

**02** 11 thieves arrested across J&K; stolen items recovered

**03** JPDCL launches campaign to promote electricity bill payment from home

**10** J&K makes special mark in 24th National Conference on e-Governance

Website : www.statetimes.in, Email: statetimes1@gmail.com

## MoU with Century Financial for \$100 million investment in UT inked Global business, industry waking up to vistas of opportunity in J&K: LG



LG Manoj Sinha after signing MoU with Century Financial for \$100 million investment in Jammu & Kashmir.

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
 DUBAI: In its ongoing efforts to strengthen the Hospitality & Tourism Industry in the Union Territory, the Jammu and Kashmir government has signed an MoU with UAE's pioneering financial services

company, Century Financial that will invest \$100 million in the Union Territory. The MoU was signed in a special event presided by the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha. The investment will cover three hotels and one commercial cum residential complex in Jammu & Kashmir. The owner of Century Financial Bal Krishen is originally a native of the Doda district of Jammu and has been a forerunner in supporting his home region. The MoU was signed by

Principal Secretary, Industries, J&K, Ranjan Prakash Thakur and Bal Krishen, Owner of Century Financial in the presence of Aman Puri, Consul General of India in Dubai and several distinguished UAE-based business owners, investors, and entrepreneurs. Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said "Prime Minister Narendra Modi is committed to the development of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir. We are happy to see the interest shown by UAE's big business houses and leaders in supporting this vision of our Prime Minister. Global business & industry are waking up to the vistas of opportunity in J&K." "Despite challenges of global pandemic, neither the pace of economic and policy reforms nor the implementation of key infrastructure projects has slowed in

■ **CONTD ON PAGE 9**

## Snowfall hits traffic at Srinagar airport, 40 flights cancelled

Mother, daughter rescued after being hit by avalanche in Poonch

■ **STATE TIMES NEWS**

SRINAGAR: All scheduled flights were cancelled on Saturday due to heavy snowfall that reduced visibility at the airport here, snapping air link between Kashmir and rest of the country, officials said.

The snowfall, which started late in the afternoon on Friday, continued through the day at most places in the Kashmir valley, they said.

"All the 40 flights scheduled to operate at the Srinagar airport had to be cancelled due to snowfall," an official of the Airport Authority of India (AAI) said.

He said that snowfall had reduced visibility to less than 600 metres at the airport.

Problems related to low visibility will be addressed soon as an upgraded instrument landing system (ILS) will be installed at the airport by November this year, the

■ **CONTD ON PAGE 9**

## Vaishno Devi experiences first snowfall, Jammu-Srinagar NH remains closed



Shri Vaishno Devi Shrine covered with snow on Saturday.

JAMMU: The famous Mata Vaishno Devi shrine in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir experienced its first snowfall of the season on Saturday, while the strategic Jammu-Srinagar National Highway remained closed due to landslides at several places, leaving hundreds of commuters stranded, officials said. The train service between the 136-km

■ **CONTD ON PAGE 9**

## Executive magistrate orders FIR against 10 PDP leaders for violating COVID norms

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
 SRINAGAR: An executive magistrate in Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag district has directed police to register an FIR against 10 PDP leaders for allegedly violating Covid protocols at an event to mark party founder Mufti Mohammad Sayeed's death anniversary, officials said on Saturday.

Reacting to the development, Peoples Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti said it appears that Covid norms apply only to her party and not to the BJP, which held a protest in Kashmir on Friday. The PDP also shared on

Twitter a video purportedly showing the Anantnag Deputy Commissioner dancing without a face mask at a New Year's Eve gathering. Others present at the event are also seen without masks. Executive Magistrate of Bijbehara tehsil has issued directions to the station house officer of the concerned police station to register an FIR against 10 PDP leaders for violating Covid-appropriate behaviour during a rally at Sayeed's graveyard on Friday, the officials said. These leaders include Sartaj Madni, Sayeed's brother-in-law who is a

■ **CONTD ON PAGE 9**

## Clear case of ambush; top ex-J&K officers seek action on PM's security breach

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
 JAMMU: Describing the security breach during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Husseniwalla Punjab as very serious and unprecedented in the history of independent India, top level former police, military and civil officers, who have served in Jammu and Kashmir, observed that incident can neither be trivialised nor ignored keeping in view its implications on the national security and ramifications over the unity of the nation. Former Chief Secretary and serving Chairman J&K PSC B R Sharma, former

