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Gujjars, Bakerwals, Paharis...

like Rajouri, Poonch, Doda, Kishtwar," he said.

Shah said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had promised elections after abrogation of Article 370 on August 5, 2019.

Modi had held local body polls and handed over the power to the 30,000 elected representatives of local bodies, he said.

Earlier power was with three families, 87 MLAs, 6 MPs. With abrogation of Article 35-A and 370, all downtrodden societies including Paharis in Jammu and Kashmir are getting or going to get their rights, he said.

The home minister said tribal reservation has become possible in Jammu and Kashmir only after abrogation of Article 35-A and 370.

He alleged that those who ruled Jammu and Kashmir for 70 years "wanted to keep Paharis crushed and pushed their voice. Now it is turn of Paharis to get their right in Jammu and Kashmir".

Shah said the development of Jammu and Kashmir is Modi's priority.

"Earlier, all money sent by the Centre for development was usurped by a few, but now everything is spent on people's welfare," he said.

"I want to appeal to you to free Jammu and Kashmir from the clutches of these three families and to make hands of Modi strong for betterment and welfare of Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

Shah did not take names of the three families.

"Today's rally is a befitting reply to those who used to say that there would be blood bath if Article 370 is abrogated," he said.

The Home Minister said Modi snatched stones from the hands of stone pelters in Kashmir and handed them laptops and jobs and this has resulted an end to stone pelting.

"The decline in number of deaths of security forces shows that Jammu and Kashmir is in safe hands now," he said, adding the Modi government has started strong drive against terrorism, stone pelters and Hurriyat conference

He also appreciated the Union territory administration's decision to announce a holiday on the occasion the birth anniversary of Maharaja Hari Singh, the erstwhile rule of Jammu and Kashmir, who signed the instrument of accession.

The Home Minister said on the last day of Navratri he paid obeisance at Mata Vaishnoo Devi temple and and prayed for peace in Jammu and Kashmir.

Shah also praised the people living in Rajouri and Poonch who are "standing like rocks for security of India" and entire country salutes them.

"Paharis, Gujjars and Bakerwals always stood for country whenever there was risk on India. Mountains of Rajouri and Poonch are guardians of LoC of India," he said.

There have been reports of protests by the Gujjars and Bakerwals in Jammu and Shopian in Kashmir recently against the move to grant ST status to the Paharis.

The Gujjars and Bakervals constitute 40 per cent of the population in the border districts of Rajouri and Poonch.

Paharis also live in the same area but they are numerically small.

The Gujjars and Bakerwals are the third largest ethnic group in Jammu and Kashmir after Kashmiris and Dogras.

Since April 1991, they have enjoyed benefits of 10 per cent quota for STs in jobs and educational institutions.

The Paharis are also seeking same benefits, which was opposed by the Gujjar and Bakarwals.

Since January 2020, the Paharis have been getting 4 per cent quota benefits in jobs and educational institutions in Jammu and Kashmir following a change of rules by the Union Territory administration.

This was also opposed by the Gujjars and Bakerwals, saying they get benefits under other categories such as OBC, EWS.

Shah pays obeisance...

tweeted in Hindi. The officials said stringent security arrangements have been made at the shrine in view of the home minister's visit.

He was received by senior officers of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) including its Chief Executive Officer Anshul Garg and prominent people and religious leaders, the officials said.

Amit Shah chairs...

by Shah, a former BJP president, in which the leaders of the party's core group participated. The discussions mainly remained focused on strengthening the organisation in both divisions of Kashmir and Jammu," he said.

The Union home minister is on a three-day tour of Jammu and Kashmir starting Monday. On Tuesday, he visited Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine at Katra and also addressed a public rally in Rajouri.

DGP Lohia's suspicious...

started, Additional Director General of Police, Mukesh Singh said.

Terming it as an unfortunate incident, the police chief said the force has got relevant clues from the scene which indicate that the accused had a history of aggressive behaviour:

He said the suspect had bolted the room from inside when the DGP was rubbing balm on his foot.

The domestic help repeatedly attacked him with a sharp object and even threw a burning pillow towards him in an apparent bid to set ablaze the body of the victim.

The 57-year-old Lohia, who was promoted and appointed as Director General of Prisons in the Union Territory in August, had shifted to his friend's house only a few days back.

Earlier, the ADGP had said that preliminary examination of the crime scene indicated that Lohia must have been applying some oil on his foot which showed swelling.

The killer suffocated Lohia to death and also used a broken ketchup bottle to slit his throat and later tried to set the body afire, he said.

