

6 terrorist associates arrested from Sopore, Bandipora

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Six terrorist associates of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) were arrested from Sopore and Bandipora areas this week and arms and ammunition were recovered from their possession, police said on Saturday.

Three of them were arrested on Tuesday at a checkpoint in Bonai area of Sopore in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, a police spokesperson said.

Security forces deployed at Chinar crossing apprehended three alleged militants when they noticed them roaming in a suspicious manner and who tried to flee when they were to stop, the spokesperson said.

The three accused were identified as Arafat Majeed Dar son of Abdul Majeed Dar resident of Harwan Sopore, Tauseef

Ahmed Dar son of Lt Gh Hassan Dar resident of Taliyan Mohalla, Arampora Sopore and Momin Nazir Khan son of Nazir Ahmed Khan resident of Arampora Sopore .

Khan is presently living in Natipora Srinagar, said the spokesperson. Two pistols, two pistol magazines, 13 pistol rounds, and a hand grenade were recovered from their possession. According to the preliminary investigation, the accused were engaged in providing logistical and other material support to the terrorists.

They were booked under relevant sections of the law and were shifted to a police station where they remain in custody, he said. In another incident, police in Bandipora arrested three associates of the LeT act-

ing on intelligence gathered about their movement, according to a police spokesperson.

The arrested men were identified as Ghulam Mohammad and Irshad Hussain, both residents of Ashtangoo Bandipora, and Ashiq Hussain, a resident of Sopore. Arms and ammunition were recovered from their possession too, the spokesperson said. Police said the accused were working to expand the terrorist activities of the proscribed terror outfit, especially for foreign terrorists, by providing them logistical and other material support including mobile phones and SIM cards.

One of them is a former terrorist and his anti-national activities have recycled many times during past. Further investigation is going on, the spokesperson said.

Leopard found dead in Samba

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A leopard was found dead in a forest area in Samba district on Saturday, officials of wildlife department said.

The carcass was found in Ghagwal forest by sarpanch Darshan Kumar and was recovered by the rescue team of the department when he informed them, they said.

A preliminary investigation suggested that the leopard died naturally, they said.

However, an FIR was registered in connection with the death and a post-mortem will be conducted to ascertain the exact cause of the leopard's death for further action, the officials said.

10 contractors blacklisted for poor execution of public works in Doda

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Authorities in Jammu and Kashmir have blacklisted 10 contractors for poor execution of works in Doda district, an official spokesman said on Saturday.

Quoting an order issued by the Rural Development Department (Superintendent Engineer REW Jammu), the spokesman said the contractors have been banned for one year for poor performance in execution of the public works.

It has been given out that during this period they shall not be allowed to participate in any tendering process across the Jammu province, he said.



BJP holds joint Core Group meet; discusses social, political, COVID related issues

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) held a joint meeting of its Core Groups from all its organizational Districts of Jammu Province.

Various organizational and developmental issues including the present social, political and COVID related issues were discussed threadbare in the meeting.

The meeting was conducted through semi-virtual mode with the help of Audio-visual Aids which was coordinated from BJP Headquarter, Trikuta Nagar, here.

J&K BJP President Ravinder Raina accompanied by former Dy. CM Kavinder Gupta, former State President Sat Sharma and BJP General Secretary Sunil Sharma inaugurated the meeting by lighting the traditional lamp at party headquarter.

J&K BJP President Ravinder Raina and General Secretary (Org.) Ashok Koul addressed the meeting from party headquarter, Trikuta Nagar, while Union MoS Dr. Jitendra Singh, J&K BJP Seh-Prabharshi Ashish Sood addressed the meeting through their respective places.

MP Jugal Kishore Sharma, former Dy. CM Kavinder Gupta, General Secretary Adv. Vibodh Gupta & Dr. Devinder Manyal and other senior leaders including the BJP District Prabharris and District Core



J&K BJP President Ravinder Raina speaking at a meeting.

Committee Members joined the meeting through their respective places.

BJP NEM Priya Sethi conducted the meeting proceedings while the note of thanks was presented by General Secretary Sunil Sharma.

Ravinder Raina praised the BJP activists for their constant working for the welfare of society. He emphasized on the role of party's Morchas in empowering the neglected communities and also strengthening the party structure in those communities. He specifically pointed out that earlier governments like NC, PDP, Congress misused them while harming their interests and now BJP has taken decisive actions to empower those communities giving examples of Women, SCs, STs, OBCs, Minorities etc.

Dr. Jitendra Singh discussed the increased role of party activists in taking the govern-

ment sponsored public welfare schemes to the targeted population. He asked them to work as consistent learner and performer and maintain unflinching touch with the society.

