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3 JeM terrorists...

were hiding inside a mud house on the foothills and opened fire on the approaching search parties, leading to an intense gunfight. The mud house caught fire during the gunfight and was gutted. The charred bodies of the terrorists were retrieved from the scene and efforts are on to identify them, the officials said, adding that the intelligence inputs had suggested the presence of Saifullah and two of his associates, both Pakistani nationals.

The Chatroo forest belt has witnessed nearly half-a-dozen gunfights between terrorists and security forces since January 18, resulting in the killing of a soldier and a Pakistani terrorist. While the soldier lost his life on January 18, the terrorist was eliminated on February 4.

With the killing of the three terrorists on Sunday, a total of seven JeM ultras have been eliminated by security forces in separate encounters in the Jammu region this year. Earlier, two terrorists were killed in the Ramanagar forest in Udhampur on February 4 and one was neutralised in Parhetar village of Kathua on January 23.

Meanwhile, a truck driver was detained for questioning after some Pakistani contact numbers were found on his mobile phone during checking at the Pandour chowk in Samba district late on Saturday evening.

The truck was on its way to Kashmir when police stopped it at a checkpoint and found several Pakistani numbers on the driver's phone, the officials said, adding that further investigation is on.

In a stirring display of courage, TYSON, the elite K9 of 2 Para SF, was injured during Operation Trashi-I in Kishtwar on Sunday morning.

According to official sources, TYSON was the first to advance towards the dhok where terrorists were holed up. During the intense operation, the brave canine sustained a bullet injury, yet refused to retreat, continuing to move forward and assisting the team in neutralising the terrorists.

Despite being wounded, TYSON's relentless advance proved critical to the success of the operation.

He was later airlifted for specialised medical treatment. Officials confirmed that TYSON is safe, stable, and recovering well.

The extraordinary bravery shown by TYSON once again underscores the vital role of K9 warriors of SF in counter-terror operations, earning him heartfelt admiration as a true hero on four paws.



8 LeT operatives...

(34), Mohammad Zahidul Islam (40), Mohammad Liton (40), Mohammad Uzzal (27) and Umar (32) -- all natives of Bangladesh's Bogura district," the officer said.

He said preliminary interrogations revealed that Faruk came in contact with Lone in March 2025 and was indoctrinated by him. Lone allegedly appointed Faruk to spearhead LeT operations in India, using Bangladeshi nationals who had assumed Indian identities.

In December 2025, Faruk was directed to conduct reconnaissance of vital installations in India and send videos to his handler. "After completing the reconnaissance, he was instructed to visit Bangladesh for further directions and recruiting more Bangladeshi nationals residing illegally in India," the Additional CP said.

Police said Faruk rented a hideout in Kolkata in accordance with Lone's instructions and shared its details with him. The premises were meant to serve as a base for terror activities. Lone also directed Faruk to arrange weapons, for which he began contacting local sources.

On February 6, Faruk and Robiul Islam boarded a plane from Kolkata to Delhi via Patna. On the night of February 7, they pasted the pro-Pakistan and pro-terror posters at 10 locations in Delhi, recorded videos of the act and sent those to Lone. They returned to Kolkata by train on February 8.

"Lone congratulated them and instructed them to replicate the act in Kolkata. The duo later pasted similar posters at multiple locations in the West Bengal capital and shared videos with him. Lone had another accomplice, Saidul Islam, a Bangladeshi national currently in a foreign country who facilitated his illegal entry into Bangladesh and arranged his hideout there. Saidul Islam also provided details of the Tamil Nadu-based group to Lone and Faruk," Kushwah said.

During searches, police seized pro-Pakistan and pro-terror posters from the rented accommodations of the accused, along with 10 mobile phones containing incriminating material. They also seized 25 credit and debit cards, five point-of-sale (POS) machines and Bangladeshi passports and identity cards.

Officials are probing the financial transactions and possible "hawala" links. Police said the accused had procured Indian identity documents to mask their Bangladeshi origin and entered the country illegally.