The guards present at the residence of the officer saw fire inside his room and broke open the door, the ADGP said.

The officials said raids were conducted by special teams at different places including the domestic help's home town in Halla-Dhandrath village in Ramban district where some persons including his fiancé were detained for questioning.

The ADGP said the CCTV footage collected from the incident site showed the accused running away after the commission of the crime.

"Lohar was working in this house for nearly six months Initial investigation revealed that he was quite aggressive in his behaviour and was also under depression, he said

"A thorough probe is on to rule out any possibility. The weapon of offence has been seized besides some documentary evidence reflecting his (domestic help's) mental state, he said.

Officials said the body of the deceased officer was shifted to the Government Medical College (GMC) hospital Jammu for postmortem.

Sharing some pages from the diary of the accused, a police official said Lohar, a school dropout, was apparently fed up with his life.

The domestic help wrote in his diary that he was 99 percent sad but wearing a 100 percent fake smile".

I am 10 percent happy, having zero percent love in life and 90 percent tension in life. I hate my life which only gives pain and waiting for death to restart my life, he wrote in the diary.

DG (Prisons) Lohia was found dead at his residence on the outskirts of Jammu on Monday night. His throat was slit and there were burn injuries on the body.

According to Additional Director General of Police, Mukesh Singh, Lohar was working in this house for nearly six months.

"Initial investigations reveal he was quite aggressive in his behaviour and was also under depression," he said.

The ADGP said a preliminary examination of the crime scene indicated that Lohia must have been applying some oil on his foot, which was swollen. The killer allegedly suffocated Lohia to death and used a broken ketchup bottle to slit his throat and later tried to set the body afire.

"The suspect had bolted the room from inside while he was rubbing balm on his foot. He repeatedly attacked him with a sharp object and even threw a burning pillow towards him in an apparent bid to set the body ablaze," he said.

Meanwhile, Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday expressed shock and grief over the murder of Director General (Prisons) H K Lohia, saying he served the country with great honour and dedication.

A 1992-batch IPS officer, Lohia was found murdered under suspicious circumstances at his residence on the outskirts of Jammu on Monday night. His domestic help has emerged as the main suspect in the case.

"Shri Hemant Lohia was an outstanding Police officer and a great human being. He served the country with great honour & dedication. Shocked and deeply grieved at his sad demise. My condolences to the bereaved family and friends," the Lt Governor said in a tweet.

The Director General of Police, Dilbag Singh, on behalf of all ranks of Jammu and Kashmir Police have condoled and expressed grief over tragic, sad and unfortunate demise of Director General of Prisons, J&K, H.K Lohia who was found murdered last night at Jammu.

In his condolence message the DGP,J&K has expressed his grief over the loss of a professional, hardworking and dedicated senior officer. He said that the officer was a very dear colleague and his services and contributions to the different organizations will always be remembered. The department and he himself are "deeply saddened by this huge loss". DGP said

DGP conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and relatives of the departed officer on behalf of the Jammu and Kashmir Police Pariwar and prayed for the departed soul.

He said that the murder of Lohia will be investigated thoroughly from all the angles to reach to the bottom of the crime.

IPS officer of 1992 batch H. K Lohia was born in 1965 to Shayam Sunder Lohia of A.T. Road Gowhati Assam. During his services the officer served at key positions including both staff and field and contributed immensely for Jammu and Kashmir Police, BSF and Prisons Department. He remained posted as SDPO Gandhi Nagar, SP (R&H) Srinagar; SP Rajouri, CO JKAP-7th Bn, SSP CID CIK, AD SKPAU, DIG Admn. PHQ, DIG CKR SGR, DIG CID, DIG SKR Ang., DIG Doda Range, DIG CKR Srinagar, IGP Traffic J&K, Director SSG, IGP Technical Services, DEP to GOI (BSF as IG), Comdt. Genl. HG/CD/SD and DG Prisons.

From "I hate my life" and "Dear death I am waiting for you" to Bollywood songs about sadness and the final farewell, the recent diary entries of a man who allegedly killed Director General (Prisons) Hemant K Lohia reveal he was "under depression".

Yasir Lohar, the 23-year-old domestic help, was arrested following a major man-hunt through the night. It seemed, according to police, the school dropout was fed up with life.

In Hindi and broken English, he has also written in his diary one-line sentences like: "I want Restart My life", "Zindagi to bas taklif deti hai, sukoon to maunt hi deti hai (life only hurts, death brings peace), and "everyday starts with expectation but ends with bad experience".

