

## !! Continuations from Page 1 !! Perpetrators behind Rajouri...

of Nari Shakti and empowering others economically and socially, added the Lt Governor.

While highlighting the important role being played by the youth of Jammu & Kashmir for social transformation, the Lt Governor appreciated the work of Budgam's Zahid Hussain and Aqib Baba for establishing a library for the under-privileged students and shaping the future of the young generation.

Compassion is the key for social development. More enlightened people in the society must come forward and strengthen the efforts of the administration towards public welfare, the Lt Governor said.

Reiterating the government's commitment to strengthen the rural economy and encouraging progressive farmers and agripreneurs to usher in a new era of new age agriculture in the UT, the Lt Governor mentioned about Arun Sharma from Kothri village, Ramban. 'He is a symbol of true grit, through his experiment in farming, Arun is motivating farmer communities of adjoining areas to aim high', he added.

Referring to the suggestion received from Pooja Raina and Mohammad Sadiq Poswal from Jammu regarding an Integrated policy to mitigate problem of water logging in urban areas, the Lt Governor said, the administration has worked out seven action plans for all the cities of Jammu & Kashmir for addressing road and sewer related problems.

He also requested the citizens to report any issues related to encroachment on roads creating obstructions in water flow and sewer connectivity or water logging in their locality to the respective helpline number for appropriate action.

Responding to the suggestion of starting a campaign for Agro and Social Forestry by Majeed Naikoo from Anantnag, the Lt Governor highlighted various endeavours of the government which have been successful in protecting the natural resources and making tree plantation a mass movement.

The Lt Governor further shared the suggestions received from Rashid Chowdhary from Poonch and Basheer Ahmed from Srinagar; Jammu's Rajeshwar Singh Jamwal and Srinagar's Ghulam Mohiuddin pertaining to rejuvenation and treatment of water bodies and urban drains, smart citizens for making city smarter and an integrated plan for promoting the poultry sector and directed the concerned departments to take appropriate action on the valuable inputs by the citizens.

The Lt Governor also extended Republic Day greetings in advance and urged all to introspect on the duties and responsibilities towards the nation, fulfill the resolve of equality and social justice and make Jammu Kashmir and India better, prosperous and safer.

## Encounter breaks out...

terrorists fired upon a search party of the forces, which retaliated. The exchange of fire was underway, but there were no reports of any casualty on either side so far, the official said. Further details were awaited.

## Labourer dies in...

the rescue operation was launched after a labourer working in a Kandi-Avli road work in Kuntwara area in Kishtwar went missing as a landslide occurred after blasting at working site.

"After hours of strenuous efforts, the rescue team, which included SDRF, Police and Red Cross Society Kishtwar recovered the body and shifted it to Kishtwar Hospital for necessary medico-legal formalities," DC Yadav added.

"After legal formalities, the body was handed over to family for last rites," DC informed. DC assured that the relief to the family will be provided from Labour Deptt and Red Cross at the earliest.

## India won't be...

spectrum of relations and stronger economic linkages buttressed by closer security coordination, he added.

The Central minister asserted that India would have been the largest country in the world, not China, had the partition not taken place in 1947 that reduced the nation's stature cutting off many regions.

"You may wonder why the External Affairs Minister is talking about all these. During my travels abroad, I have heard warm words on our (COVID-19) vaccines supplied to many developed countries and interest in our technology-enabled governance. My counterparts told me that they also have some issues. But since there's only one Modi (Prime Minister), I had to tell them to find solutions through technology," Jaishankar said.

India mattered on a global perspective too, because the country is always the first to respond to regional crisis. "India also matters in global security," Jaishankar added.

## SIT rules out...

the narco analysis conducted in Gujarat, showed that he had "deep grudges" against authorities and felt "betrayed", they said.

Ahmed, who has been charged under 302 (murder), 201 (destruction of evidence) and 4/25 of Arms Act (using petrol to burn the body and destroy evidence), had been working at a private residence of Lohia since February last year.

The accused considered the deceased as a "symbol of authority" and killed him with a butcher knife and poured petrol to burn his body, the officials said.

The accused also made an unsuccessful attempt to commit suicide afterwards by hanging himself from the roof. However, the belt could not sustain the weight of his body, the officials said, adding during investigation this fact could not be corroborated.

