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CBI empowered with general consent to investigate offences in erstwhile State: HC

is not the case of the State Government that the person who has signed the communication was not authorized to do so or that the consent has been withdrawn at any stage by the competent authority".

"The stand of the Government of the Union Territory is that it is not a general consent. The stand of the Government on the bare reading of the communication appears to be without any substance". Justice Dhar said, adding "when the Government of India contemplated to include certain more offences in the notification under Section 3 and order under Section 5, a fresh communication was addressed by the Government of India to State Government on 22nd July, 1963 and annexed to the communication were the draft notification (Under Section 3) and the draft order (Under Section 5). The Government of Jammu and Kashmir vide its communication dated 18th December, 1963 conveyed its consent to the issuance of these draft notifications/orders, thereby according its consent to the jurisdiction of CBI to investigate additional classes of offences as well".

"Both these consent letters have not been withdrawn and at least nothing is stated in the affidavit of the Government of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir in this regard, meaning thereby that both these communications conveying consent of the State Government were in force at the relevant time", Justice Dhar said, adding "mere filing of affidavits in court proceedings by officers of the State Government contending that there was no general consent given by the State Government would not nullify the effect of the communications already addressed by the competent authorities of the State Government to the

Government of India according consent to the jurisdiction of CBI to investigate certain offences in the State of Jammu and Kashmir".

"These communications have been issued in exercise of powers under Article 166(2) of the Constitution. In order to withdraw these communications a similar method is required to be adopted by issuing communications authenticated by an authorized person under Article 166(2) of the Constitution", High Court said.

High Court further observed, "in the face of the general consent accorded by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir to the jurisdiction of the CBI to investigate certain offences in the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir no such specific consent is called for in the cases that are directly registered by the CBI as there is no question of any parallel investigation parallel investigation in such cases", adding "thus, no separate or specific consent with regard to each case to be investigated by the CBI is necessary and it is only in cases where the FIR has been registered by the local Police and the investigation is sought to be transferred by the CBI, a specific consent is required".

Justice Dhar directed the Registries of both the wings of High Court to delink all these petitions and list the same separately before the roster Bench for consideration on other legal grounds raised in the petitions on individual basis. Since the stay of proceedings before the Trial Court was granted primarily on the ground of jurisdiction of the CBI to investigate the impugned FIRs, as such, having regard to the answer rendered by this court to the question of law, the stay of proceedings before the Trial Court shall stand vacated.

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Pole appointed CEO J&K

(AGMUT:2004) as the CEO for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir with effect from the date he takes over charge and until further orders in place of Hirdesh Kumar," read an order by the ECI.

"Pole shall cease to hold and hand over forthwith the charge of all or any charges of work under the Government of Jammu and Kashmir, which he may be holding before such assumption of office," the order said.

Pole while functioning as the CEO shall not hold any additional charge whatsoever under the Government of Jammu and Kashmir except that he should be designated Secretary to the Government in charge of Election Department in the State Secretariat, the order added.

Jambu Zoo to be thrown open to public in March-April this year

of grant of recognition and release of financial assistance, the Central Zoo Authority also regulates the exchange of animals of endangered category listed under Schedule-I and II of the Wildlife Protection Act among the zoos across the country.

According to the sources, all the animals presently kept in the Manda Zoo will be shifted to Jambu Zoo as per the orders of the Central Zoo Authority and the Manda Zoo will be utilized as Rescue Centre. The Department of Wildlife has also approached several zoos in different parts of the country for exchange of animals.

In response to a question, they said that Haryana's crocodiles, Delhi's black deer, Karnataka's sloth bear, Gujarat's lion, Bengal's tiger and black buck are among the species which will be delighting the visitors at the Jambu Zoo on its opening. "The zoos from these animals will be brought to Jambu Zoo have already been approached formally and soon after the grant of registration by the Central

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Govt teacher-turned LeT militant sheltered by JKP Inspector arrested in Jammu

Arif's terror plans or not. Preliminary investigations have ruled out involvement of the JKP Inspector in terror plots but further probe continued, they added.

Arif was posted in the Government School which falls under Winter Zone and, therefore, he used to come to stay in rented accommodation in Jammu during winters. In 2021 as well as 2022 and 2023, he had stayed in the same house of JKP Inspector.

