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Joint security exercise held in Srinagar to bolster security grid

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Security forces on Tuesday carried out anti-sabotage operations around vital installations in Srinagar city with the aim to strengthen security measures and counter any potential threats.

"Police, in close coordination with the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), conducted Area Security/Anti-Sabotage (AST) operations around major vital installations and sensitive locations in the North Zone of Srinagar, with the aim of strengthening preventive security measures and countering any potential threats," a Srinagar police spokesman said.

He said the purpose of the joint security exercise is to reinforce the overall security grid, enhance operational preparedness, and ensure the safety and security of critical infrastructure as well as the general public.

24x7 vigil along Mata Vaishno Devi track ahead of New Year

JAMMU: Surveillance has been stepped up along the route to the Mata Vaishno Devi shrine atop Trikuta hills to manage the expected New Year pilgrim rush, with focus on high-footfall and congested stretches, officials said on Tuesday.

A multi-tier security grid has also been put in place in and around the shrine, comprising personnel from the Police, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and shrine board security, supported by Quick Response Teams (QRTs), they said. A high-level meeting chaired by Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) Sachin Kumar Vaishya, and attended by senior officials of the board, district administration, representatives of security agencies and other stakeholders, reviewed the arrangements to ensure a safe and smooth pilgrimage for the devotees, officials said. During the meeting, the CEO directed the concerned authorities to further strengthen the Yatra management.



"During the operation, thorough checking and sani-

tisation of the identified areas were carried out, along

with a comprehensive

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Drug peddler's property worth Rs 1 Cr attached

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Police on Tuesday attached property worth 1 crore of a notorious drug peddler here, alleging it was acquired through the proceeds of illicit drug trafficking, officials said.

The attached property attached under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act comprises a double-storey residential house built on 12 marlas of land, situated at Sultan Mohalla, Saidakadal, belonging to the accused Nisar Ahmad Bota, they said.

The accused is involved in a case registered at Rainawari police station, the official said.

During the course of the investigation, it was established that the said property had been acquired through illicit proceeds generated from drug trafficking activities. Consequently, the property was attached under Section 68-F of the

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CJI urges young lawyers to be nation builders



■ STATE TIMES NEWS

PATIALA: Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant told young lawyers on Tuesday to see themselves not merely as "case builders" but as "nation builders" and ask themselves a larger, more enduring question -- what is the role of a lawyer in a country like India.

Addressing the seventh convocation ceremony of the Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law (RGNUL) here, the CJI said every generation inherits the country in an unfinished form and

bears the responsibility of shaping its future.

He drew a distinction between "case builders" and "nation builders".

"Watching all of you take your place in the world, I am reminded of a simple truth -- every generation receives the republic unfinished. Our Constitution is not a monument cast in stone, it is an ingenious blueprint. The courts give it interpretation, the institutions give it structure, but you, my dear young ones, must give it life. You must decide what India

becomes next," he told the graduating students.

The CJI said whenever he has the privilege of addressing such a young and dynamic audience, "I must confess that I assume most of you will join the bar."

"This is more of an earnest hope. And this also brings me to the central theme I want to share with you all today -- that even as advocates, you are not merely case builders. You are, in fact, nation builders," he said.

Justice Kant told the gathering that when many of the students chose to study law, they might have imagined themselves arguing landmark cases, drafting intricate contracts or perhaps, addressing constitutional benches one day, which he said are worthy ambitions and there is nothing wrong with those.

"But I would urge you to pause and ask a larger, more enduring question

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Special NIA court orders attachment of Ghulam Nabi Fai's property

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: A special NIA court in Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday ordered immediate attachment of land belonging to Ghulam Nabi Fai, a US-based Kashmiri lobbyist and convicted agent of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI).

National Investigation Agency (NIA) Special Judge Yahaya Firdous of Budgam district authorised the seizure of over 1.5 kanals (approximately 8,100 sq. ft.) of land across two villages -- Wadwan and Chhattabugh.

