

## !! Continuations from Page 1 !! Committed to utilize...

of the members from the industry and business fraternity during the interactive session. Vikramjit Singh, Commissioner Secretary, Industries & Commerce Department, J&K presented a detailed overview of the industrial sector and its growth potential in J&K UT. Hari Shankar Halvasiya, President, Calcutta Chamber of Commerce; Sushil Agrawal and RK Chhajjer- former Presidents, CCC; officer bearers of the Chamber and representatives of various industries were present.

### Search ops underway...

and sniffer dogs have been pressed into service to track down the terrorists who ambushed two Army vehicles in the area Thursday afternoon.

"A massive cordon and search operation has begun this morning after a night cordon in area," an officer told PTI. The operation was still going on.

He said that additional troops have been inducted into area to track down the terrorists involved in the firing.

On Thursday, around 3.45 pm, the two army vehicles carrying personnel to the site of a cordon-and-search operation came under attack at a blind curve at Dhatyar Morh between Dhera Ki Gali and Bufliaz under the jurisdiction of the Surankote police station. The officer quoted above said the Dhera Ki Gali (DKG) Road has been closed for traffic. Top officials of army and police are monitoring in the situation at the ground.

The heavily-armed terrorists, believed to three to four in number; initially took position on hill tops and chose a blind curve to target the army vehicles.

After the attack, they reportedly mutilated the bodies of at least two soldiers and have taken weapons of some of them, officials say. The security officials say that investigation of site is being carried out to know the pattern and use of weapons including steel core bullets in the ambush.

Security experts said on Friday the rising number of terror incidents in the Rajouri-Poonch region is concerning.

"It is matter of concern. It is second incident in the last two months. This region was peaceful till recently. During last two years, 35 soldiers were martyred here. Why is it happening? Why have terrorists got so emboldened?" Defence expert Col S S Pathania said.

Security expert Captain (ret'd) Anil Gaur said that Pakistan is trying to revive terrorism in this region by engineering these incidents. "There is some fault in how we are dealing with terrorism. It is time to strengthen intelligence and security setup of the region and eliminate all terrorists in difficult areas. There are caves," he said.

In Jammu, several bodies including the Jammu Statehood Organisation held anti-Pakistan protests in the city and burnt the effigy of Pakistan.

Dogra front Shiv Sena also held anti-Pakistan protests and demand an all out operation to clean the area of terrorists. They asked the government to carry out special operation along forest areas and strengthen intelligence network.

### Three men found...

circumstances but the cause of their death was not known immediately.

Poonch Deputy Commissioner Choudhary Mohammad Yasin and Senior Superintendent of Police Vinay Kumar reached Bufliaz following the reports of the deaths of the three men while Jammu Divisional Commissioner Ramesh Kumar is also heading for Surankote, the officials said.

### Security experts call...

is an urgent need to break the backbone of this," Lt Gen Singh, who was one of the army officials involved in the Balakote strike in 2019, said.

India had hit back at terror camps, especially of the banned Jaish-e-Mohammed group, after 40 CRPF personnel were killed in a car bomb explosion in Pulwama in February 2019.

Gen Singh also advised that it was time for those at the helm of affairs to go back to the drawing board and basic training of jungle warfare. "We should not be more dependent on technical inputs as they are misleading at times," he said.

Expressing concern over the terror incidents, defence expert Col (ret'd) S S Pathania said, "It is the second incident in the last two months. This region was peaceful until two years ago. In the last two years, 24 soldiers were martyred here. Why is it happening? Why have terrorists been so emboldened?"

He said focus should be laid on strengthening LoC management and intelligence network.

"The LoC security management should be foolproof and the intelligence network should be strengthened," he said.

Security expert Captain (retired) Anil Gaur also expressed concern over the security situation in the region and called for a total revamp of the intelligence network.

"Pakistan is trying to revive terrorism in this region by engineering these incidents. There are some gaps in dealing with terrorism. It is a matter of concern," he said.

