; Bharat Scouts and Guides, J&K and Ladakh Chapter; besides Guide Captains, Instructors, Principals, teachers & students from various schools were present.

Culprits of Army...

new era of progress and development which has become uncomfortable for the Pakistan based subversive elements. The ISI's designs to disturb peace and development in J&K would be decisively defeated because it is a cowardly act by the terrorists who enjoy support of Pakistan, Chugh added.

Poonch attack: 12...

questioned at various levels by the security forces to ascertain the identity of the terror group, which is believed to be active in the area for more than a year and probably comprises a sniper too.

A day after the attack, Director General of Jammu and Kashmir Police Dilbag Singh along with Additional Director General police Mukesh Singh was camping in neighbouring Rajouri district to oversee the investigation. The two officers also visited the site. A National Investigation Agency (NIA) team headed by a Deputy Inspector General rank officer was also present as the agency is likely to take over the case.

Initial reports suggest the presence of around five terrorists and the army truck is believed to have been attacked from three different sides. After the ambush, the terrorists possibly used grenades as well as sticky bombs that set the vehicle ablaze.

Vehicular traffic was suspended on the national highway between Bhimber Gali and Jarran Wali Gali for the second consecutive day.

The officials said those who executed the attack are believed to have been present in Rajouri and Poonch for more than one year and had adequate knowledge of the terrain which is quite tough, they said.

The area is a hot bed of Jammu and Kashmir Gaznavi Force (JKGF) as its 'commander' Rafiq Ahmed alias Rafiq Navy, who is a resident of the area, they added.

At present, three to four terrorist groups are active in the region of Rajouri and Poonch, the sources said.

Banned terror group People's Anti-Fascist Front (PAFF), a proxy wing of terror group Jaish-e-Mohammed, has claimed responsibility for the attack. There are reports suggesting that it was a handiwork of banned Lashker-e-Taiba group also.

The entire area of Tota-Gali-Bata Doriya, which has dense forests, has been cordoned off.

Officials said drones and sniffer dogs are being used to trace the terrorists, adding the army also conducted a reece of the area with a MI-chopper.

The five Army personnel were killed and another was seriously injured on Thursday after their vehicle caught fire following the attack. The soldiers were from a Rashtriya Rifles unit deployed for counter-terror operations.

Top army and police officials on Friday laid wreaths and paid homage to the soldiers -- Havildar Mandeep Singh of Chankhoian village of Ludhiana (Punjab), Lance Naik Kulwant Singh of Charik village of Moga district (Punjab), Sepoy Harkrishan Singh of village Talwandi of Gurdaspur district (Punjab) and Sepoy Sewak Singh of Bagha village of Bathinda district (Punjab).

The mortal remains were sent to their native places, they said.

Officials said a high alert has been sounded in the twin border districts of Rajouri and Poonch amid heightened vigil along the Line of Control.

Meanwhile, Jammu witnessed several protests by BJP, VHP, Rastriya Bajrang Dal, Shiv Sena, Dogra Front and Jammu Statehood organisation among others.

In a tweet, the Army said, "Chief of the Army Staff General Manoj Pande and all ranks of Indian Army salute the supreme sacrifice of five Indian Army bravehearts, Hav Mandeep Singh, L/Nk Debashish Baswal, L/Nk Kulwant Singh, Sep Harkrishan Singh and Sep Sewak Singh who laid down their lives in the line of duty at Poonch Sector yesterday."

Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha said he was anguished at the loss of lives of the brave soldiers.

"Their rich service to the nation will never be forgotten. My thoughts are with the bereaved families," he said in a tweet.

Led by its general secretary Yudhvir Sethi, the BJP took out a march and held a demonstration in Kachi Chawani area. The party workers raised anti-Pakistan slogans and held placards condemning the attack.

"We will avenge the killing of our soldiers. We will further strengthen the zero-tolerance policy," Sethi told reporters.

He said the attack was aimed at derailing peace and development in Jammu and Kashmir but the administration will not be cowed down.

Another protest was held by Mission Statehood Jammu Kashmir, a local organisation, led by its president Sunil Dimple in New Plot area. The protestors burnt Pakistani flags and effigies amid sloganeering.

The Shiv Sena Dogra Front also staged an anti-Pakistan protest.

Its members, led by its president Ashok Gupta, demanded that Indian troops destroy the terror network in Pakistan.

Grieving families get...

officer said. In Charik village in Punjab's Moga district, Kulwant Singh's brother said the government and the Army should give a befitting reply to the attack.

Holding Kulwant's four-month-old son in his arms, he said his brother loved his family and had asked him to ensure timely vaccination of his son.

Kulwant, who had recently visited his family, also leaves behind a one-and-a-half-year-old daughter and his wife.

Former village head Bakshish Singh said the entire village is pained by the loss of their brave son but at the same time, is proud of the supreme sacrifice he has made for the country.

