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Stampede at Vaishno Devi Shrine leaves 12 dead during New Year rush

LG visits Naryana Hospital; MoS PMO visits shrine, hospital

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Twelve people lost their lives and 16 others were injured in a stampede at the famous Mata Vaishno Devi shrine in Jammu and Kashmir in the early hours during a heavy rush of devotees on New Year.

This is the first such tragedy at the revered shrine located atop the Trikuta hills - about 50 km from here - that attracts lakhs of people every year.

The incident occurred between 2.30 AM and 2.45 AM on Saturday near a relatively narrow passage at gate number 3 outside the sanctum sanctorum of the hilltop shrine where devotees usually arrive round the clock after trekking from the Katra base camp, a distance of nearly 13 km.

A high-level inquiry panel headed by Principal Secretary (Home) Shaleen Kabra, with Divisional Commissioner Jammu Rajiv Langar and Additional Director General of Police Mukesh Singh as its members, has been set up by Lieutenant Governor (L-G) Manoj Sinha and asked to submit a report within a week.

Condolences poured in



Heavy rush of pilgrims at stampede site; LG Manoj Sinha talking to an injured at Narayna Hospital; MoS PMO Dr Jitendra, DGP Dilbagh Singh at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Bhawan

3-member panel constituted to probe

JAMMU: The three-member panel set up to probe the stampede at the famous Vaishno Devi shrine has been asked to submit its report to the Jammu and Kashmir government within a week, according to an official order issued on Saturday.

The committee headed by the principal secretary (home) was constituted by the Lt Governor

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Efforts underway to provide relief to injured: PM

NEW DELHI: Expressing deep grief over the loss of lives in a stampede at Vaishno Devi Bhawan in

Katra, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said all efforts are being made to provide relief to those injured in the

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Scuffle caused stampede; only 35K pilgrims were allowed: SMVDSB

JAMMU: The Saturday stampede that killed 12 people occurred due to a scuffle between two groups of pilgrims, the Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board said in a statement, emphasising only 35,000 pilgrims were allowed to proceed for the yatra against the normal capacity of 50,000 in view of the pandemic.

The board said Lt Governor Manoj Sinha, who is also the Chairman of the Board, was informed about the stampede at 3 am and he has been continuously monitoring the situation since then.

National Green Tribunal has capped the normal capacity of Yatra per day to 50,000. Pertinently, keeping in view the COVID-19 Pandemic, 35,000 pilgrims

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Azad, Chugh, among other leaders express grief

SRINAGAR/JAMMU: Political parties in Jammu and Kashmir have expressed grief over the loss of lives in the stampede at the shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi

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Vaishno Devi pilgrimage going on smoothly: Official

KATRA: The Vaishno Devi pilgrimage is going on smoothly with strict adherence to standard operating procedures (SOPs), including COVID-19 guidelines, despite a stampede that claimed 12 lives and left over a dozen injured, a senior government official said on Saturday.

Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, Raghav Langer said

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Court awards life-imprisonment to terrorist after 16-yr long trial

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

HANDWARA: Additional Sessions Judge Handwara awarded life-imprisonment to terrorist Mushtaq Ahmed Malla whereas other terrorist namely Farooq Ahmed Chopan was killed by Army in an encounter at Shahnagri (Kupwara) in 2006.

According to case, Police Station received confidential information on December 22, 2005 that two terrorists have shot dead one Tariq Ahmed, son of Abdul Qayoom, resident of

Shotgund at Adoura and one of the terrorists was identified as Mushtaq Ahmed Malla, son of Ghulam Ahmed Malla, resident of Shotgund Payeen. Accordingly, FIR No. 337 of 2005 under section 302 of IPC and Sections 7/27 of Arms Act was registered and investigation started.

Additional Sessions Judge Handwara after hearing both the sides observed that it appropriate to take count of principle of

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3 ex-JK CMs placed under house arrest before protest against Delimitation Commission proposals

NC, PDP workers protest after detention of their leaders

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: PAGD leaders including three former chief ministers were put under house arrest Saturday before a protest against the proposals of J&K Delimitation Commission, prompting angry reactions from political parties which said such steps will only "incentivise and facilitate" violent agitations.

The day began by police parking trucks outside the

residences of top National Conference leaders and former CMs Farooq Abdullah, his son Omar Abdullah, PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti and CPM leader Mohammed Yusuf Tarigami. They were conveyed that they were under house arrest.

The protest call was given by the Peoples Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) -- an amalgam of various mainstream political parties in J&K including the NC, the

PDP, CPI (M), Peoples Movement and Awami National Conference.

"Good morning and welcome to 2022," tweeted Omar Abdullah, who stays with his father. "A new year with the same JK police illegally locking people in their homes and an administration so terrified of normal democratic activity. Trucks parked outside our gates to scuttle the peaceful @JKPAGD sit-in protest. Some things never

change."

He said the police had even locked the internal gates of their residence.

Talk about a lawless police state, the police have even locked the internal gate connecting my father's home to my sister's. Yet our leaders have the cheek to tell the world that India is the largest democracy, hah!! Omar, who is the vice president of the NC, said.

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NIA Court frames charges against three conduits of JeM

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In a much publicized recovery of AK-47 at Lakhampur in 2019, Special Judge NIA Sunit Gupta framed charges against Sabeel Ahmed Baba, Ubaid-ul-Islam and Jahangir Ahmed Parra, conduits of banned terror organisation JeM.