Lohia was found dead at his makeshift residence on the outskirts of Jammu on October 3. Ahmed, 23, was arrested for the murder next day after fleeing the scene of the crime under the cover of darkness.

Police had issued a statement in which they said "during investigation, all cogent evidence (oral, documentary, circumstantial, expert and technical) were collected by the SIT. Besides, a narco analysis test of the accused was also conducted at DFSL Gandhinagar in Gujarat".

Police had registered a FIR on October 3 and later the matter was handed over to the crime branch.

After over two month-and-a-half months of hectic efforts, the crime branch filed the charge sheet of the case in a court here on December 28.

## Govt approves project...

the twin Agriculture Universities of the UT.

One of the main challenges facing the sericulture industry in J&K is the lack of access to modern technology. Many farmers still use traditional methods of silk production, which are time-consuming and labor-intensive as well as sub-par in terms of quality of output. This makes it difficult for them to benefit from the \$250 million export market for Indian Silk, said Manzoor Qadri, Director Sericulture J&K. The project shall ensure that the global fame which silk from J&K had garnered will be regained, he added.

The major interventions that are being undertaken in the project included planting 10 Lakh new mulberry plants in tree mode, doubling the silkworm seed production from 8 lakh to 16 lakh, increasing cocoon production from 700 MT to 1350 MT, establishing 100 new chawki rearing centers for supply of chawki worms to seri farmers, giving employment to 7000 new silkworm farmers and skill development of

existing15000 farmers.

A marketing and value addition support is also being created through establishment of a high value enterprise in the from of an Automatic Reeling Machine (ARM) which will directly benefit 2000 seri-farmers. The state-of-the-art machine will allow production of international quality silk within the UT fetching better prices for our cocoons.

Dr Firdose Ahmad Malik, Assistant Professor; SKUAST-Kashmir; who co-drafted the project, said that the overall objective of the project is to strengthen processes that promote economic development of sericulture farmers of UT of J&K and create an environment of growth and investment in the sector.

Overall, the project demonstrates Jammu and Kashmir government's keen intent to revive and modernize the sericulture industry of the UT. With the predicted increase in production and quality of silk, as well as the improved livelihoods of those involved, the industry is well on its way to reclaiming its past glory and becoming a major contributor to the state's economy.

## Terror hideout busted...

some ammunition were recovered, the officials said.

However, no one was arrested during the operation, which was still going on when the last reports were received.

## LG, Union MoS...

the Doppler Weather Radar (DWR) with a range of 100 kms, which will help in detection of severe weather events & safe conduct of various pilgrimages especially Shri Amarnathji Yatra.

IMD is playing a significant role in protecting life and livelihood of the people from adverse weather and is registering remarkable progress in making J&K disaster proof, said the Lt Governor.

The Lt Governor said, the system will go a long way in augmenting and helping the agriculture and allied Sectors and Tourism which are the mainstay of economy of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Lt Governor observed that the UT receives heavy snowfall in winter and heavy rain in summer which makes it vulnerable to various kinds of natural disasters like cloud bursts, lightning, landslide, flash flood, flood and avalanches.

Keeping in view the vulnerability due to various kinds of extreme weather especially in a changing climate scenario, and to provide better and improved weather services for timely forecasts, IMD had earlier installed two Doppler Weather Radars one each in Jammu and Srinagar.

The recent one installed at Banihal Top will facilitate tourists & tourism industry, safe navigation of air crafts and help to detect severe weather events especially thunderstorm, heavy shower, hailstorm, heavy snowfall etc, he said.

I hope the Radar will prove to be useful in mitigating weather disasters, if any, in future, the Lt Governor further added.

The Lt Governor expressed gratitude to PM Narendra Modi for socio-economic development of J&K and safety & welfare of its people.

The Ministry of Earth Sciences and the Scientists are doing remarkable work to enhance synergy between technology & common citizens, the Lt Governor added.

As many as eight publications of the IMD were released and school children and best performing offices and officers of IMD were also felicitated to mark the occasion.

Ajay Kumar Bhalla, Union Home Secretary; Dr. M. Ravichandran, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences; Dr. M. Mohapatra, DGM India Meteorological Department; D S Pandiyan, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences, S.C. Bhan, Scientist-G, Chairman, Organizing Committee; scientists and senior officials were present, in person and through virtual mode.

