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STATE TIMES

THE BOLD VOICE OF J&K

RNI No. : 66908/96 Vol. 29 Issue 230 • Jammu • Tuesday • August 20, 2024 • Pages 12 • ₹ 5.00
Regd. No. L-29/JK-346/22-24 Air surcharge 50 paise for Leh

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CRPF Inspector martyred in terror attack in Udhampur

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In fresh bloodletting in the Jammu region, a CRPF inspector was martyred when terrorists opened fire on a patrol party in Udhampur district on Monday.

The personnel of CRPF and Special Operations Group (SOG) of the local police were attacked by terrorists around 3:30 pm in the remote Dudu area of Basantgarh, officials said.

They said inspector Kuldeep Kumar of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) belonging to the 187th battalion was hit by a bullet and later succumbed to injuries while being taken to hospital.

A police spokesman said an exchange of fire took place between terrorists and joint parties of police and CRPF during the area domination patrol at Chill village of Dudu.

"In the encounter, one



inspector of CRPF suffered bullet injuries and has attained martyrdom. (The anti-terrorist) operation continues," he said.

His mortal remains were being brought to district headquarters for post-mortem.

The terrorists fled the scene after a strong retaliation by the joint patrolling party, they said, adding reinforcements have been rushed to the area and a search operation has been launched to track down and neutralise

the militants. The forest area of Basantgarh has witnessed a couple of terror incidents since April when a Village Defence Guard was martyred in a gunfight with terrorists. It was the first such incident in the area in nearly two decades which was seen by security agencies as an attempt by Pakistani handlers to revive terrorism in the Jammu region.

The incident comes five days after a gunfight in Doda district resulted in the



Martyr Inspector Kuldeep Kumar

killing of an army captain and a heavily armed terrorist.

The latest killing took the number of terror-related fatalities in Jammu and Kashmir this year to 74. The dead included 21 security personnel and 35 terrorists.

Of these, Jammu region's six districts -- Doda, Kathua, Reasi, Poonch and Rajouri districts -- accounted for 30 deaths including 14 security personnel and six terrorists.

Amarnath Yatra concludes, devotees laud MRTs for making pilgrimage memorable

STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: More than a dozen Mountain Rescue Teams assisted thousands of pilgrims during this year's Amarnath pilgrimage in the south Kashmir Himalayas, officials said on Monday, as the annual yatra concluded with more than 5.10 lakh pilgrims offering prayers at the cave shrine.

The Mountain Rescue Teams (MRTs) -- comprising personnel from the Jammu and Kashmir Police, State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) -- was flagged off by Additional Director General of Police Vijay Kumar and deployed on the twin tracks leading to the 3,880-metre-high cave shrine nearly a week before the start of the 52-day pilgrimage on June 29.

While eight MRTs manned the critical spots on 48-kilo-



metre traditional Pahalgam route in Anantnag district, five were positioned along the shorter but steeper 14-kilometre Baltal route in Ganderbal district.

"After two back-to-back rescue of the twin routes, all 13 MRTs were stationed at the identified spots by June 24 and helped rescue more than 1,300 pilgrims in dire need, besides providing oxygen to 20,000 others during the yatra," Inspector Ram

Singh, the MRT in-charge, told PTI.

Singh created history by becoming the first personnel from the Jammu and Kashmir Police to seal the world's highest peak -- Mount Everest -- in May 2008.

He said the teams also helped a large number of local service providers and the security personnel who suffered from altitude sickness, braving life-threatening

challenges in the snowbound, high-altitude tracks.

He said the MRTs also distributed over 20,000 raincoats free of cost among the pilgrims.

More than 5.10 lakh pilgrims from across the country and abroad visited the cave shrine, housing a naturally formed ice lingam, during the yatra, which concluded with Chhari Mubarak -- the silver-robed mace of Lord Shiva -- reaching the cave shrine on Monday afternoon on the occasion of Shraavan Purnima, coinciding with festival of Raksha Bandhan.

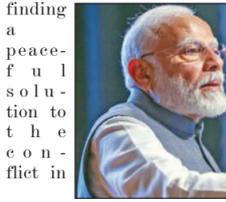
Singh, who is scheduled to get back to the base camp in Srinagar after the return of the Chhari Mubarak from the cave in the next few days, said each MRT team operated in its area of responsibility, covering the entire yatra track, including Sheshnag, Mahagunas Top, Poshpatri, Dardkote, Sangam

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

Modi to visit Ukraine on Aug 23

STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Days ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Kyiv, India on Monday said it is willing to contribute in finding a



peaceful solution to the conflict in Ukraine.

Modi will visit the Ukrainian capital on August 23 to hold talks with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

India has always been

advocating diplomacy and dialogue to resolve the conflict in Ukraine, Tanmaya Lal, Secretary (West) in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), said at a media briefing.

