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Terror strikes: 2...

standing by security forces in the battle against terrorists. "They have fought no less than a soldier," he said. The DGP said that security will be reviewed and necessary measures will be put in place for the safety of the people. "I am sad over the killings. It is a matter of grief. It is time to give a boost to VDCs. "No guns will be taken away..., if some guns have been taken away, they will be returned (to VDCs) and more guns will be provided if needed," he said. Senior J-K BJP leader and former MLC Vibodh Gupta alleged that 60 per cent of the guns of VDCs have been taken back. The VDCs were first set up in the mid-1990s in the Chenab Valley area of Jammu to arm and train villagers to defend against Pakistan-sponsored militants and comprise villagers as well as Special Police Officers (SPOs). Officials said a team of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has reached Dangri village for an investigation The army and police are conducting a massive search operation, the senior police officer, who reached the spot along with Jammu-Divisional Commissioner Ramesh Kumar, said. He said that locals have reported that two terrorists are involved in the attack. These are the first such incidents in the past many years in the otherwise peaceful Jammu region. In Jammu, protests against Pakistan were held by VHP, Bajrang Dal, Mission Statehood, Shiv Sena and Dogra Front.

LG meets protesters...



LG Manoj Sinha meeting with the family members of martyrs at Dangri village.

nation and the government stands firmly with the families in this hour of grief and the administration is committed to look after the needs and issues of all the families and people of the district. Subsequently, the Lieutenant Governor held a meeting with the Sarpanch of Dangri village, DDC, BDC members and the families of Martyrs. "We have given full freedom to the security forces and I want to assure the people that the perpetrators of this attack will be punished soon. Terrorists will have to pay a very heavy price for this despicable attack. It is our firm resolve to crush terrorists and terror ecosystem," Lt Governor observed during the meeting. He also said that the VDC will be strengthened immediately and in-depth investigation will be carried out in the incident. Lt Governor said death cannot be compensated, it is an irreparable loss. He had announced Rs.10 Lakh and a Govt job to NoKs of each of those civilians martyred in attack. DGP Dilbag Singh, ACS Home RK Goyal, Divisional Commissioner, ADGP and leaders of various political parties were also present in the meeting with families and Sarpanch. "I strongly condemn the cowardly terror attack in Rajouri. I assure the people that those behind this despicable attack will not go unpunished. My thoughts and prayers are with the bereaved families," Sinha said in a tweet. He said the seriously injured would be given Rs 1 lakh. After the meeting with the LG, the protestors agreed to cremate the bodies on Tuesday morning.

In-depth probe...

and the village sarpanch. In an apparent security lapse, two cousins -- aged four and 16 -- were killed when an improvised explosive device (IED) went off in Dhangri village in Rajouri area on Monday, 14 hours after terrorists had shot dead four people there. The terrorists, locals claimed, had planted the IED on Sunday itself and it was missed during the scanning by police and security officials who had cordoned off the area after the shootings last evening. "Some people raised the issue of security lapses, an inquiry will be conducted to find out (whether there were any such lapses). On the basis of inquiry, action will be taken," Sinha told reporters. He said the Army was also conducting operations in the area and "we will try to take strong action in days to come in this area". The LG said "two to three decisions were taken" in the meeting. We will settle scores with those involved in this act, he added. Asked whether the administration will set up security posts in villages for the security of minorities, he said whatever measures will be required, will be taken. Sinha also asserted that the administration would strengthen village defence committees (VDCs). The VDCs set up in mid-1990s have proved a stone wall defence against militancy in remote hilly areas of the Jammu region, according to officials. Earlier, the families of the victims had refused to conduct the last rites of the victims till the Lt Governor came to the spot. After Sinha visited them, they ended the protest and shifted the six bodies from Dhangri chowk to a government higher secondary school for the night so as carry out their cremation on Tuesday. Sinha said that the administration was committed to look after the needs and issues of the families as well as the people of the district.

23-year-old...

lying in the house. On Sunday at around 7:00 PM, two terrorists appeared in a house in Devi Ka Naka of Dhangri and resorted to firing in which two brothers got injured. Later, one of the injured, Deepak Kumar, succumbed, eyewitnesses said. The terrorists then moved to another house located at around 200 metres away and again resorted to firing in which Pritam Sharma and his son were killed, they said. Continuing their attacks, the militants then moved towards a house located at around 300 metres away and fired in which ex-serviceman Satish Kumar died while his wife, a daughter, a son, a brother and a neighbour got injured, the eyewitnesses said. As the terrorists were going from one house to another to target minority community members, one villager Bal Krishen came out with the gun of a village defence committee (VDC) member and started firing in the open. "Only after Bal Krishen resorted to firing with a VDC gun that the terrorists fled the area," former MLC Vibodh Gupta said. The terrorists, presuming that the firing was done by security forces, escaped from the scene, Gupta said.

