

Divorced daughter also made eligible for Family Pension: Dr Jitendra

Excelsior Correspondent

NEW DELHI, Feb 27: Addressing the 49th Pre-Retirement Counselling Workshop at Vigyan Bhavan here, 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, Dr Jitendra Singh today declared that now divorced daughter has also been made eligible for Family Pension after the death of her parent, even if she has not secured a court judgement for divorce. Similarly, seven year service eligibility for entitlement of pension/family pension has been done away with in case of employees who go missing for whatever reason, he said.

The Minister said, Government has been continuously bringing reforms to facilitate the pensioners and their families. "The intention is to free the society from the regulatory regime of feudal mindset," he added.

The Minister mentioned that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been pursuing the interest of pensioners since the Government came to power in May 2014. The minimum pension was fixed at Rs. 1,000 within a month PM Modi assumed office; similarly Family Pension has also been revised, he said.

Dr Jitendra Singh said today there are more pensioners, about 77 lakhs, than active service personnel, which is about 50-60 lakhs. Today, about 6,000-7,000 pensioners are in the age bracket of 'above 100 years' and they are drawing the same amount as pension as what they earned as salary. And nearly one lakh pensioners are in the age bracket '90 and 100 years', he said. "I am looking for-



Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh addressing the 49th Pre-Retirement Counselling Workshop, at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi on Monday.

ward to the day when there will be more than one lakh pensioners above 100 years of age," he said.

On the occasion, Dr Jitendra Singh launched the Integration of Pensioners Portal of Canara Bank with Bhavishya portal and also the New Services on SBI Integrated portal. He also unveiled the CCS (EOP) Rules Book, 2023. The Central Civil Services Extraordinary Pension Rules, 2023 is the revised/streamlined version of "Extraordinary Pension Rules, 1939".

In his address, Secretary, Pensions & Pensioners' Welfare, Shri V. Srinivas said the Government aims to bring all 11.25 lakh pensioners online. This will facilitate the DoP&PW to remain in touch with the pensioners for their welfare.

"The task of Integration of Pension Seva Portal of SBI and Canara Bank with Bhavishya portal has been completed. With this integration, the pensioners can now get their pension slip, status of submission of Life Certificate and Form-16 through the Integrated Pensioners' Portal. All 18 Pension disbursing banks will be integrated in Integrated Pensioners' Portal," he said.

The BHAVISHYA portal (An

online tracking system for pension sanction and payment developed by DOPPPW) has bagged the 3rd Rank as per the NeSDA Assessment 2021 among all the Central Government e-Governance Service Delivery Portals.

In line with the Government's objective of transparency, digitization and service delivery, the Bhavishya platform has ensured End-to-End digitization of the Pension processing and payment. From the retiree filing his/her papers online till issue of the PPO in electronic format going into the Digilocker, this platform has showcased the intention of complete transparency and efficiency of the Government. The 'Bhavishya' platform, an integrated online pension processing system was made mandatory for all central government departments w.e.f. 01.01.2017.

This system is at present being successfully implemented in the main Secretariat of 97 Ministries/Departments including 818 attached offices, 7,941 DDOs on board. As on date, more than 1,89,494 cases have been processed i.e. PPOs issued which includes more than 1,23,249 e-PPOs.

Three day 'Tawi Art Festival' concludes

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Feb 27: The three-day 'Tawi Art Festival' concluded here today with the holding of a Literature Festival at Amar Mahal Museum and Library.

The event was inaugurated by Dr. Rashmi Singh, Commissioner State Taxes, J&K Union Territory in the presence of former Governor of J&K and founder of Amar Mahal Museum & Library, Dr. Karan Singh; Dr Jyotsna Singh, Director Amar Mahal Museum & Library; Ajatshatru Singh and Ritu Singh besides a number of prominent persons from across the nation.

Dr. Rashmi Singh in her address said: "I have been witnessing diversity of cultures in Jammu. The people, especially the youth of the region are full of talent and creativity which needs to be channelized properly. The platforms like this festival can play a great role in honing their creative talent."

"Today when the world has been reduced to a global village there is always apprehension of rich local culture getting lost in the gloss of modernity. Therefore there is a dire need to create a fine balance between the two so that the originality of



Former Governor of J&K, Dr Karan Singh looking at books at a stall arranged during 'Tawi Art Fest in Jammu on Monday'.

the region is not lost," she maintained.