Lohar, a school dropout, has also scribbled in his diary a popular Bollywood song from movie Ashiqui 2 -- "Bhula dena mujhe, hai alvida tujhe" -- in which the lyrics talks about separation and goodbyes.

He wrote he was "99 percent sad" in his life but wore a "fake smile 100 percent".

"I am 10 percent happy, having zero percent love in life and 90 percent tension in life. I hate my life which only gives pain and waiting for death to restart my life," he wrote.

One each PDP..

the grant of the status in accordance with the constitution.

The Gujjar and Bakerwal delegations appealed to the home minister to allay their apprehensions that ST Status of the Gujjars, Bakervals, Gadis and Sippis shall not be diluted by including any other section of people in the category of Scheduled Tribe in the Union Territory.

Enthusiasm marks Durga..

welcome them all. This festival is an example of communal harmony."

The committee organises its Durga Puja at Digiana Industrial Area with a huge number of visitors taking part in the celebrations.

Bose added that the 'puja mahabhog' (devotional offering made to the deity) was distributed to over 1,000 people daily.

Another highlight was the daily cultural programmes with performances by local talent at the pandal premises, he said.

The Ramakrishna Mission also observed Maha Navami at its premises in Udaivala on the city's outskirts.

A large number of devotees gathered for the celebrations, which started early in the morning with a 'mangalarati'. A special puja was also performed, a spokesperson for the mission said.

IAF to unveil...

Ram Chaudhari will unveil the new combat uniform for air force personnel," an Indian Air Force (IAF) officer told reporters here.

"We already have a combat uniform, but the pattern will be changed into something called digital camouflage," he added.

The officer said nearly 80 helicopters and transport aircraft will take part in the flypast and demonstrations over Sukhna Lake here on Saturday afternoon.

However, the Chetak and Cheetah helicopters and transport aircraft Avro and Dornier will not be part of the flypast.

The recently inducted indigenously built Light Combat Helicopter Prachand will be part of the flypast in a three-aircraft formation.

Another formation will be the Sekhon, dedicated to IAF officer and Param Vir Chakra recipient Nirmaljit Singh Sekhon. The formation will include a Rafale, Tejas, Jaguar and Mirage 2000.

The Globe formation will include a C-17 heavy-lift aircraft and nine Hawk-132 from the Surya Kiran display team, he said.

The Eklavya formation will be led by the Mi-35 attack helicopter with four Apache choppers, while the Big Boy formation will include an IL-76 and two AN-32 aircraft.

Golden period foundation...

possible so that the youth of Jammu and Kashmir achieve their goals.

J&K Sports Council and Youth Services and Sport Department are making every efforts in J&K to reach out to the youth and provide them platform so that they can make J&K and the entire country proud in the field of sports.

The Jammu and Kashmir administration is formulating policies that engage youth in the governance process and ensure participation in their on-ground implementation.

The targeted schemes under 'Mission Youth' have been crafted to empower the youth. It provides opportunities for youth to become ambassadors of innovation, peace, progress and sports. Livelihood generation programmes, skill development,

counselling, sports, recreation and financial assistance by the government have brought a new revolution in youth empowerment in the last two years.

J&K administration has taken many steps to create infrastructure, schemes and policies to speed up economic development, and to meet the aspirations of youth so they can contribute to society and achieve self-growth. The easily accessible online platforms act as an interface between trained and skilled workforce and Industry requirements in J&K.

Jammu and Kashmir administration is determined to provide quality education, skill training and better employment to the youth.

Keeping in view the industries to be set up in J&K under the New Industrial Scheme, special focus is being given on training of local youth to fulfill the needs of skilled workforce and create ample job opportunities for youth here.

Amit Shah arrives...

been intensified, while additional police and paramilitary personnel have been deployed to keep a close watch on the situation, they said.

Patrolling has been intensified at many places, especially on the Srinagar-Baramulla-Kupwara highway, the officials added.

The rally venue has been turned into a fortress, they said.

The B-JP has said Shah's Baramulla rally will be historic. "This will be the biggest rally in the history of north Kashmir," BJP's J-K unit president Ravinder Raina said.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah met more than a dozen delegations on the second day of his three-day tour of Jammu and Kashmir, sources said.

The delegations called upon Shah at Raj Bhavan here earlier in the evening.

The delegations included representatives of traders, fruit growers' associations, tourism bodies, political parties, social activists, hoteliers, Sanjay Saraf of Lok Janshakti Party, and members of transport association, sources said.

