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NIA raids five...

conspiracy relates to plotting by the banned outfits in both physical and cyber space to unleash violent terrorist attacks in Jammu and Kashmir with sticky bombs, IEDs and small arms.

The organisations, supported by their masters in Pakistan, have been conspiring to commit acts of terror and violence, by radicalizing local youths and mobilizing overground workers, to disturb peace and communal harmony in the Union territory, the agency said.

16,061 pilgrims perform...

3,888-metre-high cave shrine commenced from the twin tracks of Pahalgam in Anantnag district and Baital in Ganderbal district on July 1.

The yatra is scheduled to conclude on August 31.

Meanwhile, Deputy Inspector General of CRPF Alok Avasthy has said that the force personnel have been deployed in large numbers to secure the ongoing Amarnath Yatra as the paramilitary force is equipped with the latest gadgets to augment the security grid in Kashmir.

"We are deployed for your service 24/7, 365 days (a year), whether there is yatra or not. There is an increase in the (number of) forces in view of the yatra, and more focus is given," Deputy Inspector General of CRPF Alok Avasthy said.

Avasthy said the CRPF was using with modern gadgets and weapons to maintain a hawk-like vigil on its area of operation in south Kashmir.

"We are using the most modern technology which is available in the world. I will not reveal the details here, but, yes, we are using that," he added.

Asked if there was a specific threat to the ongoing pilgrimage to the holy cave shrine of Amarnath, the officer said the CRPF was focussed on ensuring round the year peace.

"There is no specific threat, but, yatra or no yatra, our priority is the security of the people, and our jawans do not rest. They work 24/7. They are on duty 365 days. I assure you that we are at your service," Avasthy said.

Asked about special drills along the highway, he said there is an increase in the traffic and the CRPF personnel are also engaged in traffic control to ensure smooth movement of the yatra convoy.

Avasthy lauded the local population's support to the pilgrimage.

"We have full cooperation of the local people. There are no problems, local population provides water to yatriss, bless them," he added.

CS takes first...

deputed on track, so that the annual Amarnathji Yatra is transformed into a zero-waste pilgrimage by promoting cleanliness and waste management.

While taking the feedback regarding arrangements and status of ongoing yatra, Chief Secretary appreciated all the stake holders for their commendable work since the commencement of Yatra and asked them further improve the facilities so that devotees may not suffer due to paucity of any facility.

Your Pradhan Sevak...

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji has immediately given financial assistance of Rs 7,532 crores and has directed all the states that there should be no laxity in the rescue work and all the needy people should be reached soon. Help should be provided as soon as possible.

The State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) has been constituted in each state under Section 48 (1) (a) of the Disaster Management Act, 2005. The fund is the primary fund available to state governments for responses to notified disasters. The central government contributes 75 per cent to the SDRF in general states and 90 per cent in Northeast and Himalayan states.

Babli (Anita Sharma)...

building permission to JMC on August 12, 2019. To substantiate her point, she used to show false documents by concealing the factual position. This, in the process, caused a huge loss to the JMC and the state exchequer by not depositing the requisite Building Permission Fee by adopting fraudulent means.

The illegal construction was in gross violation of the setbacks and other norms of the JMC evading amount of building permission fee and causing loss to the government exchequer.

Amarnath devotees throng..

so far for the Yatra to the 3,880-metre-high cave shrine in south Kashmir Himalayas.

Five counters have been set up for Tatkal registration of the devotees. While three counters have been put up at Vaishnavi Dham, Mahajan Sabha, and Panchayat Ghar for registration of the general public, two have been set up at Geeta Bhawan and Ram Mandir for the registration of 'sadhus', the officials said.

Dharminder Bhargava, a pilgrim from Madhya Pradesh, standing in the queue for three hours, said he arrived here a week ago and has been waiting for the Amarnath Yatra registration to resume.

"We visited the Mata Vaishnodevi cave shrine during the suspension of Yatra last week. There should have been more counters so that registrations could have been conducted faster," Bhargava said.

Pilgrims waiting in the queues said the shelter and drinking water facilities at the registration spots were inadequate.

While 1.40 lakh pilgrims have paid obeisance at the Icelingam of Lord Shiva at Amarnath so far this year, over 53,000 devotees in 11 batches have left for the shrine from the Jammu base camp.

The Yatra remained suspended for three days from Saturday to Monday and was resumed on Tuesday from Jammu. In view of the suspension, around 8,000 pilgrims were stranded in Jammu, particularly the Bhagvatinagar base camp.

The 62-day annual pilgrimage to the Amarnath cave shrine began on July 1 and is scheduled to conclude on August 31.