Police said he burnt his all belongings including clothes, mobile telephone, SIM card etc to finish the evidence but Jammu Police have managed to trace some remnants to ensure that evidences stand judicial scrutiny. Arif was introduced to Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) commander Mohammad Qasim, a resident of village Angralla in Reasi district, who is operating from Pakistan, by his maternal uncle Qamar Din of Baransal, Doda, who is settled at Karachi.

Samba and Kathua districts where they were drone-dropped by Lashkar operatives from Pakistan at the behest of Mohammad Qasim. Arif was also given locations for planting IEDs from across the border. He was paid handsome amount after executing the terror strikes.

Arif admitted that he planted two sticky bombs under Seat No. 3 in the bus at Katra Bus Stand. He kept another IED in the bag inside the bus. Later, he boarded off the bus. Four persons were killed and 25 others were injured in the blasts. Nine persons were wounded in two IEDs planted by him at Narwal Transport Yard last month while there were no casualties in the IED blast at Shastri Nagar power transformer.

Meanwhile, addressing a press conference here this afternoon, Director General of Police (DGP) Dilbag Singh said an IED planted inside a perfume bottle was recovered from the possession of Arif.

Dilbag was accompanied in the press conference by Additional DGP Jammu Mukesh Singh, DIG

Jammu-Samba-Kathua range Shakti Pathak, SSP Jammu Chandan Kohli and SP City South Mamata Sharma.

Dilbag said this was the first time that such type of a bomb was recovered in the Union Territory.

A special team of experts is inspecting the device, which could have been activated by pressing the spray button, he added.

"All the (ready-to-use) IEDs have come from across the border. He had received the drone-dropped consignment of three IEDs in the last days of December and used two of these at Narwal," Singh said.

Congratulating the Additional Director General of Police (Jammu Zone) and other officers for cracking the Narwal blast case within 11 days, Singh said it was difficult as the accused had burnt his clothes and shoes and even damaged his mobile phone in a bid to destroy evidence.

"Arif is a Government employee who joined as a 'Rehbar-e-Taleem' teacher in 2010 and got regularised in 2016. He came in contact with LeT operative Qasim, also a resident of Reasi and presently operating from Pakistan, through his maternal uncle Qamar Din in 2019. Din fled to Pakistan a long time back and is settled in Karachi.

blasts. It is shameful that he was involved in terror activities despite being on the payroll of the Government. He will lose his job and will face the law for his actions," the police chief said.

Singh said Arif planted the two IEDs at Narwal on January 20 and triggered the explosives within a span of 20 minutes the next day with the intention to cause heavy damage to security personnel after the first blast.

"Security forces followed SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) after the first blast, thus averting possible casualties as the second blast was much more powerful. The first explosive was carrying 750 grams of material while the second one was packed with 1,000 grams of explosives," he said.

Referring to Arif's admission of planting two bombs in a bus carrying Vaishno Devi pilgrims on May 13 last year, he said the police had almost worked out the case following the busting of the LeT module led by Talib Shah but "there was one missing link that who actually planted the IEDs in the bus (that went up in flames shortly after leaving Katra base camp for Jammu)".

"He revealed that he had planted two sticky bombs, each weighing 450 grams, beneath seat number 3 of the bus, above the petrol tank to ensure maximum number

of casualties," Singh said.

The senior official said Arif used a timer device to cause the explosion in Jammu's Shastri Nagar area on February 22 last year, a case which had remained a mystery with no clue on the perpetrators.

The arrest of Arif is a "major breakthrough" as his interrogation revealed that he was asked to do a recce of crowded areas and religious places, apparently to choose the next target and shed innocent blood, the police chief added.

"Anyone directly or indirectly involved in terror activities will not go scot free. They will face the law and nobody will be spared," he said and asked people to continue supporting the police in foiling the nefarious designs of anti-national elements.

Singh assured the people that the police are fully alert to the threats and conspiracies hatched from across the border.

"We are for the safety and security of the people and remain awake to ensure you sleep better. There will be no shortcoming in tackling the terror threat," he said, adding, "people are extending full support and we are thankful to them."

Dilbag said the law enforcement agencies do not look at terror acts through the prism of religion and asserted that strict action will be taken against those found involved in such acts.

He said the recent terror attacks in Jammu region at the behest of handlers from across the border were aimed at reviving terrorism and harming the communal harmony and brotherhood in the Union territory.