People met Shah and informed him about various problems they are facing.

A joint delegation of Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) and Federation Chamber of Industries Kashmir (FCIK) also met the Union minister and submitted a memorandum demanding the formation of the committee to revive businesses in the region, the sources said.

The delegation also raised the issue of the frequent closure of the Srinagar-Jammu national highway.

An Apni Party delegation led by its president Altaf Bukhari also met Shah.

The Bukhari-led delegation presented a list of demands including the restoration of statehood and holding of assembly elections at the earliest.

It also demanded a transparent and fast recruitment, release of youths currently in jails, resolution of problems faced by fruit growers of the Kashmir valley, completion of pending projects, and raising of additional special battalions, particularly in border regions to create job opportunities, and stop youths from getting misguided.

Meanwhile, the train service between Baramulla and Budgam section will remain suspended on Wednesday in view of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's public rally in north Kashmir, officials said.

The train operations on Budgam-Baramulla stretch of the Baramulla-Banihal railway line will remain suspended on October 5, the officials said.

They said the suspension was ordered in connection with the VVIP visit to Baramulla and in view of the present security scenario.

10 individuals designated...

Sajid Jutt, a Pakistani national, Basit Ahmad Reshi, who hails from Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla but is currently based in Pakistan, Intiyaz Ahmad Kandoo alias Sajad, who hails from Jammu and Kashmir's Sopore but now lives in Pakistan, Zafar Iqbal alias Salim, who is from Poonch but presently residing in Pakistan, and Sheikh Jameel-ur-Rehman alias Sheikh Sahab, who hails from Pulwama.

The others are Bilal Ahmad Beigh alias Babar, who hails from Srinagar but is currently based in Pakistan, Raffiq Nai alias Sultan of Poonch, Irshad Ahmad alias Idrees from Doda, Bashir Ahmad Peer alias Intiyaz of Kupwara and Showkat Ahmad Sheikh alias Showkat Mochi of Baramulla, currently based in Pakistan.

In separate notifications, the MHA said Habibullah Malik was the key handler of the terrorists who carried out an attack on Indian soldiers in Poonch and has been involved in air-dropping of arms and communication systems through drones in the Jammu region for terrorists based in Jammu and Kashmir:

Malik has also created a wide network of hardcore terrorists and was the mastermind behind multiple terrorist attacks in the Kashmir valley, including a "fidayeen" (suicide) attack against Army personnel at Srinagar's Hyderpora in June 2013 and the killing of a station house officer in Budgam's Chadoora in December 2013.

Malik has been associated with LeT and The Resistance Front (TRF).

Basit Ahmad Reshi is a member of HM and was involved in subversive activities and coordinating target killings in Jammu and Kashmir.

He planned and executed a terror attack on a police guard post at the Baba Ali Raina shrine in Sopore's Tajjaur Sharief Peth Astan on August 18, 2015, in which a police personnel and a civilian were killed, the MHA said.

Owing to his strong network of associates in his native place, Reshi coordinates recruitment of terrorists and execution of terror attacks, the ministry said.

He has been involved in managing arms and ammunition and terror-financing from across the border and motivating youngsters to join terror ranks.

Intiyaz Ahmad Kandoo is a Hizbul Mujahideen member and has been involved in managing finances for terrorists, supplying arms and ammunition to ultras and narcotics smuggling.

Kandoo coordinated attacks, in which many security forces personnel and civilians were killed.

He has been involved in radicalising and motivating youngsters to carry out terror activities in Kashmir.

Zafar Iqbal is the operational commander of Harkat-ul-Jihad-e-Islami or Jammu Kashmir Ghaznavi Force and has been involved in supervising narcotics and weapons smuggling and infiltration of terrorists into Jammu and Kashmir.

Sheikh Jameel-ur-Rehman is the chief or "amir" of Tehreek-ul-Mujahideen (TuM) and has been involved in coordinating the activities of LeT, Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), HM and other amalgamates at the top level.

He has been involved in smuggling Pakistan-made explosives and in the movement of terrorists from across the border to India.

Bilal Ahmad Beigh, the chief of Jammu and Kashmir Islamic Front (JKIF), is involved in the smuggling of arms and ammunition into Jammu and Kashmir: He has been maintaining close contacts with notorious underworld entities and using the channels to transfer funds from abroad to Kashmir:

Raffiq Nai is a launching commander of TuM and Jammu Kashmir Ghaznavi Force and has been involved in the supervision of narcotics and weapons smuggling and infiltration of terrorists into the Poonch-Rajouri sector.