## 68 killed in...

and taken to Gandaki Hospital for postmortem, an official from the district administration office, Kaski, said. Most of the bodies were damaged so much so that they are beyond identification, the official added.

Efforts to recover four more people will resume on Monday, the spokesman of the Nepal Army said.

The 15 foreign nationals onboard the plane included five Indians, four Russians, two Koreans, an Australian, a French, an Argentine and an Israeli.

The five Indians, reportedly from Uttar Pradesh, were identified as Abhisekh Kushwaha, 25, Bishal Sharma, 22, Anil Kumar Rajbhar; 27, Sonu Jaiswal, 35, and Sanjaya Jaiswal.

Of the five Indians, four were planning to participate in paragliding activities in the tourist hub of Pokhara, a local resident who travelled with them to Nepal, said.

Among the five Indian nationals, four had just arrived in Kathmandu from India on Friday.

"All the four were planning to enjoy paragliding in the lake city and tourist hub Pokhara," recalled Ajay Kumar Shah, a resident of Sarlahi district in southern Nepal.

"We came together from India in the same vehicle," he added.

"They stayed in Gaushala near Pashupatinath Temple and then in Hotel Discovery of Thamel, before departing to Pokhara," he said.

They were planning to return to India from Pokhara via Gorakhpur, he added.

Sonu, the eldest among the Indian nationals, was a resident of Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh.

The Indian embassy is in touch with local authorities and is monitoring the situation, the mission said while expressing its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families.

"Deeply grieved on hearing about the air crash in Pokhara, Nepal. Our thoughts are with the affected families," India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar tweeted and shared the helpline numbers of the Indian Embassy.

Flight tracking website FlightRadar24 claimed that the Yeti Airlines aircraft was 15 years old and equipped with an 'old transponder with unreliable data'.

There is no information about any survivor so far, said Sudarshan Bartaula, spokesperson at Yeti Airlines.

"The weather in Pokhara was absolutely fine and the engine of the aircraft was also in good condition," he said.

"We don't know what has happened to the airplane," he said.

However, some local media reported that the aircraft took a wider turn while attempting to land, which may have caused the accident. It was a new airport built under a Chinese soft loan and inaugurated just two weeks ago.

According to Tek Bahadur KC, Chief District Officer of the Kaski district, the plane crashed into the Seti river gorge.

Among the passengers were three infants, three children and 25 women.

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' held an emergency meeting of the Council of Ministers following the crash.

The emergency meeting of the Council of Ministers has decided a public holiday on January 16 to mourn the victims of the Yeti Airlines plane crash.

Prachanda has expressed sadness over the crash and directed the Home Ministry, security personnel and all the government agencies to carry out immediate rescue and relief operations.

He cancelled a visit to the accident site to avoid causing disturbance in the rescue efforts.

The government has formed a five-member probe committee under Nagendra Ghimire, former secretary at the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, to investigate the accident.

The government has also directed that every domestic airline's aircraft undergo rigorous inspections before taking a flight.

Following the Yeti Airlines aircraft crash, the Pokhara International Airport has been closed for today for all incoming and outgoing flights.

Images and videos posted on social media platforms showed plumes of smoke billowing from the crash site.

Shortly after the crash, police reached and started a rescue operation.

However, the police said that it was not possible to deploy enough manpower. Police said that bringing the fire under control was difficult as the fire engine could not reach the gorge where the crash took place. As a result, the fire is yet to be brought under control.

Gyan Bahadur Khadka, police spokesman, Kaski, said that there was a problem in the rescue due to the difficult terrain.

After the aircraft crashed in the center of Pokhara, a crowd gathered around the accident site.

Spokesman Khadka said that this has hampered the rescue process. He said, "There is a crowd of thousands. Due to the crowd, there has been a problem in the rescue as even the ambulance and fire brigade has been hindered."

Nepal has had a fraught record of aviation accidents, partly due to its sudden weather changes and airstrips located in hard-to-access rocky terrains.

Sunday's incident was the third-deadliest crash in the Himalayan nation's history, according to data from the Aviation Safety Network.

The only incidents in which more people were killed took place in July and September 1992. Those crashes involved aircraft of Thai Airways and Pakistan International Airlines and left 113 and 167 people dead, respectively.

