

!! Continuations from Page 1 !! Army Chief exhorts...

the army chief. Both of them along with senior civil and police officers are camping in the twin districts of Rajouri and Poonch to supervise the anti-terrorist operation and maintain law and order.

In a post on X on December 23, the ADGPI had said, "Search operations by the security forces are continuing in the area of operations after the incident of 21 Dec 23. Reports have been received regarding three civilian deaths in the area. The matter is under investigation. Indian Army stands committed to extending full support and cooperation in the conduct of investigations."

Meanwhile, the mobile internet services remained suspended in both Poonch and Rajouri districts for the third day on Monday as a precautionary measure to check rumour-mongering and prevent miscreants from creating any law and order problem, the officials said.

The services were suspended early Saturday following the killing of the three civilians.

The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Saturday announced compensation and jobs to the families of the dead civilians and said the medico-legal formalities were conducted and legal action in this matter has been initiated by the appropriate authority.

Be committed to...

character and values, his poetic heart, his revolutionary vision influenced a wide spectrum of our national life for decades.

"With his spiritual strength, humility, oratory and dedication towards the nation he transcended the boundary of ideologies. Even people who had completely opposite views had become his admirers," the Lt Governor further added.

Two dead, 12...

19 years, were taken to hospital.

One of the critically injured people -- 17-year-old Tahir Ahmad -- succumbed while being shifted to Rajouri for specialised treatment, the officer said.

Unprecedented progress in...

the day is not far when Jammu and Kashmir will present the ideal of progress in India, she said while addressing the delegation.

The members of the delegation, who have been touring the country as part of the 'Watan ko Jano' programme, had called on the president at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here.

Addressing the members of the delegation, President Murmu said the purpose of the Watan ko Jano programme is to make them aware of the country's art, culture, civilization and development work.

"They must have realised during the tour that we speak different languages, wear different clothes, adopt different lifestyles, but, we are one. This unity is our real strength. We have to strengthen it further," Murmu said.

The president noted that after the removal of Article 370, there has been an "unprecedented" progress in the development of Jammu and Kashmir, according to a statement issued by the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

The government of India and the local administration are working together for the progress of the people, Murmu said.

The president urged members of the youth delegation to take advantage of the developmental efforts being made by the government.

She said that by doing this, new paths of progress will open in their life.

Murmu advised them to stay away from drugs, anti-social elements and negative publicity for their bright future.

She said democracy provides fair opportunities to everyone, they just have to believe in it and move forward with dedication and hard work.

Technology is being used extensively in governance for the benefit of common people, the president said.

"Moving towards digital Jammu and Kashmir, the administration has taken important initiatives to make the governance future-ready," Murmu said.

She said that effective delivery and transparency are the basis of good governance.

The president was happy to note that with this thought more than 1,100 government services have been made online which are in the interest of the general public.

Night temperatures continue...

Valley. Gulmarg, the famous ski resort in Baramulla district, recorded a low of minus 2.6 degrees Celsius, the officials said.

Qazigund recorded a low of minus 2.6 degrees Celsius while Kokernag witnessed the mercury settle at minus 1.6 degrees and Kupwara at minus 3.0 degrees.

The Met department said the weather is likely to remain mainly dry till the end of the month.

A dense layer of fog engulfed Srinagar early on Monday, affecting daily life.

The flow of traffic was lower than usual in the morning while vehicles were seen moving at slow speeds due to the reduced visibility.

"The visibility in Srinagar at 8.30 am was 91 metres due to the fog cover. Motorists should drive carefully due to the low visibility," an official of the local Met office said.

A Srinagar airport official said some flights from Delhi have been delayed due to poor visibility in the national capital.

"We do not have any issues on this side but some Srinagar-bound flights have been delayed due to dense fog in Delhi," the official said.

According to the India Meteorological Department, the visibility around Palam in Delhi was zero at 8.30 am.

Kashmir is currently under the grip of 'Chilla-i-Kalan' -- 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 Dal Lake, as well as water supply lines in several parts of the Valley.

The chances of snowfall are the highest during this period and most areas, especially the higher reaches, receive heavy snow.

'Chilla-i-Kalan' will end on January 31.

However, the cold conditions will continue after that with a 20-day 'Chilla-i-Khurid' (small cold) and a 10-day 'Chilla-i-Bachha' (baby cold).

Good governance dispelled...

government has also created institutions to impart momentum to development by carving out a separate cooperation ministry.

