

!! Continuations from Page 1 !! Mystery behind...

investigation will be made transparent and that appropriate measures will be implemented based on the results.

Urging restraint in political interference, he added, "I appeal to everyone to allow the concerned agencies to perform their duties. Identifying the reasons behind these tragic deaths is our utmost priority, and we are committed to taking steps to prevent such occurrences in the future."

Talking to reporters, the Chief Minister asserted that a probe is underway to unravel the mystery behind 17 deaths, assuring people that all questions will be answered soon.

Abdullah said building big hospitals everywhere is not possible but inadequacy in the health sector at district levels will be addressed to provide better healthcare facilities to people in remote pockets.

"Why this happened? We need an answer to this question. It's not a disease, so a police investigation is underway. They have formed a special investigation team and will complete their probe.

"The Centre has also deputed a team which is collecting samples and doing their activities. I want to assure all that the joint efforts of civil administration, police and the government of India will find out the answers to all questions about what had happened," the Chief Minister said.

He said his government responded immediately on getting information about the tragedy.

"The Health Department mobilized its teams and also involved other departments...the district administration also tried to understand the reasons (behind the deaths).

"First, the focus was to know whether this is the result of any disease and in case it is a disease our biggest responsibility was to ensure that it does not spread. All the tests were conducted and the results revealed that there are no bacteria or viruses," the Chief Minister said.

He said the investigation is ongoing and so far no concrete reason was found about the unfortunate deaths in the three families, mostly of children.

Asked about opposition criticism of his government over the handling of the situation, Abdullah said he would not like to do politics on such a happening.

"...Had we worked in haste and taken any wrong step, then you would have blamed us (for the deaths). The administration responded to the situation in a right way and the local MLA (Javaid Iqbal Choudhary) was there on the ground, taking the people into confidence and keeping them informed.

"We took time because we failed to establish the reason for the deaths. But we will expose the truth though it will take two or three more days and we have no issues with it," he said, adding "we will come out with the answers to all the questions".

The chief minister said he had talked to the Deputy Commissioner and the MLA who have given some suggestions which will be implemented soon.

Inter-ministerial team...

inter-ministerial team to ascertain the causes of death in the three families linked to each other in the remote village, about 55 km from Rajouri town, between December 7 and January 19.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is likely to visit the village later in the day to take stock of the situation and interact with the bereaved families.

Earlier, a Jammu and Kashmir government spokesperson said investigations and samples empirically indicated that the incidents were not due to a communicable disease of bacterial or viral origin and that there is no public health angle.

A Special Investigation Team was set up after certain neurotoxins have been found in the samples of the deceased.

Authorities recently sealed a spring in the village after its water tested positive for some pesticides/insecticides.

The people in the village, having a mixed population, are hopeful that the probe will unveil the mystery behind the sudden death of 17 villagers, including 13 children.

National Conference leader and local MLA Javaid Iqbal Choudhary lauded the patience of the villagers in the face of such a big tragedy and their cooperation with the government and medical teams.

"Our villages are an example of communal harmony and all are praying that the investigators find a clue so that those who lost their members could know the reason for the deaths of their kin," he said.

Surjeet Singh Thakur, a local resident said the entire village is in the grip of fear and grief but "we are standing together in this testing time".

"We have been living in harmony and we are standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the bereaved families," he said.

According to officials, the central team, in collaboration with the local administration, will work on providing immediate relief as well as taking precautionary measures to prevent such incidents in the future.

Experts from some of the most reputable institutions in the country have been arranged to manage the situation and understand the causes of the deaths.

The patients complained of fever, pain, nausea, intense sweating and loss of consciousness before dying within days of their admission to hospitals.

CS Atal Dulloo...

seeking spiritual solace.

Officials, residents and pilgrims in Prayagraj welcomed Atal Dulloo with enthusiasm, praising his humility and devotion. Many expressed their appreciation for a senior government official taking time to engage with the spiritual essence of the city during historic Kumb mela.

Gangster shot dead...

and police teams are actively pursuing them, Deputy Inspector General of Police



(DIG) Shiv Kumar Sharma said.