Kushwah said Lone, a resident of Srinagar, was arrested by the Special Cell in 2007 under the provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and Explosive Substances Act. At the time of his arrest, he was found to have direct links with Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) chief Hafiz Saeed and his deputy, Zakir-ur-Rehman Lakhvi. He had undergone basic (Daura-e-Aam) and advanced (Daura-e-Khaas) terror training at an LeT camp in Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

Police said Lone was backed and funded by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) to recruit Bangladeshi nationals residing illegally in India for planning terror plots. In addition to the 2007 case, Lone is also facing proceedings under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and is named in another criminal case registered at Delhi's Hari Nagar police station in 2011.

Police said the timely arrests have potentially averted terror strikes in India. The module had conducted reconnaissance of important installations and was in the process of arranging weapons. Further investigation is underway to identify other associates of the arrested accused.

DM Jammu orders...

original arms licenses before the Judicial Section of the District Magistrate's Office within ten days from the issuance of the notice. The purpose is to verify compliance and initiate necessary action, if required, under the law.

Further, individuals holding firearms beyond the permitted limit have been instructed to deposit the excess weapons in accordance with legal provisions and obtain proper receipts. They must also inform the Licensing Authority within the prescribed timeframe.

The notice warns that failure to comply will invite legal action, including proceedings that may lead to suspension or revocation of licenses without further notice.

The order has been issued under the authority of Dr. Rakesh Minhas, District Magistrate, Jammu, on behalf of the Government of Jammu and Kashmir.

The move is being viewed as part of a broader effort by the district administration to ensure strict adherence to firearm regulations and maintain public safety across Jammu district.

Sixth Khelo India...

Gulmarg will feature four medal disciplines, namely Ski Mountaineering, Alpine Skiing, Nordic Skiing (Cross-Country), and Snowboarding, with Alpine Skiing drawing the highest participation, the officials said.

At the end of the KIWG 2026 Ladakh leg, Haryana led the medal tally with four gold medals, all won by its figure and ice skaters, followed by Ladakh, Maharashtra, and Telangana.

While the civil administration has made all arrangements for smooth conduct of the winter games, Kashmir police chief V K Birdi earlier on Wednesday chaired a security meeting to review the preparedness for the event.

Senior officers of police, the Army, Central Armed Police Forces, intelligence agencies, and civil administration participated in the meeting.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, on Saturday conducted a comprehensive inspection of various venues and key locations at Gulmarg and finalized arrangements for the event, the officials said.

During the visit, the DC inspected the Gulmarg Golf Club and other designated competition and accommodation sites to ensure that all necessary arrangements have been put in place for the smooth and successful conduct of the prestigious winter sporting event, the officials said.

'Continued delay' in...

disappointment among the people," he said.

The National Conference (NC) president maintained that restoring statehood would strengthen democratic governance, ensure greater accountability and empower elected representatives to address public concerns.

Abdullah urged the Centre to honour its commitment without further delay and initiate concrete steps towards reinstating full statehood.

He said that safeguarding democratic rights and constitutional guarantees is essential for lasting peace, stability and development in Jammu and Kashmir.

Embraer CEO pledges...

production hub for aircraft to support the Asia-Pacific market.

The Embraer CEO said the company is eyeing to set up an exclusive regional MRO (Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul) hub for KC-390 operators in India while looking at a long-term symbiotic relationship with the country in both defence and civilian aerospace sectors.

The top executive, highlighting the acquisition of KC-390 by several high-profile NATO member nations, including Sweden, the Netherlands and Portugal, projected the plane as a strategic counter to the legacy dominance of Lockheed Martin's C-130J.

Neto said the KC-390 Millennium is a better fit for the future needs of modern air forces as it is a new generation multi-mission transport and aerial refuelling aircraft.

"Our aircraft has been chosen by nine European countries. It's NATO's best choice. We believe that the KC-390 is very well positioned to address the Indian Air Force's requirement," Neto said.

The Embraer President and CEO was in New Delhi as part of Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's delegation.

"We really believe that we are very well positioned for this contract, and our aircraft would be the best solution for India; not only for the Indian market, but maybe in the future, for the countries in the Asia Pacific region," he said.

In 2022, the Indian Air Force issued a Request for Information (RFI) to purchase medium transport aircraft (MTA) to replace its ageing fleet of Soviet-era AN-32 and IL-76 planes. The IAF plans to procure around 80 military transport aircraft and the multi-billion dollar procurement is likely to be cleared by the Defence Acquisition Council in the next couple of months.

