

!! Continuations from Page 1 !!

Target killing in...

of the terrorists would be spared and the region would be cleared of terrorism. "Cowardly Pakistani terrorists have once again committed a grave crime by killing innocent people. The conspiracy to target innocent people was hatched by Pakistan to create a fear among the people," Raina said. "None of the terrorists will be spared," he said adding that said Pakistan-sponsored terrorists are desperate and they're targeting innocent and unarmed civilians in frustration. "They will have to pay a heavy price for their crimes against humanity," Raina said. Meanwhile, Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress strongly condemned the terrorists attack at Dangri. "Turning the incident as serious and shocking, JKPCPC President Vikar Rasool Wani, Working President Raman Bhalla, Chief Spokesperson Ravinder Sharma, District President Shabir Ahmed Khan have expressed great shock over the martyrdom of four persons and injuries to ten persons in a terrorists attack today evening. The incident is very serious and belies claims of the government and the security heads regarding the ground situation. The party extended full support to the police & security forces to firmly deal with terrorism and save innocent lives. The party express sympathies with the families of victims and with the injured and demanded ex-gratia of Rs 50 lakh to the families of those killed and Rs 10 lakh to each injured.

Army Chief begins...

visited troops deployed at various locations in High Altitude Area along the Line of Control in #Kupwara Sector," an Army spokesperson said in a tweet. He said the chief of armed staff interacted with the troops and extended New Year wishes to all ranks and their families.

SC to pronounce...

petitioners' lawyers, including senior advocates P Chidambaram and Shyam Divan. Calling the scrapping of the Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 currency notes deeply flawed, Chidambaram had argued that the government cannot on its own initiate any proposal relating to legal tender, which can only be done on the recommendation of the RBI's central board. Resisting the apex court's attempt to revisit the 2016 demonetisation exercise, the government had said the court cannot decide a matter when no tangible relief can be granted by way of "putting the clock back" and "unscrambling a scrambled egg". The RBI had earlier admitted in its submissions that there were "temporary hardships" and that those too are an integral part of the nation-building process, but there was a mechanism by which the problems that arose were solved. In an affidavit, the Centre told the top court recently that the demonetisation exercise was a "well-considered" decision and part of a larger strategy to combat the menace of fake money, terror financing, black money and tax evasion. The Supreme Court has heard a batch of 58 petitions challenging the demonetisation exercise announced by the Centre on November 8, 2016.

Over 91 lakh...

In 2022, the highest footfall was recorded in June with more than 11.29 lakh pilgrims visiting the temple. At 3.61 lakh, February saw the lowest footfall last year. In December, 5.67 lakh devotees visited the shrine. Despite a stampede at the shrine on January 1 last year that left 12 pilgrims dead and 16 injured, over 4.38 lakh devotees visited the temple in the month. More than 7.78 lakh pilgrims visited in March, over 9.02 lakh in April, over 9.86 lakh in May, over 9.07 lakh in July, over 8.77 lakh in August, over 8.28 lakh in September, over 7.51 lakh in October and over 6.01 lakh in November, according to the data.

Only 17 lakh pilgrims, the lowest in over three decades, visited the shrine in 2020 when it remained closed for five months due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pilgrim footfall at the shrine touched an all-time high of 1.04 crore in 2012. The number of pilgrims visiting the shrine dropped from 93.24 lakh in 2013 to 78.03 lakh in 2014, 77.76 lakh in 2015 and 77.23 lakh in 2016. It increased to 81.78 lakh in 2017 and 85.87 lakh in 2018 before dropping again in 2019 to 79.40 lakh.