"We work in accordance with law of the land and do not see (any terror-related incident) through the prism of religion. An accused is dealt with on the basis of the crime and not religion," Singh said.

He was replying to a question on reported remarks of Pakistan Defence Minister Khawaja Asif that worshippers were not killed during prayers even in India following a deadly bomb attack inside a mosque in Peshawar recently.

"Our Government policy is very clear that terrorism has no religion and strict action should be taken against them (terrorists). Some people are trying to manipulate the situation and mislead the public, but we are sure that people have learnt a lot and will not be misled," he said.

The top cop said the neighbouring country is the birthplace of terrorism.

"They have been raising terror groups and shedding innocent blood, and stand exposed," he said.

Singh said terrorism sponsored from across the border has been going on for a long time in Jammu and Kashmir, and innocent people are targeted by gruesome and cowardly acts.

"Jammu province witnessed a series of terror attacks (in the past one year). The aim is to harm the

communal harmony and brotherhood, and also revive terrorism which is taking its last breath even in Kashmir," he said.

The officer said over a dozen terror groups operating in J-K have been banned, while 22 people were notified as terrorists by the Central Government in the past two years as part of the crackdown against such entities.

Singh said a terrorist cannot hide himself for ever and has to face the law.

Asked whether there is a possibility of more terrorists in Government departments, the officer said anyone found involved in such acts will be dealt with as per the law.

"A new dimension was given to terrorism in J-K under which terror modules are created and assigned particular tasks. There is more focus on such modules as most of the terrorist groups were wiped out from both the divisions of Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

He added that the intention of sponsors of terrorism has not changed and one has to remain alert to tackle the new challenges and foil their designs.

Meanwhile, the DGP said the police investigation into the recent Dhangri terror attack case is on track to bring the culprits to book.

Seven people were killed and 14 others injured when terrorists attacked Dhangri village of Rajouri district on the first day of January.

While five people, including two brothers, were killed in the terrorist firing, two children were died when an Improvised Explosive Device (IED), left behind by the attackers, went off the next day.

"We are working on various leads (to crack the Dhangri case) and will share details at the right time," Singh said.

He congratulated Rajouri police for busting a module of Lashkar-e-Toiba and arresting three of its members during investigation of cases related to recovery of IEDs at different places between January 8 and 18 in the district.

Meanwhile, 58-year-old Saroj Bala, a widow who lost both of her sons - Deepak Sharma and Prince Sharma - in the terror attack announced a hunger strike from February 5 to seek justice for the victims.

"One month has passed but the terrorists involved in the attack are still at large," Bala, who is now left alone in her family, told reporters.

She said the victim families are waiting for justice and "I have decided to sit on the hunger strike till the culprits are not brought to book."

She said Home Minister Amit Shah, Lt Governor Manoj Sinha and senior security officers had assured justice to the victims but "all their promises have fallen flat."

Dheeraj Sharma, Sarpanch of Dhangri Upper Panchayat, said the entire village is standing with the grieving mother.

"We stand with Bala and will join her in the hunger strike," he said.

Ladakh to construct 174.44 lakh litres capacity reservoirs

"As reported by the UT administration of Ladakh, under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), reservoirs of various capacities totalling 174.44 lakh litres have been planned. The thrust of the construction of these reservoirs are to provide 55 LPCD water to every household in Ladakh on a regular basis," Union Minister of State for Jal Shakti, Prahlad Singh Patel told the Lower House of the Parliament.

He said, "these measures will address the water crisis for drinking and other household purposes in rural areas of Ladakh."

The Union Minister said that due to extreme climatic conditions, difficult terrain & topography of Ladakh, there have been several challenges in the implementation of the JJM scheme in Ladakh.

He cited freezing of water at source in supply lines, sustainability

of water supply schemes during freezing winter conditions, short working season resulting in extended execution period of works, supply of manpower and material and lack of technical manpower and technical support among other challenges as impediments in the implementation of the JJM scheme in the Union Territory.

"Government of India in partnership with States is implementation of JJM to provide tap water in adequate quantity (minimum 55 LPCD) of prescribe quality and on regular and long-term basis to every rural household by 2024," the Minister further said.

"So far," he said: "70% of the households have been covered and it is hoped that 100% coverage will be achieved by the end of Financial Year 2023-24," added the Union Minister for Jal Shakti.

Temp below zero in Kashmir

Pahalgam recorded a low of 2.9°C against minus 8.9°C the previous night and it was 3.2°C above normal for the tourist resort.