Besides KC-390 Millennium, the other top contenders for the deal are Airbus Defence and Space's A-400M plane and Lockheed Martin's C-130 J Super Hercules. The IAF already operates 12 C-130 J Super Hercules.

In February 2024, Embraer announced a partnership with Mahindra to bid for the MTA programme.

Neto said the KC-390 is the most technologically advanced and versatile option for IAF and cited its load-carrying capability, diverse mission roles and jet-powered feature as against the rival platforms, and its latest digital avionics as well as low life-cycle costs.

Unlike the turboprop C-130 J Super Hercules, the KC-390 is jet-powered and it offers a 26-ton payload as against the 20 ton capability of C-130Js. The aircraft has a cruise speed of 470 knots and has the ability to fly faster while operating from unpaved or short runways.

"The aircraft is more than 50 per cent American equipment," Neto said, describing the plane as the "true" 21st-century airlifter that offers significant tactical heft.

Embraer has been emphasising that the KC-390 would provide India with a "stronger heft" in tactical airlift, bridging the gap between heavy lifters and smaller transport planes.

"The aircraft is quite prepared to operate from short and even unpaved runways. Compared to C-130Js, KC-390 is 25-30 per cent faster, and its operational cost will be less because it is a jet-powered aircraft as against the turboprop (C-130Js)," Neto said. "It carries more loads, it is faster, it can go further. You can have less aircraft to do the same missions," he said.

Neto also noted that Embraer will try its best to ensure maximum indigenous content in the aircraft.

The Embraer President and CEO, delving into the significant upswing in India-Brazil ties, said it is the right time to go for the futuristic collaboration.

"We believe a project like the KC390 fits better to a long-term vision (for India-Brazil ties). It is a new product, and it is a choice between new and the other ones that were launched many years ago," he said.

"It fits very well. We can expand our production capacity, take advantage of existing demand in India, and use this additional capacity to serve other markets in the region. The production line in India will take care of the demand in the Asia Pacific," he said.

Embraer is also looking at the civilian aviation sector in India.

The Brazilian aerospace giant and Adani Defence and Aerospace exchanged an enhanced Memorandum of Understanding on Saturday to establish a Final Assembly Line (FAL) for the E175 regional jet for India's Regional Transport Aircraft (RTA) programme.

This advancement from the initial MoU signed in January 2026 represents a significant step forward and forms part of a broader roadmap to develop an integrated RTA ecosystem in India, the two companies said.

The industrial partnership will aim to establish an ecosystem for the E175.

Both companies are already working together to progress all aspects of the MoU, including opportunities in aircraft manufacturing, supply chain, aftermarket services and pilot training, and securing orders to support the proposed FAL, they said.

As one of the world's fastest-growing aviation markets in terms of passenger traffic, India is expected to require at least 500 aircraft in the 80 to 146 seat segment over the next 20 years.

EU-India FTA...

free trade zones. Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi visited Austria in 2024 because of 75 years of the diplomatic relationship and now, we have the free-trade agreement. It is the mother of all deals. I think it is a win-win situation for the whole European Union and India," Proll said.

The FTA, finalised after years of negotiations re-launched in 2022, eliminates or reduces tariffs on 96.6 per cent of EU exports to India by value and 99.5 per cent of Indian exports to the EU by trade value.

Proll highlighted AI as a key future area of collaboration, calling it "the next step after digitalisation". "Our principle is that AI should serve for people ... a human-centred AI. We build human-centred AI around people to save democracy and make innovation happen. I think that is the way we can learn from each other," Proll noted.

NHPC enacts plan...

measures - dredging, flushing and under-sluicing to reduce sedimentation in the dam and improve power generation efficiency.

To address the crisis, a no-objection certificate (NOC) was issued to Reach Dredging Limited, Kolkata, for the desilting of the Salal dam reservoir. "The work commenced on November 25, 2025," the official said.

Reach Dredging Limited (RDL) has been involved in dredging operations for the removal of deposited sediments from the Salal Dam reservoir. The company specialises in river engineering, land reclamation and operating portable dredgers.

The firm has obtained permission from the J&K Department of Geology and mining for the disposal of one lakh metric tonnes (MT) of silt. "Of this, 1,77,802 MT has been dredged so far, while 68,490 MT has already been disposed of," officials added.

