

## !! Continuations from Page 1 !!

### Under-construction tunnel...

were rescued and hospitalised with injuries. Rescue operations are going on in full swing. Civil administration and police authorities are monitoring the situation," he said.

Those trapped inside the tunnel included Jadav Roy (23), Gautam Roy (22), Sudhir Roy (31), Dipak Roy (33) and Parimal Roy (38), all from West Bengal, Shiva Chouhan (26) from Assam, Nepali citizens Nawaraj Chowdhury (26) and Kushi Ram (25), and Jammu and Kashmir residents Muzaaffar (38) and Israt (30), officials said.

Two of those hospitalised workers have been identified as Vishnu Gola (33) of Jharkhand and Ameen (26) of Jammu and Kashmir. The third person, whose name has not been disclosed, has been taken to the Government Medical College Hospital in Jammu, police said.

All of them were employed by a company tasked with auditing the tunnel, they said. Deputy Commissioner of Ramban Mussarat Islam and Senior Superintendent of Police Mohita Sharma are at the spot along with the deputy inspector general of police, supervising the rescue operation.

Kumar, the Divisional Commissioner of Jammu, said the rescue operation is likely to consume more time as rock-breakers are being used to create space in order to reach out to those trapped.

Though officials claimed that the audit tunnel is only three to four metres, Kumar said, "It is not known whether they (those trapped) are inside it or outside the tunnel area. There is debris all-around."

### 4 arrested for...

Subzar Ahmad Parry and Mozin Nazir Bhat," he added.

The vehicle which was used in the commission of crime was also seized, the police spokesman said.

### J&K Bank corruption...

and Kashmir Police, which had registered an FIR following a preliminary inquiry. The inquiry report, now part of the FIR, had said an advertisement was issued by the J&K Bank on November 6, 2008, inviting offers for outright sale of integrated office premises at Bandra Kurla, requiring 20,000 sq ft space.

Twenty-five builders had responded to the advertisement which were opened by the committee formed for the purpose and out of the offers received, eight properties Ashapura Builders (Hallmark Business Plaza), Topaz Akriti, Crescendo (BKC), Platin BKC, Naman Centre, Golden Homeland agencies (Wockhardt), Windsor and KRC Towers were shortlisted.

Of these eight, the rates offered by Ashapura Builders were the lowest at Rs 25,000 per sq ft, Ashapura Builders on July 28, 2009, made an offer for its building's third floor of 30,000 sq ft built up area at Rs 22,500 per sq ft chargeable area.

"The application was processed and submitted to the then chairman to take a decision but no decision was taken regarding finalisation of contract with Ashapura Builders' owners. A committee was constituted with approval of the chairman to take a view with regard to the offer received. The committee so constituted has done nothing in respect of offers received," the FIR had alleged.

The bank on the instructions of its corporate headquarters published another advertisement on January 14, 2010, seeking office space 25,000-30,000 sq ft and residential flats in or around Andheri (15 single BHK 600-800 sq ft and 10 double BHK 1000-1200 sq ft) it said. The offer was responded to by 23 builders.

"Ashapura Builders again quoted the lowest rate Rs 25,000 per sq ft. It has been found that no heed once again was paid to the lowest rate..." the FIR alleged.

It has been found that in the board of directors meeting held on February 25, 2010, the director estate committee briefed board members about site inspections of the shortlisted properties conducted by the estate committee, it alleged.

"The members were informed that amongst the short listed properties, Akriti Gokti BKC meets requirements of the bank. He further informed the members that total chargeable area of the entire building was around 42,000 sqft at Rs 26,000 per sqft which roughly works out to Rs 109 crore for the entire building and Rs 73 crore for the proposed six floors," the FIR alleged.

It said the board members allegedly gave approval to the proposal and decided that the bank should enter into negotiations with the builders for purchasing the entire building.

"Negotiations were held with Akriti Gold BKC and finally the rate was finalised at Rs 26,000 per sq ft for nine floors having total chargeable area of 63,776 sq ft. A letter of intent was signed with the builder and a token money of Rs 25 crore was paid to developer Vishal Techno Commerce Limited," it alleged.

The FIR said there was sufficient space available with J&K Bank for functioning

of its branch at Bandra Kurla, Zonal Office and Treasury and as such there was no requirement of purchasing any additional accommodation.