Prof. Shyam Lal (Retd) from Department of History; Shailendra Singh, Dogri writer; Khalid Hussain, Punjabi short story writer; Swami Antar Nirav, Suman Sharma, writer & translator; Bhavneet Kaur, Author and Lalit Gupta, Critic & Curator interacted with the participants thus creating a vibrant literary atmosphere.

A guided walk through the library and a display of a selection of rare books in the Amar Mahal collection was yet another distinctive feature of today's event.

Dr Jyotsna Singh in her address said "There was excel-

lent response to the Tawi Art Festival by the people enjoying every component/session linked to the art, culture and heritage of J&K which has been a source of great encouragement."

She also said that there is much more in the heritage of J&K as the art, culture and heritage of J&K is endless and having everything to offer to the present and future generations.

Dr. Jyotsna emphasized that young people must interact with living treasures associated with our rich art and culture in preserving the heritage of J&K and assured that this festival will be an annual feature in coming years.

Advisor Bhatnagar addresses CII's annual session 'J&K @ 75 to 100: Future Ready J&K'

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Feb 27: Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, today addressed the annual session 2022-23 'J&K @ 75 to 100: Future Ready J&K' of Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) here.

Addressing a mammoth gathering of industrialists and business professionals, Advisor Bhatnagar highlighted that Jammu and Kashmir has vast potential in terms of industrial development and the region is providing sunrise opportunities for the industrialists to establish their ventures here.

He added that the Government is providing attractive incentives under the industrial investment package for any aspiring industrialist or entrepreneur willing to establish their business units in the region.

Advisor further enumerated Government's commitment towards creating a conducive environment for businesses to thrive in the region. He also outlined various measures being taken up by the Government to attract investments and promote entrepreneurship in Jammu and Kashmir.

Highlighting various achievements of the present LG led administration in terms of industrial growth, Advisor Bhatnagar said that the Government is determined

to create a vibrant start-up ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir and leveraging technology for inclusive growth of the region. He added that the present government is giving ample thrust on building a supportive ecosystem for enter-

preneurship to attract maximum youth towards it.

He said that development tempo has been accelerated tremendously across J&K and the region is emerging as investment friendly destination. He added that the Air Connectivity, Rail Connectivity and Road infrastructure has been upgraded so that the business establishments have ease of doing business here.



Advisor during CII's annual session.

Advisor Bhatnagar stated that the skilling ecosystem is being strengthened across the region to meet the skill demands of industrial sector and due to the NEP-2020, all colleges and higher secondary schools are offering skill training and vocational training courses for the students which will eventually

be fruitful for the industrial sector of the region. Outlining the significance of this session, Advisor Bhatnagar emphasized on the need for businesses to be future ready and adapt to the changing business land-

scape. He added that this session will be a platform for key stakeholders to come together and be partners in realizing the potential of Jammu and Kashmir's economy. Pertinently, the session was organized by Confederation of Indian Industry and brought together key stakeholders and thought leaders from the government, industry and academia to discuss and deliberate on 'Future Ready J&K'.

During the session, a question and answer session was also organized in which Advisor Bhatnagar interacted with the noted industrialists of Jammu and Kashmir as well as other business tycoons.

J&K likely to record capacity addition of 3400 MW in Hydro Power sector

*Saddal village gets electricity after 75 years of independence

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Feb 27: After a long gap of 75 years of independence, the residents of Saddal village in Udhampur have been able to get rid of darkness from their lives with electrification of their area under the prestigious Central Government's 'Untied Grants Scheme'.

The natives of this village are now hopeful for a better future for their children as earlier, the only source of light during the evening hours in the village was candles and oil lamps, which gradually became a part of their day-to-day life.

Similarly, Ganouri-Tanta village in the mountainous Doda dis-

trict saw the light of an electric bulb for the first time, ending the decades of darkness from the lives of the villagers.

The administration took up electrification work in the village on the directions of Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, after a group of locals put forward the demand before him at the LG Mulaqaat programme.

The Jammu and Kashmir administration has set its target to harness the hydro power potential of the region in order to make J&K power surplus in next five years.

In order to achieve this target, the administration has taken up several path breaking reforms in the power sector which will change the dynamics of power

First after UAC, over 1.5 lakh students appear in Class-8 exam across J&K

Irfan Trambo

SRINAGAR, Feb 27: Over 1.5 lakh students in identified Soft Zones of Jammu as well as Kashmir divisions today appeared in the class 8 examination held across over 2100 examination centres, marking it the first exam to be held after the implementation of the Uniform Academic Calendar (UAC) in the Union Territory.