In a parallel move, another NOC was issued on February 17 to Dharti Dredging and Infrastructure Limited, Mumbai. "Statutory clearances are under process, after which the work will commence," the official said.

Separately, a tender has been floated on February 9 to make functional the permanently plugged under-sluices. "The last date for bid submission is March 23," the official added.

Officials said that the ongoing and proposed measures are aimed at restoring at least partial storage capacity and improving the long-term operational viability of the hydropower station.

He said that flushing operations are being undertaken periodically to minimise sediment build-up and enhance the efficiency of the power station. "These measures are helping in improving the overall performance of the plant," he added.

For the third component, under-sluicing, Gouraha said bids have been floated, and responses are being evaluated. "A final decision is yet to be taken, but this is also an integral part of our sedimentation management strategy," he said.

The NHPC-run Salal Hydroelectric Project is a 690 MW run-of-the-river power plant located on the Chenab River in Reasi district, and it supplies electricity to the Northern Grid, including Jammu and Kashmir.

Salal was the first hydropower project constructed by India under the treaty and features a 130-metre-high dam.

World leaders impressed...

Rashtrapati Bhavan is taking a significant step forward in this regard, he announced that the 'Rajaji Utsav' will be celebrated on February 23, during which the statue of C Rajagopalachari will be unveiled in the central courtyard of Rashtrapati Bhavan.

"Rajagopalachari was among those who saw power not as a position but as a service. His conduct, self-restraint, and independent thinking in public life inspire us even today," the prime minister said.

Flagging success stories of farmers in better land use, water saving and extra income, the Prime Minister referred to Kerala village's success in growing 570 varieties of rice in a single field and how a Odisha farmer has secured extra income through better land use and water savings.

Modi said the results of the country's farmers' hard work are reflected in the statistics and India has now become the world's largest rice producer.

He said producing more than 150 million tons of rice is no small achievement as the country is meeting its own needs and contributing to the global food basket.

Modi said farmers are not just food providers, they are the true devotees of the earth and people should learn from them farmers how to turn soil into gold.

He said many farmers are blending tradition and technology, and some are focussing not just on production but also on quality, value addition and new markets.

He said the story of a young farmer from Odisha named Hirod Patel is truly inspiring. Until about eight years ago, Patel cultivated paddy in the traditional way with his father, Shiv Shankar Patel, but then, he began to approach farming from a new perspective. "He built a strong mesh structure over his farm's pond, grew creeper vegetables on it, planted bananas, guavas and coconuts around the pond, and also started fish farming in the pond," the prime minister said.

India Post holds...

und for their daughter's education.

Addressing the Gramin Dak Sevaks Sammelan, Scindia said India Post's mail network is being rapidly modernised with technologies such as conveyor systems, scientific sorting, Radio-frequency identification (RFID), barcodes, and QR codes to improve service delivery.

"Post Office Savings Bank accounts number nearly 38 crore. In a country with a population of 140 crore, this is significant. A corpus of Rs 22 lakh crore is being mobilised by Gramin Dak Sevaks (postal servants) across the country," the Minister of Communications and Development of North Eastern Region said.

In hilly regions such as Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand, and Himachal Pradesh, India Post will also use drones to improve the delivery of postal logistics.

Scindia said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given a clarion call to "Reform, Perform and Transform," and India Post will follow it in letter and spirit.

Minister of State for Communications Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani said the Postal Department's expenditure is approximately Rs 35,000 crore, while its income stands at Rs 13,000 crore.

In Andhra Pradesh, the department recorded an income of Rs 600 crore against an expenditure of Rs 1,800 crore last year, while revenue rose to about Rs 850 crore this year.

"We are spending Rs 100 while earning Rs 40," Pemmasani said.

There are 1.65 lakh post offices with 4.5 lakh employees across the country. Earlier, about one lakh post offices recorded no mail or parcel transactions; however, constant monitoring has reduced such 'nil transaction' offices to just 1,500, he added.

JKTMA urges expediting DPC process, raises issues of teaching fraternity in J&K

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Jammu & Kashmir Teacher Master Association (JKTMA), under the leadership of veteran trade union leader and UT President Rakesh Singh along with UT General Secretary Vivek Gupta, convened a meeting to deliberate on several pressing issues concerning the teaching community across the Union Territory.