Rajouri attack a...

any effort to bring a new culture of progress and prosperity to the region. Chugh said the Modi government has zero tolerance to such violence taking place in the valley and would deal with them with an iron hand. Chugh warned the Pakistan ISI against trying to disturb peace and amity in J&K.

Selective killings tool...

of peace and harmony. Azad also demanded that the State Government has to address the overall security situation promptly with great seriousness keeping in view the resurfacing of militant activities and trace out the militants responsible as early as possible. Azad also spoke with Dr Mehmood, the medical superintendent of Rajouri hospital. Dr. Mehmood assured Azad that all injured civilians in the hospital are being taken full care of and will be provided all the facilities available in the hospital. Azad also spoke with one of the injured civilian Prince who is currently recovering in the hospital. Azad wished all the injured a speedy recovery.

SC upholds legality...

"left aloof" in a matter of such importance and its views on demonetisation were critical, Justice Nagarathna, who was the junior-most judge in the bench, noted there was no independent application of mind by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the entire exercise was carried out in 24 hours. At the same time, the judge said it is beyond the pale of doubt that the demonetisation measure, which was aimed at eliminating "depraved practices" like hoarding black money and counterfeiting, was well-intentioned. While the BJP hailed as "historic" the judgement and asked if Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will now tender an apology for his campaign against note ban, the Congress said the majority verdict dealt with the limited issue of the process of decision-making and not with its outcome. The Congress also maintained that it is "misleading and wrong" to say top court upheld demonetisation. The judgement came on a batch of 58 petitions including one filed by Vivek Narayan Sharma challenging the demonetisation exercise. On the issue of hardships suffered by citizens during demonetisation, the apex court said if the RBI notification had a nexus with the objectives to be achieved, then, merely because some citizens have suffered through hardships would not be a ground to hold the notification to be bad in law. "The contention that the impugned notification is liable to be set aside on the

ground that it caused hardship to individual/citizens will hold no water." The sudden note ban decision sparked anxiety and panic as banks and ATMs witnessed serpentine queues with people waiting for several hours for their turn to get some cash. Demonetisation was also blamed for people losing their livelihoods and small businesses having to shut shop during that period. The bench headed by Justice S A Nazeer and also comprising justices B R Gavai, A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, said the November 8, 2016 notification cannot be said to be unreasonable and struck down on the ground of decision-making process. The bench said the 52-day window provided for the exchange of the demonetised notes with legal tenders was not unreasonable and it cannot be extended now. "Merely because on two earlier occasions the demonetisation exercise was by plenary legislation, it cannot be held that such power would not be available to the central government," it said in a 382-page judgement. Observing that scope of judicial review in matters of economic policy is narrower, the court said it was of considered view after perusal of the material on record that the RBI's Central Board had taken into consideration the relevant factors while recommending withdrawal of legal tender of bank notes. "The power available to the Central Government under sub-section (2) of Section 26 of the RBI Act cannot be restricted to mean that it can be exercised only for one' or 'some' series of bank notes and not for 'all' series of bank notes. The power can be exercised for all series of bank notes." The court said section 26(2) of the RBI Act does not provide for excessive delegation as there is an in-built safeguard that such a power has to be exercised on the recommendation of the RBI's Central Board and as such cannot be struck down. "The impugned Notification dated November 8, 2016 satisfies the test of proportionality and, as such, cannot be struck down on the said ground. The period provided for exchange of notes vide the impugned Notification dated November 8, 2016 cannot be said to be unreasonable." Commenting on the procedure adopted by the Centre in the entire exercise, the court said all the relevant factors were placed for consideration before the Cabinet when it took the decision to demonetise. "We are of the considered view that the contention that the decision-making process suffers from non-consideration of relevant factors and eschewing of the irrelevant factors, is without substance," it said while rejecting the submission of the petitioners. The court said that it cannot be disputed that the final say with regard to economic and monetary policies of the country will be with the Central Government. Mere errors of judgment by the government seen in retrospect is not subject to judicial review, it added. "The decision-making process is also sought to be attacked on the ground that the decision was taken in a hasty manner. We find that the hasty' argument would be destructive of the very purpose of demonetization. "Such measures undisputedly are required to be taken with utmost confidentiality and speed. If the news of such a measure is leaked out, it is difficult to imagine how disastrous the consequences would be..It can thus be seen that confidentiality and secrecy in such sort of measures is of paramount importance," the bench said.