Meanwhile, police in a statement urged the people to remain calm and refrain from speculation, awaiting official updates from the police.

"A firing incident occurred this afternoon in the Jewel Chowk area, under the jurisdiction of Police Station Nowabad. Upon receiving the information, ADGP Jammu, along with senior police officers, arrived at the scene," said police in a statement. "The public is urged to remain calm and refrain from speculation, awaiting official updates from the police," the police statement adds.

India-Pak rift...

projects. However, a year later, Islamabad demanded that the objections be handled by the court of arbitration.

India has been cooperating with the neutral expert but stayed away from proceedings of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague.

New Delhi considers the start of the two concurrent processes to resolve the dispute a violation of the provision of the graded mechanism prescribed in the IWT.

"It has been India's consistent and principled position that the neutral expert alone has the competence under the treaty to decide these differences," the MEA said in a statement.

"Having upheld his own competence, which comports with India's view, the neutral expert will now proceed to the next (merits) phase of his proceeding," it said.

The MEA said this phase will culminate in a final decision on the merits of each of the seven differences.

"Being committed to preserving the sanctity and integrity of the treaty, India will continue to participate in the neutral expert process so that the differences are resolved in a manner consistent with the provisions of the treaty, which does not provide for parallel proceedings on the same set of issues," it said.

"For this reason, India does not recognize or participate in the illegally constituted Court of Arbitration proceedings," it added.

The MEA said India and Pakistan also remain in touch on the matter of modifi-

cation and review of the Indus Water Treaty.

14 Maoists killed...

be ascertained.

"Another mighty blow to Naxalism. Our security forces achieved major success towards building a Naxal-free Bharat. The CRPF, SoG Odisha, and Chhattisgarh Police neutralised 14 Naxalites in a joint operation along the Odisha-Chhattisgarh border. With our resolve for a Naxal-free India and the joint efforts of our security forces, Naxalism is breathing its last today," Shah wrote on X.

Giving details of the incident, police said two women Naxalites were killed during a joint operation on Monday along the Chhattisgarh-Odisha border. A large cache of firearms, ammunition and IEDs, including a self-loading rifle, were recovered from the encounter site.

A fresh exchange of firing took place late Monday night and it continued till early hours of Tuesday in a forest under the Mainpur police station areas (Chhattisgarh) along the Chhattisgarh-Odisha border, in which 12 more Naxalites were gunned down.

With this, the total number of Maoists killed in the operation went up to 14, police said.

Intermittent exchange of firing in the area was underway on Tuesday too and the number of Maoist casualties may increase, they said.

A joint team of security personnel from the District Reserve Guard (DRG) of the Chhattisgarh Police, CoBRA commandos of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Special Operation Group (SOG) personnel from the Odisha Police were involved in the operation.

The operation was launched on the night of January 19 based on intelligence inputs about the presence of Maoists in the Kularighat reserve forest of Chhattisgarh, just 5 km from the border of Odisha's Nuapada district.

Hailing the security forces, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai said under the BJP-led double-engine government at the Centre and the state, Chhattisgarh will get rid of the menace by March 2026.

He said strengthening the resolve of Prime Minister Modi and the union home minister to end Naxalism in the country by March 2026, the security forces have been continuously achieving success and moving rapidly towards fulfilling the target.

"This success of the soldiers is commendable. I salute their bravery," he said.

Forty Naxalites have been killed in separate gun fights in Chhattisgarh this year. On January 16, 12 Naxalites were killed by security forces in Bijapur district. Later, Maoists, in a statement, admitted that 18 cadres were killed in the January 16 gunfight.

Last year, 219 Naxalites were neutralised by security forces in separate encounters in Chhattisgarh.

Northern Army Commander...

exemplary professionalism in conduct of operations.

The visit of the army commander comes amid heightened security arrangements across J&K to ensure peaceful Republic Day celebrations on January 26.

Presidents elected for...

Kuldeep Sharma for Akhnour.