Kokernag recorded a low of minus 1.9°C against minus 0.5°C the previous night and it was 0.5°C above normal for the place.

Gulmarg recorded a low of minus 7.6°C against minus 8.2°C the previous night and it was normal for the skiing resort.

In Kupwara town, the mercury settled at minus 2.3°C against minus 1.4°C the previous night and it was normal for the town.

Leh, Kargil and Drass recorded a low of minus 11.0°C, minus 15.6°C and minus 16.1°C respectively.

While Chillai-Kalan, the 40-day long harsh winter period that started on December 21 has ended, Kashmir is under the grip of a 20-day-long period called 'Chillai-Khurd'. It will be followed by a 10-day-long period 'Chillai-Bacha' (baby cold) which will end on February 28.

The MeT department has forecast isolated very light rain and snow for next 24 hours. It has already ruled out the possibility of any major snowfall for a week.

Authorities retrieve land from former Union MoS, Forest Minister's kin

25 shops at Aftab Market.

He said they were assured that the shops will be unsealed today. It may be mentioned here that 25 shops were sealed last evening at Aftab Market after a complainant claimed that the land was illegally occupied where these shops were raised. However, the shops were raised by the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) in 1970s and allotted to the shopkeepers.

India gets 1.75 lakh Haj quota

Haj quota were received.

"The issue was addressed under the Annual Bilateral Agreement with Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) for Haj 2023 and in spite of challenges of COVID-19, the original Haj quota of the country i.e. 1,75,025 has been restored for Haj 2023," Irani said.

The quota earmarked for Haj Committee of India (HC) under the Annual Bilateral Agreement is meant for pilgrims from various States and UTs for Haj 2023.

The increase in Haj quota has now enabled the Government to send more pilgrims from states/UTs. (PTI)

Principal attached for unauthorised use of biometric

December 2022 and January-2023, he is again violating the instruction of the Government and marking biometric attendance from different locations other than GDC, Qazigund," the order said.

"In view of the above he has been attached in the office of Director Colleges, Jammu for violation of section 3(1) of J&K Employees Conduct Rules, 1971 till further order," read the order.

Principal, GDC Kulgam has been directed to hold the additional charge of Principal GDC Qazigund.

HC seeks NIA's response on Nayeem's bail

asked it to file reply to the petition challenging a trial court's order denying bail to the accused.

The High Court listed the matter for further hearing on March 23.

Khan has challenged the trial court's December 3, 2022 order dismissing his bail plea saying that there was prima facie evidence available against the accused.

Hurriyat Conference leader Khan was arrested on July 24, 2017 and is currently in judicial custody.

The trial court, in its December 3, 2022 order, had noted that the charges against the accused were framed in March 2022 and that order has not been stayed or set aside, despite a challenge in the High Court.

It had said that the accused was prima facie involved in terror funding activities and had led a pro-ISIS rally and visited the area

CDS reviews security situation in Kashmir

attempts. The CDS was told that the Counter-Infiltration Grid along the LoC has been further strengthened as militants are desperate to infiltrate.

He was told that despite snow-fall the troops deployed along the LoC are conducting regular patrols.

The CDS was briefed at the Chinar Corps Headquarters about the successes achieved by the troops in the hinterland during the anti-militancy operations. He was also given detailed presentation about the programmes conducted by the Army for the civilian population as part of soldier-citizen connect.

The CDS commended the Chinar warriors for their professionalism.

He was also briefed about the trans-LoC drug trafficking which has become a new way of funding militancy in Jammu and Kashmir. He was told that the Army is on alert to foil any such attempts.

India questions WB decision on 2 JK power projects

year-old Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) for management of cross-border rivers following Islamabad's "intransigence" in handling disputes.

"I do not think they (World Bank) are in a position to interpret the treaty for us. It is a treaty between our two countries and our assessment of the treaty is that there is a provision of graded approach," External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said.

India took the significant step of sending the notice to Pakistan conveying its intent to amend the treaty months after the World Bank announced appointing a neutral expert and a chair of Court of Arbitration to resolve the differences over the Kishenganga and Ratle hydroelectric projects.

New Delhi has been particularly disappointed over the appointment of the Court of Arbitration.

"India's Indus Water Commissioner issued a notice on January 25 for the modification of the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 to his Pakistani counterpart," Bagchi said at a media briefing while replying to a question on the matter.