SC to launch...

be rolled out on the Supreme Court's website and will also be made available on the mobile application of the Supreme Court of India as also on the Judgment portal of the National Judicial Data Grid (NJJDG). On Monday, the Supreme Court will reopen after its winter break. The top court said, "This is a project which, in essence, endeavours to take a step forward towards fulfilling the objective of digitization of Indian Judiciary and underlines the vision to bring in a positive change for the benefit of all the stakeholders of justice, primarily litigants and members of the Bar as also the High Courts, National Law University, Judicial Academies, etc." The top court said that as the judiciary is aligning more with technology, the e-SCR project is an important stepping stone for future of the modern Indian judiciary and entails manifold benefits, including those of reduction in burden of travelling and browsing through huge volumes of journals in libraries, as also for enhancing its accessibility to those with visual disabilities, as they may now be able to access them through their screen reading software. It added that the e-SCR project will showcase replica soft copies of SCRs by utilizing the verifiable authentic soft copies and would create an invaluable resource as the entire gamut of judgments from the inception of the Supreme Court in the year 1950 till date would be available on e-SCR and digital repository. The top court, however, added that the challenges before the registry included segregation/splitting of reported judgments where the reported judgments, compiled in the form of SCR, pertaining to the years 1950 to 2017, were compiled in the form of a book wherein the judgments were not segregated to form an individual judgment. "A team comprising officials of Judges' Library and Editorial Section worked tirelessly and within a short span of 15 days, almost 34,013 judgments were split to create a database suitable for meeting the requirements of the proposed search engine with the facility of elastic search," it said. The top court added that this was followed by extraction and verification of meta data so that various kinds of search techniques may be deployed through the search engine. "The meta data extracted by the machine learning tool, developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC) Pune, in respect of all the 34,013 reported judgments has been duly verified within a short span of 15 days," it said. The Supreme Court has developed a search engine with the help of NIC comprising elastic search technique in the database of e-SCR and the search facility in e-SCR provides for free text search, search within search, case type and case year search, Judge search, year and volume search, bench strength search options.

Crowds surge at...

the New Year without COVID restrictions. With no major pandemic-related curbs by authorities except advisories to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, revellers marked the beginning of 2023 with gusto, while police kept a tight vigil and hundreds of people faced action for traffic violations like drunk driving. There were massive traffic snarls across the national capital, especially near the India Gate and Connaught Place, while metro stations were teeming with people as many preferred to enjoy outdoors on a sunny Sunday after muted New Year celebrations for two years due to COVID-19. In Jammu and Kashmir, devotees lined up to pay obeisance at the Mata Vaishno Devi shrine in the Reasi district. Similar scenes were seen elsewhere including the ghats of Varanasi and the shores of Kanyakumari and Puri.