The last major air accident in Nepal happened on May 29 when all 22 people onboard, including four members of an Indian family, were killed as a Tara Air plane crashed in Nepal's mountainous Mustang district.

In 2016, all 23 people aboard were killed when a plane of the same airline flying the same route crashed after takeoff.

In March 2018, a US-Bangla Air crash occurred at the Tribhuvan International Airport, killing 51 people on board.

A Sita Air flight crashed in September 2012 while making an emergency landing at the Tribhuvan International Airport, killing 19 people.

A plane flying from Pokhara to Jomsom crashed near Jomsom airport on May 14, 2012, killing 15 people.

## Bharat Jodo Yatra...

Kharge has written to 23 leaders of various political parties across the country, inviting them to the rally.

"The leaders from Jammu and Kashmir who have accepted the invitation and will join the yatra include (NC's) Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah, (PDP chief) Mehbooba Mufti, (CPI-M's) M Y Tarigami and (ANC's) Muzaffar Shah," she said.

From Maharashtra, Shiv Sena's Sanjay Raut will also join the rally in Srinagar, Patil added.

Asked whether the Union Territory administration has given permission for the yatra, she said a Congress delegation met Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, who has promised every possible assistance to the march.

"He (Sinha) said the permissions will be given. He has given the responsibility to the divisional commissioners of both Jammu as well as Kashmir, and directed them to ensure that we do not face any problem," Patil said.

She said the Congress wants the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly polls to take place soon so that people have their own government.

"Everyone is angry over the downgrading of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood. The people here say they have been stripped of their right and the BJP will have to give an explanation for that," the Congress leader said.

## Minimum temperature settles...

of Gulmarg in Baramulla district went slightly up to settle at minus 10.4 degrees Celsius from the previous night's minus 11 degrees Celsius.

The meteorological office said the weather will remain mainly dry across J-K till January 18. There will be a further decrease in the night temperature till that time.

Fresh western disturbances are likely to affect J-K from January 19 to 25. Light to moderate rain or snow is likely between January 23 and 24, it said.

Kashmir is currently under the grip of 'Chillai Kalan', the 40-day harshest weather period when the chances of snowfall are maximum and most frequent. Chillai Kalan begins on December 21 and ends on January 30. The cold wave continues even after that with a 20-day-long 'Chillai Khurd' and a 10-day-long 'Chillai Baichha' following it.

## Low level avalanche...

of life. On Thursday, an avalanche in the Sarbal area of Sonamarg had killed two persons.

Meanwhile, in the wake of three avalanches in less than a week at a construction company site in Sonamarg area of Ganderbal district, the authorities have evacuated the workers from there and shifted them to a safer place, officials said.

Two workers of the company -- Hyderabad-based Megha Engineering and Infrastructure Limited (MEIL) -- which is constructing the Zojila Tunnel were killed when an avalanche hit Sarbal area of Sonamarg on Thursday.

Two simultaneous avalanches hit the area on Saturday as well, but there was no loss of life.

Following the three avalanches and in view of the warning of more, the authorities shifted the workers of the company to a safer place, the officials said.

"All MEIL workers have been shifted to a safer place from Sarbal and all are safe," they said. The officials said district administration along with police, SDRF, Army and other agencies is ensuring the safety of people on priority.

## Assembly polls must...

go. We will listen to what they have to say, we will also say what we have to," he said.

Asked about VDC members in Rajouri being provided weapons to fight militants, the former J-K chief minister defended the move, saying the militancy has to be fought.

"It is not something new and weapons were given in our time (when the NC ruled J-K) as well. The militancy has to be fought," he said.

To a reporter's question that if Sonia Gandhi would be on stage when the Bharat Jodo yatra reaches here, would the issue of the restoration of Article 370 be taken up, Abdullah retorted "you care a lot about (Article) 370".

He said the yatra was for removing the hatred between communities across the country.

"What is the yatra for? It is for removing the hatred between religious communities, that we all Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and Buddhists -- live together is what the yatra is working for. That is for what he (Rahul Gandhi) has come out.

"Yesterday, a Muslim was beaten till he did not utter what he was asked. These issues are a challenge and it is a matter of happiness that Rahul has come on roads for that," he said.

On the deadline given by J-K administration to those who occupy government land under the Roshni scheme, the NC president said deadlines come and go. "It is not a huge thing".