Director General of Punjab Police, P S Gill, former Directors General of J&K Police Kuldeep Khoda, Dr. Ashok Bhan, K. Rajendra Kumar, Dr S. P Vaid, former veterans Maj Gen Goverdhan Singh Jamwal and Lt General R. K Sharma participated in over 90 minute virtual conference anchored and hosted by former legislator Devender Singh Rama. The participants unequivocally termed the breach a manifestation of failure of the Punjab administration, especially the police, saying the SPG Act was blatantly ignored and Blue Book vio-

lated deliberate attempts were made to undermine the gravity of the situation in which the country's top political executive was almost trapped on flyover with no route to escape in an ambush like scenario. This was nearly ambush like situation, which reflects the conspiracy angle as the SPG was not informed about the developing situation and, in fact, protestors having blocked the road, to the SPG which could have taken a call to call off the road journey. Some of the speakers feared of untoward incident having taken place in view of

the breach site being just 20 odd kilometres away from the International Border with Pakistan. The enemy country could have resorted to artillery shelling thus shifting the blame to, what Pakistan is used to referring to non-state actors. The recalled 9/11, saying but for the capture of terrorist Ajmal Kasab, Islamabad had washed off its hands from the most heinous terror act. The incident, one of the participants said, is a blot on the professionalism of the Punjab Police that had valiantly

■ **CONTD ON PAGE 9**

## Patwari seen taking bribe in video, suspended

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
 RAJOURI: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rajouri on Saturday ordered suspension of a Patwari of Revenue department after a video went viral on social

Commissioner Rajouri Vikas Kundal ordered suspension of Patwari Salsuni Halqa, Javed Iqbal Wani. "He shall be suspended pending enquiry to be conducted by Additional

### Addl DC Rajouri to hold detailed inquiry and submit report within a week's time

media in which the official could be seen taking money from a man.

In this video, it has been claimed that Patwari has resorted to corrupt practices and took money from the man for clearance of some files. Taking note of the viral video, Deputy

Commissioner Rajouri Vikas Kundal ordered suspension of Patwari Salsuni Halqa, Javed Iqbal Wani. "He shall be suspended pending enquiry to be conducted by Additional Deputy Commissioner Sunderbani.

## Court employees demanding money from accused 'unacceptable': SC

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
 NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court has said that demanding money as illegal gratification while working in courts is "unacceptable" and very high standards apply to not only judges but also those employed there. The apex court observed this while modifying the punishment given to a man, who was posted in a district court in Bihar and was dismissed from service on the charge of having demanded Rs 50,000 for acquittal of the accused in a case, to removal so that he may explore the possibility of another employment. A bench of Justices A M Khanwilkar and C T Ravikumar was told by the counsel appearing for the appellant that for the last 24 years, the man had an unblemished service and this was the first allegation against him. "You (appellant) were working in court and demanding money..."

## 655 new COVID cases in J&K, 3 more die

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
 SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir recorded 655 fresh COVID-19 cases on Saturday, taking the virus tally to 3,43,965, while three fatalities due to the disease were reported from the Union Territory in the past 24 hours, officials said. Of the fresh cases, 392 were from the Jammu division and 263 from the Kashmir division, the officials said. They said Jammu district recorded a maximum of 263 new COVID-19 cases, followed by 133 cases in Jammu district. There are 2,982 active cases in the Union Territory,

### Three areas declared micro containment zones in Jammu

JAMMU: In view of the rapid surge in Covid-19 positive cases in Jammu and Kathua, the district administrations on Saturday declared three areas in Jammu as micro containment zones. According to order issued by District Magistrate Jammu Anshul Garg, Lane No 16 near Block 73, Jagti, Jammu, lane No 2 near H.No 252, Suryabanshi Nagar opposite Mahesh Bharti Mandir, Lower Roop Nagar, Jammu and Lane near H. No 146, Sector-07 near CRPF Ground, Channi Himmat, Jammu have been declared as micro containment zones to prevent further transmission of Covid-19 in the district.

while the count of recoveries now stands at 3,36,446, the officials said. The new fatalities pushed the death toll from the pandemic to 4,537 in Jammu and Kashmir.

Meanwhile, Ladakh's COVID-19 caseload increased to 22,413 during the past 24 hours as 43 more people tested positive for the virus, officials said.

■ **CONTD ON PAGE 9**

## India reports 1,41,986 new COVID cases, 285 deaths

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
 NEW DELHI: India saw a single-day rise of 1,41,986 new coronavirus cases, raising the tally to 3,53,68,372, which included 3,071 cases of Omicron variant reported across 27 states and union territories so far, the Union Health Ministry said on Saturday. Of the 3,071 cases of Omicron variant, 1,203 have recovered or migrated, according to the data updated by the ministry at 8 am. Maharashtra has recorded the maximum number of 876 Omicron variant cases, followed by Delhi at

