

## !! Continuations from Page 1 !! Kathua encounter: 3...

hospital. Special troops of Army were airdropped at the scene of the encounter in the evening to further strengthen the cordon around the area, the officials said, adding bodies of two terrorists were noticed by drones and would be retrieved on Friday morning.

It may be mentioned that a group of terrorists were intercepted by the SOG in the Hiranagar sector of Kathua district on Sunday evening.

Despite a massive search operation, the terrorists managed to escape the initial cordon, the officials said, adding it is assumed that the same could have been possibly spotted near Jakhole, approximately 30 kilometers from the initial encounter site.

The terrorists were moving through the forest area when a police party headed by a SDPO moved in after getting specific information, the officials said, adding they came under heavy firing resulting in the gunfight.

Reinforcements from the police, Army, and CRPF were immediately deployed in the area.

The quiet village Suffain in Kathua district was shattered by the relentless sounds of gunfire, grenades, and rocket fire as a fierce exchange raged throughout the day, punctuated by a series of powerful explosions.

Earlier, a group of terrorists was intercepted on Sunday evening within a 'dhok', a local term for an enclosure in a nursery, in Sanyal village near the International Border.

A subsequent massive search operation, involving the police, Army, NSG, BSF, and CRPF, utilised advanced technical and surveillance equipment, including helicopters, UAVs, drones, bulletproof vehicles, and sniffer dogs.

The search teams discovered evidence on Monday, including four loaded magazines of M4 carbine, two grenades, a bulletproof jacket, sleeping bags, tractsuits, food packets, and materials for constructing improvised explosive devices (IEDs) near the Hiranagar encounter site.

Police believe the terrorists infiltrated on Saturday, possibly via a ravine route or a newly constructed tunnel from across the border.

Director General of Police, Nalin Prabhlat, and Inspector General of Police, Jammu Zone, Bhim Sen Tuti, have been overseeing the anti-terrorist operation from Kathua for the past four days, the officials said.

## PHE DWs defer...

PHE Employees United Front, which has been spearheading the protest for the last seven days.

However, he clarified, "If our demands are not met, we will be back on the streets on April 7."

This decision to defer the strike also follows a meeting between PHE Minister Javed Rana and protesters. In the meeting, the minister agreed to release the pending wages, one of the demands of the daily wagers, in a phased manner.

The PHE daily wagers have four major demands - regularisation, release of pending wages, an increase in minimum wages and compensation for those who retired at 60.

Abdullah, while responding in the Assembly on Tuesday, appealed to daily wagers to end their strike, which has triggered a water crisis in the Union Territory, and urged them to raise their grievances with the panel set up to address them.

Hans, while speaking to reporters, informed that employees' representatives met Rana at his residence on Tuesday and "a decision on their demands is expected within a day or two."

The union leader, however, also issued a stern warning to the government, stating that if employees' concerns were ignored or deceived, the administration would face serious consequences.

He further cautioned that employees would escalate their movement once the assembly session begins.

"As soon as the Assembly session starts on April 7, our 'assembly' will also begin on the streets," he declared.

The decision to defer the strike has brought temporary relief to the public, but with a firm deadline, all eyes are now on the government's response.

Rana termed the employees' demands as "genuine" and said they had faced injustice for a long time.

"While I request the committee formed for regularisation to talk to them, for other demands, like pending wages amounting to Rs 400 crore, I will try to clear them in a phased manner."

He added that he would also raise the issue in the Thursday cabinet meeting to expedite wages' release.

On increasing minimum wages, he said, "If the Minimum Wages Act is prevailing across the country, we will try to implement it here too. Their problems are genuine and will be resolved."

During the protest over the past few days, scores of PHE department workers and daily wagers were baton-charged by police. Many were detained in Jammu when they marched toward the Assembly, the CM's residence and the civil secretariat in support of their demands.

A committee headed by the chief secretary was formed last week to address the issue of regularisation of daily wagers in the Union Territory. It will submit its recommendations to the government within six months.