The ongoing conflict in Ukraine will form a part of discussions, he said.

India has independent ties with both Russia and Ukraine, Lal said replying to a question.

Modi will travel to Poland before visiting Ukraine.

CS assesses preparedness for holding Kashmir Marathon 2024

STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Monday held a meeting to discuss the status of readiness of the Tourism Department to hold Kashmir Marathon 2024 scheduled to be held on 20th of October this year.

Besides the Commissioner Secretary, Tourism and Secretary, Y&S the meeting was attended by Director Tourism, Kashmir/Jammu and other concerned officers.

The Chief Secretary took this occasion to impress upon the concerned to improve registrations by going for all



Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo chairing a meeting at Srinagar.

out promotional activities on both conventional and social media.

He also asked them to reach out to different groups of athletes who are interested

in such sporting activities nationally/internationally. He asked them to use the services of influencers/motivators to create mass awareness about this maiden event

to be held in such a picturesque location.

During this meeting the Commissioner Secretary, Tourism, Yasha Mudgal gave insights into the preparations of the Department to make this event a success here.

She informed the meeting that since the inaugural launch on 24th of July, 258 runners have registered for this event with 105 of them for Full Marathon and 153 for Half Marathon.

It was further given out that the primary goal of this event is to

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

'Govt likely to release draft data protection rules within a month'

STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The government is likely to release draft rules under the Digital Personal Data Protection Act within a month, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said on Monday.

The minister said the government has first worked on digital implementation of the Act and framed rules accordingly.

"The framework is ready, and the draft rules for consultation are expected to be released within a month," Vaishnav told reporters here.

He said the final draft of the rules was reviewed last week, and it is expected to be

in the public domain within a month.

The minister said the language of the rules will be very simple.

The rules will be framed after consultation and will need to be placed before Parliament before implementation.

The Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Bill was approved by Parliament on August 9, 2023 -- about six years after the Supreme Court declared the 'Right to Privacy' as a fundamental right. The Act has provisions to curb the misuse of individuals' data by online

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

PDP names Constituency In-Charges for Assembly polls

STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on Monday released its first list of constituency in-charges for the upcoming assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir. The list was made public by the party's General Secretary, Ghulam Nabi Lone Hanjura. As per the list, Abdul Rehman Veeri will be in-charge for Anantnag East, Sartaj Madani for Devsar, Dr Mehboob Beg for Anantnag, G N Lone Hanjura for Charar-e-Shareef, Itija Mufti for Bijbehara, Ghulam Mohiuddin Wani for Wachi, Waheed Rehman Parra for Pulwama, and Rafiq Ahmad Naik for Tral.

Maha Dhyaneswar Yatra conducted in Bandipora

STATE TIMES NEWS

BANDIPORA: The sacred Maha Dhyaneswar Yatra, also known as Chota Amarnath Yatra, took place on Monday in Bandipora, marking a significant event in the region's spiritual calendar. This year, around 85 pilgrims from various areas participated in the revered pilgrimage.

WEATHER
Temperature (Jammu)
Max: 33.6°C Min: 25.6°C
Humidity
Max: 86 Min: 72
Temperature (Srinagar)
Max: 31.9°C Min: 19.7°C
Humidity
Max: 84 Min: 49
Sunset : 19:11 Hours
Sunrise : 05:56 Hours

Mpox scare: Centre tells Int'l airports to be vigilant

STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The Union Health Ministry has asked all airports as well as authorities at land ports on borders with Bangladesh and Pakistan to remain alert about incoming international passengers reporting Mpox symptoms, official sources said on Sunday.

The ministry has identified three Centre-run hospitals -- Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, Safdarjung and Lady Hardinge -- as nodal centres in the national capital for isolation, management and treatment of any patient with Mpox.

All state governments have been asked to identify such designated hospitals under their jurisdiction, the sources said.

P K Mishra, the principal secretary to the prime minister, chaired a high-level meeting on Sunday to review the country's preparedness for Mpox amid enhanced surveillance for prompt detection.

Officials said there is no reported case of Mpox in the country as of now. As per the current assessment, the risk of a large outbreak with sustained transmission is low, they said.

The World Health

Organisation (WHO) has declared Mpox a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) in view of its prevalence and spread across many parts of Africa.

"The virus strain this time is different and is more virulent and infectious. But the risk of a large outbreak with sustained transmission is low in the country as per the current assessment," an official source said.

The health ministry has directed officials to enhance surveillance and effective measures to be taken

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

Man held for harassing female doctor at hospital

STATE TIMES NEWS

RAJOURI: A man was arrested for allegedly creating a ruckus and harassing an on-duty female doctor inside a hospital in Rajouri district early Monday, officials said.