"In Jannagar, the foundation stone of the WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine has been laid and the Indian Institute of Millets Research has been set up.

"India has also set up the Global Bio-fuel Alliance, International Solar Alliance, and initiated the India-Middle East Economic Corridor ... India has been the creator of institutes of national and international importance," he said.

Prime Minister Modi said despite being a scholar of the English language, Malaviya was always a votary of Indian languages and their use for official purposes.

Modi said his government was implementing the National Education Policy that gives primacy to Indian languages and higher education courses were now being taught in the mother tongue.

"It is unfortunate that the nation had to wait for 75 years for this to happen," the prime minister said.

He said the country is indebted to the great personalities who made invaluable contributions to the nation and he was privileged to release a book of Malaviya's works.

The function, also attended by Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur and Minister of Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal among other dignitaries, was held on the occasion of the 162nd birth anniversary of Malaviya.

The bilingual (English and Hindi) work in 11 volumes, spread across about 4,000 pages, is a collection of writings and speeches of Malaviya, collected from every part of the country.

These volumes comprise his unpublished letters, articles and speeches, including memorandums; the editorial content of Hindi weekly 'Abhyudaya' started by him in 1907; articles, pamphlets and booklets written by him from time to time.

It also contains his speeches given in the Legislative Council of the United Provinces of Agra and Awadh between 1903 and 1910; statements given before

the Royal Commission; and speeches given during the presentation of bills in the Imperial Legislative Council between 1910 and 1920.

There are also letters, articles and speeches written before and after the establishment of Banaras Hindu University; and a diary written by him between 1923 and 1925.

The work of researching and compiling the documents written and spoken by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya was undertaken by the Mahamana Malaviya Mission, an institution devoted to propagating the ideals and values of Malaviya.

A dedicated team of the Mission, led by eminent journalist Shri Ram Bahadur Rai, has worked on Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya's original literature without altering the language and text.

The Publications Division under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has published these books.

Three criminal justice...

and the Indian Evidence Act of 1872.

While replying to a debate on the three bills in Parliament, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said the focus was on delivering justice rather than handing down punishment.

The three legislation aim at completely overhauling the criminal justice system in the country by giving definition of various offences and their punishments. These have given a clear definition of terrorism, abolished sedition as a crime and introduced a new section titled 'offences against the state'.

The bills were first introduced during the Monsoon session of Parliament in August. After the Standing Committee on Home Affairs made several recommendations, the government decided to withdraw the bills and introduced their redrafted versions last week.

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

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita lists offences such as acts of secession, armed rebellion, subversive activities, separatist activities or endangering the sovereignty or unity in the new avatar of the sedition law.

According to the laws, anyone purposely or knowingly, by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or by electronic communication or by use of financial means, or otherwise, excites or attempts to excite secession or armed rebellion or subversive activities, or encourages feelings of separatist activities or endangers sovereignty or unity and integrity of India or indulges in or commits any such act shall be punished with imprisonment for life or with imprisonment which may extend to seven years and shall also be liable to fine.

According to IPC Section 124A, which deals with sedition, anyone involved in the crime may be punished with life imprisonment or with a three-year jail term. Under the new laws, 'Rajdroh' has got a new term 'Deshdroh', thus doing away with the reference to the British crown.

Also for the first time, the word terrorism has been defined in the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. It was absent in the IPC. Under the new laws, the magistrate's power to impose fines has been increased as well as the scope of declaring a proclaimed offender.

Enforcement Central Jammu...

conducted a surprise inspection of the Nakas laid by the teams of DC Enforcement Central, Jammu and appreciated the efforts of the team led by STO, Dr Sonika Sudan working under the close supervision and guidance of DC Enforcement Central, Ritu Mahajan.

During the Enforcement drives by the Enforcement (Central), Jammu apart from the penalty of Rs 2.01 crores which is 53 percent increase as compared to last fiscal year, a total of 368 vehicles were detained and around 103108 E-Way bills were verified. The major commodities on which penalties were imposed during this period includes Marble/Granite, Metal Scrap, TMT bars & Electronic goods etc.

Deputy Commissioner Enforcement (Central) Jammu under the instructions of Commissioner State Taxes Rashmi Singh constituted different teams headed by State Tax Officers, Sonika Sudan, Chander Mohini, Romi Jamwal, Naresh Koul, Surinder Gupta and Sunil Gupta.