Addressing the gathering, Rakesh Singh urged the Education Minister to expedite the long-pending Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) process for the promotion of Teachers and Masters to the posts of Lecturers in various streams. He stated that delays in promotions have led to stagnation and demotivation among eligible educators and have also adversely affected the academic interests of senior secondary students. The Association demanded the immediate finalisation and issuance of promotion orders in a transparent and time-bound manner.

The Association welcomed Education Minister Sakina Itoo and expressed gratitude for her efforts towards addressing the concerns of the teaching fraternity, particularly the release of DPCs for Political Science and Dogri Lecturers aimed at tackling the shortage of subject specialists in Higher Secondary Schools.

During the meeting, members also demanded the immediate introduction of Science subjects in pending Higher Secondary Schools, emphasising that the move would benefit students in rural and far-flung areas by providing access to Science education without requiring long travel.

UT Vice President Vikram Gupta further called for the enhancement of overall cadre strength in Masters Grade posts by regularising SSA Head Teacher positions. According to the Association, this step would streamline administrative functioning, create promotional avenues for deserving Masters and strengthen academic supervision.

Reiterating the organisation's commitment, the UT President said that JKTMA will continue to work towards safeguarding the rights and professional growth of teachers and masters while promoting quality education for students across Jammu and Kashmir.

Last rites of Jammu student who died in Russia-Ukraine war held

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Manjinder Singh, 24, travelled to Russia on a student visa with hopes of higher education and supporting his family. He returned to his family, however, months later in a coffin, with his family alleging he was lured into joining the Russian Army under false promises.

Singh had travelled to Russia in December 2024 to build a better life but his death in the Russia-Ukraine conflict has plunged his loved ones in a forward hamlet in the RS Pura sector in Jammu into grief. They said if there were better opportunities in the country young people could be prevented from such overseas recruitment and urged the government to bring back Indian nationals who have fallen prey to such schemes. According to his family, he spent seven to eight months studying and working part-time, trying to support himself and reduce the financial burden on his parents.

"He was a good student. He went there to build a future," Ravinder Singh, his elder cousin brother, said. The family alleges that during his stay, he came into contact with agents who lured him and other Indian youths with promises of high salaries - reportedly up to Rs 1 crore for a one-year contract - and assurances that the work would be non-combat in nature.

"They told the boys they would only be moving materials or working behind the lines. They even deposited some money into a Russian account to gain trust," Ravinder said.

In early August, without informing his family, Manjinder joined the Russian Army and underwent around 15 days of training at a facility reportedly located several hundred kilometres from Moscow. His family only learned of the development nearly two weeks later.

"I asked him to come back immediately but he said it was not possible," Ravinder said.

He said the last conversation between Manjinder and his family took place on August 20. The following day, his phone was switched off. Months passed without contact, prompting the family to approach the Indian Embassy in Russia and the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

After repeated emails and requests, the family was informed in early February that Manjinder had been deployed in eastern Ukraine and had died on January 28, reportedly due to either a drone strike or artillery shelling.

Due to heavy shelling in the area, his body could not be recovered for several weeks. When it was eventually retrieved, it was reportedly in an advanced state of decomposition and was chemically preserved before being placed in a mortuary, he said, adding the officials asked the family whether they wished to conduct the last rites in Russia or repatriate the body.

Residents hail Dr. R.K Bhagat's re-posting to Poonch

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

POONCH: Residents of Poonch have welcomed the re-posting of noted surgeon Dr. R.K. Bhagat to the district, expressing happiness over his return to local healthcare services.

Dr. Bhagat, known for his professional competence and patient-centric approach, has built a strong reputation in the district for successfully handling complex surgical cases. His dedication and approachable nature have earned him widespread respect among patients and the general public.

Locals recalled that his earlier transfer had caused disappointment, with many viewing him as a key pillar of the district's medical services. Several community members had voiced hope for his return, citing the strong bond he shares with the people.

On rejoining duty, Dr. Bhagat was accorded a warm welcome by residents and members of the media fraternity in Poonch. Thanking the public for their support and goodwill, he assured that he would continue to serve with commitment and uphold the standards of healthcare in the district.

Journalists of District Poonch also extended their best wishes, expressing confidence that his presence would further strengthen medical services in the region.