Ashish Sood while stressing on the role of Core Committees for the successful working of the organizational structure also discussed the importance of meetings through virtual mode in this Covid marred period. He said that even in this tough time BJP activists through their dedication and team spirit are working for the welfare of society.

Ashok Koul in his address sought and discussed the reporting from all the organizational Districts. He discussed the forthcoming party programmes while emphasizing on the functioning of District, Mandal and Booths. He also discussed the Covid management and ongoing Vaccination Drive.

106 new COVID-19 cases recorded in Ladakh; 35 patients cured

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

LEH: Ladakh's coronavirus caseload increased to 23,079 on Saturday as 106 more people tested positive for the virus, officials said.

Eighty-six of the new cases were reported from Leh district and 20 from Kargil district, they said.

According to the officials, the COVID-19 death toll in the Union territory stands at 222 - 164 fatalities in Leh and 58 in Kargil.

The number of active COVID-19 cases in Ladakh has gone up to 669 603 in Leh and 66 in Kargil, the officials said. Thirty-five patients were discharged from hospitals in Leh during the past 24 hours, taking the total number of recoveries in Ladakh to 21,188, they said. The officials said the total positivity rate of Ladakh stands at 3.8 per cent.

Training programme for police officers on 'women safety' concludes at SKPA

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

UDHAMPUR: Five-day training programme for Investigators on "Safety of Women" sponsored by BPR&D New Delhi which commenced on January 10 at SK Police Academy Udhampur concluded on Saturday. 20 Police Officers of the rank of ASI to Dy.SP attended the training programme.

The course was designed to accommodate investigation skills and knowledge of latest provisions of law including POCSO, JJ Act, IT Act, etc. To achieve the objective of the training programme, experienced guest speakers including Dr. Rashi Taggar, school of Business SMVDU Katra, Inspector Rakesh Sharma Cyber Police Station Jammu and



SKPA officers presenting memento to a dignitary.

Nayem Abbas Hamdami, Jr. Cyber Consultant and faculty of the Academy shared their wide range of knowledge on the related subjects.

In the valediction, V.K Jamwal, SSP Dy. Director (Outdoor) advised the participants to be sensitive towards women victims,

adopting guidelines laid from time to time. He further said that the objectives of the course is to enhance capacity of the investigating officers. The course was coordinated by Suraj Singh, Asstt. Director (Trg/R&D) and Shri Rakesh Manni, Inspector (Member faculty).

The eminent speakers

from Academia and renowned Cyber Forensic experts shall be delivering lectures during the course. The audience was informed that organizing such courses is the endeavour of DGP J&K and Director SKPA, Udhampur.

In his inaugural address Mohan Lal, SSP welcomed all the course participants on behalf of Director SKPA. He laid stress to enhance professional competence of the investigating officers to investigate offences against women and children including Cyber Crime so that at the end of the day, the cases end in conviction.

The course is being coordinated by Suraj Singh, Dy.SP, AD (Trg/R&D) and Inspector Sanjeev Gupta, member faculty.

Minimum temp settles below freezing point in Kashmir

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: The intense cold wave conditions continued in Kashmir as the minimum temperature settled several degrees below freezing point, officials said here on Saturday.

The night temperature was several degrees below the normal for this part of the season.

The mercury in Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, settled at minus 4.5 degrees Celsius down from the previous night's minus 3.4 degrees Celsius, they said.

Gulmarg, the famous skiing resort in Baramulla district of north Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 9.5 degrees Celsius up a degree from the previous night.

Pahalgam in south Kashmir Anantnag district, which serves as the base camp for the annual Amarnath yatra, recorded a low of minus 11.4 degrees Celsius down from the previous night's minus 10.3 degrees Celsius, they said.

The resort was the coldest recorded place in Jammu and Kashmir.

The officials said Qazigund, the gateway town to the Valley, recorded the minimum of minus 7.6 degrees Celsius, while the

nearby south Kashmir town of Kokernag recorded a low of minus 7.2 degrees Celsius.

The mercury in Kupwara in north Kashmir settled at a low of minus 5.0 degrees Celsius.

The MeT Office said the weather is likely to stay mainly dry over the next few days and the minimum temperature may drop further.

Kashmir Valley is currently under the grip of the 40-day harshest winter period known as 'Chilla-i-Kalan' which began on December 21.

'Chilla-i-Kalan' is a period when a cold wave grips the region and the temperature drops considerably leading to freezing of water bodies, including the famous Dal Lake here as well as the water supply lines in several parts of the Valley.

The chances of snowfall are the most frequent and maximum during this period and most areas, especially in the higher reaches, receive heavy to very heavy snowfall.