Gopal Krishan was elected president of the Basohli organisational district and Updesh Andotra for Kathua. Asha Sharma will lead the BJP in Samba.

Pritam Sharma was elected to the top post for the Nowshera organisational district, Dev Raj Sharma for Rajouri and Gurdeep Singh for Poonch.

Rohit Dubey will take charge as the new organisational district president of Reasi and Arun Gupta for Udhampur. Babu Ram was elected to head Doda organisational district. Rajiv Pandita will serve as president for Kashmir Displaced District.

HC takes cognizance of election of JKOA office bearers, issues notice to UOI, IOA

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Vacation Judge of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court Justice Moksha Khajuria Kazmi took cognizance of election of office bearers of J&K Olympics Association (JKOA), issue notice to UOI and Indian Olympics Association (IOA) & others.

Justice Moksha Khajuria Kazmi after hearing Advocate Amit Gupta for the petitioner while issuing notices, observed that in the instant petition, the petitioner has challenged the notification dated December 15, 2024 whereby respondent Nos. 6 to 18 have been declared as President, Vice President, Office Bearers and Executive Members respectively of JKOA Jammu.

It is stated by counsel for the petitioner that the election has been held in violation of National Sports Development Code of India 2011 read with J&K Govt. Employees Conduct Rules, 1971 issued under SRO 164 dated March 27, 1980 and circular/instructions issued by the GAD from time to time read with circular issued by Govt. of India, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Department of Sports and Office Memorandum issued by Govt. of India, Ministry of Personnel Public Grievances and Pensions, Department of Personnel and Training read with Regulations of J&K State Sports Council.

The petitioner has also challenged Article 11 of Memorandum of Association of Jammu and Kashmir Olympic Association which provides that "the office bearers, may hold office as such for one or more terms of 4 years each as void ab-initio, null and void being in contravention to mandatory Provisions of the National Sports Development Code of India 2011 as well as the memorandum and rule.

Sr. Advocate Abhinav Sharma stated that the petitioner has participated in the election process and has secured one vote out of 24 votes, moreover, subject-matter of the writ petition is already pending before Supreme Court and status quo has been granted with respect to the terms and conditions made in the Memorandum of JKOA.

Advocate Amit Gupta appearing for the petitioner submits that the petitioner had participated under protest which he has also pleaded in the writ petition.

Adv Anshuja Tak, stated that the appointment of the Returning Officer was not made by the Sports Council, as such, his appointment is not in consonance with law. She further states that as per Constitution of J&K Sports Council, Returning Officer had to be appointed by the J&K Sport Council and not by the President of Association. Justice Moksha Khajuria Qazmi issued notice to the respondents, Vishal Sharma, DSGI accepts notice on behalf of Union of India, Anshuja Tak, Advocate on behalf of J&K State Sports Council and Abhirash Sharma, learned counsel on behalf of respondent Nos. 6 & 8. They seek and are granted four weeks' time to file objections.

Delegations call on Dy CM, highlight key issues

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A delegation from Padder, led by Pooja Thakur, Chairperson District Development Council (DDC) Kishtwar, called on Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Chaudhary here on Tuesday.

The delegation apprised the Deputy Chief Minister of the pressing issues faced by the residents of Padder-Nagseni, seeking immediate redressal. The key demands presented included improving road connectivity, addressing power supply issues, enhancing healthcare facilities and expediting completion of pending developmental projects in the region.

The Deputy Chief Minister gave a patient hearing to the delegation and assured them of prompt action. He issued on-the-spot directions to the concerned departments for early resolution of several highlighted issues.

Later, a deputation of Association of Industries (AoI) Gangyal, Jammu led by Virendra Jain, President and other functionaries met the Deputy Chief Minister.

The delegation apprised the Deputy Chief Minister of current state of Micro/Small Industrial sector, Jammu in particular and J&K in general.

The Association urged for initiating a new industrial policy and package of incentives, the operation part of which must be at par for new and the existing industry as well.