As per officials, a total number of 84,993 appeared in the examination being held by the SCERT and associated District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs)-in 914 examination centres that were set up across Kashmir.

Mohammad Sharief Dedhar, Joint Director of the State Council of Education Research & Training (SCERT) told Excelsior that for the smooth and hassle-free conduct of the examination, all the necessary arrangements were put in place.

In Jammu, the officials said, 70,435 students are enrolled and appeared in the examination across 1189 examination centres set up across the division.

Concerning the district-wise break-up of the number of registered students who appeared in the examination, the officials informed that for Anantnag, the total number of students who appeared in the examination was 12,132 students, 5,255 for Bandipora, 14,642 for Baramulla, 9,991 for Budgam, 4,000 for Ganderbal, 5,810 for Kulgam, 13,184 for Kupwara, 6,919 for Pulwama, 3,121 for Shopian and 10,988 for Srinagar.

The students were visibly excited before the start of the examination and talked about their preparations. They also hailed the Government's move of conducting the examination in February which would otherwise start in October-November with the start of the winter season.

After 75 years of Independence, the Jammu and Kashmir Government has launched unprecedented reforms to bolster and rejuvenate this ailing sector.

The UT is likely to see a capacity addition of 3400 MW in the Hydro Power sector within few years from now. Availability of electricity has been enhanced in both Jammu and Kashmir divisions. Besides, Revised Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) is being implemented at a cost of Rs. 5,641 crore to ensure availability of quality power to all citizens, he said.

Although power generation, distribution and transmission sectors have seen substantial capacity addition, an official added. In the past 70 years, only 3500 MW out of the potential of 20,000 MW had been harnessed in Jammu and Kashmir. Once the entire potential is exploited, J&K will have surplus power and can be an energy exporter. However in the past two years alone, the projects for about 3000 MW capacity have been revived and subsequently put on track for operationalization.

Likewise, new projects of 3300 MW have been planned to be executed soon which included four projects of Kirithai II (930 MW), Sawlakote (1856 MW), Duhasi stage II (258 MW) and Uri-I stage II (240 MW). Also, back in January 2021, in a historic moment for energy sufficiency in Jammu and Kashmir, Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were signed for implementation of much awaited Mega Hydro Power projects including 850 MW Ratle HEP and 930 MW Kirithai-II HEP.

In the words of Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, vision of the Government was to harness the hydro energy resources of J&K with a goal to double the energy generation by 2024 and also to prepare a strategy for efficiency through policies, monitoring mechanisms to ensure energy security for economic and social benefits.

Bail denied to KAS officer, Lecturer

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Feb 27: Special Judge CBI Jammu RK Watal has rejected the bail applications of Chief Accounts Officer of Jammu & Kashmir Tourism Development Corporation and a Lecturer of Government Polytechnic College, who have been booked in a bribery case.

According to the CBI, accused Sajjad Ahmed, Chief Accounts Officer JKTDC demanded bribe of Rs 2.20 lakh from one Pankaj Kumar Verma through Shokat Ali, Lecturer Govt Polytechnic College Jammu for processing payment in respect of bills submitted by firm of the complainant.

After verification of the complaint, FIR was registered against Sajjad Ahmed (KAS) officer and during the trap laid by the CBI Shokat Ali Lecturer, Govt Polytechnic College, Jammu was caught red-handed while accepting bribe of Rs 2.30 lakh from the complainant on behalf of accused Sajjad Ahmed.

During further trap proceedings, Sajjad Ahmed was also caught red-handed in the pres-

ence of independent witnesses, while accepting the bribe amount from the accused Shokat Ali.

After hearing PP VK Dogra for the CBI whereas Senior Advocate Pranav Kohli and Advocate Prince Khanna for the applicants, the court observed, "perusal of the CD file produced by the prosecution shows that statements of some of the witnesses have been recorded but the statement of the complainant who is stated to be presently outside the territory of J&K and that of the shadow witness and some other important witnesses are yet to be recorded and documented to be collected which shows that investigation is not complete as yet".

"In case the accused are released on bail the investigation will be hampered and the witnesses may also be subjected to the influence of the accused", the court said, adding "this case does not seem to be within the general scope of law of criminal jurisprudence and falls under the exception".

Accordingly, court rejected the bail application.



LG Manoj Sinha inaugurating Civil Services Officers Institute at Srinagar.

LG inaugurates Civil Services Officers Institute at Srinagar

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Feb 27: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha today inaugurated Civil Services

* Watch video on www.excelsiornews.com

Officers Institute (CSOI), here at M A Road.