In Bagha village in Bathinda, Sewak Singh's elder sister's tears won't stop.

A villager, who was among the mourners, demanded that the Army give a befitting reply to the "cowardly act" of terrorists.

At Harkrishan Singh's house in Talwandi Barth village in Batala, villagers hailed his supreme sacrifice for his motherland.

Harkrishan had recently visited his family. Hours before he was martyred, he spoke to his wife and two-year-old daughter on a video call, the villagers said.

Mandeep Singh belonged to Ludhiana district.

Similar scenes were witnessed at the house of Debashish Biswal's house in Khandayat Sahi of Alaguma panchayat in Odisha's Puri district.

"We are pained as well as proud that a son of our soil became a martyr. He was a great person and participated in all village events when he came home. He last visited the village four months ago," said Biswal's cousin Lalit Kishore Nayak.

Biswal got married in 2021 and is survived by his wife Sushree Sangeeta and a seven-month-old daughter.

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and his Odisha counterpart Naveen Patnaik condole the loss of lives in the terrorist attack.

"We received the very sad news of five soldiers being martyred in the incident (terrorist attack), out of which four were from Punjab," Mann told reporters in Moga.

He also announced an ex gratia of Rs 1 crore each to the kin of the four soldiers from his state.

Talking to Twitter, Patnaik said, "It is too painful to learn about the martyrdom of brave Odia javan Debashish Biswal at Poonch sector of J&K. His sacrifice for the nation will be remembered for all time to come. I convey my condolence to the family members of the great martyrs."

Moon sighted, Eid...

occasion, we pray that brotherhood and harmony that has existed in the country for 75 years continues to prosper."

Maulana Khalid Rasheed Firangi Mahali of Lucknow said the moon was also

sighted at several places in Uttar Pradesh and Eid-ul-Fitr will be celebrated on Saturday.

Eid-ul-Fitr is celebrated across the world on different days and it is determined by the sighting of the crescent moon which is supposed to denote the start of the Shawwal month in the lunar Islamic calendar.

It marks the end of the fasting month of Ramzan.

Rahul Gandhi to...

bungalow for nearly two decades.

After shifting his office, he has already started living with his mother and Congress Parliamentary Party Chairperson Sonia Gandhi at her 10, Janpath residence, the sources said.

Rahul Gandhi was asked to vacate his official premises by April 22 following his disqualification. A Surat court on March 23 had convicted Gandhi of defamation and given him two-year sentence, leading to his disqualification.

The Lok Sabha Secretariat had sent Gandhi a notice asking him to vacate the premises by April 22.

A few years ago, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra was also asked to vacate her Lodhi Estate bungalow after her SPG security cover was removed.

Rahul Gandhi first got elected as an MP from Amethi in Uttar Pradesh in 2004 and shifted his constituency to Wayanad in 2019.

CBI asks ex...

corruption allegations levelled by Malik in the awarding of contracts for a group medical insurance scheme for government employees and civil work worth Rs 2,200 crore related to the Kiru hydroelectric power project in Jammu and Kashmir.

Malik had claimed that he was offered a Rs 300-crore bribe for clearing two files during his tenure as the Jammu and Kashmir governor between August 23, 2018 and October 30, 2019.

The agency has booked Reliance General Insurance and Trinity Re-Insurance Brokers Limited as accused in its FIR related to a controversial health insurance scheme for Jammu and Kashmir government employees reportedly cleared by Malik at a state administrative council meeting held on August 31, 2018. The scheme was scrapped subsequently.

"... unknown officials of the finance department of the government of Jammu and Kashmir, by abusing their official positions in a conspiracy and connivance with Trinity Reinsurance Brokers Limited, Reliance General Insurance Company Limited and other unknown public servants and private persons, have committed the offences of criminal conspiracy and criminal misconduct," one of the FIRs alleges.

They caused "pecuniary advantage to themselves and wrongful loss to the state exchequer during the period 2017 and 2018 and thereby, in this manner, cheated the government of Jammu and Kashmir", it further alleges.

In the second FIR pertaining to alleged malpractices in the awarding of contracts for the civil work package of the Kiru hydroelectric power project, the CBI has alleged that the guidelines related to e-tendering were not followed.

"The case was registered on allegations of malpractices in the award of the contract worth Rs 2,200 crore (approximately) of civil works of the Kiru Hydro Electric Power Project (HIEP) to a private company in the year 2019," it has said.

The agency has booked senior Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer Navin Kumar Chaudhary, former chairman of Chenab Valley Power Projects (Private) Limited, M S Babu, former managing director, M K Mittal and Arun Kumar Mishra, former directors, and Patel Engineering Limited.

"Though a decision was taken in the 47th board meeting of CVPPL (Chenab Valley Power Projects Limited) for re-tender through e-tendering with the reverse auction after the cancellation of the ongoing tendering process, the same was not implemented (as per the decision taken in the 48th board meeting) and the tender was finally awarded to Patel Engineering Limited," the FIR alleges.