Three non-local...

the district administration to ensure all possible assistance to those injured and their family members. The Lt Governor said no efforts will be spared to bring the perpetrators to justice.

Omar Abdullah, the National Conference vice-president, condemned the attack

and wished the injured a speedy recovery.

"Very unfortunate. I unreservedly condemn this attack and send my best wishes to the injured. I hope they make a complete and speedy recovery," Abdullah said in a tweet.

Altaf Thakur, the BJP's spokesperson in Jammu and Kashmir, said, "Strongly denounce the attack on unarmed non local labourers in Gagran, Shopian district by the terrorists. This reflects frustration, inhumanity and cheapness of terrorists involved (in) the gruesome attack on three non local labourers who had gone to buy grocery items."

Thakur urged the police to track those involved in the act and punish them sternly. Praying for a speedy recovery of all three injured men, he said.

Saina Nehwal pays...

the pilgrimage on Wednesday, the officials said.

After paying obeisance at the holy cave shrine, Nehwal said she felt blessed and was bestowed with positivity, strength and peace of mind.

"We had very good darshan of the Amarnath ji. People mostly discuss these things that they want to have darshan of Amarnath ji, but, I feel blessed that I had the darshan along with my mother," she said in a video released by the Jammu and Kashmir's Department of Information and Public Relations.

Nehwal expressed gratitude to the J-K administration, the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB) and the security forces.

"You feel good and your mind is at peace. It was a very good experience, a comfortable one," the former world number one said.

Her mother said everyone should undertake the yatra and have darshan' at the cave shrine.

CJ visits Central..

Chief Justice was received by the Director General Prisons, J & K, Deepak Kumar and Chairman DLSA Srinagar Jawad Ahmed. Superintendent of Central Jail Srinagar, Daljit Singh; SP North Zone Srinagar, Raja Zuhaib and other officers of Central Jail Srinagar were also present on the occasion.

The Chief Justice, upon his arrival, was also accorded ceremonial guard of honour by contingent of CRPF deployed at the Central Jail.

During the visit, the Chief Justice had round of all the baraks and interacted extensively with the inmates and patiently listened to their grievances and concerns. The Chief Justice assured the inmates that their genuine grievances shall be redressed and also issued on spot instructions to the concerned to ensure that the grievances projected by the jail inmates are addressed at the earliest.

During the visit, the Chief Justice engaged in constructive discussions with prison officials, legal aid volunteers, and inmates of Central Jail Srinagar. During interaction all the jail inmates admitted that they are being represented in the respective courts either by the counsel engaged by them or by counsel provided by the respective District Legal Services Authorities, where ever their cases are pending.

To gauge the effectiveness of VC facility available in the Central Jail, the Chief Justice directed the jail authorities to connect the District Court Srinagar and interacted with the System Assistant and expressed satisfaction about the quality of Video Conference Facility.

Chief Justice also emphasized the significance of safeguarding the fundamental rights of prisoners, ensuring their access to justice, and offering them adequate legal support.

The Chief Justice also inspected Legal Aid Clinic within the Central Jail Srinagar and acknowledged that the same plays a pivotal role in providing legal assistance to the inmates. The Chief Justice expressed his satisfaction with the functioning of the clinic and lauded the efforts of the dedicated legal para legal volunteers for tirelessly striving to uphold the rights of the prisoners.

The Chief Justice also inspected the Medical Facility unit, Recreational Facility, Tailoring unit, Gymnasium, Carpentry Unit, Vet Canteen, Mulaqaat Centre, Calling Booth and other facilities available at the Central Jail.

DG Prisons, on the occasion assured the Chief Justice that for the decongestion of the Central Jail, Srinagar, appropriate steps will be taken at the earliest, besides assuring the construction of additional washrooms for the jail inmates.

Pertinently, the primary purpose of the visit was to take stock of the conditions and facilities available to the inmates, besides evaluate the effectiveness of Legal aid Clinic established in the Central Jail Srinagar.

Modi holds ‘fruitful’...

earlier in the day, was received by Prime Minister Borne at the airport in a special gesture. A ceremonial welcome and Guard of honour were accorded to Prime Minister Modi upon his arrival.

Modi and Borne discussed furthering cooperation in various areas such as economic and trade, energy, environment, education, mobility, railways, digital public infrastructure, museology and people to people ties.

"Both sides reiterated their desire to further deepen the multifaceted cooperation between India and France, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a press release.

"PM@narendramodi held fruitful talks with PM@elisabeth_borne in Paris. The leaders reviewed various facets of India-France partnership as well as discussed measures to further strengthen the ties between both the countries," the PMO tweeted.

