

03 J&K Branch of ICAI elects new office bearers

08 Several Indian-origin scientists keen to return home: Dr Jitendra

10 India's 'Super Subs' ensure clean sweep against Sri Lanka

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Putin puts Russia's nuclear forces on alert, cites sanctions

■ AGENCY

KYIV: In a dramatic escalation of East-West tensions over Russia's invasion of Ukraine, President Vladimir Putin ordered Russian nuclear forces put on high alert Sunday in response to what he called aggressive statements by leading NATO powers.

The order means Putin wants Russia's nuclear weapons prepared for increased readiness to launch and raises the threat that Moscow's invasion of Ukraine and the West's response to it could boil over into nuclear warfare.

Amid the worrying development, the office of Ukraine's president said a delegation would meet with Russian officials as Moscow's troops drew closer to Kyiv.

Putin, in giving the nuclear alert directive, cited not only the alleged statements by NATO members but the hard-hitting financial sanctions imposed by the West

Ukraine, Russia diplomats to meet on Belarus border

Three more flights bring back 688 Indians from Ukraine

KYIV: The office of Ukraine's president has confirmed that a delegation will meet with Russian officials as Moscow's troops draw closer to Kyiv.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's office said on the Telegram messaging app that the two sides would meet at an unspecified location on the Belarusian border and did not give a precise time for the meeting.

The announcement on Sunday came hours after Russia announced that its delegation had flown to Belarus to await talks. Ukrainian officials initially rejected the move, saying any talks should take place elsewhere than Belarus, where Russia has placed a large contingent of troops.

The meeting news came shortly after President Vladimir Putin ordered Russian nuclear forces put on high alert in response to what he called aggressive statements by leading NATO powers. Meanwhile, India

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

against Russia, including the Russian leader himself.

Speaking at a meeting with his top officials, Putin told his defense minister and the chief of the military's General Staff to put the nuclear deterrent forces in a special regime of combat duty.

Western countries aren't

only taking unfriendly actions against our country in the economic sphere, but top officials from leading NATO members made aggressive statements regarding our country, Putin said in televised comments.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Putin

was resorting to a pattern he used in the weeks before launching the invasion of Ukraine, "which is to manufacture threats that don't exist in order to justify further aggression. The global community and American people should look at it through that prism. We've seen him do this time and time again.

She told ABC's This Week that Russia has not been under threat from NATO or Ukraine.

This is all a pattern from President Putin and we're going to stand up ... we have the ability to defend ourselves but we also need to call out what we're seeing here, Psaki said.

Putin threatened in the days before Russia's invasion to retaliate harshly against any nations that intervened directly in the conflict in Ukraine, and he specifically raised the specter of his country's status as a

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

Fresh guidelines for restrictions for COVID containment issued Home Deptt to monitor COVID Appropriate Behaviour enforcement

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The government on Sunday announced that measures notified on February 20, 2022 to control spread of COVID-19 will continue to remain in force in the Union Territory till further order.

"The State Executive Committee, in exercise of the powers conferred upon it under section 24 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, orders that the guidelines / instructions on COVID containment in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, already notified vide Government Orders 35 and 36-JK (DMRRR) of 2021 dated May 29, 2021 read with Government Orders 73-JK (DMRRR) of 2021 dated October 22, 2021, 91-JK (DMRRR) of 2021 dated December 28, 2021 and 17-JK (DMRRR) of 2022 dated February 20, 2022 shall continue to remain in force till further orders," reads an order

issued by Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction.

The order said that public and private educational institutions can seek personal attendance of vaccinated staff in limited numbers for administrative work only. The maximum number of people allowed to gather at any indoor or outdoor remains restricted to 50 per cent at a time.

"The District Magistrates (Chairperson, DDMA) of respective Districts of J&K shall adopt a Zero Tolerance policy towards non-compliance of Covid Appropriate Behaviour (CAB) and shall ensure due action against defaulters under relevant sections of the Disaster Management Act, Epidemic Act and the Indian Penal Code," it stated adding that the DMs shall constitute inspection teams of district officers to check whether the instructions contained herein

for enforcement of CAB are being implemented by the concerned with due responsibility.

Further, the DMs shall constitute joint teams of Police and Executive Magistrates for intensifying enforcement of CAB and ensure no violator is let off, it stated and added that the joint teams shall submit daily report regarding activities carried out by them and their assessment of compliance level.

"The Home Department, Government of Jammu & Kashmir shall monitor the enforcement of Covid Appropriate Behaviour closely and shall submit a Report to the Chairperson of the State Executive Committee (Chief Secretary) regularly," the order stated and added "The Health and Medical Education Department, Jammu and Kashmir shall closely monitor all relevant statistics and Data in respect of Covid-19 for timely

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

J&K reports 54 new COVID cases

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday recorded 54 new COVID-19 cases, taking its infection tally to 4,52,955, officials said.