Narendra Modi: Most...

Modi-be it combating pandemic or be it seeking solutions to vexed global issues like the Ukraine conflict. This is the power of India that the worst critic of Prime Minister Modi, New York Times, in its March 18, 2023 opinion column by Nicholas Kristof, cautions...'He's the World's Most Popular Leader. Beware'. He says with approval ratings in India of about 78 per cent, Modi is far and away the most popular major leader in the world, according to 'Morning Consult'. Remember, New York Times is a chronic Modi basher, which has not been concealing its anti-India mindset but making it known as well.

As per WION tweet "#Gravitas! The New York Times @nytimes is looking for a correspondent in India. The person must be anti-establishment, anti PM@narendramodi, must paint India in a bad light in every story. This job description reads like an op-ed names PM Modi@Palkisu calls out NYT". And the US newspaper gratefully carries the articles from Indian including Jammu and Kashmir which paint Modi in a very bad light.

On the contrary, a popular Pakistani YouTuber says 'that Pakistanis don't want the likes of Nawaz Sharif, Benazir Bhutto, Imran Khan or even the late General Pervez Musharraf to lead the country while adding that Prime Minister Modi is a great man. The Pakistani youngster added that Modi can deal with all the mischievous elements in the country. The gentleman also stated that India is the fifth largest economy globally whereas Pakistan stands nowhere.' Not only a common citizen, Shahzad Chaudhry, a noted political, security, and defence analyst, writing in The Express Tribune, called India a preferred destination for all investors. The writer further reiterated that India has, under the chairmanship of PM Modi, established its own domain on the foreign policy front. India is also a big producer of agricultural products and the IT industry, Chaudhry noted in his column, adding that "in agriculture, their yields per acre are comparable to the best in the world and despite being a country of over 1.4 billion people, it remains a relatively steady, coherent and functional polity".

The uprising in Pakistan after the economic disaster is an eye opener for all those myopic Indians, who for their political interests sacrifice the national pride and Sanatani ethos.

(To be continued)

Rise in COVID cases: Centre asks States to ensure strict vigil, take pre-emptive action in any area of concern

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Amid rising cases of Covid, the Centre on Friday asked eight states including Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra to maintain a strict watch and take preemptive action in any area of concern to control any emerging spread of infection.

Underlining that Covid is still not over, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan in a letter to Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Kerala, Karnataka, Haryana and Delhi urged them to remain cautious against laxity at any level saying that may nullify the gains made in pandemic management so far.

The country has been witnessing a consistent rise in COVID-19 cases since March, with 10,262 cases reported in the week ending April 20. A rise in positivity rate has also been noted across the country, with 5.5 per cent positivity reported in the week ending April 19 against 4.7 per cent positivity reported in the previous week, Bhushan said.

"This is a cause of concern," he stated.

While the rates of hospitalization and deaths due to COVID-19 have remained low, states or districts reporting higher number of cases may indicate a possible localized spread of infection thus necessitating a closer look at these states or districts (high daily cases and/or high-test positivity rates) and the need to institute requisite public health measures to control and contain such surges in the initial stages, he said.

"It is also critical to ensure timely and regular updating of data to assist in accurate monitoring of the situation. It is essential that the State must maintain a strict watch and take preemptive action if required in any area of concern to control any emerging spread of infection. Regular monitoring and follow-up action are crucial," Bhushan said.

While the five-fold strategy for control of pandemic - Test-Track-Treat-Vaccination and adherence to Covid appropriate behaviour - remains the time-tested approach, it is critical for the state health departments to institute prompt and effective public health measures with a key focus on the aspects such as strengthening Covid surveillance in all districts and monitoring trends of influenza-like illness (ILI) and SARI cases in all sentinel surveillance sites on a regular basis and ensure its reporting through IDSP-IIHP network, he said.

He also urged them to focus on maintaining adequate levels of testing (especially in emerging hotspots, ILI and SARI cases) in all the districts while maintaining the recommended share of RTPCR and Antigen tests.

The focus should be in areas reporting high case positivity and new clusters of cases, Bhushan said and asked them to increase the number of Covid-positive samples sent for Whole Genomic Sequencing through the INSACOG network of laboratories, especially from any new clusters of cases detected in the community.

States have also been asked to ensure operational readiness and adequate strengthening of hospital infrastructure, especially at the sub-district levels in terms of availability of essential drugs and equipment and adequately trained manpower. Adequate financial support has already been provided to all states under various financial packages and PM-ABHIM. They have been further asked to encourage uptake of precaution doses among eligible beneficiaries while countering vaccine hesitancy through community awareness and improve community awareness to encourage early reporting of symptoms and testing as well as adherence to Covid-appropriate behaviours, particularly in terms of avoiding overcrowded or poorly ventilated settings and use of masks in such settings.