As per charge-sheet, on September 12, 2019 an information was received at Police Station Lakhampur from reliable sources stating that a conduit of banned ter-

ror organization JeM after criminally conspiring in order to accomplish their Unlawful Activities in J&K, erasing serious threat to Unity and integrity of India, are in possession of prohibited arms and ammunition etc and are transporting the same in a truck from Punjab towards Kashmir valley. On basis of information, FIR No. 61/2019 under sections 38/39 of UA(P) Act, 120-B RPC and 7/27 Arms Act was registered at Police

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Terrorist killed in Kupwara encounter

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: A terrorist was killed in an encounter with security forces in Kupwara district on Saturday, police said. The encounter took place in Jumagund area of the north Kashmir district.

"One unidentified terrorist killed in an encounter at Jumagund area of Kupwara. Army & Police are on the job. Further details shall follow. @JmmKmrPolice," the Kashmir Zone Police said on Twitter.

Police to test slain terrorist's DNA

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: A DNA test will be conducted of one of the three militants killed in the Anantnag encounter as his picture resembles that of the last surviving ultra involved in the 2019 Pulwama suicide attack

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WEATHER

Temperature (Jammu)

Max: 18.0°C Min: 5.6°C

Humidity

Max : 79 Min : 66

Temperature (Srinagar)

Max: 8.5°C Min: -2.4°C

Humidity

Max : 78 Min: 60

Sunset : 17:38 Hours

Sunrise : 07:34 Hours

COVID: Set up makeshift hospitals, Govt to States/UTs

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: To tackle a possible surge in COVID-19 cases, the Centre advised all states and Union territories to initiate the process of setting up makeshift hospitals and to constitute special teams to monitor patients in home isolation.

In a letter to all chief secretaries, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said it is imperative to re-emphasise the significance of timely and swift upgradation of health infrastructure in all states and UTs.

J&K sees 169 fresh COVID cases, 2 more deaths

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday recorded 169 fresh coronavirus cases that took its infection count to 3,41,459, while two more fatalities pushed the death toll to 4,530, officials said.

Of the fresh cases, 68 were reported from the Jammu division and 101 from the Kashmir division of the union territory, they said.

Srinagar district recorded the highest number of fresh cases at 48, followed by 34 in Jammu district.

The number of active COVID-19 cases in Jammu and Kashmir stands at 1,397. So far, 3,35,532 patients have recovered from the viral disease, the officials said. There are 50 mucormycosis (black fungus) cases

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"This becomes all the more important since with the sudden increase in cases, we

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5.1 magnitude earthquake hits J&K

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: An earthquake of magnitude 5.1 hit Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday but there were no reports of any loss of life or damage to property, officials said. The epicentre of the quake was on the Afghanistan-Tajikistan border, they said. The earthquake of magnitude 5.1, which occurred at 6.45.24 pm, was also felt in J-K, the officials said. It hit at the coordinates of 36.55 degrees north and 71.20 degrees east at a depth of 216 km, they added. There are no reports of loss of life or any damage to property, the officials said.

Govt sets-up 5 new police stations, three police posts in Valley

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Government on Saturday announced setting up of five new police stations and two new police posts in Srinagar district while one police post has been set up in Budgam district of Central Kashmir as well.

"In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (s) of Section 2 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, the Government declares the eight places as Police Stations and Police Posts for the purpose of registration and investigation of all

offences," reads S.O 01 notification issued by Shaleen Kabra, Principal Secretary, Home department.

As per notification, five new police stations have been set up in Srinagar city that include Police Station Ahmed Nagar, Police Station Sangam, Police Station Chanapora, Police Station Bemina and Police Station Shalteng.

"Two new police posts in city are police post Tengpora under police station Batamaloo and police post Khimber under Police post

Zakoora," it stated, adding that a police post has been also set up at Mouchwa area Budgam that will work under police station Chadoora.

Consequent upon the above, the jurisdiction of seven Police Stations of District Srinagar, for the purpose of registration and investigation of all offences have been revised. These include Police Station Srinagar, Police Station Safa Kadal, Police Station Saddar, Police Station Parimpora, Police Station Nowgam, Police Station Batamaloo, Police Station Shaingari.

PM releases Rs 20,946 cr to farmers under PM-KISAN

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday released Rs 20,946 crore to 10.09 crore farmers across India as the 10th installment of financial aid under the PM-KISAN scheme and said there was a need for innovation in agriculture along with promotion of natural farming.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme, a financial benefit of Rs 6,000 per year is provided to the eligible farmer families, payable in three equal installments of Rs 2,000. The PM-KISAN scheme was announced in the February 2019 Budget. The first installment was for the period December 2018 to

March 2019.

Addressing a virtual event for release of the amount, Modi said that the scheme is a big support for farmers and the Centre has transferred all installments on time directly into bank accounts of beneficiaries, without any involvement of middlemen.

Nobody would have thought that India could achieve such a feat, he said.

"If we include today's transfer, more than Rs 1.8 lakh crore has been transferred directly to the accounts of the farmers under the PM-KISAN," he said, adding that the scheme has helped farmers in buying good quality seeds and fertilisers.

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