He added that it is time to strengthen the intelligence and security setup of the region and eliminate all terrorists.

He said it is a difficult terrain with a lot of caves.

Five soldiers were killed and two injured when heavily-armed terrorists ambushed two Army vehicles in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district on Thursday.

The vehicles carrying the personnel to the site of a cordon-and-search operation came under attack at a blind curve at Dhatyar Morh between Dhera Ki Gali and Bufliaz under the jurisdiction of the Surankote police station around 3.45 pm, according to the officials.

The stretch between Dhera Ki Gali and Bufliaz on the boundary of Rajouri and Poonch districts is densely forested and leads to Chamrer forest and then Bhata Dhurian forest.

With the latest killing, the total number of people killed in terrorist incidents in the border districts of Rajouri, Poonch and Reasi went up to 59.

Earlier, the three districts witnessed a series of encounters that left 54 persons, including 19 security personnel and 28 terrorists, dead.

While 31 persons, including 10 terrorists and 14 security personnel, were killed in Rajouri, 15 terrorists and five security personnel were killed in Poonch district. Three terrorists were killed in Reasi district.

Most of the terrorists were killed while attempting to sneak into this side of the border, the officials said.

### EODB Govt's tops...

Among the topics discussed were regular power supply to industrial units, renewal of licences, registration of hotels to be eased, promotion of virgin tourist destinations in a planned manner; streamlining of registrations.

Hoteliers Club raised the issue of registration of hotels, permission for repairs, industry status, extension of leases.

Houseboat Owners Association while submitting their memorandum raised the issue of renewal of licences, repairs of houseboats, subsidised timber among other things.

KCCI in its demands said that the new destinations should be promoted and developed in a planned manner besides carrying out environmental impact assessment and taking capacity of the area into consideration.

Representatives demanded Gondola Cable Car facility in Sonamarg and Hotel Association of Sonamarg raised the issue of snow clearance machines, fire and emergency vehicles, promotion of winter sports activities among other things.

Chief Secretary gave a patient hearing to the demands of the associations and said that the government will act as a facilitator and will take all stakeholders on board.

Atal Dulloo said that the government is taking promotion of tourism in and across the country very seriously and is taking several initiatives in this direction.

He advised the various bodies that they should partner with the Government in organizing high profile events like the G20 event held this year and another with film industry can be planned. CS encouraged tourism players to be part of FAME events that will have a cascading effect on the arrival of tourists.

Maintaining that government is very keen on the promotion of new tourist destinations in a sustainable manner; Atal Dulloo said that under a comprehensive plan modern day infrastructure and facilities will be made available at few virgin tourist destinations to cater to the huge influx of tourists while taking into account the capacity of the locations.

In another separate meeting, Federation Chamber of Industries Kashmir (FCIK)

also met the Chief Secretary and raised issues related to the industrial sector in Jammu and Kashmir.

The prominent issues that came up for discussion included composite industrial policy; quota for J&K industrial units in Government purchases, rejuvenation of industry; interest subvention, simplifying the procedures in Pollution Control Board, business interruption insurance, marketing support, power amnesty, sorting out of land lease issues and restraining J&K bank from taking harsh action against industrial units while dealing with NPAs which could be dealt with more compassion.

Chief Secretary assured the delegation that any issues faced by the industrial associations will be seriously looked into and everything will be done to foster ease of doing business. He said that steps are already afoot in providing a conducive environment for providing relief in setting up industrial units.

### One killed, another...

fiddling with a mortar shell picked up from some forest area. A similar incident had taken place in the area earlier as well, he told PTI. The SSP said the matter is being investigated.

### All UTs to...

the Bharatiya Sakshya (Second) Bill on Wednesday, the Rajya Sabha gave its nod on Thursday. The three legislations will replace the Indian Penal Code of 1860, the Criminal Procedure Code of 1973, and the Indian Evidence Act of 1872, respectively. While replying to a debate in Parliament, Shah asserted that the focus of the laws is on delivering justice rather than handing down punishment.