The court directed the Budgam district collector to

take possession of the property "forthwith" with the assistance of revenue and police authorities.

Later in the day, Budgam police attached Fai's property.

The court's decision follows an application by Assistant Public Prosecutor Mohammad Iqbal Rather under Section 83 of the Criminal Procedure Code (now Section 85 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita).

Originally a resident of Budgam, Fai was declared a "proclaimed absconder" by the court in April this

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Advocate General's post vacant in J&K; no proposal yet for new appointment: RTI reply

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The advocate general's post in Jammu and Kashmir is lying vacant for more than a year following senior advocate D C Raina's resignation, the Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs has said.

Responding to an application filed under the Right to Information (RTI) Act by Jammu-based activist Raman Kumar Sharma, the central public information officer (CPIO) has said no proposal has so far been initiated to fill the post.

"The post of advocate general is presently lying vacant. The post is lying vacant from the date on which the last advocate general tendered his resignation," read the RTI reply given on Monday.

Raina submitted his resignation in October last year, two days after a National Conference-led government assumed office in the Union Territory, but his resignation was not accepted by the lieutenant governor, bringing to the fore a growing rift between the Lok Bhavan and the elected regime in yet

absence of the rules of business.

Raina was appointed to the post of advocate general of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir on three occasions -- in September 2008, February 2016 and July 2018. After his resignation, the government has consented to his continuation.

"The matter (Raina's resignation) is presently under consideration. Acceptance has not yet been finalised or formally communicated as yet," the RTI reply said.

The department declined

to provide a certified copy of the resignation letter, saying disclosure at this stage is not appropriate as the matter is under consideration.

In response to queries regarding the appointment of a new advocate general, it clarified that no proposal has so far been moved and consequently, no steps have been initiated for making a fresh appointment.

The RTI reply further clarified that the advocate general of Jammu and Kashmir is appointed by the competent authority under the Constitution.

Fresh snowfall, rain in parts of Kashmir

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Parts of Kashmir were hit by fresh snowfall and rain, with the minimum temperature remaining above the freezing point at most places in the valley, officials said on Tuesday.

North Kashmir's ski resort of Gulmarg was among the places in the higher reaches that received intermittent snowfall through the night. It continued till the morning, they said.

Shopian district, Mughal Road and Gurez in Bandipora also received snowfall. The plains of the valley received intermittent rain.

The minimum temperature in Srinagar on Monday night was recorded at 2.7 degrees Celsius, down from 4 degrees Celsius the night before and 5.1 notches above the season's normal, according to the officials.

Other places in the valley also registered above-normal minimum temperatures ranging from 3.8 to 5.6 degrees Celsius.

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J&K cabinet approves proposal to upgrade panchayat secretaries' pay level

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir Cabinet has approved a proposal to upgrade the pay level of panchayat secretaries in the rural development department.

The Council of Ministers, which met on Monday in Jammu under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, approved the proposal for up-gradation of the pay level of Panchayat Secretaries of the Rural Development Department," the office of the Chief Minister said on Tuesday.



It further said that the decision addresses a long-pending demand of these grassroots functionaries.

The Panchayat Secretaries had been demanding for a

long time the removal of anomalies and better allowances in their salaries, with a focus on revision of the pay scale from Level 2 to Level 4 in J&K.

NTA to introduce facial biometric verification, live photography in major entrance exams from 2026

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The National Testing Agency (NTA) is planning to introduce the facial recognition system for verification in major entrance exams including NEET and JEE from 2026, according to sources.

The agency is also in the process of introducing an option for candidates to capture live photographs while applying for the exams.

"During the 2025 NEET exam, the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) successfully conducted a Proof of Concept (PoC) on the use of face authentication. The PoC was aimed at evaluating the feasibility and effectiveness of Aadhaar-based face authentication as a means of verifying the identity of can-

didates," a source said. "During the PoC, Aadhaar face authentication technology was deployed at select NEET centres in Delhi, and was integrated with NIC's digital infrastructure and NTA's examination protocols," he added.