Speaking on the occasion, the Lt Governor said the institute will promote welfare of officers, integration of services and organize seminars, symposiums to meet the needs and challenges of civil

administration.

The Lt Governor also interacted with the Officers present on the occasion and suggested to establish and maintain libraries and information services to facilitate the officers.

Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary; RK Goyal, Additional Chief Secretary, Home Department; Sanjeev Verma, Commissioner Security, GAD; Saurabh Bhagat, Commissioner, Science & Technology and other senior officers of Police and Civil Administration were present.

Unauthorized construction of 339 buildings DB directs DC Reasi to file ATR

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Feb 27: In a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) regarding illegal constructions being carried around Railway Station at Katra, a Division Bench of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court comprising Justice Tashi Rabstan and Justice Moksha Khajuria Kazmi has directed Deputy Commissioner Reasi to file Action Taken Report (ATR) regarding unauthorized construction of 339 buildings which have come up in violation of Master Plan.

The Division Bench in order dated 03.12.2018, had made it clear that it will take a strict view against any person or authority found violating the law. "Only such deviations which are covered under the prescriptions of the judicial pronouncement and additionally covered under Regulation 11 of the Regulations, 1998 can be made the subject matter of compounding and not others", the DB had stated.

"We are informed Senior AAG S S Nanda has not filed the compliance of the order dated 03.12.2018. He shall file the latest ATR/compliance report by or before the next date of hearing. A status/compliance report on behalf of the Deputy Commissioner, Reasi with regard to the sealing process had been filed on 10.11.2014 wherein it was mentioned that out of 70 cases of violations under Section 13 of Agrarian Reforms Act, 53 replies have been

received and the replies to the notices are still pending from 17 violators. And in the interest of justice one more opportunity is being provided to them to file the replies to the notice", the DB observed.

"The respondent vide order dated 24-07-2014 had constituted a committee comprising of Additional Deputy Commissioner, Reasi and Assistant Commissioner (Revenue) Reasi to scrutinize the replies and recommend further course of action in the light of Agrarian Reforms Act and Rules made there under. The committee also co-opted SDM Katra and Tehsildar Katra and furnished the report in respect of 53 cases on 7-11-2014", the DB observed.

"The report of the committee is under examination and it is prayed that the answering respondent may be given reasonable time to take further action in accordance with the Agrarian Reforms Act and submit action taken report", the DB observed, adding "ostensibly, the compliance filed by the Deputy Commissioner, Reasi would show that the Deputy Commissioner had to take action in accordance with the Agrarian Reforms Act with regard to 70 violators".

Accordingly, DB directed that the Action Taken Report shall also include the action taken regarding the unauthorized constructions of 339 buildings which have come up in violation of Master Plan.

Payment of pending dues since 2012

Retired employees of JK Cements plea to LG

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Feb 27: J&K Cements Ltd Retired Employees Front have sought the immediate intervention of Lt Governor, Manoj Sinha in releasing their unpaid and legitimate retirement dues since 2012.

In an appeal to LG, the Front urged him to look into the matter as the retired employees are running from pillar to post for justice over a decade now but to no avail. The Front said that the employees are facing miseries and many hardships as they have not been paid the due dues and retirement benefits till date. It

said even some retired employees have not been paid the salaries for three to four years.

Highlighting the plight of the employees Front said many of the retired employees are at the verge of starvation as they have nothing to feed their families. Being in old age many of the employees and their spouse are suffering from various ailments and they are even unable to have a proper medical checkup and purchase medicines due to paucity of money.

Some of the retired employees are also unable to perform the marriage ceremonies of their grown up

daughters. The employees are in a pathetic situation and suffering from trauma and agony. Pinning high hopes in the LG administration, the Front representatives said they have a firm belief that directions will be issued to concerned authorities to sort out the issue so that the aggrieved retired employees of the corporation will get justice so that they are relieved of mental agony.

The Front said that J&K administration has already initiated action for disinvestment / sale of JK Cements Ltd, assets to meet the liabilities of retired employees but the procedure is too lengthy and will take a lot of time and on the other hand, the retired employees are on ventilator with their families on begging stage.

The Front said keeping the plight of the retired employees in view, the Government should at least release 50 percent of the retirement dues in favour of the retired employees out of plan funds of JK UT Government which can later be adjusted against the sale deed amount of assets of the company so that the retired employees of the JK Cements Ltd will have a sigh of relief and they can overcome their miserable financial condition to some extent.