## BSP celebrates birthday of Mayawati

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) J&K celebrated the birthday of Mayawati, the National president of BSP & former Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh at party Headquarter Satwari, here.

A function was held in this regard under the supervision of Somraj Majotra, J&K BSP president in which Member Parliament and Incharge Coordinator J&K, Rajaram was the chief guest. While addressing the gathering, Raja Ram highlighted the sacrifices and contribution of Mayawati, who accepted the challenge for ameliorating the living conditions of the poor masses of the country and trying her level best to get the constitutional provisions implemented as envisaged in the constitution of India.

Daya Chand, while addressing the gathering, also high-



lighted the work done for the upliftment of the poor while Mayawati was Chief Minister of UP. S.R Majotra highlighted the contribution of Mayawati, who stood as rock stone for saving the interest of the poor masses. He also remembered Mayawati as the iron lady of India. Other participants who spoken on the occasion were Vice President Charanjeet Chagotra, State General Secretary Office Incharge Advocate Shashi

Bhushan Thappa, State Coordinator Gurbaksh Gourav General Secretary Jagdish Verma, District President Kathua Raman Kumar, District President Udhampur Mangal Dass, District president Samba Sardari Lal, Assembly President Bishnah Tara Chgand, Bhannu Partap Singh from Samba, Vijay Attri Assembly President Vijaypur State Secretary Rajkumar Bhagat.

## Mamata to visit poll-bound Meghalaya on Jan 18

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KOLKATA: Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee will visit Meghalaya on January 18 to hold a public meeting in North Garo Hills district to boost the morale of party functionaries ahead of the assembly elections due this year in the northeastern state.

This will be her second visit to the state in recent times as she had addressed a TMC workers' convention last month and participated in pre-Christmas celebrations there.

Banerjee, the West Bengal chief minister, will hold a public meeting at Mendipathar in Meghalaya's North Garo Hills district on Wednesday, the party said.

She will be accompanied by TMC national general secre-

tary Abhishek Banerjee.

Leader of TMC parliamentary party in Rajya Sabha Derek O'Brien, Meghalaya TMC in-charge Manas R Bhunia, its state president Charles Pyngrope and leader of opposition Mukul Sangma will be present at the meeting. Notably, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had also visited Meghalaya last month to attend Golden Jubilee celebrations of the North-Eastern Council (NEC) in Shillong.

The TMC has been trying to strengthen its foothold in the northeastern state along with Assam and Tripura in the region. In November 2021, 12 of the 17 MLAs of the Congress in Meghalaya had joined the TMC, making it the principal opposition party in the 60-member assembly of the hill state.

## BJP Minority Morcha holds State Executive, office-bearers meeting

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir UT BJP Minority Morcha held its first meeting cum interaction of its State Executive and office bearers at party headquarters Trikuta Nagar, Jammu on Sunday. As per a press statement issued in Jammu, "It was a historic moment for BJP Minority Morcha when the organisation held its first ever State Executive and office bearers meeting after appointing new BJP Minority Morcha President Ranjodh Singh Nalwa on January 15, 2023 in Jammu." The meeting, which was attended by over a hundred members of the BJP's minority wing, marked a defining moment in organisation's history and is seen by many observers as a key

moment in the party's effort to reach out to the minority communities in the UT, it further added.

The meeting was chaired by BJP Minority Morcha President Ranjodh Singh Nalwa while General Secretary for Kashmir Intiaz Butt and Santokh Singh General Secretary Jammu province besides Spokesman Farid Ahmed Fani were also present on this occasion. Nalwa, while addressing gathering, thanked the delegates for attending and emphasized on importance of the occasion. He stated that the meeting was convened to strengthen the organisation's outreach to the minority communities and to ensure that their voice is heard in JKUT, he added.

Elaborating on numerous programs and schemes of the union Govt led by BJP for betterment of minorities of the country, Farid Ahmed Fani and other prominent leaders also highlighted various issues facing respective communities, highlighting their respective socio-economic concerns while expressing the need for better representation and political engagement on the ground. In addition to speeches and presentations, the meeting conducted several sessions discussing a range of key issues in UT, including reservation and SC, ST, Pahari rights, need for increasing and improving access to health and education besides creating better economic opportunities for minority communities.