The Prime Minister is here on a two-day visit during which he will hold wide-ranging talks with President Emmanuel Macron and join him for the French National Day celebrations as the Guest of Honour.

Modi also had a "productive meeting" with Senate President Larcher and the two leaders deliberated on a range of issues of mutual interest and agreed to work together to deepen India-France cooperation in a number of areas, the Prime Minister's Office said.

"Delighted to have met Mr.@gerard_larcher, President of the @Senate. Had productive exchanges on ways to deepen India-France cooperation across diverse sectors," Modi said in a tweet.

Prime Minister Modi highlighted the significance of our shared values of Democracy, Freedom and Equality', forming the foundation ethos of India-France partnership, the MEA said in a press release.

Their discussions focused on a wide range of areas including India's G20 priorities, democratic values in technology usage and cooperation between the two Upper Houses. Regional and global issues of mutual interest were also discussed,

Omar Abdullah sets out on foot to party office after police 'deny' him escort vehicles

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Omar Abdullah Thursday set out from his home on foot to reach the party office after police allegedly denied him escort vehicles and ITBP personnel cover.

Abdullah, the vice president of the National Conference (NC), was scheduled to address a function at the party headquarters, Nawa-i-Subah, to pay homage to 22 Kashmiri people who were killed by the army of a Dogra ruler on this day in 1931.

He alleged that the Jammu and Kashmir Police denied him his security escort vehicles and ITBP cover to visit the party headquarters.

There was no immediate response from the police.

Unfazed by the denial, Abdullah set out to the office near Zero Bridge on foot from his home in the Gupkar area of the city here, while a handful of his special security group personnel -- a wing of J-K Police responsible for guarding VIPs -- were seen walking along with him.

The former J-K chief minister took to Twitter and posted a video of his walk to the office.

"Dear @JmuKmrPolice don't think that refusing to give me my escort vehicles & ITBP cover will stop me. I'll walk to where I have to get to & that's exactly what I'm doing now," Abdullah said.

After reaching office, where some of his party leaders and activists were waiting for him, the NC vice president said the "police would now send everything" for his security.

"Now that I've got to the office & will go ahead with my programme you will send everything. The fact is @JmuKmrPolice has stopped a lot of my senior colleagues from coming to the @JKNC office today by adopting the same tactics of stopping them in their homes. Notable amongst those stopped are Abdul Rahim Rather Sb, @AliMSagar_Sb, Ali Mohd Dar Sb and others," he said.

The NC said Abdullah was to address the party workers to pay tributes to the 1931 martyrs.

the statement said.

Modi also interacted with children and members of the Indian diaspora on his arrival at the hotel in Paris. Enthusiastic Indian community members who were waiting outside his hotel chanted 'Bharat Mata ki Jai' as they met the prime minister.

"A warm welcome by the Indian diaspora in Paris! Across the world, our diaspora has made a mark for themselves and are admired for their diligence and hard-working nature," Modi said.

Prime Minister Modi's intensive programme in Paris includes a slew of engagements with the French leadership, Indian diaspora, CEOs and prominent personalities.

Ahead of his departure, Modi expressed confidence that his visit will provide a new impetus to the bilateral strategic partnership.

Expansion of bilateral defence ties is expected to be a key focus of Prime Minister Modi's talks with Macron.

"I look forward to meeting President Macron and holding wide-ranging discussions on taking forward this longstanding and time-tested partnership over the next 25 years," Modi said in his departure statement.

"We also work together on regional and global issues," he added.

Modi said his visit to France was particularly special as he will join President Macron for the French National Day, or Bastille Day celebrations in Paris as the Guest of Honour.

A 269-member Indian tri-services contingent will participate in the parade. Three Rafale fighter jets of the Indian Air Force (IAF) will also join the flypast on the occasion along with French jets.

Noting that this year marks the 25th anniversary of India-France strategic partnership, Modi said that rooted in deep trust and commitment, the two countries cooperate closely across various domains, including defence, space, civil nuclear; blue economy, trade, investment, education, culture and people-to-people ties.

Modi had the opportunity to meet President Macron several times since his last official visit to France in 2022, most recently in Hiroshima, Japan in May 2023 during the G-7 Summit.

From Paris, Modi will travel to Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, for an official visit on July 15.

G20 countries should...

is extremely necessary today, the Home Minister said.

Shah said our internet vision should neither be one of excessive freedom threatening the very existence of our nations nor one of the isolationist structures such as digital firewalls.

"Many countries have become victims of cyber attacks and this threat is hovering over all the major economies of the world. According to World Bank estimates, cyber attacks could have caused losses of around USD 5.2 trillion to the world during 2019-2023. The use of crypto currency by malicious threat actors further complicates its detection and prevention," he said.