"The Zonal Office Mumbai, Branch Bandra Kurla and Treasury were already functioning in the bank's own buildings. The advertisements issued were for 20,000 sq ft and 20,000-30,000 sq ft respectively in response to which, the rates offered by Ashapura Builders were Rs 25,000 and Rs 22,000 a sq ft," it alleged.

The CBI alleged that as part of a "criminal conspiracy hatched among the officers/officials of J&K Bank and the owners of Akriti Gold BKC", officers of J&K Bank approved purchase of 65,065 sqft at Rs 26,000 per sqft on highly exorbitant consideration of Rs 180.57 crore "in blatant disregard to the tendering process with consequent loss to the bank exchequer".

Their actions allegedly caused a tentative loss of more than Rs 100 crore to the bank exchequer, it said.

### J&K delimitation panel...

May 5 dealing with the size of each constituency -- will come into effect together from May 20.

With the recommendations having been accepted by the Centre, deeks are now cleared for holding of the first assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir after it was downgraded to a Union territory on August 5, 2019.

The three-member delimitation panel was headed by Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai, a retired judge of the Supreme Court. Then Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra (now retired) and Jammu and Kashmir Election Commissioner K K Sharma were its two ex-officio members.

Five Jammu and Kashmir Lok Sabha members -- three from the National Conference and two from the BJP -- were associate members to the commission.

The panel submitted its final report on May 5, just a day before its two-year tenure was to end.

In its report, the commission did not reserve any seat for either Kashmiri migrants or refugees from West Pakistan.

The Delimitation Commission had said in its 240-page report that while they found substance in the grievances of Kashmiri migrants as their plight was unparalleled but it was not possible for the panel to reserve or direct the government to nominate their members to the legislature or Parliament as "such legal provisions are absent here".

"However, we feel it appropriate to recommend to the government for sympathetic consideration" for providing at least two seats, including one for a woman, for the community of Kashmiri migrants in the Legislative Assembly at par with the power of nominated members of the Puducherry Assembly under which a member has a right to vote.

The commission, which was entrusted with the work of delimiting the assembly and parliamentary constituencies in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir on the basis of the 2011 Census, also recommended to the government to consider giving the displaced persons from Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir some representation in the assembly through nomination.

The population of Jammu region is 53.72 lakh and Kashmir division 68.83 lakh, according to the Census of 2011.

Out of the 90 assembly constituencies, nine have been reserved for Scheduled Tribe -- six in Jammu and three in the Valley.

While there was no immediate reaction from the political parties on Friday's development, the National Conference, the PDP and other Kashmir Valley-based parties had opposed it earlier saying that the delimitation panel was "illegal".

The National Conference had said, "No amount of gerrymandering will change the ground reality which is that whenever elections are held the voter will punish the BJP and its proxies for what they have done to JK over the last 4 years."

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti had said that there was nothing more to add as "we have always maintained that the Delimitation Commission was meant only to execute the political game plan of BJP in Jammu and Kashmir and divide people on communal lines". Names of some assembly seats have been changed keeping in view the demand of local representatives and public sentiment.

The commission was set up in March 2020 after the passage of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Bill in Parliament in August 2019 and was asked to complete its work within a year which was extended by a year due to COVID-19.

It was granted another extension of two months and its term was to end on May 6. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during a meeting with Jammu and Kashmir leaders on June 24 last, had said the ongoing delimitation exercise has to happen quickly so that polls can be held to install an elected government that gives strength to its development trajectory.

### Six IAS, IPS officers...

(IAS AGMUT, 2019) from Mizoram to Goa and Vikramajit Singh (IPS, AGMUT, 2004) on joining AGMUT cadre from Kerala Cadre to J&K.

## Security situation in J&K getting worse day by day: Omar

### STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Asserting that tourism activity and the number of flights to Kashmir cannot be considered as signs of normalcy, former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday said the security situation was getting worse day by day.

Abdullah, the National Conference vice president, said the state of fear was such that Kashmiri Pandit employees were ready to leave their jobs and run away from Kashmir.

Jammu and Kashmir has been witnessing protests by Kashmiri Pandits since the killing of community member and government employee Rahul Bhat by terrorists inside his office in Budgam's Chadoora on May 12.

"Fights and tourism are not (signs of) normalcy. Normalcy is that there should be no fear and terror. Kashmiri Pandits should not run away. They are ready to leave their jobs. Is this normalcy?" he told reporters at his party's office here.