The 'Chilla-i-Kalan' will end on January 31, but the cold wave continues even after that in Kashmir with a 20-day-long 'Chillai-Khur'd' (small cold) and 10-day-long 'Chillai-Bachha' (baby cold).

Situation under control; however no room for complacency: Div Com



Div Com Jammu, Dr Raghav Langer chairing a meeting.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Dr Raghav Langer on Saturday chaired a meeting of all Deputy Commissioners, Principals of all GMCs, Director Health Services Jammu, MD NHM, MD JKMSCL, all Chief Medical Officers and other stakeholder departments to take holistic review of the emerging Covid situation and preparedness to tackle the 3rd wave.

The Divisional Commissioner directed the Deputy Commissioners to ensure that all newly installed Liquid Medical Oxygen plants are made functional in the districts. He also directed MD NHM and ERA officers to get all the dysfunctional Oxygen plants repaired under PM Cares, ERA plants. It was informed that over 53000 LPM installed capacity is available in the division.

To ensure properly functioning oxygen plants, the Div Com directed the DCs to depute adequate trained staff to man the supply. It was informed that NHM has trained health functionaries for ensuring proper functioning of oxygen plants in the districts.

During the meeting, Managing Director, NHM gave a detailed powerpoint presentation and apprised the Divisional Commissioner about the overall Covid situation in the division with regard to testing rates, positivity rate, vaccination status, blocks with high positivity rates and other important issues. The Health experts expressed optimism and said that the situation was under control but rejected any room for complacency.

Dr Langer stressed on the optimal utilization of RTPCR testing in the districts, especially in blocks identified as low testing blocks. He asked the DCs and CMOs to ensure that the testing are conducted in the districts as per the targets.

He also emphasized that the

additional testing teams/mobile testing teams be given the task of random testing at public places like crowded markets.

In order to provide tele-consultation to the patients through e sanjeevani app, the Div Com directed the DCs/CMOs to deploy more doctors for the same so as to ensure that doctors are available and service was available 24x7 which is presently functioning 10 AM to 4 PM.

The Div Com also stressed on the Information Education and Communication (IEC) campaigns for e-Sanjeevani helpline numbers, control room numbers, 108 services etc.

Keeping in view the rising number of cases in the districts, Dr Langer directed the DCs to designate level I/II/III facilities in the districts to avoid unnecessary referrals for successful management of the covid care facilities. He also directed the DCs and medical officers to activate triage centers in the districts for further streamlining of referrals.

He also instructed the DCs to activate surveillance teams to ensure regular monitoring of health status of patients in home isolation. He further asked for the line listing of all the active positive cases in the districts. The DCs were instructed to notify the list of paid isolations in the districts.

Dr Langer also insisted the DCs to activate volunteers for enforcement of Covid Appropriate Behaviour.

The meeting was attended in person by Principal GMC Jammu, Director Health Services, MD JKMSCL, Medical Superintendents, Incharge Divisional Covid cell and other concerned officers while MD NHM, Deputy Commissioners of Jammu division, Principals of GMC Kathua/Doda/Rajouri, CMOs and MS of all District Hospitals participated in the meeting through video conferencing.

Pakistan national held along IB in Jammu; repatriated

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A Pakistani national was arrested shortly after he inadvertently crossed into the Indian side along the International Border (IB) in Samba sector on Saturday, a senior BSF official said.

Deputy Inspector General of Border Security Force (BSF), S P S Sandhu said the intruder was repatriated within six hours of his arrest at a flag meeting with Pakistani Rangers after completion of necessary formalities.

"One Pakistani national crossed over inadvertently to India on the Balhad border today (Saturday) at about 1300 hours. He came about 200 metres inside India and was apprehended by the alert troops," said Sandhu, who is also the Public Relations Officer of BSF Jammu frontier.

He said on preliminary questioning, it was found that the man, hailing from Shakargarh tehsil of Pakistan, had accidentally crossed the IB into this side.

The BSF established contact with Pakistani counterparts and informed them about the accidental crossing of their national into this side, the official said.

"The Pakistani national was handed over to Pakistani Rangers at 6.45 pm on proper receipt through a flag meeting," Sandhu said.

Security forces defuse IED in Bandipora

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Security forces on Saturday detected and defused an improvised explosive device (IED) in Bandipora district, police said.

The IED was recovered during a cordon and search operation in the orchards in Mader and Papehan area in the north Kashmir district, a police official said.

He said the IED was later destroyed by a bomb disposal squad without causing any damage.