In year of milestones, SC upholds Art 370, demonetization

STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: In a year of milestones, the Supreme Court delivered a melange of seminal verdicts in 2023 including those that upheld the Centre's decisions to scrap Article 370, which bestowed special status on Jammu and Kashmir, demonetisation of Rs 1,000 and Rs 500 currency notes, and refused to accord legal recognition to same-sex marriages.

Under Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud, the top court created a record by disposing of an unprecedented 52,191 cases between January 1 and December 15, 2023. It had disposed of nearly 40,000 cases the previous year.

Though the Modi government received an emphatic endorsement from the Supreme Court for its decisions nullifying Article 370 and binning Rs 1000 and Rs 500 notes, it was at the receiving end of apex court order that held the Delhi government had legislative and executive control over services in the national capital except for public order, police and land.

A five-judge bench of the Supreme Court (SC) unanimously ruled that the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners shall be made by the President on the advice of a committee consisting of the prime minister, the leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha and the Chief Justice of India.

However, these led to the framing of a new law on the appointment of CEC and ECs and amendments to the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD) Act by the Centre. Now the CJI will not be part of the committee for selecting members of the poll panel as was envisaged in the March 2 judgement of the Supreme Court. Through the new GNCTD Act the Centre also wrested control over services from the Delhi government.



The top court is now again seized of the Delhi government's fresh plea against the amended GNCTD Act.

Notwithstanding the continuing tug of war between the Supreme Court and the Centre over appointment and transfer of judges in constitutional courts on the recommendation of the collegium, the apex court worked with full strength of 34 judges for the major part of the year and all the 14 recommendations for judgeship of the apex court were approved with alacrity.

The decades-old hope of the queer community for legal validation of their marriages and consequential rights like adoption, enrolment as parents in schools, opening of bank accounts and succession got dashed as a five-judge constitution bench came out with a fractured verdict leaving major issues to the discretion of Parliament.

The Centre also drew flak from the Supreme Court for granting repeated extensions to Sanjay Kumar Mishra as the Enforcement Directorate (ED) chief and held it "illegal".

The Centre won the legal battle over scrapping of Article 370, with a five-judge constitution bench unanimously upholding its decision to abrogate its provisions. The apex court, however, ordered restoration of statehood for the present-day Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir "at the earliest" and holding the state assembly elections by September 30, 2024.

2024.

The apex court talked tough over the governors of Punjab and Tamil Nadu delaying assent to bills passed by the state legislatures, cautioning the Raj Bhawan occupant in Chandigarh against "playing with fire" and observing his counterpart in Chennai, accused of "sitting over" 12 bills, was a "matter of concern".

The apex court, while taking note of hate speeches at political rallies and religious programmes, said it was looking to put in place a machinery to deal with these.

The year saw marathon hearing of important cases, including on reconsideration of the Supreme Court's 1998 judgement which said lawmakers enjoy immunity from prosecution for taking bribe to make a speech or cast a vote, besides on pleas challenging the remission granted to 11 convicts in the Bilkis Bano gang-rape case and murder of seven of her family members during the 2002 Gujarat riots.

Judgements in these cases are expected in 2024. The apex court will also deliver its verdict on petitions challenging electoral bonds scheme for political funding next year.

Matters related to air pollution during winter in Delhi-National Capital Region also kept the apex court busy. It made hard-hitting remarks and passed directives for curbing the menace.

In a first initiative of its kind, the Supreme Court launched a handbook containing a glossary of 'gender unjust terms' and suggested alternative words and phrases which may be used in legal lexicon.

According to the handbook, words like eve-teasing, prostitute, and housewife will be out of the legal jargon and be replaced with terms like street sexual harassment, sex worker and homemaker.

In a bid to make itself litigation friendly, the Supreme Court undertook measures

including launch of portal 'SuSwagatam' to enable lawyers and litigants to register themselves online and get e-passes to enter courtrooms. It also onboarded the National Judicial Data Grid, a repository of data on pendency and disposal of cases.

The SC also stepped in to assuage the concerns of those hit by ethnic violence in Manipur and passed a raft of directives, including for setting up a panel of three former women high court judges to ensure that people are protected, rehabilitated and compensated.

Battling for media freedom, it said criticism of government policies cannot be termed "anti-establishment" and quashed the Centre's telecast ban on Malayalam news channel, MediaOne.

On pleas questioning the seizure of electronic devices like mobile phones and laptops of individuals, especially media professionals, by investigating agencies, it asked the Centre to come out with guidelines.