The three legislations were drafted after comprehensive consultations, he said, adding that he had gone through every comma and full stop of the draft legislations before bringing them to the House for approval.

### Rare, ancient sculptors...

55 kg approximately and Lord Shiva measuring 21" x 14" weighing 40 kg approximately. The department is all set to take the process of preservation of these sculptures.

### Slight improvement in...

than even the Srinagar city.

Qazigund recorded a low of minus 3.0 degrees Celsius, the Kokernag town saw the mercury settle at minus 2.4 degrees Celsius and Kupwara recorded the minimum of minus 3.4 degrees Celsius.

The intense cold conditions have resulted in the freezing of many slow-moving water bodies. It has also resulted in the freezing of water supply lines in some areas. The cold conditions have forced people in the valley to put on extra layers of clothes to stay warm.

With electricity supply erratic in many areas of Kashmir; people are using Kangri, an earthen firepot, to beat the chill. The cold and dry weather has resulted in an increase in respiratory problems among children and elderly.

The weatherman has forecast generally cloudy weather on Friday, with a possibility of light snow over isolated places in the higher reaches of Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday.

It said another spell of light snow over isolated places in the higher reaches is possible on December 27.

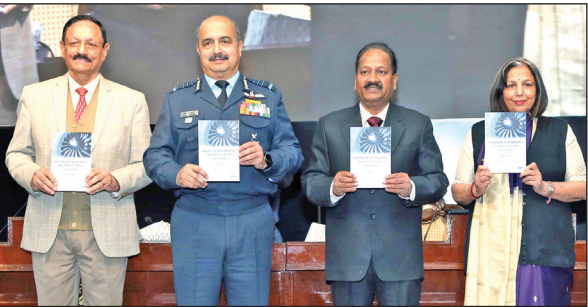
'Chilla-i-Kalan' is the 40-day harshest winter period when a cold wave grips the region and the temperature drops considerably leading to the freezing of water bodies, including the famous Dal Lake here, as well as the water supply lines in several parts of the valley.

The chances of snowfall are the most frequent and maximum during this period and most areas, especially in the higher reaches, receive heavy snowfall.

Traditionally, the valley residents used to consume dried vegetables to overcome the scarcity of fresh vegetables during the winter months as the Srinagar-Jammu would often be closed due to heavy snowfall.

While dried vegetables are still consumed as delicacies, the highway to Jammu does not face frequent closures anymore. 'Chillai-Kalan' will end on January 31. However, the cold conditions continue even after that in Kashmir with a 20-day-long 'Chillai-Khurd' (small cold) and a 10-day-long 'Chillai-Bachha' (baby cold).

## Air power would continue to play pivotal role: IAF Chief



COAS Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhary and other dignitaries releasing broucher.

#### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The world is at a pivotal juncture and winds of change are blowing strongly in India's favour; Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhary said on Friday.

The Air Chief Marshal also said that India's rise in the Global South marks a "pivotal point" in international affairs.

He was speaking at a seminar on "India and Global South: Challenges and Opportunities".

"Rooted in a rich historical tapestry, the country's emergence from colonial shadows to a prominent global player brings forth a myriad of challenges and opportunities," the chief of Indian Air Force said.

"Understanding the complex dynamics at play is crucial in navigating a future shaped by

interconnectedness," he said.

The 20th Subroto Mukherjee seminar was organised by Centre for Air Power Studies.

"As we navigate these uncharted skies, air power being a key component of national power, would undoubtedly play a pivotal role and also serve as a symbol of national strength, a tool for peace and collaboration," he added.

Air Chief Marshal Chaudhary said the IAF may easily act as a catalyst for progress, fostering strategic partnerships and contributing to the collective advancement of the Global South.