Distribution of free...

under PDS in Jammu & Kashmir. The Central Government has now decided to provide free of cost foodgrains, rice and wheat, to all NFSA beneficiaries under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) for one year, effective from 1st January, 2023. The Department of Food & Public Distribution in J&K is commencing free distribution of foodgrains (rice and wheat) to all NFSA beneficiaries from 1st January, 2023 across Jammu and Kashmir. Appropriate instructions have been issued to field officers, NIC Team and Technical Teams to incorporate these changes in IT system, e-POS applications, and PDS, so as to ensure free of cost distribution of rice and wheat to NFSA beneficiaries from 1st January, 2023. While distribution of rice and wheat would be absolutely free, Rupee 1 would be charged for wheat flour per kg as conversion charges, with applicable conversion loss, where wheat flour is provided to beneficiaries instead of wheat. The beneficiaries are advised to obtain printed e-PoS receipts, clearly indicating free distribution of rice and wheat, along with their entitlement. The above benefit is exclusively for NFSA beneficiaries and the rate/scale shall remain unchanged in respect of Non-NFSA beneficiaries. All the field staff and FPS dealers have been advised to create awareness amongst the beneficiaries for free of cost foodgrains distribution under NFSA. This free distribution under NFSA shall continue till 31st December, 2023.

Govt appoints Principals...

to the posts are made," reads an order issued by Bhupinder Singh, Secretary, Health and Medical Education Department. As per order, Dr. Iffat Hassan Shah appointed as Principal Government Medical College (GMC) Handwara, Dr Surinder Kumar Atri as Principal GMC Kathua and Dr Mrityunjay as Principal GMC Udhampur.

J&K registers 28...

Commissioner, State Taxes Kashmir, Shakeel Maqbool, while speaking in this backdrop, said that this spurt in GST collection has been recorded due to better tax compliance and reporting coupled with economic recovery. He added that this increase is one of the highest ever monthly growth rates in J&K since the inception of GST.

Negative Covid report must even for flyers to India transiting through China, 5 other nations

■ STATE TIMES NEWS NEW DELHI: A negative Covid report is a must for passengers transiting through China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Singapore and Thailand, irrespective of their originating countries, before landing at any Indian airport, the Union Health Ministry said Monday. In a letter to Civil Aviation Secretary Rajiv Bansal on Monday, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said that in the context of the evolving trajectory of COVID-19 cases in some countries, especially China, Singapore, Hong Kong, the Republic of Korea, Thailand and Japan, the guidelines were revised and came into effect from January 1. A negative Covid report from the RT-PCR test is a must for passengers arriving in India from China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Singapore and Thailand from the first day of 2023. The test must be conducted within 72 hours of undertaking the journey to India and the negative report from the RT-PCR test has to be uploaded on the Air Suvidha portal before their departure. "This will also apply to transiting passengers through the countries (mentioned) irrespective of their originating countries before coming to any Indian Airport," Bhushan said in the letter. Accordingly, the Ministry of Civil Aviation's Air Suvidha Portal has to be made operational for passengers on all international flights from these countries, with a provision to allow international travellers arriving in India to submit negative RT-PCR test reports as well as a self-declaration form on this portal. "This arrangement is in practice with effect from 10 am on Sunday, January 1, 2023," the letter said, adding the existing practice of post-arrival random testing of 2 per cent of travellers irrespective of the port of departure shall continue.

Modi underlines need for widening scope of research on modern Indian history

■ STATE TIMES NEWS NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday underlined the need for widening the scope of research on modern Indian history and called upon academic and cultural institutions across the country to produce well-researched work on the contributions of social reformer Swami Dayanand Saraswati as well the Arya Samaj that he founded in 1875. Modi made the remarks during the Annual General Meeting of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML) Society, in his capacity as its president, hosted at 7, Lok Kalyan Marg here, officials said. The NMML was established in the memory of India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru, and is an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Culture. The prime minister "underlined the need for widening the scope of research on modern Indian history both in terms of individuals, institutions and themes, so as to create better awareness among people about India's past," the ministry said in a statement. He also emphasised upon the "need for institutions in the country in general to create their well-audited and researched recorded memory for the benefit of the present as well as future generations," it said. During the meeting, Modi expressed satisfaction over the design and content of P r a d h a n m a n t r i Sangrahalaya and underlined the important fact that "this museum is truly objective and nation-centric, not person-centric", and that it suffers neither from undue influence nor from unwarranted absence of any required facts, the statement said.