Dealing with cases of anti-terror law, the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, the apex court delivered important verdicts including the one which held that mere membership of a banned organisation was an offence liable to be punished with imprisonment under the provisions of this law.

In another verdict, it held that mere holding of certain literature through which violent acts may be propagated would not attract the provisions of UAPA.

The apex court also dealt with several matters related to animals, including the death of eight cheetahs, translocated from Africa, in the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh.

A five-judge constitution bench upheld the validity of amendment acts of Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Karnataka which allowed bull-taming sport 'Jallikattu', bullock-cart races and buffalo racing sport 'Kambala', saying they are "valid legislations".

Extortionist arrested in Anantnag

STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Police on Monday arrested an extortionist in Anantnag district.

Taking cognisance of social media reports and on the basis of complaint received that an individual namely Saqib Bashir Ganai resident of Rakh Moman Bijbehara, district Anantnag has been cheating and intimidating people in order to illegally extort money from them, legal action has been initiated against the said person, according to official handout.

A case FIR No. 294/2023 under relevant sections of law has been registered in Police Station Bijbehara. The citizens have been requested to exercise appropriate caution while using internet and social media apps and in case of any grievance, approach Police directly for appropriate legal action rather than taking recourse to social media.

Opinion poll predicts return of Modi Govt in 2024

STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: An opinion poll conducted by a private news channel and a survey agency has predicted the return of the Modi government, while noting the opposition INDIA bloc "could do better" than the BJP in states like Bihar, Punjab, Maharashtra and Telangana.

According to the survey conducted by the ABP News and C-Voter, the BJP-led NDA would get around 295-335 seats, while the opposition Congress and its INDIA allies are projected to get 165-205 seats.

"ABP News-CVoter Opinion Poll, the first before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, puts the NDA comfortably ahead. I.N.D.I.A. could do better than the BJP in states like Bihar, Punjab and Maharashtra, apart from South," they said in a statement.

"ABP News-C Voter opinion poll predicts return of the Modi government in 2024, but South remains a challenge for the NDA (National Democratic Alliance)," it said.

The survey findings and projections are based on C-Voter Opinion Poll CATI interviews (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing), conducted from December 15 to December 21 among 18-plus adults statewide, "all confirmed voters". The sample size of the survey, covering 543 seats, was 13,115, the statement added.

"Zone-wise projections show BJP/NDA bagging 80-90 seats out of 153 in east zone, the highest 150-



160 seats out of 180 in the north zone, 45-55 out of 78 in the west zone, and 20-30 out of 132 in the south zone," the ABP News-CVoter said.

"The South is the only zone where the BJP/NDA is behind, with the Congress/I.N.D.I.A projected to win 70-80 seats. In the other three zones, t h e INC(Congress)/I.N.D.I.A is projected to get 50-60, 20-30, and 25-35 in the east, north, and west, respectively," it added.

The ABP News-CVoter said that according to the survey the NDA appears to be "comfortably ahead" with all the BJP-ruled states, such as Madhya Pradesh (27-29), Chhattisgarh (9-11), Rajasthan (23-25), and Uttar Pradesh (73-75), looking to vote for its candidates.

"In Congress-ruled Karnataka too, the BJP is projected to win 22-24 seats with a vote share of 52 per cent against the Congress' 4-6 seats and 43 per cent vote share. In MP, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, the Opposition alliance is projected to get only 0-2 seats each," the ABP News-CVoter added.

According to the opinion

poll, the states where the Congress and opposition INDIA bloc are ahead are Telangana (9-11 seats), Bihar (21-23) and Maharashtra (26-28). In Punjab, the Congress is projected to bag 5-7 Lok Sabha seats while the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) may get 4-6 seats.

"In West Bengal, where the I.N.D.I.A seat share will be a matter of debate, the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) could get 23-25 seats and Congress and Left together 0-2, against the BJP's 16-18, if the elections are held now," the ABP News-CVoter said. "On the question of how much satisfied people were with the work of the current prime minister Minister Modi, a total of 47.2 percent people across India said they were very much satisfied with PM Narendra Modi's work, while 30.2 percent said they were satisfied to some extent and 21.3 percent said they were not at all satisfied," it said.

The ABP News-CVoter opinion poll also found that a majority of the respondents think the opposition parties' INDIA bloc "will not remain united till the 2024 Lok Sabha elections," it added.