According to data shared by Delhi police, as many as 1,329 motorists were prosecuted for committing various violations, which included 318 for drunk driving and 175 for dangerous driving. Also, 53 vehicles were impounded on the spot. Special pickets were set up at major points like Connaught Place, Mehrauli, Saket, Nehru Place, Vasant Vihar and South-Extension. The cases of drunken driving in the national capital on New Year's eve were over 12 times compared to the previous year, officials said on Sunday. Mumbai Police took action against 2,465 people for traffic violations, including drunk driving, during the New Year celebrations, officials said. The Gujarat police cracked down on people found consuming liquor, drinking and driving and violating traffic rules during New Year celebrations in the dry state. In Vadodara city alone, at least 3,000 suspects were intercepted and checked, and 89 cases of liquor consumption were registered in 24 hours till Sunday morning, an official said. In Kolkata, people of all ages were seen enjoying picnics and flocking to cinema halls and restaurants. Restaurants in Kolkata and the nearby towns saw long queues outside, while many swarmed Alipore Zoo, Victoria Memorial Hall, Eco Park and Nicco Park. Thousands of people gathered at the Kashipur Udyanbati in north Kolkata for the annual 'Kalpataru Utsav'. It is believed that on this day in 1886, Ramakrishna Paramahansa was blessed with the inner vision ('Chaitanya') at this house. A large number of people also visited the Kalighat temple and Dakshinেশwar temple. Temples witnessed arrangements for special 'poojas' and 'abishekams' from early morning, midnight masses were held in churches and chapels and a large number of people visited gurdwaras and other shrines to seek divine blessings for the new year. Popular tourist destinations were choc-a-bloc, with people making the most of the winter holidays by heading to hill stations and seaside resorts. Roads leading to various beaches in Goa witnessed massive traffic jams after midnight on Sunday as lakhs of people turned up on the state's seashore to welcome the New Year. A number of people attended midnight masses in churches and chapels. The state started witnessing a rush of domestic and international tourists ahead of Christmas for the celebrations which continue till the New Year. A senior police official said no untoward incident was reported during the celebrations. "Police maintained a strict vigil on the beaches. We had also rounded up anti-social elements ahead of the festivities," he said. People wearing facemasks visited temples and churches across Telangana and offered prayers. Devotees thronged Lord Venkateshwara temples in Hyderabad besides Laxmi Narasimha Swamy Temple in Yadagirigutta and other temples. Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan and state Ministers also visited temples and offered prayers. Colourful rangolis with 'Happy New Year 2023' messages were drawn in front of homes even as people also burst crackers, cut cakes and played new year songs welcoming 2023. Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann was among those who paid obeisance at Gurdwara Singh Shaheedan Sohana on New Year. Nagaland welcomed the new year with firework displays and special prayer services in churches. Thousands of devotees from across Odisha and other states queued outside the 12th-century Shree Jagannath Temple in Puri. The Puri district administration had made elaborate security arrangements. As many tourists also visit the sea beach to have a bath before going to the temple, a large number of lifeguards were stationed at designated bathing points along the beach to prevent incidents of drowning, said Puri, SP, Kanwar Vishal Singh "We sought blessings of Lord Jagannath on the first day of the New Year. May 2023 bring happiness and prosperity to all," said a devotee.

CRIME REPORT

Drug peddler arrested, contraband substance recovered

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

BUDGAM: Continuing its efforts to eradicate the menace of drugs from the society, Police have arrested a drug peddler on Sunday and recovered contraband substance from his possession. During the investigation of case FIR No. 209/2022 of Police Station Chadoora in which two drug peddlers were arrested yesterday, the investigating team arrested one more drug peddler who has been identified as Abdul Hameed Yatoo son of Abdul Khaliq Yatoo resident of Hayatpora Chadoora. On his disclosure, 34.5kgs of Poppy Straw (Fukki) like substance has been recovered. Further investigation into the case is going on and more arrests & recoveries are also expected.



Robbery case solves within 6 hours; accused arrested, snatched mobile phone recovered

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

BUDGAM: Police on Sunday solved a robbery case within 06hrs by arresting an accused person involved in the commission of crime and recovered a snatched mobile phone from his possession. Police Station Khag received a complaint from one lady stating therein that an unknown person stopped her while walking from her native village to Hardnuresh Khag in connection with her personal work. Then the said person threatened and tried to snatch her wallet which contained 01 Android Mobile Phone (Redmi 6). Despite showing some resistance, the person managed to flee alongwith mobile phone from the spot. Accordingly, a case vide FIR No. 01/2023 under relevant sections of law was registered in Police Station Khag and investigation was taken up. During the course of investigation, a police team put forth strenuous efforts to trace the accused person and subsequently arrested the accused person within 06hrs. He has been identified as Muzaffar Ahmad Wani son of Ghulam Mohammad Wani resident of Peth Sharan Khag. On his disclosure, snatched cell phone (Redmi 6) was also recovered. He has been shifted to police station where he remains in custody.

Narco smuggler nabbed, heroin recovered

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KATHUA: Cracking down on Narcotics Smuggling as well as to neutralise the activities of drug peddlers within the district, Kathua Police under the guidance of SSP Kathua R C Kotwal on sunday recovered/seized approx. 03 grams of Heroin-like narcotics near K V School Hiranagar, 01 drug peddler arrested. As per the details, a police team led by Insp. Sunil Kumar SHO Police Station Hiranagar under the supervision of SDPO Border Pankaj Soodan during Naka/checking duty in its jurisdictional area at K V School Hiranagar apprehended one suspicious person namely Sunil Singh, son of Romel Singh, resident of W. No. 06 Hiranagar Tehsil Hiranagar & District Kathua who was wandering under suspicious circumstances. On thorough checking approx. 03 grams of Heroin(Chitta) like narcotics was recovered from his illegal possession. Thereafter all the recovered narcotics was seized and one person was arrested and FIR No. 161/2022 under section 8/21/22/ NDPS Act has been registered at Police Station Hiranagar.