"This notice was issued with the intent to provide an opportunity to Pakistan to enter into government-to-government negotiations to rectify ongoing material breach of the treaty," he said.

Bagchi said India called upon Pakistan to notify a suitable date for the commencement of interstate bilateral negotiations under article 12(III) of the treaty within 90 days.

"I am not aware of a response from Pakistan as yet. I am not aware of any response or comment by the World Bank," he said.

India, US keen to conclude drone deal

Corporation, said.

"The aircraft also can carry a wide variety of specialist payloads if they must adapt to a specific mission. A SkyGuardian becomes a SeaGuardian, for example, when it carries a 360-degree maritime search radar that gives users a quality of maritime domain awareness they can't achieve any other way," he said.

Artificial intelligence, machine learning and other sophisticated technologies help unlock the rich feed of insight from these aircraft, analyse it and distribute it to those who need it to take quick decisions, Lall said.

"Other payloads include communications relays - so the aircraft can serve as a node connecting forces over land or sea - or other intelligence, surveillance or military systems. These aircraft can conduct search and rescue, help fight wildfires, support customs authorities, augment naval forces and take many other tasks," he said.

"In short, MQ-9B is the premier multi-role, long endurance remotely piloted aircraft in the world today. It is in high demand. Japan, Belgium, Great Britain, and several other nations are flying or are on track to begin flying them," Lall said.

Early in the day, Assistant Secretary of State for Political Military Affairs Lewis told reporters that the India-US defense relationship has gained pace.

"When we look at the relationship with India and our security cooperation with India and the defense relationship with India over the past 10 years or even a little bit longer, we've really seen that grow and evolve and change... in very positive ways," Lewis said in response to a question.

"I think all the discussions (during this week's iCET dialogue) are in that context," she said, a day after the two countries embarked upon the ambitious initiative in critical and emerging technologies. (PTI)

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CINEMA

APSARA AUDI-1: PATHAAN (HINDI) - 10.15 AM, 01.15 PM, 04.15 PM, 07.15 PM, 10.00 PM

APSARA AUDI-2: KUTTEY (HINDI) - 11.00 AM, 1.15 PM, 3.30 PM, 6.30 PM

HARI THEATRE: DRISHYAM - 2 - 10.00 AM, 12.30 PM, 3.30 PM, 6.30 PM

PVR KC AUDI 1: 1. PATHAAN (HINDI) - 9.55 AM, 1.10 PM, 4.25 PM, 7.40 PM, 10.55 PM

PVR KC AUDI 2: PATHAAN (HINDI) - 9.30 AM, KALI JOTTA - PUNJABI (U/A) - 12.15 PM, THE WOMAN KING - HINDI (U/A) - 3.00 PM, PATHAAN (HINDI) 6.00 PM, 9.15 PM

WAVE CINEMA AUDI 1: PATHAAN (U/A) 10.15 AM, 01.10 PM, 04.05 PM, 7.00 PM, 10.00 PM.

WAVE CINEMA AUDI 2: PATHAAN (U/A)- 10.45 AM, 1.40 PM, 04.35 PM, 7.30 PM, 10.30 PM.

WAVE CINEMA AUDI 3: 1. KALI JOTYA - PUNJABI (U/A) - 9.30 AM, 2. THE WOMAN KING - HINDI (U/A) - 12.05 PM, 3. KALI JOTTA - PUNJABI (U/A) - 2.45 PM, 4. KNOCK AT THE CABIN - ENG (U/A) - 5.20 PM, 5. KALI JOTTA - PUNJABI (U/A) - 7.30 PM, 6. THE WOMAN KING - HINDI (U/A) - 10.05 PM

WEATHER

JAMMU: Partly cloudy

TEMPERATURE

Max: 21.9 Degree C

Min: 7.5 Degree C

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

RH-I (Morning): 84.0 per cent

RH-II (Evening): 60.0 per cent

Sunset on Friday: 06.06 p.m

Sunrise on Saturday: 07.25 a.m

Srinagar:

Generally cloudy

TEMPERATURE

Max: 7.8 Degree C

Min: 0.4 Degree C

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

RH-I (Morning): 84.0 per cent

RH-II (Evening): 60.0 per cent

LEH:

TEMPERATURE

Max: -0.2 Degree C

Min: -11.0 Degree C

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