Irshad Ahmad is a launching commander of HM and is involved in coordinating training and launching activities of the terrorist organisation.

Bashir Ahmad Peer is a launching commander of HM and is responsible for providing logistics to its members, especially for infiltration into Kupwara.

Showkat Ahmad Sheikh is operating as the chief launching commander of HM and has been instrumental in spreading terror in Jammu and Kashmir, the MHA said.

LG's greetings on...

and that of righteousness over unrighteousness. It is an occasion to foster goodness and brotherhood. The life and deeds of Lord Rama and his message of right conduct continue to inspire generations of people". Let us resolve to purge all ills within us and live a virtuous life following the ideals of Maryada Purushottam Shri Ram, added the Lt Governor. The Lt Governor prayed for peace, development, prosperity in the UT and well being of all.

BSF 'Retreat Ceremony' along IB in Jammu completes one year

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The 'Retreat Ceremony' along the International Border here has successfully completed one year with the BSF contemplating to increase the seating capacity owing to its growing popularity among the people, officials said.

The "Wagah-Attari-style" ceremony, comprising a structured parade by the Border Security Force (BSF) personnel on every Saturday and Sunday, was launched on October 2 last year as part of the border tourism promotion programme of the government.

BSF band live display, splendid retreat parade and visit up to the zero line are the key features of the ceremony and during the last one

year, the parade has been witnessed by thousands of tourists, VVIPs and celebrities.

"This event has now become a centre of attraction for the locals as well as tourists and part of the overall tourism package," a BSF official said.

He said the parade was conceptualised by BSF frontier headquarters, Jammu, in collaboration with the tourism department and after a lot of efforts and hard work, the retreat ceremony was inaugurated by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha last year.

"The retreat ceremony has become popular among the masses and the number of visitors are increasing day by day. Seeing its popularity, the

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari on Tuesday said appropriate "non-escalatory" measures were taken in response to recent Chinese air activities along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh and that return to status quo ante prior to the standoff was key for the situation to become normal in the region.

The Chief of Air Staff said Chinese actions along the frontier including in the Ladakh sector are being monitored constantly and the IAF's overall preparations are part of continuing efforts irrespective of whether it sees any challenge from China.

He was addressing a press conference ahead of the Air Force Day on October 8.

"The benchmark to say the situation on LAC is normal would be to return to status quo ante and complete withdrawal from all the points all along the

LAC. That is the situation that we are looking for," he said, replying to a question.

His comments came days after Chinese envoy Sun Weidong claimed that the situation along the border is "overall stable" and the two sides have moved from the "emergency response" that followed the Galwan Valley clashes in June 2020 to "normalised" management.

India has been insisting on the restoration of the status quo ante prior to the standoff in eastern Ladakh.

Asked about reports of China's air incursions and military activities along the LAC in eastern Ladakh, Air Chief Marshal Chaudhari said the issue was taken up with the Chinese military and that all the activities by the adversary are being monitored.

"As regards to the recent air violations or incursions or increased air activity by the Chinese, we continuous-

ly monitor it by continuously enhancing our air defence efforts there. We have increased the presence of radars," he said.

"Appropriate non escalatory measures have been taken. I think we have been able to signal our intent and... our state of readiness with the actions we have taken so far," he said.

Air Chief Marshal Chaudhari said confidence building measures are in place between the two sides, but noted that a hotline is yet to be set up.

The IAF chief said recent events on the global landscape have clearly indicated that the presence of a strong military is imperative to ward off external threats through deterrence.

"The armed forces in general and the IAF in particular, will continue to remain a lynchpin in the national security matrix both as a deterrent as well as a war-winning instrument," he said.

Air Chief Marshal Chaudhari also

said that the IAF has been preparing for all kinds of security challenges including "worst case scenario" and asserted that it is fully ready to face any situation.

"We continue to be actively deployed while at the same time expediting the operationalisation of recently inducted systems like Rafale, Light Combat Aircraft and S-400 among others. Today, as I speak, the IAF continues to be ever vigilant and deployed," he said.

"Our air defence elements are deployed 24x7, 365 days of the year to prevent any violation or transgression of our national airspace. Our fighters are always on readiness to be scrambled in a matter of a few minutes to counter any emergent threat," he said.

The Chief of Air Staff also spoke on the depleting number of its fighter squadrons and phasing out of the Mirage 2000s, Jaguars and the MIG 29s.