Maha: 2 killed, 17 injured as blast in Nashik chemical plant triggers huge fire; Govt to conduct high-level probe

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NASHIK: Two persons were killed and 17 others injured on Sunday when a massive fire was triggered after a blast in a boiler of a chemical factory in Maharashtra's Nashik district, officials said citing preliminary information as the blaze raged on for hours. The state government has decided to order a high-level probe to identify the exact reason behind the fire. The blast in the Jindal Poly Films factory, located in Mundhegaon along the Mumbai-Agra highway in Igatpuri taluka, was so powerful that it was heard in nearby villages. The fire and smoke could be seen from a distance. The incident occurred around 11.30 am, officials said.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde visited the accident site, located about 30 km from Nashik and 130 km from Mumbai. He also met the injured persons admitted to a hospital in Nashik. Even after nine hours, the fire is still raging on. At least 20-22 fire tenders are at the spot, a Nashik Police official said at around 9 PM. "The fire in Jindal company was huge. The reason behind it is not known yet. A high-level inquiry into the incident will be conducted. 19 employees were injured in the incident and two of them lost their lives," the chief minister said. He said the next of kin of each deceased will get Rs 5 lakh aid from the state government and the injured will

get free medical treatment. Sources said both the deceased were women. Earlier in the day, CM Shinde said the Air Force Station at Deolali (in Nashik district) will make a helicopter available for the rescue operation. Later, a helicopter and Army personnel reached the spot. A police official said the rescue was not conducted using the chopper as "the situation changed" but didn't elaborate. Personnel of the Fire brigade and police rushed to the spot to launch a rescue operation. They were joined by State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) teams. Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis said 19 persons were rescued and 17 of them were admitted to a

private hospital for treatment. A senior official said as it was the first day of the New Year, the number of workers present at the factory was less. Officials said some workers were present on the premises of the chemical unit when the incident occurred. Earlier in the day, Divisional Revenue Commissioner Radhakrishna Game told reporters a blast led to the fire at the chemical plant. "Normally, 20 to 25 people work in the plant. But, as it was the first day of the New Year, the number was less on Sunday. As huge grass has grown on the premises and inflammable material is lying everywhere, our first aim is to control the fire. The

exact reason behind the blaze is yet to be ascertained. It will take some time," Game added. The CM also said as it was an automatic plant, there was not much manpower present at the time of the blast. "The government will make whatever efforts that are needed for the rescue operations, there will be no lacunae," he said. Union Minister of State for Health Bharati Pawar, who hails from Nashik, told reporters at least 100 beds have been kept ready in various hospitals Nashik District Civil Hospital, SMT Hospital, and other medical facilities (in case of a need). Even though the exact cause behind the fire is not

known, a senior official said the blaze didn't appear to have been caused by a boiler, a senior official said. "The three boilers out of the five at the Jindal Poly Films in Igatpuri were of waste heat recovery or running on thermic fluid. It does not use any inflammable material to prepare steam. "The remaining two boilers are of small industrial boilers type, which means there is a minimum chance of it causing a fire inside the plant," Dhaval Antapurkar, Director at the Directorate of Steam Boilers, a Maharashtra government body, said in a statement. The Deputy director of the department will reach the spot and a review will be conducted to know the exact cause of the fire, he added.