Of the fresh cases, 38 were detected in Jammu division and 16 in Kashmir division, they said.

The officials said Jammu district recorded the highest number of 30 new cases. There are 788 active

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

Srinagar acid attack survivor awaits regaining sight

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

CHENNAI/NEW DELHI: She wakes up in the dead of night and screams with tears rolling down her cheek as the memory of February 1 acid attack still haunts her, say family members of a Jammu and Kashmir woman who is waiting to regain her sight and see light at the end of the tunnel at a specialised eye hospital in Chennai.

"We have been with her since February 1, the unfortunate day when a monstrous person threw acid on my sister's face in downtown Srinagar. We dread that day," says 22-year-old Arizoo Nisar, sister of the acid

attack survivor. The family is thankful to a businessman-turned-politician, who prefers anonymity, for bearing all hospital expenses and to the Jammu and Kashmir government for transporting them to Chennai and also expressed gratitude to police for completing the investigation into the case in record time.

"I am sure that the culprits would be punished and their punishment would deter others having a similar mentality," her father Nisar Chilloo says.

Arizoo says that her sister who has undergone six

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

Seven police officers transferred

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Jammu, Chandan Kohli on Sunday transferred seven police officers.

As per order, SI Sudershan Lal has been transferred from DPL Jammu and posted as Incharge Police Post (PP) Residency; SI Jaswant Singh has been transferred from PP Residency and posted as Incharge PP GMC Jammu; SI Manohar Lal has been transferred from DPL Jammu and posted as Incharge PP Sarwal; PSI Sarjeet Singh has been transferred from PP Sarwal and posted at Police Station Peer Mitha; PSI Mohd Ilyas from PP Bathindi to P/S Arnia; PSI Mohd Younis Khanday from PP Sainik Colony and posted as Incharge PP Bathindi; PSI Bhawani Singh has been transferred from PP GMC and posted as Incharge PP Sainik Colony.

Rana terms PAGD's whitepaper as white lies paper

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

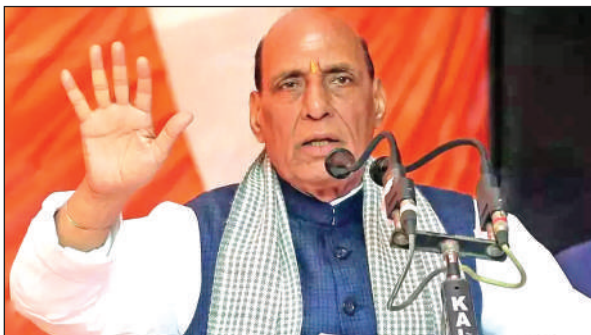
JAMMU: Terming the PAGD's so-called whitepaper 'The Betrayal' as a bunch of lies by the bunch of dynasts, Senior BJP leader Devender Singh Rana on Sunday cautioned against attempts of creating an atmosphere of paranoia across Jammu and Kashmir in a fit of desperation to regain lost power by indulging in falsehood and misrepresentation of facts.

"On the face of rejection by the people of Jammu and Kashmir in general and the Valley in particular, the limited company of dynasts under the umbrella of PAGD is unsuccessfully trying to whip up passions to attain rele-



Prominent BJP leader Devender Singh Rana briefing media on Sunday.

vance in the Kashmir politics", Rana said when asked by media persons at the sidelines of a social function here at Jio Potha Ghat, Akhmoor, to comment over the



increased. World has got the message that India is not to be trifled with, he said.

He said soon the country will become self-reliant in the defence sector and will become an exporter of defence equipment instead of being an importer, which it is

now. He claimed political analysts have come to the conclusion that BJP was going to form next government in the state and people are going to write a new history.

"Now triple engine will run in the state with Modi's

whitepaper released by the PAGD. He said the people know who's who and can read in between the lines, especially as the preface of their white lies exposes the inherent mischief of polarizing the communities and regions to satiate their lust for power. The authors of the document have taken pains in defining the values and explaining the preamble of the Constitution of India with reference to Satyameva Jayate in a bid to make out a case in support of Article 370 but fail to appreciate the temporary nature of this provision.

He said the temporary provision granting special status

to Jammu and Kashmir had to go for being an obstacle to the rights of Dalits, women and tribals in particular, he said, adding this is why the PAGD remains confined to a few cozy drawing rooms of Gupkar Road in Srinagar.

Rana also questioned the timing of the whitepaper, saying it took them 19 long months to frame up a response to August 2019 developments. The proprietary demanded them to wait for the outcome of their plea filed in Supreme Court of India but having chosen to articulate their false narrative in the public domain speaks of the underlying

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

J&K's Wushu player Sadia wins Gold at Moscow

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: India's star Wushu player Sadia Tariq has made the entire nation proud especially Jammu and Kashmir by winning gold medal in the Moscow Wushu Stars Championship held in the Russian capital from February 22 to 28.