The deputation laid emphasis on compensating local Micro/Small sector through timely reimbursement of fiscal incentives at least equivalent to the quantum of amount prevalent before adoption of GST regime in J&K by way of VAT remission, CST and Toll Tax exemptions besides Central Excise Duty refund and other demands.

The Deputy Chief Minister assured the deputation that the issues projected by them would be looked into and redressed properly. He said the government is committed for ensuring sustained industrial growth in Jammu & Kashmir.

Power shutdown

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Chief Engineer (Distribution) JPDCL, Jammu has informed that the power supply to District Udhampur, Kishtwar and parts of Doda will remain affected on January 22 from 10 am to 2.30 pm.

Similarly, the power supply to Suhagpur, Arnia, Allah, Chak Shera, Treva, Jabawal, Kotli and adjoining areas will remain affected on January 22 from 8 am to 12 noon.

Youth 4 Panun Kashmir reaffirms demand for separate UT for Kashmiri Hindus

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Reaffirming their commitment to the Margdarshan resolution, which demands the creation of a separate Union territory for the permanent rehabilitation of Kashmiri Hindus in the valley, Youth 4 Panun Kashmir (Y4PK) on Tuesday said it is a roadmap to ensure the preservation of their heritage and a secure future for the community.

They emphasised that the Jammu-based Jagti migrant camp, the largest habitation of displaced Kashmiri Pandits, will be the centre of all major community programmes in 2025, symbolising the resilience and unity of the community.

"The Jagti Declaration marks a renewed commitment to the Margdarshan Resolution of 1991. It outlines a roadmap to ensure the preservation of our heritage and a secure future for our community," Rahul Kaul, apex body member of Y4PK, told reporters here.

Y4PK unveiled the Jagti Declaration - 2025, a landmark initiative to reignite the struggle for justice, cultural preservation and the reclamation of the homeland for Kashmiri Pandits. They observed Exodus Day of the community on January 19 at Jagti township.

"The declaration outlines key priorities for the year, emphasising youth leadership and grassroots action," he added.

"Thirty-five years after exodus, nothing has been done by respective governments. We want implementation of the Margdarshan resolution", Kaul said.

He said they would take the battle to a conclusive end about a homeland for the community in the Kashmir valley.

Explaining the declaration's details at Jagti township, he highlighted that the camp would serve as the hub for all major community programmes in 2025, symbolising the resilience and unity of Kashmiri Pandits.

"The 3rd International Kashmiri Hindu Youth Conference is scheduled to take place in Jagti. This global event will bring together young Kashmiri Hindus to strategise and strengthen the Panun Kashmir movement," he said.

Announcing the Ajay Khosa Memorial Scholarship, he mentioned full education funding for meritorious students up to Class 12 and sponsorship for 30 students at the Jonraja Institute of Genocide and Atrocities Studies to document and amplify the genocide narrative. Regarding the reaffirmation of the Margdarshan Resolution of 1991, Kaul stated that the community has reiterated Panun Kashmir (our own Kashmir) as the only just and viable solution for their rehabilitation.

Addressing security concerns in Jagti, he announced that Y4PK plans to install 100 solar-powered street lights to enhance safety and ensure a secure environment.

Responding to inquiries about the involvement of the new generation in community affairs, Y4PK president Vithal Chowdhary stressed that this declaration is more than a document. It is a pledge to remain steadfast in their mission, he said.

"The youth will be the driving force behind our initiatives," he affirmed.

Ashwani Bhat, senior activist at Panun Kashmir and resident of Jagti, said, "Jagti has always been a symbol of the Kashmiri Pandit spirit. The declaration's focus on this community ensures our voice remains strong and united."

Minorities will have better sense of belonging if 'small issues' addressed: Nagi

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Minorities will have a better sense of belonging to the country if their "small issues" are addressed, National Commission for Minorities member Roubie Nagi said on Tuesday.

Despite the government's efforts to improve the condition of the minorities, there are still some gaps that need to be filled, she said.

"If we address these small issues of the minorities, they will be more attached to the country," Nagi said after interacting with members of minority communities in Baramulla district. "I don't believe that anyone who is born in India and is a citizen of this country is a minority or a majority. We are all equal," she added.