Mission 2024 Lok Sabha polls: BJP chief Nadda to address two rallies in Maha on Jan 2

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

C H A N D R A P U R : Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president JP Nadda will on Monday launch a drive from Chandrapur as part of the party's plan to win 18 "difficult" seats from Maharashtra in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, a BJP leader said on Sunday. Nadda will address rallies at Chandrapur in east Maharashtra and Aurangabad in the Marathwada region. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP failed to retain the Chandrapur constituency which was won by Congress, the only seat the Grand Old Party currently holds in Maharashtra which sends 48 MPs to Lok Sabha. The BJP had revised its national target of the "difficult" LS seats it is eying

to win in the 2024 polls to 160 from 144. In Maharashtra, the safe from party has identified 18 "difficult" constituencies. "JP Nadda will launch the drive from Chandrapur district on January 2 with a mega Vijay Sankalp rally at Chandrapur," said Devrao Bhongle, district BJP president. He said Nadda will offer prayers at the famous temple of goddess Mahakali in Chandrapur city. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP won 23 of the 25 seats (out of the total 48) it contested in Maharashtra, while the party's then ally Shiv Sena bagged 18. "Nadda will address his first rally in Chandrapur on Monday followed by an organisational meeting. His second rally will take place in Sambhaji Nagar

(formerly Aurangabad) in the Marathwada region," said Sanjay alias Bala Bhegade, coordinator for Lok Sabha meetings of BJP. For a long time, Aurangabad Lok Sabha constituency was represented by Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena. In 2019, the Asaduddin Owaisi-led AIMIM wrested the Aurangabad seat from Shiv Sena. After the split in Shiv Sena last June, the BJP and Balasahabanachi Shiv Sena led by Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde are eyeing this constituency. Nadda will be accompanied by Union ministers from Maharashtra Nitin Gadkari and Raosaheb Danve, Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, and state BJP president Chandrashekhar Bawankule among others.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Vaishali Raina, an alumna of Samaj Kalyan Kendra (SKK) run School for Hearing Handicapped, Jammu, has become J&K's first deaf & dumb to pass the 2-year Diploma in Teaching Indian Sign Language (DTISL). Earlier, she had done her BCA & was selected in Finance Department. Vaishali is now qualified to teach Indian Sign Language to deaf students. She has passed her Diploma course from the



Indian Sign Language Research & Training Centre of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disability, Govt of India. The examination was con-

ducted by the National Board of Examination in Rehabilitation of the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment. Vaishali has secured 82.65 per cent marks. The Samaj Kalyan Kendra(SKK) encourages it's alumni to go for higher studies by reimbursing fifty per cent of the semester fee out of a Fund set up for the purpose. The President of the SKK, K B Jandial has congratulated Vaishali for her outstanding performance & offered to help her in any other higher course.

India voices very deep' concern over Ukraine conflict; urges Russia, Ukraine to return to dialogue and diplomacy

■ AGENCY

VIENNA: Voicing "very deep" concern over the ongoing Ukraine conflict, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Sunday that India is on the side of peace and since beginning New Delhi's effort has been to return to dialogue and diplomacy as differences cannot be settled through violence. Jaishankar, who arrived here from Cyprus on the second leg of his two-nation tour, made the remarks while addressing the members of the Indian diaspora. "This (Ukraine) conflict is really a matter of very, very

deep concern Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared in September (that) we actually genuinely believe that this is no longer an era of war. You cannot settle differences and issues through violence," Jaishankar said. "So from the very beginning, our effort has been to urge (Russia and Ukraine to) return to dialogue and diplomacy The Prime Minister himself has spoken on numerous occasions with President (Vladimir) Putin and President (Volodymyr) Zelensky. I myself talked to my colleagues in Russia and Ukraine," he said. "We know this is not (an) eas-

ily resolvable situation. But it's important that countries who believe (in)...negotiation, speak up clearly in that regard," he said, adding that "we're on the side of peace and a large part of the world thinks like us." India has repeatedly called on Russia and Ukraine to return to the path of diplomacy and dialogue and end their ongoing conflict. Prime Minister Modi has spoken to the presidents of Russia and Ukraine on multiple occasions and urged for immediate cessation of hostilities and return to the path of diplomacy and dialogue for the resolution of the conflict.