## 2 more Hurriyat...

Threeqi Isteqal chairman Gulam Nabi Sofi said he and his organisation disassociated from the All Parties Hurriyat Conference or any other group with the relevant ideology.

"We continued our struggle despite all odds but neither All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) (G) nor APHC (M) has been able to meet the expectations of the common masses. They failed at every step to represent the people's aspirations and sentiments. I have long ago severed my ties with separatist ideology and today I officially denounce it," he said.

Sofi also said he is a true and committed citizen of India and believes in the Indian Constitution.

"Neither in the past I have been associated with any act that is detrimental to the interests of India nor do I or my organisation intend to be a part of any group or forum which will work or has been working against India in future," he said.

In a separate statement, J-K Tehreek-I-Istiqamat chairman Ghulam Nabi War too said he and his party are no longer associated with the APHC (G) or (M) or any other ideology that works against the interests of India.

War said the Hurriyat had lost ground and was unable to meet the expectations of the people of J-K.

"They failed at every step to represent the people's aspirations and sentiments. I have long ago severed my ties with separatist ideology and today, I officially sever my connections from it," he said.

## 14 private member...

presented the first budget of his government on March 7. After the demands for grants, the budget was approved on March 25 with the passage of Appropriation Bills before the assembly went on a 12-day recess.

The legislative assembly will meet again from April 7 to 9 for the final part of the budget session. The House will also take up private member bills on April 8.

According to the bulletin issued by secretary, J&K Legislative Assembly Secretariat, Manoj Kumar Pandit, seven each private members' resolutions, the relative precedence whereof has been determined by ballot on March 25, would be taken up in the House on April 7 and 9.

Ruling National Conference members will move a total of 10 resolutions including the two related to the demand for restoration of statehood, independent members' two resolutions including the one on statehood restoration, and BJP and PDP members' one each.

Barring a few walkouts or marshalling out of some members on a few occasions, the assembly so far has not witnessed a single adjournment which was even highlighted by Chief Minister Abdullah on March 25. He had said "the House is in action today. It was peaceful until now" while referring to the ruckus over the issue of dailywagers.

On April 7, National Conference member Qaisar Jamshaid Lone will move the resolution which reads "this House resolves that statehood be restored immediately as promised by the Central Government in the Parliament of India".

His party colleague Hilal Akbar Lone will move another resolution that says "this House impresses upon the Government of India to restore statehood to the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir in order to fulfil the promise made by the Prime Minister in the Parliament".

Independent member Shabir Ahmad Kullay's resolution reads, "This House stands united in its demand for the full restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir and urges the Government of India to take immediate steps to fulfil this long-standing promise."

PDP's Waheed-Ur-Rehman Para is moving a resolution seeking complete ban on use of LNT, JCB, cranes, machines and heavy machines' for extraction of sand, riverbed mining and other mining activities in Jammu and Kashmir, while NC's

Ghulam Mohi-Ud-Din Mir is demanding measures to streamline the health care especially in the rural and far flung areas.

NC's Ali Mohammad Sagar will demand steps to ensure the regularization of 'Rehbar-e-Janglat' (forest guides) and his party colleague Ali Mohammad Dar will ask for rectifying all the wrong entries made in the land records.

On April 9, NC's Ajaz Ahmad Jan will move a private member's resolution to push for necessary steps to ensure the establishment of separate administrative structure, including creation of district offices, infrastructure development, and allocation of resources to promote the welfare of people of Pir Panjal region, comprising Rajouri and Poonch districts.

NC's Bashir Ahmad Veeri demands an end to illegal or unscientific riverbed mining all across the rivulets, rivers and nullahs of Union Territory and protecting aquatic and ecological degradation due to these "unscientific activities".

"Also, Karewa's, water bodies/wet lands needs to be demarcated and protected with firm resolve and determination. This House urges the Government to take immediate measures for environmental conservation, afforestation, sustainable development and disaster preparedness. This House further resolves for stricter regulations to curb pollution and protect natural resources, ensuring a sustainable future for the region," Veeri's resolution reads.

BJP's Rajiv Jasrotia, through his resolution, will highlight the need for construction of a tunnel from Bhora to Dhar Road and a tunnel at Mata Bala Sundari in Kathua district to boost connectivity.