Sadia is receiving appreciation from one and all for her brilliant achievement in the world of sports.

Prime Minister, Narendra Modi also took to social media to wish the young Wushu champion. "Congratulations to Sadia Tariq on winning the Gold



medal at the Moscow Wushu Stars Championship. Her success will inspire many

budding athletes. Wishing her the very best for her future endeavours", PM Modi said in a tweet.

Lieutenant Governor of J&K, Manoj Sinha, also wished the player for her brilliant success. "Congratulations to Sadia Tariq from Srinagar on winning Gold in this International championship. She exhibited great discipline, dedication, talent and mental strength making India proud with her significant accomplishment. She is an inspiration for budding sportspersons of the

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

Traffic resumes on Jammu-Srinagar highway; light vehicles plying from both sides

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

BANIHAL/JAMMU: Traffic movement on the 270-km Jammu-Srinagar national highway resumed on Sunday after being suspended for over 30 hours owing to snowfall in the Qazigund-Banihal sector and landslides in Ramban, officials said. The highway was closed for traffic around 4.30 am on Saturday and debris was cleared at over a dozen places between Chanderkote and Ramsu, but a fresh landslide at Magerkote in Ramban around 5 am delayed the resumption of traffic movement, Senior Superintendent of Police, Traffic (National Highway) Shabir Ahmad Malik said. He said the road clearance agencies pressed personnel and machinery again on Sunday morning and took several hours to finally restore vehicular traffic on the highway the only all-weather road linking Kashmir with the rest of the country.

A massive traffic jam was witnessed at the Nagrota bypass in Jammu after the traffic police stopped light motor vehicles (LMVs) carrying passengers from Jammu to Srinagar

on Sunday morning. Traffic movement was restored around noon, the officials said.

They said a similar situation was seen at Qazigund in south Kashmir where all Jammu-bound traffic was halted this morning due to the closure of the highway.

"After the road clearance operation was completed, traffic was first allowed from Jammu towards Srinagar. Later, vehicular movement was also allowed from Qazigund towards Jammu," the SSP said.

The Banihal-Qazigund sector of the highway experienced snowfall on Friday-Saturday night, while landslides and shooting of stones from the hillocks were triggered by heavy rains at Rompadi-Banihal, Shalgardh-Wagan, Moumpassi-Ramsu, Panthiyal, Digdole, Maroog, Monkey Morh, Cafeteria Morh and Mehar in Raman district.

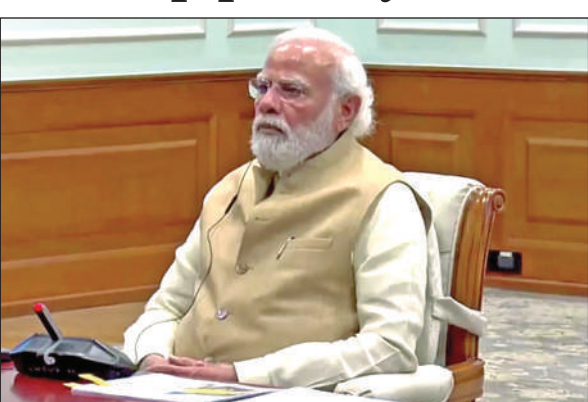
The closure of the highway left a large number of trucks stranded at different places which were allowed to move towards their respective destinations later on Sunday, the officials said.

Ensuring safety of Indian students, evacuating them top priority: Modi

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a high-level meeting on the Ukraine crisis on Sunday and asserted that ensuring the safety of Indian students and evacuating them is the government's top priority, official sources said. It was also decided at the meeting to further enhance cooperation with the neighbouring countries of Ukraine to expedite the evacuation of Indian students, they said.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar was part of the meeting, which was also attended by top government officials, including National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval. The meeting lasted for over two hours, the



sources said.

Modi presided over the meeting immediately upon his return from Uttar Pradesh, where he addressed public meetings as part of the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) campaign for the

state Assembly polls.

A large number of Indians, mostly students, are stranded in Ukraine following Russia's attack on the country. India has begun evacuating them and over 900

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

LeT terrorist held in Anantnag

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: An alleged active terrorist of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) outfit was arrested on Sunday from Anantnag district, police here said. "During a surprise naka checking, movement of a suspicious person was noticed, who was apprehended tactfully by the alert police party," a police spokesman said. The arrested man was identified as Shahid Thoker son of Mohd Iqbal Thoker resident of Nossipora Keegam Shopian.

"Incriminating material and a pistol was recovered from his possession," the spokesperson said. As per police records, Thoker is a categorized terrorist as he had recently joined the LeT, he said.

WEATHER

Temperature (Jammu)

Max: 22.1°C Min: 8.1°C

Humidity

Max: 77 Min: 47

Temperature (Srinagar)

Max: 12.0°C Min: 1.4°C

Humidity

Max: 92 Min: 51

Sunset : 18:28 Hours

Sunrise : 07:00 Hours