■ **CONTD ON PAGE 9**

## Kashmir journalist arrested, UK-based Kashmiri man booked for anti-national activities

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
 SRINAGAR: A journalist was arrested from Bandipora district for allegedly engaging in activities "prejudicial to the sovereignty, integrity and unity of India", police here said on Saturday. Sajad Ahmad Dar, who works for an online portal, was arrested two days ago, leading to criticism from several quarters. Dar is presently on Police remand, a police spokesperson said. He operated a Twitter account with the name Sajad Gull and was always "propagating" against the govern-

ment and uploading tweets not based on facts in order to provoke people against government to spread animosity, the spokesperson said. The journalist during an anti-encroachment drive carried out by the revenue department last year in his village had instigated locals against the drive, the spokesperson said. The officials were restrained in discharging their legitimate official duties as result of his actions, the spokesperson added. A case under sections 147, 447, 336, and 353 of the

Indian Penal Code was registered against Dar charging him for rioting, criminal trespass, preventing officers to carry out their duty, and endangering people's lives. The case is sub judice in the court of JMJC Sumbal, the spokesperson said. Dar, according to police, was also involved in spreading "disinformation campaign through fake tweets/narratives" regarding recent anti-terrorist operation in Gundjahangeer in which an alleged local terrorist Imtiyaz Ahmad was killed. "In this regard, a

■ **CONTD ON PAGE 9**

## Five States go to polls in 7 phases from Feb 10--Mar 7

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
 NEW DELHI: Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Manipur and Goa will be held between February 10 and March 7 in seven phases with the counting of votes on Saturday and banned physical rallies and roadshows till January 15 due to Covid concerns.

The elections have huge political significance with BJP ruling four of these five states, while it is making a big push to capture Congress-ruled Punjab, where the Aam Aadmi Party is also emerging as an important player. Announcing the month-long election schedule with a strong focus on digital and



CEC Sushil Chandra addressing press conference to announce the election schedule. ECs, Rajiv Kumar & Anup Chandra Pandey are also seen.

virtual modes of campaigning in view of the Omicron scare, Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra said the ban on rallies, roadshows, nukkad sabhas, padayatras and vehicle rallies will be reviewed on January 15. "Physical rallies during the campaign, if allowed, after reviewing the situation need

to follow the Covid-19 protocol," Chandra said. The poll panel has also banned victory celebrations and only two persons will be allowed to accompany a candidate to collect the winning certificate. While all major political parties welcomed the announcement of the

■ **CONTD ON PAGE 9**

### 'Don't indulge in hate speeches'

NEW DELHI: The Election Commission on Saturday cautioned political parties over hate speeches and said it is closely monitoring social media posts to ensure clean assembly polls in five states. Political parties and their candidates must ensure that their supporters do not indulge in hate speeches and fake news, Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra said during a press conference to announce the election schedule for Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Punjab and Manipur. "Strict watch on social media posts is being kept to ensure that election atmosphere is not

■ **CONTD ON PAGE 9**

### 'EVM is no issue now'

NEW DELHI: The use of electronic voting machines (EVMs) is no issue now, Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra said on Saturday, asserting that there is a sense of pride that India has developed a machine which gives accurate and faster results. His remarks came at a press conference convened to announce the assembly election schedule for Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Goa, Manipur and Uttarakhand. Responding to a question on parties losing elections questioning the credibility of EVMs, Chandra said, "EVM is no issue now." "EVM is in existence

■ **CONTD ON PAGE 9**

## Security breach: Punjab CS submits report to Centre

V K Bhawra made Punjab's new DGP

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
 CHANDIGARH: Punjab Chief Secretary Anirudh Tewari has submitted a report to the Centre regarding the security breach that stalled Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Punjab visit informing that an FIR has been lodged in the incident and the state government has formed a two-member panel to investigate lapses. Tewari is learnt to have shared details pertaining to the sequence of events that unfolded during the prime minister's visit on Wednesday, official sources said on Friday. On Thursday, the Punjab government had announced a two-member panel to investigate the lapses. The panel has been asked to submit its report in three days. In a major security lapse, the prime minister's convoy was stranded on a flyover due to a blockade by protesters in Ferozepur on Wednesday after which he returned from poll-bound Punjab without attending any event, including a rally. The Union Home Ministry had directed the state government to file an immediate report, saying it did not ensure the required deployment, while Home Minister Amit Shah had said that such dereliction of the security procedure during the prime minister's visit was totally unacceptable

■ **CONTD ON PAGE 9**

**WEATHER**

Temperature (Jammu)  
 Max: 13.2°C Min: 10.6°C

Humidity  
 Max: 97 Min: 83

Temperature (Srinagar)  
 Max: 4.4°C Min: 0.2°C

Humidity  
 Max: 96 Min: 100

Sunset: 17:41 Hours  
 Sunrise: 07:33 Hours