Independent member Rameshwar Singh will seek extension of holiday to cover areas in Bani, Lohai Malhar, Basantgarh and Latti in Kathua on account of annual Kailash Kund Yatra.

NC's Sajad Shaheen is going to move a resolution to recommend to the government to take immediate steps for the regularization of 18 residential colonies in Jammu district where people have been living for the last five decades to ensure planned development and access to essential civic amenities.

NC's Ghulam Mohi-Ud-Din Mir will also demand necessary measures to solve the unemployment problem of educated youth in the UT.

## Chugh thanks PM...

root in Kashmir. "The rejection of separatist ideologies by these groups marks a significant victory for nationalism and stands as a testament to the people's growing trust in the vision of a strong, united Bharat," he added.

Chugh emphasized that under the Modi government, bold and decisive steps have been taken to dismantle terrorism and ensure the complete eradication of anti-national elements. "The echoes of unity and progress are now resonating across Kashmir," he remarked.

As Jammu & Kashmir embraces a new era of peace, stability, and development, Chugh reaffirmed the BJP's commitment to safeguarding the region's growth and full integration into the national mainstream.

"This historic transformation is just the beginning. The journey of a prosperous, united, and peaceful Jammu & Kashmir is well underway," he added.

## 40,000 pilgrims visit...

temple daily, with numbers rising even further on weekends," Anshul Garg, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of SMVDSB, said.

He further said that this trend is expected to rise during the upcoming Navratri season.

The CEO said that many decisions have been taken under the leadership of the honorable Chairman of the Mata Vaishno Devi Board, Shri Manoj Sinha Ji, to accommodate this influx.

"We are making efforts to introduce several facilities to ensure a smooth and convenient pilgrimage during the upcoming Navratras," he said.

Garg also highlighted that around 95 per cent of pilgrims follow the traditional pilgrimage route. "In light of this, the board has launched several initiatives for the traditional pilgrimage route, including expanding and adding accommodation, resting, and langar facilities," he said.

Regarding facilities, the CEO announced that free slots for Attka aarti at Bhawan and Garbhjoon aarti at Adhkuwari will be reserved for divyang pilgrims from Chaitra Navratri onwards.

"A series of initiatives have recently been introduced for divyang pilgrims, including a dedicated quota in helicopter bookings and free battery car services," he added.

He further said that advanced online bookings for helicopter services at the Mata Vaishno Devi shrine are now available for senior citizens and divyang pilgrims as a special category. "Reservations can be made through the board's website," he added.

Regarding new facilities added to the yatra route, he said that an all-weather covered resting area for 1,500 pilgrims at Ardhkuwari, which is being set up to facilitate yatrīs starting this Chaitra Navratri.

"It will feature a water ATM, prasad kiosk, refreshment unit, and live telecast of Garbhjoon Aarti to enhance the divine yatra experience," he said.

He also said that newly released photographs of the holy Pindis, in LED backlit frames and various sizes, are now available on the official website of the shrine board.

"Bookings can be made under the 'Online Services' tab at maavaishnodevi.org for home delivery starting this chaitra navratri," he added.

The CEO said that the renovated Darshani Deodi, with a double-storey queue complex, is fully prepared to welcome pilgrims this Chaitra Navratri.

"An all-weather marble-clad structure, with a capacity to accommodate 2,000 pilgrims at a time, enhances the glory of the traditional Banganga track," he said.

## Police, Govt can't...

Pakistan is not happy with the changing reality of Kashmir from a terrorism hub to tourism hotspot. Pakistan is weighed down by several factors, but the prominent among them are - its defeat in pursuing and executing anti-India ideology. It used to use the troubles in Jammu and Kashmir as a smokescreen for its own people. The projection was that the people in Kashmir were engaged in their battle for "liberation", and as Muslims they had a duty to support them. Pakistani establishment would keep the people in dark about the reality. At the same time, Pakistan is fearful of showing the changed atmospherics of Jammu and Kashmir - the life is normal, people are living and doing their work without any fear and real or imagined restrictions. That change sits in contrast with what is happening across the LoC in PoJK where people are starving and have raised a rebellion against the Pakistan state and government. They know that they have been subjected to atrocities because they were fooled with the religious and emotional slogans. That myth is broken and they know that the Indian side of Jammu and Kashmir is progressing.