He said that Kashmiri

## Navjot Sidhu surrenders, sent to Patiala jail

### STATE TIMES NEWS

PATIALA: Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu surrendered before a court here Friday and was sent to the Patiala central Jail, a day after being sentenced to one-year rigorous imprisonment by the Supreme Court in a 1988 road rage death case.

Senior advocate HPS Verma, who accompanied Sidhu to the court, said the former Punjab Congress president surrendered before the court of Chief Judicial Magistrate Amit Malhan, who signed the conviction warrant and ordered him to be sent to the jail.

The 58-year-old surrendered shortly after 4 pm, and was taken for the mandatory medical examination, conducted at the Mata

Kaushalya Hospital. After the medical check-up, he was lodged in the jail in a police jeep.

Some party leaders including Navtej Singh Cheema, Ashwani Sekhri, Hardial Singh Kamboj, Pirmal Singh and Sidhu's supporters accompanied him from his home to the court, which is close to his residence.

Sidhu is the native town of the former India cricketer.

Cheema drove Sidhu, who was dressed in a blue-coloured 'pathani suit' and was wearing dark goggles, to the court in a Toyota Land Cruiser from the former cricketer's home here.

This came just hours after the former Punjab Congress president approached the Supreme Court seeking a few weeks to surrender and

face of normalcy, I cannot say anything," he added.

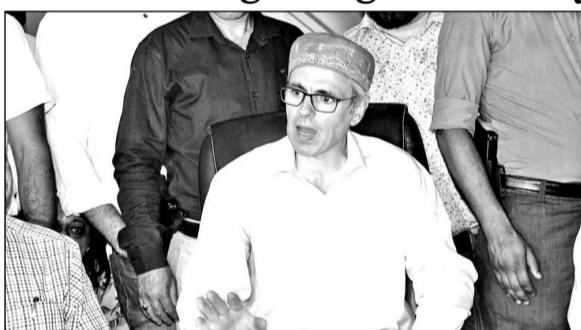
"We feel sorry that innocent people are being killed one after another. Minorities are being killed. Police persons are being killed. Civilians are getting killed in cross-firing and targeted killings," he said.

Taking a dig at the government over its claim that the situation would become normal after Article 370 was scrapped, he said, "Two-and-a-half years have passed, where is improvement in the situation? Targeted killings had stopped (in the past). I cannot remember when the circle of targeted killings took place last time. Today, people are not feeling secure

undergo the one-year imprisonment.

The top court bench of justices A M Khanwilkar and J B Pardiwala told senior advocate A M Singhvi, appearing for Sidhu, that the judgment on one-year rigorous imprisonment was passed by a special bench, and that he can file the application and mention it before the Chief Justice.

Interestingly, another high-profile prisoner lodged in jail here in connection with a drug case is Shiromani Akali Dal leader Bikram Singh Majithia, who had contested against Sidhu from Amritsar East. Sidhu and Majithia had both lost the election to AAP's Jeevan Kaur.



Former CM Omar Abdullah briefing media in Jammu.

in Kashmir."

He said terrorism was returning to the places which had earlier been cleared of terrorists, particularly Srinagar and its adjoining areas and those in north Kashmir.

"There has been a lot of difference between what is said and what is done by the government. The situation is getting worse day in and day out," he said.

Asked whether the targeted killings started after the release of 'The Kashmir Files' movie, he said such incidents took place even before and referred to the killing of Makhwan Lal Bindroo and Akash, the son of the owner of the popular food joint Krishna Dhaba in Srinagar, last year. Abdullah said it is for the people to decide whether the movie has contributed to improving the situation or worsening it.

Replying to another question on the ban on loudspeakers in Jammu, he said the authorities should adopt a middle path so that sentiments of the community are not hurt.

He observed: "Regular orientation of staff from concerned department is being conducted by JK-IGRAMS".

### STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Emphasizing that administration being a service provider needs to develop, evolve and equip itself to fulfill people's aspirations, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday directed officials to ensure effective and efficient response mechanism to serve the public with total integrity, commitment and unflinching loyalty.

"Our grievance redress mechanism today is more resilient and accountable. Citizen is in the centre of governance and their complaints are being handled in fair, transparent and just manner," Sinha said while interacting with the applicants of Jammu Kashmir Integrated Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (JKIGRAMS) during "LG's Mulaqat".