"Our air power engagements with the countries of the Global South have resonated across the board and allowed us to exchange best practices,

improve interoperability and build trust," he said.

The IAF chief noted that these engagements are crucial for tackling shared security challenges and ensuring regional stability. "We have increased the footprint of training and cooperation with these nations," he said.

On the global geopolitical developments, the Chief of Air Staff said the landscape of international relations is constantly shifting and traditional power structures are increasingly being challenged by new players.

"The threat of global conflict looms large, fuelled by ideological divisions, resource scarcity and climate change. This has created interconnected challenges like economic disparity and resource exploitation," he said.

The IAF chief observed that "black swan" events like COVID-19, and conflicts being witnessed across the world have aggravated the situation.

#### Himachal Police arrests proclaimed offender from Jammu

#### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

HAMIRPUR (HP): The Hamirpur Police have arrested proclaimed offender Saherajuddin from Gulshannagar in Jammu, they said on Friday.

Saherajuddin, a resident of Doda district's Gundakhara village, was wanted in a theft case registered against him under section 380 of the IPC at the Sadar Hamirpur Police Station in January, 2016.

He was declared proclaimed offender by a local court on November 23 this year, said Hamirpur SP Akriti Sharma.

#### Friday prayers allowed at Jamia Masjid after 10 weeks

#### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Congregational prayers were allowed at the historic Jamia Masjid here on Friday after remaining barred for 10 consecutive weeks, officials said.

"The Friday prayers were allowed and concluded without any disturbance," an official said.

## Team Jammu condemns terrorists attack on Army personnel in Poonch

#### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Strongly condemning yesterday's attack on Army personnel in Poonch district, Team Jammu today said it is the right time that Government of India directs the security forces to once again "attack and destroy" terrorist training camps across the border in Pakistan besides giving befitting reply to terrorists by neutralizing their barbaric acts.

"Centre government should adopt a proactive policy to flush out and eliminate all terrorists also operating in different parts of the state," stated Chairman, Team Jammu while addressing emergent meeting of its members.

"Instead of adopting a soft approach towards terrorists, the Centre government should adopt a decisive and pro-active policy and formulate an action plan to flush out and eliminate all militants," pointed out Zorawar Singh Jamwal and added that "The time has come once when our forces should be asked to attack and destroy the militant training camps across the border so that a clear cut message goes to Pakistan either to stop using its land for mushrooming terrorists' camps or face consequences."

While paying tributes to army personnel who attained martyrdom in the terrorist attack, Chairman, Team Jammu Zorawar Singh Jamwal also expressed sympathies for bereaved family members.

"We stand by our forces and their families. Their martyrdom will not go in vein and we are of complete belief that our security forces will give them befitting reply while eliminating anti-national elements from the state," stated Zorawar Singh Jamwal.

## Roadshow to promote Bharat Tex held in Srinagar

#### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: A roadshow was organised here to promote the Bharat Tex, a global textile expo to be held in New Delhi in February next year; to raise awareness about the significance of the event among manufacturers and exporters in Kashmir.

The roadshow was organised by the Consortium of Textile Export Promotion Council (EPCs) and the Carpet Export Promotion Council of India (CEPC).

The roadshow was part of the series of such events to promote Bharat Tex 2024, a flagship textile event, scheduled from February 26-29 at Bharat Mandapam and Yashbhoomi in New Delhi.

The expo will be spread across two lakh sq mt and will have more than 3,500 exhibitors showcasing fibre, yarn, fabric, home textiles, technical textiles, handloom and powerloom

products, handicrafts, and technical textiles. The expo will see participation of exhibitors and buyers from over 40 countries.

Speaking on the occasion, Director, Ministry of Textiles, Anil Kumar, said several road shows have taken place across the country and they have now come to Srinagar.

"We want to make the people aware about Bharat Tex. It will be a huge event... we appeal the textile manufacturers, exporters to participate in the event as it will help their products reach different corners of the world," he said.