JKEEGA resents delay in promotions across all cadres

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Jammu & Kashmir Electrical Engineering Graduates Association (JKEEGA) on Saturday held a meeting of its Executive body under the chairmanship of Sachin Tickoo General Secretary along with Ashok Kumar Dubey Vice President, M P Singh Provincial Secretary, Rajeshwar Janwal Provincial Publicity Secretary, Yash Paul Organising Secretary, Vipul Sharma Treasurer and Parshotam Lal Sharma for discussing delay in promotions and adjustment of Chief Engineers and Assistant Executive Engineers. The members expressed strong resentment that despite collective efforts to sensitize Government on a number of issues pertaining to employees of PDD in recently concluded talks and agreement thereof on major issues, no headway has been witnessed and a lackluster approach is being adopted by administration. The fraternity fails to understand why placements/promotions on vacant positions at all levels right from AE to SE levels are pending for months in the office of Chief Secretary and General administration Department. Nearly 100

positions of AEs, 50 positions of AEEs, 20 positions of Executive Engineers and nearly 15 positions of SEs are vacant and more retirements are taking place and eligible candidates are being deprived of promotion opportunity due to inordinate delay as they are superannuating with each passing month. The participants further said that adjustment of promotee Chief Engineers has not been done despite the officers having been placed as Chief Engineers since over two months. The adjustment of Assistant Ex Engineers, who were promoted nearly 12 months back, is still awaited, they added, demanding necessary measures for expediting the regularization process.

JKEEGA urges the administration to fulfill commitment made with respect to the regularization of PDL/TDL whose DPCs are cleared since 2019 and other similarly situated staff of Tech/ministerial candidates as per agreement post calling-off of work boycott call. JKEEGA urged Chief Secretary J&K and Principal Secretary PDD to address basic issues of employees at the earliest, which shall infuse renewed zeal among employees.

Despite COVID surge, tourism activities still going on without check

■ SHAKEELA ANDRABI

SRINAGAR: Looking at the fresh wave of COVID-19 pandemic in J&K as thousands of cases are being reported every day, the authorities have taken some important measures on war-footing basis like imposition of weekend lockdown and others. All hospitals in Kashmir, that were designated as COVID-19 hospitals during second wave will again be reserved for COVID-19 while OPDs and elective surgeries in all tertiary care hospitals have been postponed. These are some of the fresh containment measures ordered by Divisional Commissioner Kashmir P K Pole.

A senior official of administration told that teams are ascertaining emerging situation on daily basis and any decision regarding closure of

public parks and gardens in the city will also be taken at an appropriate time. However, reports are pouring in that COVID-19 protocols are being breached in public parks and gardens by visitors, thereby posing a grave risk for entire community in wake of resurgence in pandemic. Despite all necessary measures in place, Floriculture and Tourism departments are in a fix and yet to take a call about closure of public parks and gardens in city and tourist spots in Kashmir.

Meanwhile, Director Floriculture Kashmir has said that department is bound to obey the orders from the district administration and can't shut any park or garden on its own. He said in past when pandemic escalated in the valley, we took several measures includ-

ing enforcement of COVID-19 protocols in letter and spirit. He further said that circumstances at this point is 'dissimilar' as due to cold, majority of people refrain from visiting parks & gardens and prefer to remain indoors. "Despite harsh weather conditions, the Department has still put all SoPs in place to contain virus spread", he added.

Earlier, coaching centres across the valley have been directed to stop offline educational activities and impart education through online mode. Cluster University Srinagar on Saturday deferred offline examinations in view of spike in COVID cases due to new virus variant Omicron, but general public is asking the administration why tourism activities are still going on if curbs have been imposed as thou-

sands of tourists are coming to Gulmarg and Pahalgam and many other places in Kashmir from across the country.

More than 65 students, who were participating in winter games in Gulmarg, were recently tested positive. At that time, there were about 600 students in Gulmarg who were busy in training for winter games.

Block Medical Officer Tangmarg, Dr Sabha told STATE TIMES that all the students present in Gulmarg have departed. We are very cautious and not a single person is allowed to go to Gulmarg without COVID negative certificate and rapid test, said Dr Sabha, adding, "Unless we get any direction from administration, we are alert and doing our best round the clock."

Pertinently Jammu &

Kashmir reported thousands of positive cases on each day, as Srinagar district topped the list alone in the Kashmir division. There has been a huge spike in pandemic cases from last week after which divisional administration re-imposed COVID-19 curbs and ordered night curfew across valley to contain the spread. The administration also ordered Director SKIMS, Principal GMC Srinagar and Principal MCH- Bemina Srinagar to depute final year MBBS students and final year Nursing/Paramedic students to Deputy Commissioner Srinagar's office for further deployment as per requirement. Also, the enforcement teams constituted by district administration have been put on toes to enforce COVID Appropriate Behaviour (CAB).