The home minister also suggested that in line with the United Nations Convention on the Criminal Use of Information and Communication Technology, speedy preservation, investigation and co-ordination of evidences is essential.

He said Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) must be strengthened to deal with emerging technologies.

"There should be a 24X7 cyber security mechanism in place for an effective 'predictive - preventive - protective and recovery' action. Time has come to build a 'Transparent and Accountable AI (Artificial Intelligence) and Emerging Technologies Governance Framework' to ensure responsible use," he said.

Shah said given the rise in cyber crime involving digital currency, there is a need for a "dedicated common channel" among the nations to prevent such financial irregularities.

He said third-party verification of NFT (non-fungible token used by block chains and crypto currency) platforms will increase trust and curb criminal activities.

Citing the country's steps to counter cyber criminals, Shah said India has set up certain open-access digital infrastructure models which have become examples in the world today.

"India has developed Aadhaar Model for digital identity, UPI mode for real time fast payment, Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), and Open Health Service Network, among others. The world today needs a new model for digital public infrastructure to facilitate the flow of information and finance. This will facilitate the countries of the world to digitally empower their citizens," he said.

The home minister said the Indian government under Narendra Modi has worked towards outlining a uniform cyber strategy, real-time reporting of cyber-crimes, capacity building of LEAs (law enforcement agencies), designing analytical tools and setting up a national network of forensic laboratories, ensuring cyber hygiene, and spreading cyber awareness to every citizen.

"The Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and System (CCTNS) has been implemented in all police stations of the country. The Government of India has established the Indian Cyber-Crime Coordination Center (I4C) to ensure a comprehensive response against cyber crime," he said.

Shah added that India has created world's largest training programme in cyber security through massive open online courses platform called the 'Cy Train' portal.

"We aim to create a 'Cyber Success World' and not a 'Cyber Failure World'. Together, we can harness the potential of these technologies while ensuring a secure and prosperous digital future for all," he said.

CUET-UG results..

key challenges were received, of which 3,886 were unique. Processing all this data and finalisation of the results takes time. Once this is over, the result committee will examine the data and give the go-ahead for the result announcement. The NTA (National Testing Agency) is targeting to announce the results latest by Monday and even earlier."

More than 14 lakh applications were received for the CUET-UG this year, registering a 41 per cent increase from its first edition last year.

The CUET-UG is the second-largest entrance exam in the country in terms of the number of applicants. In its first edition, 12.5 lakh students had registered for the exam and 9.9 lakh submitted their applications. Unlike last year, the exam was conducted in three shifts this year.

India clears procurement of 26 Rafale jets, three Scorpene submarines

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: India on Thursday cleared proposals to procure 26 Naval variant of Rafale jets from France and three French-designed Scorpene class submarines on a day Prime Minister Narendra Modi began a two-day high-profile visit to Paris.

The procurement proposals were approved by the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) headed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, the defence ministry said.

Four of the 26 Rafale-M jets, the naval variant of the deck-based platform, will be trainer aircraft, sources in the defence establishment said.

The delivery of the aircraft will begin within three years of signing of the contract, they said, adding it may take close to one year to seal the final deal as detailed price negotiations are to be undertaken.

"The DAC granted Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for procurement of 26 Rafale Marine aircraft along with associated ancillary equipment, weapons, simula-

tor, spares, documentation, crew training and logistic support for the Indian Navy from the French Government based on Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA)," the ministry said.

It said price and other terms of purchase will be negotiated with the French government after taking into account all relevant aspects, including comparative procurement price of similar aircraft by other countries.

"Further, integration of Indian designed equipment and establishment of Maintenance, Repair and Operations (MRO) hub for various systems will be incorporated into the contract documents after due negotiations," it said in a statement.

The defence procurement projects are expected to be announced following PM Modi's talks with French President Emmanuel Macron on Friday.

The DAC, which is the defence ministry's highest decision making body on procurement, also cleared a proposal for construction of three more Scorpene sub-

marines in India.

"The DAC also granted the AoN for procurement of three additional Scorpene submarines under Buy (Indian) category which will be constructed by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL)," the ministry said.

It said the procurement of additional submarines, with higher indigenous content, will not only help in maintaining required force level and operational readiness of the Indian Navy, but also create significant employment opportunities in the domestic sector.

"It will also help the MDL in further enhancing its capability and expertise in submarine construction," it added.

The MDL has already constructed six Scorpene submarines five of which are already in service.The sixth one is likely to be commissioned early 2024.

The DAC approved another proposal to lay down guidelines for achieving the "desired indigenous content in all categories of capital acquisition cases", the ministry said.