Kumar said the aim of the Bharat Tex is to bring the whole industry to a single platform and address problems faced by stakeholders.

It will also act as a platform to give international market to exporters, he added.

CEPC Chairman Mukesh

## CS for adding huge vibrancy to Republic Day events held across J&K

#### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Friday held a meeting of the top brass of civil and police administration to take stock of the preparations to be made for the grand celebrations of Republic Day, 2024.

The Chief Secretary impressed upon the concerned Divisional administrations to making arrangements beforehand for holdings events in a befitting manner right from the Panchayat level. He called for adding lot of activities before this event to create the right kind of enthusiasm among people. He stressed on adding vibrancy to all the events held right from the Panchayats across the UT.

Dulloo made out that the administration should provide ample time to school children to many rehearsals of performances set to be made by them. He called for providing them every kind of assistance to reach to the venues in this winter season. He even asked for

making better arrangements of refreshment for them that is both healthy and hygienic for them.

The Chief Secretary also emphasized on making traffic plan that is less exhausting and circuitous for general public. He also asked for adding more frisking booths at the venue especially for school children and elderly so that they do not have to face any kind of inconvenience in entering into the venue.

He directed for decorating and illuminating all the rotaries and important public infrastructure at both Jammu and Srinagar. He called for making special arrangements for creating ambience of festivity in both the smart cities as well as towns of J&K.

Regarding the Tableau to be displayed during the main functions at Jammu and Srinagar; the Chief Secretary

advised for promoting the themes on the achievements made in Jal Jeevan Mission, Mission Shakti (Education), Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra, Sports, Swachh Bharat Mission and Nasha Mukht J&K Mission.

On the occasion the Chief Secretary also took note of the preparations and back-up plans of the departments regarding power, water, sanitation and public address system facilities at the venues. He also asked for making foolproof security arrangements besides deployment of fire tenders and health care professionals in strength there.

The Commissioner Secretary GAD and Divisional Commissioners apprised the meeting about the arrangements to be put in place for smooth conduct of Republic Day celebrations in both the cities.

## BJP ignored Jammu Region: Sr Vice President PCC

#### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Congress has hit out at BJP Govt. for ignoring Jammu region in the matter of railway projects especially the vital Jammu-Rajouri-Poonch railway project proposed during UPA Govt.

Reacting sharply to the reply of the Govt. in the Lok Sabha which indicates the Centre Govt. is ignoring the important rail links even after 10 years of being in power, failing to fulfill its commitments to the people of Jammu Region.

The Sr. Vice President of PCC and Chief Spokesperson Ravinder Sharma and several other senior leaders have questioned BJP for the step motherly treatment to Rajouri-Poonch besides Bani-Basohli, Bhaderwah-Kishtwar projects and simply because Congress had proposed the initial survey of Jammu-Poonch Railway project in 2012 on the initiative of Rahul Gandhi keeping the problems of connectivity of border people besides the strategic importance of the project from defence point of

view. Rs.13608 crore project was proposed after initial survey but the BJP Govt. abandoned this project for nine years.

Similarly party demanded Basohli-Bani- Bhaderwah railway link and Mata Vaishno Devi- Shivkhori-Sunderbani-Kalakote railway link with Jammu-Poonch proposed railway line. These railway connectivity is very important for defence point of view.

Several senior leaders of Rajouri-Poonch have also voiced their serious concern over the issue and accused BJP Govt. of ignoring the border people of Rajouri-Poonch. The leaders include Shri Shabir Ahmed Khan (Ex-Minister) Jahangir Mir (Ex-Dy. Chairman JKLC) Sain Abdul Rashid Choudhary and Shah Nawaz Choudhary Vice Presidents PCC, Itfikhhar Ahmed, Parveen Sarwar Khan, Shakeel Mir - General Secretaries PCC, S. Rainder Singh Kaka President DCC Poonch, Bittu Shah, Pushpinder Gupta, Sajad Tariq and several others voiced their concern.