The source informed that the same will be introduced in major entrance exams from next year.

"The option for capturing live photographs has also been introduced in the application system to ensure that unfair means are not being used," the source added.

Facial biometric verification confirms a person's identity by analysing unique facial features, such as the distance between the eyes or the shape of the nose,

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Northern Railway introduces 'scratch rake' to curb fog-related delays in Jammu division

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Amid fog-related disruptions over the past many days, the Northern Railway's Jammu Division has arranged 'scratch rake' to minimize delays in train operations and to ensure passenger convenience during winter months, an official said on Tuesday.

The significant decision has been taken on the directions of Divisional Railway Manager, Vivek Kumar, the official said.

With this facility, it has been decided to provide a scratch rake or additional rake for Train No. 12414 (Jammu Tawi-Ajmer) and Train No. 22478/22477 (Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra-New Delhi-Katra) to compensate for delays in



their departure and arrival, the official said.

He said the step would ensure that passengers reach their destinations on time.

The scratch rake or additional rake is a solution for trains that are delayed by seven hours or indefinitely, the official said, adding that by using these scratch rakes, the punctuality of delayed

Disclosure of outsiders working, residing in Samba mandatory for property owners, contractors

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The administration in Jammu and Kashmir's Samba district on Tuesday issued an order making it mandatory for landlords, property owners, industries, business establishments and contractors to disclose details of outsiders working or residing in the district, citing security concerns.

The order was issued by Samba District Magistrate Ayushi Sudan under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita in compliance with the Jammu and Kashmir

Tenancy Act, 2025.

"I do hereby order and require all landlords, landowners, owners of properties, owners of business establishments, attorney holders, persons in charge of properties in any capacity, hereafter called as owners, located in the jurisdiction of district Samba, to comply strictly with the following directions in accordance with the Jammu and Kashmir Tenancy Act, 2025," the DM said in the order.

The decision was taken following deliberations of the district-level standing committee on border security,

during which the Senior Superintendent of Police, Samba, highlighted instances of anti-national and anti-social elements seeking hideouts in residential areas in the guise of tenants or domestic helpers, the order noted.

The administration also took note of concerns raised earlier by the Border Security Force regarding settlements of some outsider families close to the International Border, who had taken agricultural land on rent and were suspected of involvement in

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Delhi HC dismisses plea of HM chief's sons against framing of charges in terror funding case

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court on Tuesday dismissed the pleas of two sons of Hizbul Mujahideen chief Syed Salahuddin and others challenging the framing of charges against them in different terror funding cases.

A bench of Justices Vivek Chaudhary and Manoj Jain rejected the appeals on the ground that they were not maintainable.

"All the present appeals, on grounds of maintainability, are dismissed," the bench said in its order.

The high court held that an order framing charges against the accused is interlocutory in nature and cannot be challenged in appeal under Section 21 of National Investigation Agency (NIA) Act.

The court passed the order while rejecting the appeals filed by sons of Hizbul-Mujahideen chief Syed Salahuddin and others challenging the framing of charges against them in a Jammu and Kashmir terror funding case.

Besides, the court also rejected similar petitions filed by various other accused facing prosecution in separate NIA cases -- Masarat Alam Bhat, Shabir Ahmed Shah, Zahoor Ahmad Shah Watali, Nayeem Ahmed Khan, Javed Ali, Alemla Jamir, Masasasong Ao, Abdur Rehman, MD Waqar Lone, Rajkumar, Rouf Ahmad Bhat, Mateen Ahmed Bhat, Hasir Nisar Langoo, Manan Dar, Hanan Gulzar Dar, Zamin

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WEATHER

Temperature (Jammu)
Max: 21.6°C Min: 10.7°C

Humidity
Max: 88 Min: 60

Temperature (Srinagar)
Max: 10.2°C Min: 2.7°C

Humidity
Max: 97 Min: 75

Sunset : 17:29 Hours
Sunrise : 07:30 Hours