The accused Gurpreet Singh's unruly behaviour at the sub-district hospital in Nowshera sparked a protest by doctors and the paramedical staff, they said.

The ruckus erupted around 12.45 am when Singh accompanied a patient to the hospital and allegedly indulged in hooliganism without any provocation.

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

RRBs must devise suitable products aligning with MSME clusters: FM

STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday asked Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) to devise suitable products aligning with MSME clusters to increase banking penetration.

During a review meeting with chairpersons of RRBs and CEOs of their sponsored bank, the finance minister emphasised active outreach by the RRB branches located in MSME clusters to ensure credit to

small and micro enterprises in areas like textile, wooden furniture, leather, food pro-

cessing, packing materials etc. that hold immense potential for increasing the loan portfolio.

Sitharaman also asked sponsor banks and RRBs to

recognise the challenges ahead and continue focusing on maintaining asset quality, expanding digital services, and ensuring robust corporate governance.

During the meeting, Sitharaman underlined that all RRBs must have their own up-to-date technology stack to stay relevant and noted that digital banking services like mobile banking will be a boon for regions with relatively challenging physical connectivity

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

Art 370, statehood restoration among 12 guarantees in NC manifesto

STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Restoration of Article 370 and Jammu and Kashmir's statehood as well as implementation of the autonomy resolution passed by the erstwhile assembly in 2000 are among the National Conference's 12 guarantees announced in its manifesto for the upcoming polls.

In June 2000, the National Conference government under Farooq Abdullah passed a resolution in the Assembly seeking to restore the pre-1953 constitutional position in the state. It was, however, rejected by the Union Cabinet headed by then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

The Narendra Modi government abrogated Article 370, which gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir, in 2019 and bifurcated the

erstwhile state into two Union Territories -- Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

The NC manifesto for the upcoming Assembly polls also promised to seek amnesty for all political prisoners and dignified return of Kashmiri Pandits to the Valley.

Free 200 units of electricity, relief from power and water crisis, transfer of hydro-electric power projects to Jammu and Kashmir and providing 12 LPG cylinders to the economically weaker sections each year for free are among the other pledges made by the party in its poll document.

Releasing the manifesto at a press conference here, NC Vice President Omar Abdullah said the party is making only those promises it can deliver. He described

the manifesto as the NC's vision document and a roadmap for governance.

The manifesto makes 12 broad promises, including striving for the full implementation of the Autonomy Resolution passed by the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly in 2000.

"We strive to restore (Articles) 370-35A, and statehood as prior to August 5, 2019," the NC poll document said.

In the interim period, "we will endeavour to redraw the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019, and the Transaction of Business of the Government of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir Rules, 2019", it said.

The manifesto has promised that the Jammu and Kashmir assembly, in its first

list of business after elections, will pass a resolution against the Centre's decision to strip the region of its statehood and special status.

The NC said it will make efforts to modify, annul, and repeal post-August 5, 2019, laws that impact the special status of Jammu and Kashmir.

It also pledged to protect the land and employment rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, encourage dialogue between India and Pakistan, and make efforts to secure the release of prisoners languishing in jails.

Under a guarantee titled "Restoring normalcy", the NC said if it forms government in Jammu and Kashmir after the polls, it will revoke the stringent and controversial Public Safety

Act (PSA).

Simplified job verification process, addressing "unjust" terminations of employees and putting an end to harassment of people on highways have also been mentioned in the manifesto.

The National Conference pledged to provide a comprehensive job package, one lakh jobs to youths and fill up all vacancies in government departments within 180 days of coming to power.

Another guarantee announced by the party talks about social welfare and the aim to provide Rs 5,000 per month to women heads of households belonging to the economically weaker sections of society.

It also promised to strengthen the public distribution system, providing

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

India seen as reliable 'Vishwa Bandhu' in fast-changing, conflict-ridden world: Murmu

STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Asserting that India is engaging the world with renewed vigour to find solutions to global challenges, including climate change or taking a principled stand against international terrorism, President Droupadi Murmu on Monday said the country is seen as a reliable 'Vishwa Bandhu' in a fast-changing and conflict-ridden world.

Addressing officer trainees of the Indian Foreign Service (2023 batch), who had called on the President at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here, she asked them to always be there for fellow Indians abroad.

"In my recent visits abroad, I have seen for myself, the immense goodwill generated by our development partner-

ship projects, in the field of infrastructure, education, health and agriculture; particularly in countries of the Global South," Murmu said.

There is also tremendous interest in Indian soft power, including films, Yoga, Ayurveda and Indian art, crafts, dance and music, she said.

"I have also sensed that our friends and partners abroad now have very high expectations from us, which we must deliver on. This is where your role becomes crucial. You must engage constructively with a wide range of stakeholders in your host country, including the business and scientific community, cultural representatives and the media," the President said.

Equally importantly,

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9