Pakistan, to keep its narrative of troubles in J&K, is doing mischief to cause derailment of the progress. That is where handholding and consolidation of peace by all the peoples is necessary. The Police and the government alone cannot achieve the sustainable peace. The message is quite loud and clear.

## Probe into activities of proscribed groups; Police raids multiple areas in Kashmir

### STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Multiple raids were conducted in the Kashmir valley Thursday as part of police investigations into the activities of several proscribed organisations, officials said. The raids were conducted in Srinagar, Ganderbal, Shopian and Baramulla districts, they said.

Multiple locations were raided and searches were conducted at the residences of individuals associated with the proscribed organisations, including Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI), Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (JKDFP), Jammu and Kashmir Peoples league (Bashir Ahmad Tota Group) and J-K Muslim League (Masrat Alam Faction), they said.

In Srinagar, the raids were conducted at the residence of Bashir Ahmad Tota located at Pathan Colony Zakoor and simultaneously at his old residence in Reshanhar Nawakadal Srinagar, the officials said.

They said police carried out searches at the residential premises of separatist elements suspected of involvement in unlawful activities that pose a threat to public order and national security.

During the search operations, law enforcement officials seized incriminating material linked to the activities of these banned groups, the police officials said.

The recovered items are now under investigation, forming a crucial part of multiple FIRs registered under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), they said.

The raids were conducted in the presence of magistrates and independent witnesses to ensure full legal adherence and procedural transparency, the officials added.

The ongoing investigation aims to dismantle the anti-national and separatist ecosystems by identifying and taking strict legal action against individuals involved in such activities, they said.

Over the last few days, police have conducted multiple raids across the valley as part of the investigations against these banned groups, and with an aim to dismantle the anti-national and separatist ecosystems.

## Sinha flags off fleet of door-to-door garbage collection vehicles

### STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday flagged off a fleet of



Door-to-Door Garbage Collection Vehicles. A total of four vehicles were handed over by ICICI Bank and ICICI Foundation to the Jammu Municipal Corporation.

The Lieutenant Governor appreciated the initiative of the Bank and the ICICI Foundation for its support to increase the efficiency of waste collection and improve cleanliness in the Jammu Municipal area.

Sandeep Sharma, Zonal Head, J&K and Ladakh, ICICI Bank informed the Lieutenant Governor that the bank has also handed over Two Garbage Collection Vehicles to Municipal Committee Basohli under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative.

Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Devansh Yadav, Municipal Commissioner Jammu and other senior officials were present at the flagging off ceremony at Raj Bhavan.

## Samba police foils bovine smuggling bid, rescues eight bovines, seizes vehicle

### STATE TIMES NEWS

SAMBHA: Continuing its drive against bovine smugglers and their propagators, Samba Police on Thursday foiled bovine smuggling attempt in the jurisdiction of Police Station Samba and rescued eight bovines from the clutches of bovine smugglers.

The vehicle used for illegal transportation of bovines was also seized. An information was received at Police Station Samba from reliable sources regarding smuggling of bovines in a Mahindra Bolero bearing registration No. JK02CT-2243 from Manamu towards Mansar side.

Acting on information, a Police team headed by SHO Police Station Samba successfully intercepted the said Mahindra Bolero at Manamu for its checking.

During checking, eight bovines found inside the vehicle which were tied in a cruel manner and were being transported illegally without any valid permission. All the rescued bovines have been shifted to a safer place.

A case FIR No. 82/2025 U/S 223 BNS 11 PCA Act has been registered at PS Samba and investigation started.

## Drug peddler nabbed with heroin-like substitute

### STATE TIMES NEWS

SAMBHA: Continuing its drive against drug smugglers and peddlers, Samba Police on Thursday arrested a drug peddler in the jurisdiction of Police Station Bari Brahmana and recovered 03 grams approximately heroin (chitta) like substance from his possession.