Nagi said she met members of the Sikh, Kashmiri Pandit and the Christian communities as well and had free exchanges of ideas during which they raised their issues. "While the government has not rejected their demands, some gaps have been there. We will try to plug those gaps," she said. "Whatever I read and I heard, there are no major issues that cannot be addressed," she added. On the grant of reservations to the Pahari-speaking people in Jammu and Kashmir, Nagi said a community should get what it deserved. "Every community should get it equally, be it Pahari speaking, Malayalam speaking, Punjabi or Bihari or any other language. When we talk about equality, if A is getting something on a certain criteria, B should not be left out," she said. "Our main focus will be to remove the impediments in the way of our youngsters getting jobs. Some of our youngsters are not able to come forward due to petty reasons," she added.

Soldier injured in landmine explosion

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

MENDHAR/JAMMU: An army soldier was injured in a landmine explosion near the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district on Tuesday, officials said.

The 32-year-old soldier was part of a patrolling party when he accidentally stepped over the landmine in Krishna Ghati sector, the officials said.

They said the mine went off, causing critical injuries to the sepoy who was immediately evacuated to hospital.

As part of an anti-infiltration obstacle system, the forward areas are dotted with landmines which sometimes get washed away by rains resulting in such types of accidents, the officials said.

GCW Bhagwati Nagar conducts educational lecture on 'Financial Education for Young Citizens'

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Department of Commerce and NSS Unit of Govt. College for Women (GCW), Bhagwati Nagar, Jammu conducted a thought-provoking and educational lecture on "Financial Education for Young Citizens" under the patronage of the Principal of the college, Dr. Meeru Abrol.

The session was delivered by Bhagwant Singh, a retired principal and SEBI-certified Smart Trainer, under the prestigious programme from NISM Mumbai, as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative. In his lecture, Bhagwant Singh highlighted the importance of financial literacy for students and young professionals, emphasizing the need for informed financial decisions in today's dynamic economic environment. Covering essential topics such as budgeting, saving, investing, and understanding financial markets, he provided practical insights and tips to empower young citizens to achieve financial independence.

Dr. Meeru Abrol, Principal of GCW Bhagwati Nagar, expressed her gratitude to Bhagwant Singh and applauded his efforts to promote financial awareness among students. She also commended Prof. Gagan Jyoti and Prof. Kamaldeep Singh for organizing this impactful event, stating, "Such initiatives equip our students with critical skills to navigate their financial journeys confidently."

The session witnessed active participation from students, faculty, and staff, with a vibrant Q&A session where attendees interacted with the resource person to clarify their financial doubts and concerns. The lecture concluded with a formal vote of thanks by Prof. Gagan Jyoti, leaving participants inspired to apply their newly acquired knowledge in real-life financial scenarios.

JU organises Guest Lecture on 'School internship, dissertation and project work'

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Centre for Distance and online Education (CDOE) University of Jammu organised a guest lecture on the topic "School internship, Dissertation and Project Work" today at committee room of CDOE.

The program started with the welcome address by Dr. Anuradha Goswami (Coordinator of M.A Education Programme) who introduce resource person Prof. Renu Nanda former HOD and Dean faculty of Education. The session aimed to equip M.A Education students with useful knowledge and skills to effectively undertake project work, write a comprehensive research proposal, and prepare appropriate research tools.

Prof. Renu Nanda shared insights on how school internship acts as a bridge between theoretical knowledge and practical teaching experience. The lecture provided a detailed about research writing, emphasizing its importance in laying a strong foundation for academic research. Students were guided on selecting relevant topics, formulating objectives, and adopting appropriate methodologies.

Prof. Pankaj Srivastava, Director CDOE presided over the function. On this occasion in his address, he focused on how this lecture will provide students practical insight and actionable strategies for completing project work successfully, internship and research proposal thereby preparing them for both academic and professional challenges in Education. The inaugural session concluded with the vote of thanks by Dr. Anuradha Goswami. In her address Dr. Goswami shared valuable information on various components of course structure.