39 SOs promoted as ADs

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Feb 27: Planning, Development & Monitoring Department today accorded sanction to the regularisation and promotion of one in-charge Assistant Director and 38 Statistical Officers (SOs) as Assistant Directors (E&S) of the J&K Economics and Statistics (Gazetted) Service.

The officers who have been regularised and promoted in the pay level-08 (47600-151100) are

Rita Sharma, Kishore Kumar, Sangat Singh, Jeet Singh, Abdul Rehman Bhat, Rajesh Kumar, Sarita Kumari, Naveen Bala, Harpreet Kour, Ashita Baru, Ali Mohammad Sheikh, Naseer Ahmed Parray, Mohammad Hussain Dar, Firdous Ahmed Ganie, Bopinder Singh, Mohammad Shaique, Ferooz Ahmad Rahi, Suriya Tabasum, Satish Kumar, Surinder Kumar,

Roopa Raina, Showkat Ahmad Gatoo, Mohammad Abdullah Sheikh, Fayaz Ahmad Mirza, Khurshid Ahmad Dar, Mohammad Yousuf Bhat, Shabir Ahmed Wani, Argunava Hakeem, Ghulam Nabi Najar, Amar Jit Singh, Divinder Kumar Sharma, Shivani Dhawan, Sarita Chopra, Shubash Chander, Harsimr Preet Kour, Avinashik Kargotra, Ferooz Ahmad Khan, Mohammad Ashraf Wani, and Arvind Kumar Kotwal.

As per an order, the clearance of the promoted officers is subject to the outcome of writ petition(s), if any, pending in any competent court of law.

"The promotee(s) shall continue to work at their present/respective place of postings, and their further posting orders shall be issued by the Directorate of Economics & Statistics separately," read the order.

Div Com reviews issues of mega projects

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Feb 27: Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Ramesh Kumar, today chaired a meeting of Deputy Commissioners and concerned officers regarding issues of mega projects being executed in Jammu division.

The meeting was attended by GM projects, NHIDCL, Col SPS Sangwan; Deputy Director Planning, Munish Dutta; CPO Jammu, Chief Engineers of Railways, Superintendent Engineers of Jal Shakti, JPDCL, besides Project Directors of NHAI, senior officers of AIIMS Jammu while Deputy Commissioners of Jammu division along-with officers of concerned departments and Director AIIMS participated in the meet-



Div Com Jammu Ramesh Kumar chairing a meeting.

ing through video conferencing.

The Div Com reviewed in detail issues pertaining to AIIMS Jammu, Udhampur Srinagar Baramulla Rail Link and other Road projects being executed in the districts of Jammu division.

Reviewing the status of AIIMS, the Div Com directed Engineers of Jal Shakti to expedite the work on water supply infrastructure and ensure adequate water supply for the phase 1 in a time bound manner.

Regarding USBRL, the Railway authorities apprised the Div Com about the pending work of installments of poles for providing power supply to the rail link.

Responding to the issues, the concerned Superintendent Engineer of JPTCL informed that the work on installation of electric poles was in progress.

The Div Com directed SE, JPTCL to expedite the pace of work and complete the work within the set timeline. He also instructed the SE to submit weekly progress reports to his office.

He further asked concerned agencies to stay in regular touch with DC Reasi and Ramban for resolving minor issues, if any,

for expeditious work on the prestigious railway project.

He also reviewed issues of road projects and directed NHAI and NHIDCL to expedite the pace of work on all the ongoing projects and be in regular touch with concerned DCs for resolving issues timely.

The Div Com instructed all the concerned executing agencies to submit weekly progress reports in his office.

3 Inspectors placed as DySPs on stop-gap basis

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Feb 27: Home Department on Monday ordered the placement of 3 Inspectors as Deputy Superintendents of Police (DySPs) on stop-gap basis.

As per an order, Inspectors Mohammad Rafi, Malik Zada Idrees, and Ravinder Paul Singh, have been placed as DySPs.

Meanwhile, the order said that the arrangements of the officers shall be without prejudice to the outcome of writ petition(s)/application(s), if any, pending, before any competent forum(s)/court(s) of competent jurisdiction of any existing or future orders of the Courts," read the order.

DIPR extends date for submission of accreditation forms

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Feb 27: In view of repeated requests from media fraternity of Jammu and Kashmir, the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), J&K Government, has extended the date of applications for submitting accreditation forms of News Media Representatives upto March 10, 2023, 4:00 PM.

The Department has requested the teligible media persons to submit their applications, completed in all respects, alongwith required documents at DIPR office Jammu/Srinagar by said date and time.