Acting on an information received through reliable sources, a Police party headed by SHO PS Bari Brahmana intercepted a car bearing registration No. JK04J-0975 near Lane No. 17 Bari Brahmana for its checking. During checking, 03 grams approximately heroin like substance was recovered from the possession of driver of the said vehicle.

The drug peddler identified as Ridwan Bashir, son of Bashir Ahmed, resident of Nugwan, Tehsil Chadoora district Budgam has been arrested and contraband item has also been seized.

A case FIR No 48/2025 U/S 8/21/22/25 NDPS Act has been registered at PS Bari Brahmana and investigation started.

## SSP Jammu leads Anti-Drug Rally at Satrayian, R S Pura

### STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In a bid to combat the scourge of drug abuse, SSP Jammu Sh. Joginder Singh launched a

unique initiative of Antidrug Rallies by leading one such grand Rally at Satrayian, R S Pura.

Huge gathering of respected figures of the area, youth including Sportsmen as well as Children participated enthusiastically in the Rally.

SP Headquarters Jammu Irshad Hussain Rather, SHO R S Pura R S Parihar and other officers of Headquarter zone also participated in the Rally.

The rally begins at Govt. Middle School Sidher Satrayian and after passing through Satrayian Village giving strong Antidrug message, culminated at Panchayat Ghar.

Besides, prominent senior citizens who never used drugs and alcohol in their life, were also honored by Special Antidrug Momentos from District Police Jammu in recognition of their non-use of drugs and Alcohol. "The main motive of this is to projecting these Citizens as Role Models against Drug Abuse in the society.

This groundbreaking campaign aims to educate the public about the dangers of drug abuse and at the same time honour the senior citizens for not using drug and alcohol in their entire life.

The initiative capitalises on ensuring the anti-drug message reaches a broad audience & stressed to steer clear of drugs and alcohol and maintain a drug-free lifestyle.

The campaign seeks to foster enduring awareness about the issue of drug abuse. It also serves as a constant reminder to the individuals, reinforcing the importance of staying away from illicit substances.

## LS passes Immigration and Foreigners bill 2025

### STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said those who come to India for business, education and investment are welcome, but those who pose a threat to security will face stringent action while declaring that the country is not a "dharamshala".

"India is not a dharamshala (resthouse)," Shah asserted while replying to the debate on the Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025 in the Lok Sabha. The bill was later passed by a voice vote after various amendments moved by Opposition members were negated. One of the key provisions in the bill is that anyone found to be using a forged passport or visa for entering India or staying in or exiting from the country will be punishable with a jail term of up to seven years and a fine which could extend to Rs 10 lakh. The bill also seeks to ensure a close monitoring of everyone who visits India, Shah said.

Shah said the bill is necessary to strengthen the country's security and economy, promote manufacturing and trade, get global recognition for the education system and help universities earn international repute. It will ensure that the country gets up-to-date information about every foreigner visiting India, he added.

He also hit out at the Trinamool Congress (TMC) and previous Congress government at the Centre for allowing Rohingya and Bangladeshis enter India on the basis of Aadhaar cards and voter cards earlier from Assam and now West Bengal.

He said while security forces are blamed, the real culprits are the TMC government in West Bengal and the earlier Congress government in Assam.

"India's border with Bangladesh is 2,216 km long, out of which fencing work has been completed on 1,653 km. Out of the remaining 563 km, fencing is not possible on 112 KM due to geographical conditions.

"But fencing in 412 km is incomplete because Bengal government is not giving land," the minister told the House.

Shah alleged that when attempts are made for fencing, cadres of the ruling party in West Bengal come and create a ruckus.

"Border fencing is incomplete because of Bengal government's leniency towards infiltrators." Shah then asked "When Bangladeshis or Rohingyas infiltrate, who gives them Aadhaar cards?" "Most of the Bangladeshis who have been caught have Aadhaar cards and voter cards of 24 Parganas (in West Bengal)," he said hitting out at the TMC.