CRIME REPORT 6 drug peddlers arrested across Kashmir valley

■ STATE TIMES NEWS SRINAGAR: Continuing its efforts to eradicate the menace of drugs from the society, Police have arrested 6 drug peddlers on Monday & recovered contraband substances from their possession. As per the details, a Party from P o l i c e S t a t i o n Pulwama at a checkpoint established at Peaks A u t o G a n g o o Pulwama intercepted a suspicious person who tried to flee from the spot but was apprehended tactfully. During checking, 1.5kg of bang patri was recovered from his possession. He has been identified as Inayat Javid son of Javid Ah Ganie resident of Chatapora and has been shifted to police station where he remains in custody. Meanwhile in another action, a Police Party from PS Pulwama acting swiftly following a specific information about hoarding large quantity of contraband substances by one person namely Shakeel Ahmad Wani son of Gulam Ahmad Wani resident of Gosoo Pulwama in his residential house. On receipt of this information, a Police party raided the specific location at village Gusoo Pulwama in presence of Magistrate. During search 800gms of Charas Powder was recovered from the said house and also arrested the accused person involved in the commission of crime. He has been shifted to the police station where he remains in custody. In Baramulla, a police party under the supervision of I/C PP Mirgund SI Ather Parvaiz during routine naka checking at Sumbal-Singhpura road near Odina signalled a vehicle (i-10) bearing registration number UP65BE-9224 with 04 persons onboard to stop. During search of the vehicle, 3kgs of Poppy Straw, 700grams of Charas powder & 12grams of Herion like substance was recovered from the said vehicle and arrested four drug peddlers who were identified as Mohammad Maqbool Bhat @Raja son of Gh Mustafa, Zulfikar Ali Parray son of Mohd Akbar and Sher Ali Parray son of Gh Mohammad all residents of Gund Hassi Bhat, Srinagar and Parvaiz Ahmad Najar son of Gh Hassan Najar

resident of Trihgam Sumbal. They have been shifted to police station where they remain in custody. Vehicle used in the commission of crime has also been seized. Accordingly, cases under relevant sections of law have been registered in respective police stations and investigation has been initiated. Illicit timber seized in Handwara ■ STATE TIMES NEWS HANDWARA: Police on Monday have seized illicit timber at Kulangam area of Handwara. Acting on specific input regarding illicit timber lying in the premises of Abdul Majeed War son of Ghulam Rasool resident of Kulangam, a police party of Police Post Chogul raided the particular spot and seized twenty (20) logs of illicit timber. Accordingly, a case vide FIR No. 03/2023 under relevant sections of law has been registered at Police Station Handwara and further investigation set into motion. Police has resolved to act as per law against those who indulge in criminal activities. Two narco-smugglers nabbed, heroin recovered ■ STATE TIMES NEWS JAMMU: Continuing its drive against drug trafficking and substance abuse, Police on Monday arrested two narco smugglers and recovered 60 grams of heroin from their possession. As per the details, a team of Police Station Bahu Fort constituted under the supervision of SDPO East Syed Zaheer Abbas Jafari and led by SHO PS Bahu Fort Inspr Nayat Ali rounded up two suspects namely Umar Beig, son of Mohd Ameen Beig, resident of Chinar Bhaderwah and Abu Usman, son of Nizaket Ali Bhatt, resident of Chaka Bhaderwah who were on their way from Narwal towards Panama Chowk on their vehicle (JK06A-5035). During search, 60 grams of heroin was recovered from them accused. Duo was arrested and FIR No. 03/2023 under sections 8/21/22 NDPS Act was registered at Police Station Bahu Fort. The whole operation was done under the supervision of Sp South Mamta sharma. 13 bovines rescued, 2 vehicles seized ■ STATE TIMES NEWS JAMMU: Acting tough against the bovine smugglers and to curb the bovine smuggling menace, Police on Monday rescued 13 bovines during naka checking in the area under the jurisdiction of Police Post Manwal Jammu. As per the details, a team of Police Post Manwal constituted under the supervision of SDPO Nagrota Pardeep Kumar and led by SHO Jhajjar Kotli Inspr Samson Bhatti assisted by In-Charge Police Post Manwal PSI Sanjeev Sharma rounded up two vehicles. During search, 13 bovines i.e 09 bovines from vehicle (JK14H-4692) and 4 bovines from vehicle (JK18A-0118) were rescued. In this regard cognizance has been taken by Police Post Manwal and bovines were rescued.