Live Public Grievance Hearing programme, at the Civil Secretariat.

He observed: "Regular orientation of staff from concerned department is being conducted by JK-IGRAMS".

JKIGRAMS symbolises nothing but a pavlovian response aimed to misuse any forum, and every topic, to propagate false and malicious propaganda against my country. Counsellor in India's Permanent Mission to the UN Rajesh Parikh said, India exercised the Right of Reply at the Security Council open debate on Maintenance of International Peace & Security - Conflict and Food Security organised by the US. The US' response came after Bilawal raked up the issue of Jammu and Ladakh were, are and will always remain an integral and inalienable part of India. This includes the areas that are under the illegal occupation of Pakistan. No amount of rhetoric and propaganda from any country can deny this fact,

Parikh asserted. The only contribution that Pakistan can make is to stop state sponsored terrorism. As regards to his other remarks, we will treat it with the contempt it deserves, Parikh added. The Pakistan foreign minister, who is on a maiden visit to the US, also raked up the Kashmir issue while responding to questions during a press conference in New York on Thursday. "As far as the question of our relationship with India is concerned, it is particularly complicated" by their recent actions in Kashmir

- firstly the August 5, 2019 decision to abrogate Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir as well as the recent decision by the delimitation commission on Jammu and Kashmir, he said.

While listening to the issue of Farooq Ahmad from Srinagar regarding the lack of playfield in his area, the Lt Governor directed the Deputy Commissioner to explore the possibility of finding a suitable place near the locality as per feasibility.

On the grievance of Girdhar Lal from Panchayat Makwala, Tehsil Rankot of Kathua regarding the commissioning of a constructed Water Pump House in his area, Deputy Commissioner Kathua apprised the Lt Governor that the same shall be made functional in a time bound manner.

Responding to the grievance of Nizam Din regarding the issuance of ST Certificate, the chair was informed that the certificate has already been issued. The applicant expressed his gratitude to the Lt Governor for receiving a prompt response from the authorities.

In another issue of availing a small business loan from the SC, ST and OBC Corporation, the applicant Suresh Kumar from Reasi informed that the issue was resolved within one month of filing the grievance on JKIGRAMS.

The Lt Governor directed the Commissioner/Secretary, Social Welfare Department, Sheetal Nanda to ensure hassle free processing of all such cases of Business loans from SC, ST and OBC Corporation.

Similarly, on various other grievances that were pre-

sented in today's LG's Mulaqat programme, the concerned Deputy Commissioners apprised the Lt Governor of the status of the grievances.

The Lt Governor while taking stock of the issues highlighted by public during the interactive programme directed the concerned officials to make the delivery of services easier and more expeditious. He also said modification in policies and procedures should be undertaken by concerned authorities to reduce the cause of grievances.

Rehana Batul Commissioner/Secretary, Public Grievances informed the chair about the progress and status of grievances received on JKIGRAMS.

It was informed that more than 2, 12,000 grievances have been received on the JKIGRAMS so far, out of which 97% have been resolved.

Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary; Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture Production Department; R K Goyal, Additional Chief Secretary, Home Department; Nitishwar Kumar, Principal Secretary to Lt Governor; Administrative Secretaries; Divisional Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners, Superintendents of Police, Heads of the Departments, and other senior officers were present during the interaction, in person and through virtual mode.

### Court rejects bail...

of investigation that he had received the cash from an unknown person in Srinagar on the direction of Babu Singh, who told him to give reference to Khateeb while receiving money and before receiving money, he had received what's app messages from Pakistan No. (+923005252171).

Accordingly, search was made in the residential house of Jatinder Singh alias Babu Singh at Ward No 1 Kathua and number of raids were also conducted through special teams. Finally, on April 9, 2022, the accused Jatinder Singh alias Babu Singh was arrested from Kiran Gondal, Kathua.

During the course of investigation, CDR/IPDR of contact No. 9419000214 was analyzed minutely and it was revealed that Babu Singh had links with separatists across the Pak handlers.

It was also submitted that the investigation of the case is at its initial stage and the electronic gadgets seized from the applicant and co-accused Mohd Sharif Shah have been sent to FSL Srinagar for expert opinion while collection of technical evidence, questioning of suspects/ witnesses, arrest of other accused is under way.

"If the accused will be enlarged on bail the same will definitely hamper the investigation",